

For immediate release
January 12, 2024

Pratt Institute & Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. present
their annual collaborative exhibition at Pratt Library, Brooklyn, NY

LIVE AT THE LIBRARY IX
The Ballad of Reversals: Ephemeral Images of Ephemeral Art

January 16 through April 11, 2024

Pratt Institute Library
Mondays-Thursdays, 8:30am-10pm; Fridays. 10am-6pm; Saturdays-Sundays, 12-7:30 pm

Panel discussion
Saturday February 10, 2024, 5-6 pm et and online at the Franklin Furnace digital LOFT

at Pratt Library, Alumni Reading Room (accessible elevator building)

All exhibition and related events take place at
Pratt Institute 200 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11205-3802

The new exhibition *The Ballad of Reversals: Ephemeral Images of Ephemeral Art* reflects on the medium of reversal film through the image archives at Franklin Furnace. Reversal film, also known as slide film, positive film, and transparency film, was introduced by Eastman Kodak in 1935 as an affordable and high-quality alternative to negative film. This advance made it possible to directly project images onto screens, as opposed to images needing to be developed in a darkroom becoming visible. By the 1960s, artists, particularly those whose practices were conceptual and ephemeral in nature, began to use reversal film to document and exhibit their work.

The Ballad of Reversals considers the conjunction of two parallel missions of Franklin Furnace: one that supports and celebrates the ephemeral art and another that aims to preserve the ephemerality. Reversal film, which inevitably deteriorates with age and exposure to light, is itself ephemeral. It is both a medium of preserving ephemeral moments and an object of ephemerality. Embodying this ambivalence, *The Ballad of Reversals* explores the paradoxical nature of the now obsolete medium through images and physical slides drawn from Franklin Furnace's Event archives. The exhibition also features a glass vitrine in which visitors can glimpse a simulated darkroom wherein the "magic" of photographic image making takes place.

The accompanying panel discussion, from 5-6 pm et on February 10th, will present exhibition co-curator Tsubasa Berg, conversing on the topic with photographers Barbara Nitke and Marty Heitner, and Harley Spiller, Ken Dewey Director of Franklin Furnace and co-curator of the exhibition. The panelists, all colleagues and friends of Michael Katchen, Franklin Furnace's Senior Archivist and photography expert, who worked steadily for the organization from his first day as a university student intern in 1980 until his death in February 2023, will also discuss Michael's career and legacy, and respond to comments and questions from audience members.

Tsubasa Berg has worked with Franklin Furnace since 2021. He is an artist/photographer based in Brooklyn, New York.

Barbara Nitke is a New York photographer and educator best known for her intimate and compassionate work in the alternative sex world. Long a champion of the LGBTQ+, kink and sex worker communities, she lives and works in Harlem.

Marty Heitner is an artist and professional photographer who has created photographic documentation of Franklin Furnace art events since the early 1980s. His work has been published in The New York Times and he lives and works in Brooklyn and Greenport, New York.

Harley Spiller, Ken Dewey Director, is a lifelong New Yorker who started working for Franklin Furnace in 1986. He is an artist, collector, educator, and author of "Keep the Change: A Collector's Tales of Lucky Pennies, Counterfeit C-Notes, and Other Curious Currency" (Princeton Architectural Press).

Franklin Furnace, an independent 501(c)3 charitable organization-in-residence at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2026. Franklin Furnace was founded in 1976 by artist Martha Wilson to serve artists who chose publishing as a primary, "democratic" artistic medium who were not being supported by existing arts organizations.

Pratt is an institute, an experience, and an idea. What started as a radical experiment to expand access to creative careers is now a community of 5,137 grad and undergrad students working across 48 programs with 1,200 dedicated faculty. 135 years in the making, this is Pratt.

Live at the Library IX is presented with funding from The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; The New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; Pratt Institute; The Silicon Valley Community Foundation; and the Board of Directors, members, and friends of Franklin Furnace.

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