



ABOUT ELIZABETH BICK

Elizabeth Bick (b. Houston TX) is a photographer influenced by her training in classical and modern dance. Bick holds an MFA in Photography from Yale University. She divides her time between New York City and Charleston, SC, where she is Assistant Professor and Area Head of Photography in the Department of Studio Art at the College of Charleston.

Bick has exhibited at the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; the Ogden Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, CA; Houston Center for Photography, Houston, TX; and the University of Texas Visual Arts Center, Austin, TX. Grants and awards include Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Houston Center for Photography Fellowship, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and The Rudin Prize. She has participated in the Summer residency at American Academy in Rome, Ingmar Bergman Estate Artist Residency, La Napoule Foundation residency, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council workspace, and Santa Fe Art Institute residency. Her work has been critically reviewed in the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Photograph Magazine*, *Hyperallergic*, and *TIME*, and she has been commissioned by Public Art Fund, *The Atlantic*, Harper's, and the *New York Times Magazine*.

RELATED EVENTS

All events during this exhibition will occur in person in the Halsey Institute galleries, subject to change. Events are free and open to the public, unless noted. Check halsey.cofc.edu for up-to-date information.

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, January 13, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

ARTIST TALK WITH ELIZABETH BICK

Saturday, January 14, 2:00 PM

CURATOR COFFEE CLUB

Friday, February 3, 9:00 - 11:00 AM
Open to Halsey Institute Members

WGS INTERSECTIONS

Wednesday, February 8, 6:00 PM

HALSEY AFTER HOURS

Friday, February 17, 5:00 - 7:00 PM
Free for Halsey Institute Members,
suggested \$10 donation otherwise

LOCATION

The Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts
College of Charleston
161 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401
halsey.cofc.edu

PARKING

Available in the St. Philip St. and George St. garages

GALLERY HOURS

During exhibitions
Monday-Saturday, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Open until 7:00 PM on Thursdays
Free admission!

CONTACT

(843) 953-4422 or halsey@cofc.edu

BLOG

Learn more about the exhibition at halsey.cofc.edu/learn

MISSION

The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston School of the Arts provides a multidisciplinary laboratory for the production, presentation, interpretation, and dissemination of ideas by innovative visual artists from around the world. As a non-collecting museum, we create meaningful interactions between adventurous artists and diverse communities within a context that emphasizes the historical, social, and cultural importance of the art of our time.

IMAGE CREDITS:

this side, left: Elizabeth Bick, *Stages*, 2022. Archival Inkjet Print, 40 x 50 inches
reverse side, left: Elizabeth Bick, *Every God*, 2015. Archival Inkjet Print, 40 x 55 inches

reverse side, right: Elizabeth Bick, *Movement Studies*, 2022. Archival Inkjet Print, 40 x 60 inches

cover: Elizabeth Bick, *Every God* [detail], 2022. Archival Inkjet Print, 40 x 55 inches

All works © Elizabeth Bick

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ELIZABETH BICK

Contrapposto



January 13 - February 25, 2023





Setting the Stage

Elizabeth Bick: Contrapposto

In her photographic practice, Elizabeth Bick captures pedestrians as choreography and public space as a stage. Through her lens, Bick makes visible the familiar yet unseen and presents people as performers in their everyday lives. This close observation of human movement is inspired by the artist's training in classical and modern dance. Taking cues from the stage, Bick captures the natural and contrived performances of quotidian life. In doing so, she simultaneously crafts a level of performance herself through the precise structures and routines of her creative process.

Beginning first with the stage, Bick scouts the world around her as she considers how light blankets our built environment, noticing patterns on facades and watching shadows demonstrate the passing of time. She takes visual notes using her phone, rehearsing the next phase, before returning with her tripod and camera to cast her performers. Bick emphasizes that anyone passing through her camera is a worthy subject. In this sense, she empowers existing alone as an exceptional performance—a condition nearly impossible to feel under the scrutiny of critical eyes in an audition room or on a stage. Bick

often returns time after time to sites and people, yielding a new understanding of change both in her subjects and herself in how she views them.

Upon moving to New York, Bick began developing *Movement Studies*, a three-part work structured to reference acts in a play and sections in a ballet or musical composition. The exhibition at the Halsey Institute hones in on *Movement Study I: Street Ballet* (2013-present), which captures the unthinking gestures of passersby in front of urban facades. These moments are presented as gridded composites of sixteen photographs each, visually reminiscent of storyboards but devoid of sequence or plot beyond what the mind infers from context clues and socially constructed assumptions. The grids affirm the rhythmic common spectacles of walking with our gaze up or down, the figurative and literal things we carry, and how we wait for transit and crosswalks. The exhibition title, *Contrapposto*, calls back to a historical shift in the fifth century as artists developed the dynamic and unassuming representation of a natural human stance—an unintentional repeated expression.

Bick would become reacquainted with her next stage—the Pantheon—during the summer of 2014 as a resident at the American Academy in Rome, Italy. It had been fourteen years since her first pivotal experience there photographing the streets. During this residency, she set out to study renderings of light in seventeenth-century paintings, particularly those by Caravaggio, and recognized the dramatic lighting as soon as she stepped into the Pantheon, the temple of all the gods, inspiring a decade-long endurance work entitled *Every God* (2014-ongoing). The architecture functions like that of the interior of a camera and a sundial, marking our attempts to capture impermanence. Especially in summer and during the solstice, sunlight bursts through the central oculus atop the Pantheon's dome creating a natural spotlight visitors flock to absorb as it gradually glides across the floor. Something intangible ignites a person within—an innate desire to reach toward the light, to dance and be photographed among strangers of all backgrounds in this historic public space. Bick returns each summer to document these fleeting performances where a few steps hide her subjects in the shadows, imperceptible to the camera's blind spots.

Contrapposto highlights the extraordinary quotidian rhythms of our shared existence. Bick's careful consideration of stage and experience in her photographic practice is carried over to the exhibition space. Selections from *Movement Studies* confront



visitors in the center of the Chalsty Gallery, suspended from the ceiling, directing a path toward new complementary work from *Stages* (2022) and *Locomotion* (2022). The central installation also invites the viewer to rotate in a circular path to engage with *Every God*. Bick's choreography conjures a captivating feeling of the stages she returns to year-after-year.

Text by Kaylee Lass, Director of Exhibitions at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art.

