



**Ericka Beckman**

**January 19 - February 23, 2019**

Press Release

Philip Martin Gallery is pleased to present two films by Ericka Beckman: “Frame UP” (2005) and “Tension Building” (2016). There will not be an opening reception for this exhibition; instead, there will be programming for the artist in mid-February.

Philip Martin Gallery's presentation of “Frame UP” and “Tension Building” follows on its previous exhibition of “Switch Center” (2002). These three films use the structure of architecture and games to investigate labor and capital, social roles and social responsibilities. All three films were shot on location, rather than in a black box, as was Beckman's method in her earlier works.

In 2005, Walker Art Center senior curator of Film/Video Sheryl Mousley approached Beckman to film during the construction of the museum’s new building designed by Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron. (“Switch Center,” which Beckman had just completed, was filmed in a former Soviet-era water treatment plant in Budapest.) For “Frame UP,” Beckman set up multiple cameras at the perimeter of the Walker building site to capture its construction through time-lapse photography. Beckman used Super 8, High 8 and VHS video and edited throughout the shooting process.

Beckman recalled the process of making “Frame UP” in a recent interview with the Walker’s Bentson film scholar Isla Leaver-Yap: “The construction site became the pinball [machine] “backglass” for the structure of this film. I looked at the workers as dancers. With my camera, I followed the movement of materials through this space and, specifically, how they were transported and handled by workers. I looked for various pinball references on the construction site – that meant looking for shafts, for paddles, inclines and sockets.” Beckman points out her belief that the body communicates “through signs and gestures.”

## Philip Martin Gallery

In “Frame UP,” the movement of the “ball” leads the viewer through its two-screen presentation, the action of the players, and a soundscape composed of recordings Beckman accumulated of toys, games and an actual pinball machine. Beckman has long-standing interest in games as a means by which individuals in society learn social roles. The performers in Beckman’s work are often cast as “players.” These players then participate in a narrative in which they seek to complete a task or win a competition, the rules of which explore both economics and gender.



“Tension Building” which was shot on location at both Harvard Stadium in Boston and Artemio Franchi Municipal Stadium in Florence, Italy. Beckman also used architectural models. Spectator sport has been a subject of such Beckman works as “You the Better” (1983). Beckman updated “Tension Building” after the election of Donald Trump “to bring out a critique of spectacle in American culture.” Beckman adds that, “You the Better” features spectacle sports; the guys perform to a set of rules but miss the whole point of what they’re doing. That

idea of spectacle sports is enhanced in ‘Tension Building,’ which gnaws at American culture and what we have become recently.” Through shots that emphasize the circularity and structure of the stadium, and the repetitive action of the football players and cheerleaders, Beckman’s work reflects on the games, societal and otherwise that we are all programmed to play.

A solo exhibition of Ericka Beckman’s work opens at KANAL Centre Pompidou (Brussels, Belgium) January 2019. An American touring exhibition, curated by Henriette Huldish, opens at MIT List Visual Arts Center (Boston, MA) in May 2019. Ericka Beckman’s work was featured in recent solo exhibitions at Secession (Vienna, Austria, catalog); KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin, Germany); Zabłudowicz Collection (London, UK, catalog); and Tate Modern (London, UK, catalog). A solo museum show of Beckman’s work opened at Kunsthalle Bern (2013, Bern, Switzerland; traveled to Le Magasin-Centre National d’Art Contemporain de Grenoble 2014, Grenoble, France). A monograph on Beckman’s work, edited by Lionel Bovier, Fabrice Stroun and Geraldine Tedder, was released by JRP Ringier summer 2016. Beckman’s work has appeared in group exhibitions at Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN); The Broad (Los Angeles, CA); Centre Pompidou (Paris, France); Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea (Turin, Italy); and Swiss Institute (New York, NY). Beckman’s work has been included in four Whitney Biennials as well as “The Pictures Generation 1974-1984,” curated by Douglas Eklund (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2009). Her work is in such museum collections as Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY); Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY); Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN); Wexner Center for the Arts (Columbus, OH); Centre Pompidou (Paris, France) and Kunsthalle Bern (Bern, Switzerland). Beckman lives and works in New York.

Philip Martin Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11am-6pm and by appointment. For further information and images please contact the gallery at +310-559-0100 or [info@philipmartingallery.com](mailto:info@philipmartingallery.com).