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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sheila Ross

LIFE ON EARTH—is brief

A video installation and photographs

March 9–27, 1999

Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11–6

The video footage of **LIFE ON EARTH** begins in the upper evening air with a variety of nameless creatures—bugs? birds? helicopters?—darting about. As darkness falls, we crash to earth for a brief and cacophonous riot, to be catapulted into a stunned trajectory through the star fields of outer space, where the comet Hale Bopp can be seen in its pristine passage through the slowly turning heavens before it fades from our sight with the return of day.

The photographs, like the terrestrial video footage, were shot on various July 4th evenings, from 1987 to the present, at Coney Island. On that night the beach is like a war zone, with rockets fired horizontally, bonfires, and a pall of smoke over all. Some of the photographs are stills from the present video. The rest are one-minute, hand-held exposures that allow time to gather perceptibly in the image and turn people into passing ghosts.

Sheila Ross is an English installation artist and photographer who has lived and worked in New York City since 1977. A reformed sculptor, she has degrees in fine art from the sculpture school at St. Martin's School of Art in London, and from Hunter College CUNY. She became an installation artist when she found that the obdurate physicality of wood and steel and even paper could no longer speak to what entranced her most—the depth of experience of watching the light for the length of a day, or of walking along the street. Working with light, projections and sound in a time-based medium, she now finds that she can speak to that which is supposedly invisible but which is totally central—time passing.

Sheila Ross has created installations at the Rotunda Gallery and BACA Downtown in Brooklyn, at the Hunter College Galleries, and at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. She has created a stage set at the Marymount Manhattan Theatre for the choreographer and writer Marjorie Gamso, and a slide series at Experimental Intermedia for the composer Mary Jane Leach. Her photographs have been shown at AIR, Salmagundi, the Henry Street Settlement, 22 Wooster, Pleides, and Jon Gerstad galleries in Manhattan, and at Ammo Gallery in Brooklyn. She is a Fellow of both the MacDowell Colony and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and is a member of Art & Science Collaborations. Her work has been supported by NYSCA, the Change Foundation, Experimental Intermedia, and Meet the Composer.

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