
THE BOX

October 3–31, 2016

Hope Ginsburg

Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy (2016)



Image courtesy of the artist

Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy

An artist who explores the slippery boundary between art and everyday life, Hope Ginsburg is motivated by a natural curiosity about the world. Her practice finds form in experiences and events that often generate images, objects, and physical spaces, which are, in turn, the source of further investigation. Ginsburg's work is informed by the history of social practice artists and feminist artists such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles. Like Ukeles, Ginsburg's work explores the transformative potential of interactions between artist and audience, using seemingly simple subjects (bees, sponges, the act of breathing) as frameworks for exploration and exchange, particularly between teacher and student. Over the past 10 years, with the modest sea sponge as a subject of her curiosity, Ginsburg created *Sponge* (2007–15), a living and breathing ecosystem of workshops, classes, and exhibitions that explored various forms of learning and knowledge exchange. Like the sea sponge, Ginsburg's "work" is porous and malleable, a flowing network with a lifespan that allows it to evolve through interaction and collaboration.

Ginsburg participated in the Wexner Center's 2004 exhibition *Work Ethic*, and in 2015 she returned as an artist-in-residence in the Film/Video Studio to work on *Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy*, which is part of a larger project called *Breathing on Land*. Given the nature of her practice, it is no surprise that this video is a direct extension of the activities and research performed during the *Sponge* project. After years of studying the sponge and the ways in which its form and cycle symbolized an alternative approach to learning, Ginsburg finally had an opportunity to view her pedagogical muse in its natural habitat among the ocean reefs with a 2011 grant that gave her the opportunity to take scuba diving lessons.

The lessons themselves led to new curiosity about a very different system of absorption and filtration—human breathing. After some traditional experiences underwater, Ginsburg began contemplating the idea of breathing on land. Underwater, the assisted breathing offered something meditative—the weight of the gear and the suit, the sound of each inhalation and exhalation—and all of this was amplified on land. But meditation is associated with healing and introspection, and the need for assisted breathing on land is strange and ominous, something reserved for an epidemic, war, or an environmental disaster. As our planet hits record-breaking temperatures and ocean waters continue to rise, perhaps that environmental crisis isn't so far away? And perhaps the healing properties of meditation and the focus on specific landscapes could affect the ecological health of the planet.

This new line of inquiry led to *Breathing on Land*, an ongoing project that has included group performances, photographs, and video. *Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy* is set on the famous shores of the Bay of Fundy, which are alternately engulfed and exposed twice daily by the highest rising tide in the world—waters there rise and fall up to 50 feet every six hours. A fitting landscape for the consideration of our rapidly changing environment, the video shows four divers lined up together in meditative focus. Their breathing offers a strange but rich soundscape as it shifts with the rising tide from hisses to gurgling bubbles. It's as if the tide is being summoned by the divers themselves. But it also resists, knocking the seated divers about with its natural ebb and flow and buoyant properties. In the end the divers are submerged completely, engulfed by the water and yet a part of its endless cycle.

—Jennifer Lange
Curator, Film/Video Studio Program

Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy was created with the support of the Wexner Center's Film/Video Studio Program. It was recently included in the exhibitions *Explode Every Day: An Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder*, at Mass MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts, and the Distinguished Alumni Exhibition at Tyler School of Art's Temple Contemporary gallery, Philadelphia. Her projects and workshops have appeared in the 9th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Proteus Gowanus, Brooklyn, New York; Mildred's Lane, Beach Lake, Pennsylvania; Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania; Baltimore Museum of Art; SculptureCenter, New York; and in the Wex's 2005 exhibition, *Work Ethic*. Ginsburg holds a BFA in sculpture from Tyler School of Art and an MS in visual studies from MIT. She is an associate professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. You can find her work on her website www.hopeginsburg.com or on Instagram at @hopeginsburg.

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Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy, 2016
7:08 mins., video

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