



"Ruth's projects bridge art, technology and public history to invite active civic engagement and social transformation"



Ruth Sergel - www.aha-fineart.com

Artist Statement

I am fascinated by what makes it possible for people to move from the inner realm of dream, thought or feeling to the exterior world of public action.

My films, interactive installations and public interventions are all explorations of different possibilities for community engagement in both the creation and consumption of the work. My early projects were 35mm short films created with communities whose participation as actors and advisors shaped the heart of the project. During screenings I became aware of an inherent contradiction – I had hoped to create a transformative experience for the audience yet I was requiring them to sit silent and still in the dark, inadvertently rewarding them for passivity. I began to imagine what

might be possible if the audience had to be physically engaged in order to experience the work.

I began to create projects that take people out of a controlled environment, inviting them into the streets or to physically interact with objects, image and sound. Emerging interactive technologies have the capacity to unhinge what we thought we knew about how the world functions and in that moment of confusion our expectations become unbound into a rush of possibilities. Interactive art requires the audience to risk. In an immediate and physical manner the individual has to choose to act. It is the risk we experience in making the work. The risk our culture warns against: transforming our imagination into substantive action.

PROFILE

Ruth Sergel is an internationally recognized artist whose work harnesses technical prowess for community engagement and social transformation.

Her projects bridge art and technology, memory and public history to create compassionate works that invite us to active civic engagement. Exploding out conventional definitions of maker, subject and viewer, Ruth has created community based fiction films and interventions, interactive documentaries that require the audience's physical participation and new media live performance.

Ruth's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Boston Museum of Fine Art, Corcoran Gallery of Art, National Museum of Women in the Arts, New-York Historical Society, Gray Art Gallery, Anthology Film Archives and 3LD Art + Technology Center. Her work has been shown internationally including Clermont-Ferrand (France), Shift Festival (Basel) and Théâtre de la Ville, (Paris) as well as broadcast on the Independent Film Channel (IFC) and PBS.

Ruth's projects have been supported by the Jerome Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, Experimental Television Center, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and the 21st Century ILGWU Heritage Fund. Ruth was a fellow in Public History at Brown University and Resident Researcher in Video at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP). Additional residencies include Squeaky Wheel, CESTA (Czech Republic), Digital Performance Institute, and Here Arts Center.

Her work has been widely covered in the press including the New York Times, NY Daily News, NPR, CNN, and the Huffington Post. In 2011, Ruth was honored to be invited to the Obama White House to participate in the Community Leaders Briefing Series.

Ruth's first book, *Perpetual Revolution: Chalk and the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition*, will be published by the University of Iowa Press in Spring 2015.