

GUILD HALL: OFFSITE

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**GUILD HALL HEADS EAST TO THE
AMAGANSETT U.S. LIFE-SAVING STATION WITH
NOW HERE, AN OFFSITE EXHIBITION
BY ALICE HOPE, BASTIENNE SCHMIDT, AND TONI ROSS**



The No W Here artist collective Toni Ross, Bastienne Schmidt, and Alice Hope, of Now Here, a Guild Hall: Offsite exhibition at the Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving Station, 2022. Photo: Joe Brondo for Guild Hall

June 30, 2022—East Hampton, NY — Guild Hall (158 Main Street, East Hampton) has announced the first of two exhibitions as part of **GUILD HALL: OFFSITE**. The **No W here Collective**, made up of artists Alice Hope, Toni Ross, and Bastienne Schmidt, will present an offsite exhibition entitled ***Now Here***, Curated by Christina Mossaides Strassfield, on view at the Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving Station (160 Atlantic Avenue, Amagansett) from **July 16 through September 30, 2022**. A public opening reception will take place on Sunday, July 17 from 4-6PM.

The unique project will primarily respond to the Life-Saving Station's "faking box", seen as the emblematic artifact in the station's collection that reflects their mission — to save lives. The faking box shares a formal aesthetic with the Collective's founding inspiration, the Metropolitan Museum's Marshallese Navigation Chart. The artists will exhibit works in the south-facing crew quarters on the second floor, the western-facing backyard, and the southeast corner of the wrap-around porch, as well as other areas on the site. In the crew quarters, the artists will create responsive installations to the room and the faking box. The outdoor installations will also be responsive to the site, the faking box, and will include references to the Marshallese Navigation Chart.

Outdoor installations are viewable at all times, and works exhibited indoors can be seen from Friday to Sunday, 11AM-3PM, or by appointment. Exhibition-related programs include a "Meet the Artists" Talk and Walkabout on Sunday, July 31 at 3PM, Drop-In Family Workshops on Saturdays, August 6 and 13 from 12-3PM, and a Panel Discussion with the Artists on Saturday, August 20 at 5PM.

Guild Hall's Museum Director & Chief Curator Christina Mossaides Strassfield has been working closely with the **No Where Collective** and the Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving Station (ALSS) to make this project come together. Strassfield shared, "The idea focuses on life-saving and working together during the pandemic, creating a pod, and to a certain extent, saving one another through art, and having each other to support their creative energies. The concept of saving one another, sharing the inspiration of the ALSS, the guiding presence of the architecture of the building, and the ocean which surrounds us, is the core of the dialogue which has created the site-specific installations that the artists have crafted within and outside of the ALSS building. We are thrilled by the collaboration of these two organizations working to bring forward this exciting project."

Of the faking box, exhibition essayist George Negroponte writes:

"'Fake' is a nautical term meaning to coil or methodically arrange a rope 'ready for running.' The word provides no clue as to the larger purpose of a faking box: it was a life-saving device primarily used in the 19th and early 20th centuries for rescuing sailors stranded at sea. A faking box was made of wood with dowels that organized a rope in a zig-zag pattern, ready to be used in an emergency. When in need, the faking box was turned upside down, and the rope was neatly deposited from its frame onto the ground. The rope was attached to a Lyle gun, a line-throwing device that looked like a cannon that fired a shot line at the imperiled ship. Once secured, it created a rope bridge connecting land and ship. Additionally, pulleys and life-rings helped transport sailors to shore. The sole purpose of the faking box was to allow the shot line to be fired without becoming tangled or knotted. It is such a simple device you might think Temple Grandin invented it. It was a nitty-gritty and indispensable tool for rescue, but for our artists, it offers a lot of inspiration and meaning beyond practical use."

Collective member Alice Hope states, "The Life Saving Station's faking box is formally beautiful, and poetically and conceptually inspiring. I think of it as emblematic to the Life-Saving station itself; it's the organizing principle to a lifeline. For the last few years, I've been stringing can tabs to make a continuous line that resembles rope. Sometimes the line accumulates in tangled piles and often I organize it into spiral forms. The faking box will inspire a new organization—a new form of my continuous can tab line."

No W here Collective Artist Statements:

Alice Hope: I've been using the box spring as a grid and armature for several years, while also welcoming the references implied in the found object; in the Station's crew room, where the men slept, I've made a new cot box spring assemblage that responds to the faking box.

I'll also include a site-specific piece made entirely with blue tape, a new material, which is inspired by currents—the essential life taking and giving ocean phenomenon. On the grounds, I'll compile an installation made with a new sculptural form—an enlarged dock cleat—connected to organized and piled rope, made with footage of used Coke can tabs.

I will also have a site-specific assemblage made with red trammel netting and used Budweiser tabs referencing the immense ghost nets left at sea.

Bastienne Schmidt: Envisioning the exhibition *Now Here* created an exciting opportunity for our collective to feel inspired by the history of the Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving Station, but also some actual tools used for life saving. A particular object that spoke to all of us was the faking box, a rectangular wooden frame with Shaker-style dowels sticking out. A rope was inserted in a cross-grid-like formation, which was used to unravel at fast speed, and later placed upside down in the sand where it was catapulted with a cannon to reach people in distress at sea with great speed. This object is reminiscent of a grid, but the process of unraveling also comes to mind. Coming out of a particularly difficult time such as the pandemic reminds you of the yin and yang of seeing sea faring as a metaphor for life.

