
PIER REMIX 2023

The exhibition features the Piers in New York, which have been at various times places of artistic experiment. Piers 17 and 18 (Vito Acconci), Pier 52 (Gordon Matta Clark), Pier 34 (Marion Scemama).

These Piers have had a deep influence on contemporary creation, marking different but always alternative ways to work and live, from anarchitecture to cruising – or the idea of a set for film noir evoked by Vito Acconci.

The interventions of these successive “waves” of artists take place on the margins of legality. They turn a no-man’s-land into a living artistic community. If these communities are movement, group, refuge, they are not closed.

The notion of openness presides over these experiments, as if having “opened up” these places transformed their DNA. Matta Clark’s *Day’s End* opens Pier 52 into a gigantic rose window reminiscent of Gothic cathedrals. Vito Acconci’s *Untitled Project for Pier 17* proposes to tell one of his secrets to each person who comes to him on a given date.

One of the mythical emergence places of the Lower East Side scene is the Pier 34. Artists David Wojnarowicz and Mike Bidlo illegally open this industrial building in 1983 and invite their friends there. Pier 34 becomes a place of artistic and social experimentation, a refuge for a gay community, a place of cruising and partying. Marion Scemama photographically documents the participants and their works. These, mostly painted on the walls, disappear with the destruction of the building. This documentation is the trace of these works. The disappearance of these works is poignantly redoubled by the disappearance of many of these artists during the AIDS epidemic.

The exhibition project is built around Marion Scemama’s movie. Shot in 16mm B&W in 1983 with an Äaton camera and edited in 2023 with video artist Sergei Rostropovich, the film is the only filmed testimony of the Pier 34. Photographic works by Marion Scemama as well as those by David Wojnarowicz created at the Pier 34 and given to Marion Scemama are also shown. Donations and counter-gifts, as well as collaborations, are one of the “hallmarks” of the Pier 34 episode and its community, creating a multifaceted legacy.

Like the Pier itself - and the community that made it happen - the film leaves a vivid trail but has a complex, wounded history. Over the years and through the vagaries of life, including a fire, the negatives and working copy of this film have been altered or lost. This new edit was made from the sounds, outtakes and unused rushes at the time. These off-center rushes of a planned narrative at the time of filming perhaps offer just the right fragmented portrait of a world, where both the medium and what is filmed are marked by history.