

# GUILD HALL: OFFSITE

NOW HERE at the Amagansett Life Saving Station with  
Bastienne Schmidt, Toni Ross and Alice Hope

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Bastienne Schmidt

Envisioning the exhibition NOW HERE created for our collective NoWhere an exciting opportunity to feel inspired by the history of the Amagansett Life Saving Station, but also by some of the 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 one of the yin and yang of seeing sea faring as a metaphor for life.



*Three Copper Grids, 2022*

From right to left

*Frazzled String Copper Grid, 2022*

Tracing Paper with Muslin Fabric and Strings with Copper Frame

Pigmented, Woven and Sewn Copper Grid, 2022

*Muslin Fabric with Copper Frame Cone Grid, 2022*

Tracing Paper with Muslin Fabric and Copper Frame

I have been working for the past five years around the concept and notion of grids and mapping spaces in new ways. Sewing, stretching, marking, pigmenting, stringing are continuous principles of new spatial organization for me. I assembled various grids made out of copper pipes, relaying the concept of sameness and difference in materiality and fragility. Growing up as the daughter of an archeologist in Greece the methodology of laying out objects and artifacts, while giving them a new context are working principles for me. I also learned from my early upbringing in Germany the love of geometric organization and the principles of Bauhaus. With these pieces I utilize fragile and recyclable materials such as fabric, pigment, tracing paper and threads to underline the ephemerality of our grazing on this earth. I created two faking boxes out of wood in different dimensions, that reference the dimensions of the cot doors, where I opposed the grid like, organized structure to the left against the undulating, overflowing more chaotic one to the right.



Left:

*The Grid/ Faking Box , 2022*

Wood with Cones and Thread

Right:

*The Unraveled Faking Box, 2022*

Wood with Cones and Rope



*Two Canoes with Life Saving Pillows,*  
2022

Tracing paper and fabric with twigs and string  
Pillows of duck cotton canvas with polymer paint



*Sand Bags , 2022*  
Duck Cotton Canvas with Polymer Paint



*Buoy/ Stakes, 2022*  
78 painted and sewn temporary markers  
and ceramic cones

For the coat nook downstairs I crafted two canoes out of tracing paper, strings and fabric. They possess the shape of boats, but they can be perceived more as archeological objects, because they contradict the purpose of functionality as they are built out of fragile materials. The life saving bags with words around the theme of the sea are meant as protective shields. Words take on the meaning of poetry.

The first installation outdoors 'Sand Bags with Words' , right to the entrance to the Amagansett Life Saving Station takes reference to the flooding of sea coasts. I sewed sand bags that are usually stacked up high to hold back flood waters and painted words on them, as itineray and movable thoughts around sea faring and life saving spaces. It also goes back the idea of soft and movable sculptures, that can easily come and go.

The installation on the left to the building on the outdoor grounds 'Buoy Stakes' are movable stakes that speak to the dowels of the faking box and also to the buoys that usually are floating in water, where as mine are movable on the ground. They are ceramic cones and painted fabric stakes. It is a way to connect with the land and finding new footing, an anchor of place. But it is also meant as commentary of not owning spaces. These stakes can be easily moved and transported, as a metaphor for grazing in spaces.

Bastienne Schmidt is a multi-disciplinary artist working with photography, painting and sewing. She was born in Germany, raised in Greece and Italy and has lived in New York for the past 30 years. Her art work 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 exhibition 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'. She is the recipient of the Kodak Book Award, the Best German Photo Book Award and the German Photo Prize. She is also the winner of the World Press Photo Award and she received a grant from the Soros Foundation for her documentary work.