

Erika Blumenfeld

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BIOGRAPHY

Erika Blumenfeld, born in 1971 (USA), is an internationally exhibiting artist with a BFA in Photography from Parsons School of Design in New York. In 1994, Blumenfeld moved her studio from New York to Santa Fe, New Mexico where she lived and worked for thirteen years. The artist currently resides in Marfa, Texas. In 1998, inspired by the distinct quality of light that pervades the skies of the Southwestern United States, Blumenfeld developed a process to reduce photography to its most essential ingredients: light and light-sensitive material. Foregoing the use of a traditional camera, the artist instead builds special recording devices, which she uses to expose photographic papers, films and digital media directly to the ever-changing sunlight and moonlight. In her resulting photo-based works and video installations, natural light phenomenon is medium and subject non-objective documentations of light itself as seen through the cycles of astronomic and atmospheric events. Blumenfelds recent installations have been exhibited widely at galleries, museums and non-profits in the US and Europe, including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York; Ballroom in Marfa, Texas; the Center for Contemporary Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Center for Contemporary Non-Objective Art (CCNOA) in Brussels, Belgium; DiverseWorks Art Space in Houston, Texas; the Galerie der Stadt Mainz-Brückenturm in Mainz, Germany; the Hertfordshire University Galleries (UH Galleries) in Hertfordshire, England; Kunstneres Hus in Oslo, Norway; the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico; the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), in Portland, Oregon; and the Santa Fe Art Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her work has been featured in Art In America, ARTnews, Arte Contemporary, and Camera Arts magazines, and is included in The Polaroid Book published by Taschen. She has received grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, the Land Rheinland-Pfalz Kultusministerium in Germany, and the Polaroid Corporation. Blumenfeld was also Ballroom Marfa's inaugural artist-in-residence, and was awarded a Special Editions Fellowship from the Lower East Side Printshop in New York. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas; the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico and The Polaroid Collection.

Erika Blumenfeld

Light Graph: Twilight, 2001

609 4x5 inch Type 59 Polaroids, 660 clear pushpins
140.75x81.25 inches (266.07x206.38 cm)

Installation view: Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, Oregon, Solo Exhibition, 2001

Private Collection

Light Graph: Twilight depicts the light at sunset; the Polaroids at the bottom of the piece documented the sunlight as it was diminishing and the black Polaroids above documented night after the sun had set.

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Fractions of Light & Time: October 2, 2003, 3:24 PM, 2003

Ilfochrome paper, Aluminum panel
13.5x19 inches (34.29x48.26 cm)

Private Collection

Fractions of Light & Time, an ongoing series, is an ode to the thousands of fleeting moments during our day. Isolating random times of day, these pieces are exposed for three seconds directly onto photographic paper.

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Installation view: DiverseWorks Art Space, Houston, Texas, Solo Exhibition, 2004

Left: Light Recording: Blue Moon [Peace Moon], 2004

Light Recording: Blue Moon (Peace Moon) is from the artists first series documenting moonlight. Blumenfeld recorded every full moon over a years time, from Harvest Moon 2003 to Harvest Moon 2004. Each piece in the series is a recording of the amount of moonlight radiating toward Earth from the full moon.

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Light Recording: Total Lunar Eclipse [October 27, 2004]

Chromogenic prints, aluminum panels, laminate

36 panels, each 15x15 inches (38.1x38.1 cm); installed: 46x185.5 inches (116.84x471.17 cm)

Installation view: DiverseWorks Art Space, Houston, Texas, Solo Exhibition, 2004

Light Recording: Total Lunar Eclipse [October 27, 2004] documented the entire four hours of the diminishing and reappearing light of the full moon while it was being eclipsed by the earth's shadow during the total lunar eclipse of October 27th, 2004. Blumenfeld recorded the light every seven minutes during the eclipse and configured them consecutively from left to right, starting from the top row.

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Moving Light: Lunation 1011, 2004

Projected Installation (03 27 , looped, silent, DVD)

Dimensions Variable

Edition of 8

Installation view: DiverseWorks, Houston, Texas, Solo Exhibition, 2005

In September and October of 2004, Blumenfeld went to Marfa, Texas as Ballroom Marfa's inaugural artist-in-residence. Through the generosity and non-financial support of the McDonald Observatory, Blumenfeld was granted the rare opportunity to work on site up on the main peak of the observatory in one of their astronomer's houses. During her two-month stay, Blumenfeld created her very first video-based installation, titled Moving Light: Lunation 1011.

Lunation is the mean time between two successive new moons, and the lunation number is calculated from the first new moon that occurred in 1923. This piece, titled 1011 after the actual lunation cycle, documented the waxing and waning of moonlight over a 30-day period, from new moon to new moon. Recorded through an altered telescope and self-built recording devices, Blumenfeld documented the varying intensities of light radiating from the moon onto handheld photographic film. The resulting images portray not only the changing quantity of moonlight in its nightly phase, but also the artist's own hand which, in holding each piece of film over the long two-minute exposures, moved slightly from her own heartbeat and body's subtle sway. The relationship between technology and the human implementing it is expressed in the completed video installation, where each of the exposures taken over the 30 days were animated in sequence to produce a moving account of the lunar cycle.

Erika Blumenfeld Light Recording: Spring 2005 (March 22, 2005)

Chromogenic print, aluminum panel, laminate

30x40 inches (76.2x101.6 cm)

Private Collection

In the Spring 2005 series, Blumenfeld documented the 93 days between the vernal equinox and the summer solstice, the days in the year that comprise the season known as northern spring. At the exact moment of civil sunset on March 20th (equinox) Blumenfeld, using a handmade lightrecording device, recorded a two-second exposure of the amount of sunlight present at that moment directly onto a single sheet of film. For the subsequent 92 days, she documented the sunlight at that exact time onto separate sheets of film. The 93 still images show the sun's daily and subtle shifts in intensity; as time moves toward the summer solstice (June 21st) and the sun approaches its northern most point in the sky, the days gets longer and the sun stays brighter later in the day, and so the images grow in brightness.