

Hope's Horizon
Artist Statement
2/14/2023

Hope's Horizon does not begin or end. Hope's Horizon loops endlessly, falling through space, circling the event horizon of a black hole, slipping, perhaps, across timelines, in and out of this world. Hope's Horizon is 13 minutes of television, centering on a soapy show of the same name. The work moves between scenes and genres: Cliff and Electra reunite in the small seaside town of Hope after 15 years; Mara falls asleep watching TV and has a dream (or a premonition?); an advertisement from local divorce attorney Melrose Dyer; an infomercial with actress Cassandra Way, star of Hope's Horizon; and brief glimpses behind the television at the backstage preparations for the show about to begin again. The artist places herself inside of this world, performing each character, filming, editing, finding plot through improvisation and repetition, character through wigs and costumes.

Created over the course of several months and filmed on site at Thomas VanDyke gallery in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, Hope's Horizon explores the way that entertainment lives alongside us — a portal to another universe. The work takes up the history of soap opera, with its winding never-ending plot lines and economical daily productions, as well as the history of viewership of soap operas, an obsessive fandom stereotypically associated with women. How do these shows actually live, actually breathe, through being consumed and absorbed? How does the labor of creation fold itself over into the folds of our skin, the lines repeated, the songs hummed? The media we take in — actively streaming an entire season, thoughtlessly passing one's eyes over the local news while waiting at the doctor's office, scrolling, podcast ads, an afternoon matinee — become a part of the fabric of who we are, where we have been, our specific cultural viewpoints: an ever-evolving soil that we root into, growing and forming in constant dialogue with our media pasts.

And what are our media futures, if not hope? Hope is "to cherish a desire with anticipation : to want something to happen or be true" (Merriam-Webster). We have to believe in the next episode, the promise of a new show, or perhaps in a new form of entertainment altogether. Hope's Horizon, the artwork and the show within the show, explore the entertainment past, engaging tropes and formula, and at the same time take pleasure in creation, in the possibility of media future. The hope for our favorite characters to return from the dead, the anticipation of returning to our living rooms and laptop screens at the end of a long day; the intention to carry on, to continue, to live, to work, to create. Each day the sun sinks below the horizon and rises dependably. Each day we trust in this cycle, admire the sunset's colors, and hope to see them again tomorrow. And if tomorrow there is no sunrise, we will adapt, adjust, entertain ourselves in the darkness, disappear into the unknown of the black hole's singularity hoping for a beautiful sunrise on the other side.

Original music by Adam Rokhsar