

JULIET

Ericka Beckman at the Kestner Gesellschaft

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Since the 1980s, Ericka Beckman (New York, 1951, lives in New York) has been considered a pioneer in the use of video as electronic reworking and virtual interaction., so much so that an article on this author was already published in Juliet art magazine n 41 / apr 1989, signed by Heiner Nine.

The exhibition "Fair Game" at the Kestner Gesellschaft presents the animated multimedia installation "Nanotech Players" (1989) and two films that play a central role in his work: "Nanotech Players" (1983) and his latest work, "Reach Capacity" (2020), which will be screened for the first time in Germany.

These two documents from the 1980s, despite many years apart, speak of a current topic, such as the use of gambling as a means of circumventing the structures and control systems of capitalist and patriarchal society.

The making of "You the Better" is based on the visual and musical aesthetics of a low-cost children's program from the 1980s and blends the competitive spirit of sport with gambling. For most of the film, a group of uniformed players play and move around a black room according to unclear rules. The opponent is the depersonalized capital that continually outwits the players. In this way, winning strategies quickly become losing strategies. In the end, two questions arise: who won the game first? Can a dominant system be outsmarted?

The video-performative installation "Reach Capacity" was created in two parts, in 2019 and 2020, as a reaction to the explosion of the New York real estate market and following which the author had to leave her apartment in Lower Manhattan because it was demolished for a speculation project. In the first part of the film, the construction fever seems to be unstoppable. Merchants in blue suits are constantly investing in new buildings. In the second part of the film, the screen tilts 180 degrees. The focus now is on the workers who hinder the capitalist game and ultimately turn it into social justice.

During her phase of researching and defining the structure of "Reach Capacity" Beckman immersed herself in the history of what is probably the most famous board game: Monopoly. But a game is a game, while people's real life is quite another thing and in real life family and social balances come into play, friction and retaliation, the possibility of bankruptcy, of getting sick, of losing any credit, all out of an insane greed or a dull will to oppress.

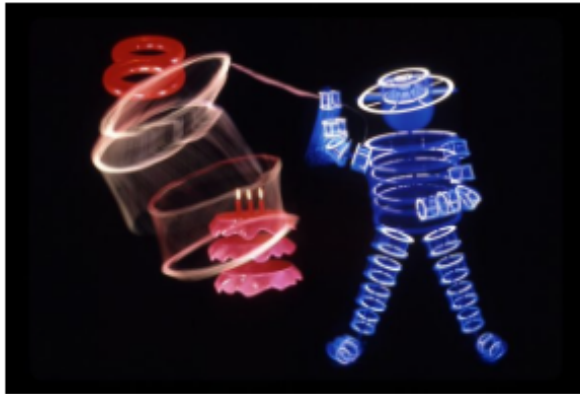
Ericka Beckman's works can be found in archives around the world, including: Anthology Film Archives, New York; The Broad, Los Angeles; Center Pompidou, Paris; British Film Institute, London; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Kunsthalle Bern; Metropolitan Museum, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; MoMa, New York.

The exhibition, curated by Julika Bosch, was created in collaboration with the M Museum in Leuven, Belgium. The catalog is produced by Mousse Publishing, with texts by Marie de Brugerolle, Valerie Verhack and Marc Cutler.

Philip Martin Gallery



Ericka Beckman, *You the Better*, 1983, 16mm transferred to digital, single-channel, color, sound. TRT: 31 min., 57 sec. Courtesy of the artist and Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles



Ericka Beckman, *Nanotech Players 1-5*, 1989, Archival pigment prints, mounted and framed, 5-part, with audio, 40 x 60 in (4 parts) and 60 x 40 in (1 part), 101.6 x 152.4 cm (4 parts) and 152.4 x 101.6 cm (1 part). Courtesy of the artist and Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles



Ericka Beckman, *Reach Capacity*, 2020, single-channel video, color, sound, single-projection/screen. TRT: 12 min., 54 sec. Courtesy of the artist and Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles