

## Companion

### Curatorial Statement

Perhaps in school you recall being given a novel that was considered ‘difficult.’ Sometimes you were given an essay—a ‘companion’ text—that provides to that novel—sometimes even line by line. Sometimes, the ‘companion’ text, proffering to augment the ‘primary text’ through alternate insight or inroad, is the only way to know the primary text to which it refers. We might then think of this as one of the ways in which intimacy or knowledge works: both come about through the property of induction, and meaning arises from that place between the two companions. The author Roland Barthes employs the term ‘affective contagion’ to refer to the way that desire, like thought, “proceeds from others, from the language, from books, from desire, from friends: no love is original.”

This exhibition embarks from the notion that a constellation of people, places, events, and things mediate and augment the understanding of an artwork. In some works, the ‘companion’ is personified: the artworks have resulted from vignettes formed around distinct personages. In others, the work is the result of a collaboration—whether witting or unwitting—between individuals and organisms. Taking another perspective, in several works the ‘companion’ is explicitly quoted or poached. Others take an inverse approach in which the ‘companion’ is conspicuously absent—a significant historical moment intentionally elided from the artwork itself.

To the viewer/participant, ‘Companion’ asks a question: what are those objects, places, people, and things that inform your understanding of the works?

**Marisa Jahn** for REV-

*Companion* is on view at EFA Project Space from January 15- March 13, 2019. Complete list of artists: Tom Bogaert, Cui Fei, J. Blachly & Lytle Shaw, Pablo Helguera, Sarah Oppenheimer with Edward Stanley, Karina Skvirsky, Yuken Teruya, Saya Woolfalk with Rachel Lears, plus special screening of *Bathing Babies in Three Cultures* (1951) by Margaret Mead & Gregory Bateson

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