

JESSICA MALLIOS

SIGNALING LIGHT



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

JANUARY 24 - MARCH 12, 2026

AUSTIN, TEXAS

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

In the video, a woman, the photographer Jessica Mallios, sits in a lighthouse's spiral staircase, silently dragging a piece of graphite across paper laid over the treads. Two stairs are already done: she's been at this for a while. The rubbings reveal the patterns in the wrought iron's regular rectangular holes, purposeful spaces meant to allow water to drain through them, rough enough hopefully not to be too slippery. Later turned into photographic prints by Mallios, they exchange their indexicality—the marks produced by contact—with photography's own, its touch made by light. Occasionally, others climb the stairs. These are sightseers, their brochures, slow steps, and heavy breathing giving them away as interested callers who nevertheless don't belong. They're laboring but at leisure.

If we time our visit to the gallery right, *Signaling Light (Rubbing)* will be on view as we overhear the discussions of lighthouse stairs from another video, *Signaling Light*. A voice—disembodied but recognizably female—reads from a lighthouse logbook, recounting tasks completed long ago, the repetition of them

[illegible]

Stebbins' December Logbook Entry,
1882, 2025, Archival pigment print, 16.5 x 14"



Signaling Light (Rubbing), 2026,
4K digital video, 29:15

echoed in the back-and-forth of Mallios' arms.¹ The upkeep, repair, cleaning, and painting of the stairs prove to be just as vital to the operation of a lighthouse as the light. Like so many occupations that we might presume, in our ignorance, to be merely contemplative, keeping a lighthouse was backbreaking work, often drudgery, without periods of rest long enough to permit sustained introspection.

Logbooks only reveal, though, the “official” work of the lighthouse keeper. Mallios’ installation uncovers, as well, the additional demands placed on the time of female keepers, the children to be raised (and, sadly, sometimes buried), the clothing made and mended, the livestock and gardens tended, the food prepared, the visitors—intentional and accidental—cared for. The women who took on their husbands’ duties when they died somehow managed all of these tasks, straddling what the feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva has called men’s time and women’s time.

Male time, in her account, is “linear time.” Linear time can be measured in logbooks and is that which must be clocked to be prepared for a lighthouse inspector visit at 5:00 am.²

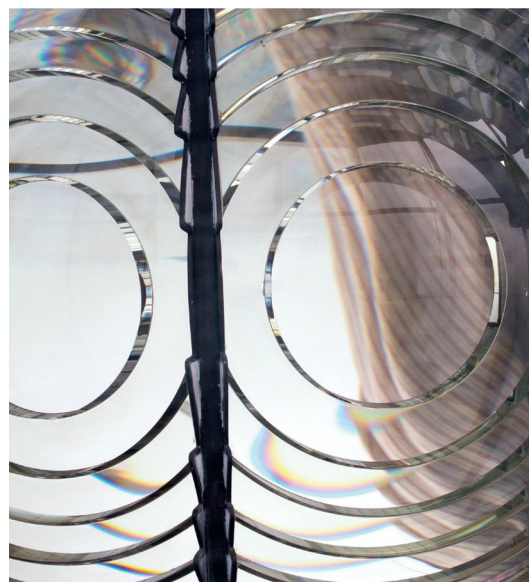
For Kristeva, women's time is outside of linear time because of its cyclical character, its biological repetition:

"On the one hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock, but whose regularity and unison with what is experienced as extrasubjective time, cosmic time, occasion vertiginous visions and unnameable jouissance."

But because of its very nature, Kristeva observed,

*"On the other hand, and perhaps as a consequence, there is the massive presence of a monumental temporality, without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with linear time (which passes) that the very word 'temporality' hardly fits: All-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space..."*³

We might feel a desire to resist what could seem essentializing or an over-generalization of women's experiences, but considering Mallios' practice, I found myself thinking of the possibility of women's time, its cyclicity, and her daily practice of working to document work. The rubbings create volume from absence, and it is important that the videos loop and revisit



From top to bottom: *Signaling Light*, 2026, 4K digital video, 29:15;
Signaling Light (installation view), 2026; *Signaling Light*, 2026, 4K digital video, 29:15
 Cover Panel: *Signaling Light* (installation view), 2026



Signaling Light, 2026, 4K digital video, 29:15



Signaling Light (installation view), 2026

their stories throughout the day while their length tethers us and keeps us intently focused; the arcing screen recreates the parameters of a lighthouse, too, ushering us through the gallery while also offering us safe haven and a place to rest.

Returning to the island where she grew up, says a daughter and granddaughter of lighthouse keepers, is a return to living with rituals and habits. “Maybe I put my feet on the earth,” she claims of that homecoming, “and there’s some grounding.”⁴ Such ways of life are “triggered” by that land surrounded by water. In a recitation from a nineteenth-century logbook, a woman’s voice reads, “August 16, 1872: This was the day on which the comet was to strike the earth and demolish all things terrestrial but failed to come up to appointment.”⁵ The mention of that spectacular non-event is bookended by events that did come to pass, atmospheric conditions and the tempers of winds, the unremarkable marked and the universe funneling down to a single point of light in the middle of the water.

There are moments when the camera pauses and watches, its round lens trained through circular portholes on relentless waves or the night sky, nothing seeming to move but then the gleam of a satellite streaks overhead (no comet, once again). In another passage, the lighthouse’s beam brushes over a dense patch of leaves. It momentarily sweeps across the landscape and then disappears, leaving everything in darkness, only to reappear a few seconds later. The raking light casts the foliage as relief sculpture, and because the beam is so regular, we find ourselves anticipating its return. The rotating light creates form before moving on.

These are strange, paradoxical scenes: moving images that are ever-changing but because of that persistence seem almost to be motionless; they suggest still photography—and still life photography—while profoundly separating themselves from it.

“The still life is time,”

wrote Gilles Deleuze of these static occurrences in film,

*“for everything that changes is in time, but time does not itself change, it could itself change only in another time, indefinitely. At the point where the cinematographic image most directly confronts the photo, it also becomes most radically distinct from it. . . Time is the full, that is, the unalterable form filled by change.”*⁶

In these flashes, time becomes space, and the deep structures of Jessica Mallios’ installation reinforce the metaphoric relationship of lighthouse to photography and echo the lives it documents. Trained on the rituals of the lighthouse, her camera collapses duration by intensifying its intimate attention.

Amanda Gluibizzi, PhD, is an art historian, an art editor at the *Brooklyn Rail*, and the Co-Director of the New Foundation for Art History.

1. Mallios’ project *Signaling Light* builds on and extends the research undertaken by J Candace Clifford and Mary Louise Clifford and their books *Mind the Light*, *Katie: The History of Thirty-three Female Lighthouse Keepers* (Alexandria, VA: Cyprus Communications, 2006) and *Women Who Kept the Lights: An*

Illustrated History of Female Lighthouse Keepers (Williamsburg, VA: Cyprus Communications, 1993).

2. Jessica Mallios, *Signaling Light*, video (2026): 10:27.

3. Julia Kristeva, *Women’s Time*, trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs* 7 no.1 (Autumn 1981): 16.

4. Mallios, *Signaling Light*, 8:39.

5. *Ibid.*, 10:40.

6. Gilles Deleuze *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989): 17.

Jessica Mallios CV

EDUCATION

2005	MFA Photography, The Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
2000	BFA Photography, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
1997	The Minneapolis College of Art and Design Florence Program, L'Accademia Di Belle Arti; Istituto Statale d'Arte, Florence, Italy

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS & SCREENINGS

2024	<i>Porch Swing Orchestra Presents: Jessica Mallios</i> , Co-Lab Projects, Austin, TX, curated by Barry Stone
2019	<i>The Shard</i> , The University of Texas at San Antonio, TX, curated by Chad Dawkins
2015	<i>Local Time</i> , COR&P, The Center for Ongoing Research & Projects, Columbus, OH, curated by Kris Paulsen and Ryland Wharton
2014	<i>Sight lines</i> , Artpace International Artist-In-Residence Program, San Antonio, TX, curated by Rita Gonzalez
2012	<i>For an Experience of Wholeness</i> , The Digital Media Gallery, Lycoming College, Williamsport, PA, curated by Leah Bedrosian Peterson

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS, SCREENINGS, & BOOK RELEASES

2025	<i>Color into Light</i> , Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, curated by Malcolm Daniel
2022	<i>Darmstädter Sezession: Open Studios</i> , Atelier Siegele Artist Residency, Darmstadt, Germany
2017	<i>Same Sky: Jessica Mallios and Adam Schreiber</i> , Ruffin Gallery, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, invited by William Wylie
2016	<i>Swan Cycle: Chapter Two</i> (book release) & <i>Chapter Three</i> (screening), Lakes Were Rivers Collective, Farewell Books, Austin, TX <i>Strange Pilgrims</i> , Lakes Were Rivers Collective, The Contemporary Austin, Austin, TX, curated by Heather Pesanti
2015	<i>Photography Sees the Surface</i> , Higher Pictures Gallery, New York, NY, curated by Aspen Mays <i>The Mobile Archive: The Israeli Center for Digital Art</i> , Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, UK <i>Jessica Mallios: Local Time</i> , Artist Monograph, 10th Annual Printed Matter's NY Art Book Fair at MoMA PS1, New York, NY, curated by Kris Paulsen and Ryland Wharton
2014	<i>SIGHTINGS: Kevin Cooley and Jessica Mallios</i> , Oregon Contemporary, Portland, OR, curated by Rachel Adams <i>Fragments of an Unknowable Whole</i> , Urban Arts Space, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, curated by Tim Smith
2013	<i>Artifact/Souvenir</i> , Lakes Were Rivers Collective, Texas Biennial 2013, Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum, San Antonio, TX <i>Contemporary Photographic Practice and the Archive</i> , Lakes Were Rivers Collective, The Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
2012	<i>Photo Forum 2012</i> , Group Exhibition, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, curated by Yasufumi Nakamori <i>X Y Z – The Geometric Impulse in Abstract Art</i> , Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA, curated by Jessica Halonen and Emily Joyce <i>Dark Matter</i> , Vanderbilt University, Fine Arts Gallery, Nashville, TN