Toni Ross: Over the last few years, I have used my weaving practice as a life raft, a navigational tool to help me find my way through the uncharted waters of the COVID-19 pandemic. In our collective exhibition, *Now Here*, I expand on this idea by exploring the maritime history of life saving at The Amagansett U.S. Life-Saving Station Museum and highlight the beauty of the building itself.

Many of the works reveal my fascination with rhythms and patterns. Abstracted international maritime signal flags figure prominently in the work woven through jute netting and potato sacks. Another element of the work brings attention to overlooked details by incorporating found objects from the site of the Museum. An interactive piece echoes the Museum's architectural forms and provides the viewer a place to rest while contemplating the elegance and historical context of the Life-Saving Station.

Visit guildhall.org for more information on this and other **GUILD HALL: OFFSITE** programs and events.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ALICE HOPE

Alice Hope works with materials that have cultural references. She intends her materials to be both the object and the subject of her work, while she also aspires to transform the materials to a-materiality, into experience.

For the last seven years she has been immersed in using the used can tab about which she states "The used can tab can be looked at from a multiplicity of perspectives - that its proportion is in the Golden Mean like the Parthenon; that it's a tool - a lever; that it's trash; that it's an icon; that it's an anti-phallus with its equal negative and positive space; that as a floor plan it emulates Renaissance cathedrals with its apse and nave; its ergonomics; its timed obsolescence; its

demographically democratic use—but in my work I focus on the used tab as a relic of consumption and as a token for redemption.”

Hope has created numerous site-specific public and residential installations. Some highlights include Camp Hero State Park in Montauk, New York for the Parrish Art Museum, Pier 92 Lobby for the Armory Show, WNYC’s Greene Space lobby, Queens Museum, US Embassy’s lobby in Mozambique for Art in Embassies, the National Museum for Women in the Arts, and Guild Hall. She shows with Tripoli Gallery in Wainscott, New York and Ricco Maresca in NYC.

BASTIENNE SCHMIDT

Bastienne Schmidt is a multi-disciplinary artist working with photography, painting and large-scale drawings. She was born in Germany, raised in Greece and Italy and has lived in New York for the past 30 years. Her artwork is included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the International Center of Photography, the Brooklyn Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris among others. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally in over 100 exhibitions among them the International Center of Photography in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the New Museum, the Museum fuer Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, among many others. She has published seven monographs, among them *Vivir la Muerte*, *American Dreams*, *Shadowhome*, *Home Stills*, *Topography of Quiet*, *Typology of Women* and *Grids and Threads*. She was the Artist-in-Residence at the Parrish Art Museum in 2017. In 2018, she was awarded a residency at the Watermill Center. In 2019 she was chosen to be part of the Parrish Art Museum exhibition ‘Artists Choose Artists’.

Schmidt is the recipient of the Kodak Book Award, the Best German Photo Book Award, and the German Photo Prize. She is also a winner of the World Press Photo Award, and she received a grant from the Soros Foundation for her documentary work.

TONI ROSS

Toni Ross is a multi-disciplinary artist using time-honored material and site-responsive installation to explore themes of political and social distress. Born and raised in New York City, Toni attended Wesleyan University where she studied ceramics and fine art, graduating with a BA in Film Studies. Her practice embraces fiber, installation, sculpture, and works on paper. Toni has participated in artist residencies as a Yaddo Fellow and at The Watermill Center. Recent works include *Finding Beauty in a Dark Place* (2021) at The Watermill Center in Water Mill, NY; *In Light Of* at The Leiber Collection in Springs, NY; *Today Cannot Be Tomorrow* (2020) at C.A.R.E. Ltd., *When* (2020) for Drive By Art, *Sanctuary Entwined* (2017-18) at Longhouse Reserve in East Hampton; and *Found Lines* (2018) at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge, MA. Toni is also a member of the artist collective No W here, whose debut exhibition took place in 2021 at Ricco/Maresca Gallery in New York, NY. Toni Ross lives and works in Manhattan and Wainscott, NY.

ABOUT THE AMAGANSETT U.S. LIFE-SAVING STATION

The Amagansett Station was constructed on Atlantic Avenue in 1902, one of a network of thirty life-saving stations on the South Shore of Long Island. Through each night and in bad weather the crew at these stations kept watch from the lookout tower and by patrolling the beach. Discovering a ship in distress, the life-savers would perform a rescue by launching their surfboat or by firing a line to the ship and taking people off with a breeches buoy. From 1902 to 1937 the crew of the Amagansett Life-Saving Station, most of whom were experienced local fishermen and shore whalers, kept watch over this beach and rescued sailors and passengers from a number of shipwrecks.

The Life-Saving Service and the Lighthouse Service were the two federal programs intended to increase the safety of coastal navigation. These two services were later joined in the U.S. Coast Guard. The Amagansett Life-Saving Station complements the Montauk Point Lighthouse in recalling that era of our maritime history when ships sailing the ocean provided the principal means of transporting goods and people in coastal America.

<https://www.amagansettlss.org/> @amagansettlss

ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall is the cultural heart of the East End: a museum, performing arts, and education center, founded in 1931. We invite everyone to experience the endless possibilities of the arts: to open minds to what art can be; inspire creativity and conversation; and have fun.

For more information about this and other programs, visit www.guildhall.org.

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SPONSORS

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