

AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION FOR ELLIE SCHMIDT

SANDCASTLES, 2008–2017

My piece in the show, a short film called Sandcastles, is an observational look at Nantucket Island and certain homes that are built very close to the ocean and the ways that the residents have been trying to protect their homes from erosion by building buttresses and planting seagrass.

I think this exhibit's subject of "displacement" is very relevant today. Of course, as more and more people are experiencing physical displacement from their homes due to climate change or war, I think it's worth thinking about through art and research and activism. I also think that a lot of us have experienced a more long-term form of displacement or just removal from our connection to the places that we're from. I think part of humanity's great strengths is the way that we're able to migrate and adapt and change to our environment. But I think, of course now more than ever, it feels like climate change is causing us to adapt and move at a pace that we are not very well-equipped for.

I feel like this piece is really about the different timescales of human lives and island lives. The island of Nantucket is a glacially-made island where it's basically a pile of rocks and sand that was at the terminal end of a glacier many, many years ago. And so the island itself is always moving and shifting on a longer geological scale, but for humans, those shifts feel so slow as to be almost not happening at all.

So this piece is about the quixotic impulse that we have to try and control these large forces of nature. I think we all intuitively understand that it's impossible, and yet we still try and do it anyways.

Music credit: airtone