2011	<i>Texas Biennial</i> , Austin, TX, curated by Virginia Rutledge <i>Voxel Vision 1.0 Video Festival</i> , Vox Populi Gallery, Philadelphia, PA, curated by Rachel Cook
2010	<i>Perspectives 108: Anna Krachey, Jessica Mallios, and Adam Schreiber</i> , Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX, curated by Toby Kamps <i>31 Women in Art Photography</i> , Affirmation Arts Foundation, New York, NY, curated by Charlotte Cotton and Jon Feinstein

SELECTED RESIDENCIES

2025	The Arctic Circle: Artist & Scientist Residency Program, Svalbard, Norway
2022	Darmstädter Sezession, Atelier Siegele Artist Residency, Darmstadt, Germany
2020	Ströndin Studio Residency Program, Seydisfjörður, Iceland Skafftfell: Center for Visual Art, Seydisfjörður, Iceland
2014	Artpace International Artist-In-Residence Program, San Antonio, TX

SELECTED PRESS

2026	Drew, Caroline. "A Different Kind of Keeper" The Austin Chronicle, January 29, 2026.
2024	Stone, Barry. "Vast is the Sea: A Conversation with Jessica Mallios" Porch Swing Orchestra Podcast, February 19, 2024. "Top Five: February 1, 2024 (for Vast is the Sea)." Glasstire, February 1, 2024
2021	Gonzalez, Rita. "Sight lines" Artpace at 25, 2021.
2019	Rindfuss, Bryan. "Remixed Election Signs, Towering Views, Reproduction and a 'Deranged' 1972 Happening Explored in Four New Southwest School of Art Exhibitions" San Antonio Current, January 21, 2019.
2015	Panaro, Luca. "Un'Apparizione Di Superfici." 1st ed., APM, 2017. Dawkins, Chad. "Strange Pilgrims" Glasstire, November 8, 2015. Green, Kate. "Strange Pilgrims" Art Forum, September 27, 2015. Aletti, Vince. "Photography Sees the Surface" The New Yorker, August 3, 2015. Knoblauch, Loring. "Photography Sees the Surface at Higher Pictures" Collector Daily, July 21, 2015.
2014	Speer, Richard. "Sightings" Willamette Week, Volume 41/09, December 31, 2014. Burbank, Megan. "So Money, Skylines and Shiny Objects at Disjecta and Nisus Gallery" Portland Mercury, December 31, 2014. Speer, Richard. "Critic's Picks: Portland," art ltd Magazine, November/December 2014. Adams, Rachel. "Review: Jessica Mallios at Artpace San Antonio," Modern Painters, May 5, 2014. Fisch, Sarah. "Artpace's International Artists-In-Residence Geek Out," San Antonio Current, March 26, 2014. Morgan, Jack. "Artpace Will Soon Unveil New Works," Texas Public Radio, March 10, 2014.



Signaling Light, 2026, 4K digital video, 29:15

WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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Photographs by Jessica Mallios and Bobby Scheidemann

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Women & Their Work is a visual and performing arts organization located in Austin that serves as a catalyst for new ideas in contemporary art. Since 1978, Women & Their Work has created significant opportunities for artists and audiences to experience contemporary art through ambitious exhibitions, commissions of new work, performances and programs that inspire audiences of all ages. We have actively developed the careers of more than 2,000 women artists, presenting 351 visual art exhibitions, 170 music, dance and theater events, 31 spoken word and literary performances, 16 film festivals and 959 programs & education workshops with the goal of ensuring that women artists are represented in all forms of art. Women & Their Work helps meet an important need in Texas providing exhibition and performance opportunities and helping to attract critical attention to the work produced here; it is the only organization of its kind in the region and one of the few organizations in the United States that dedicates itself to the work of women artists.

Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *ArtForum*, and on *National Public Radio* and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 2020, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art acquired the archive of Women & Their Work ensuring that our entire history of the work of women artists and our website will be preserved in perpetuity. In 2024, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York acquired all 160 catalogs [digital and physical] produced by Women & Their Work to date. These publications, as well as all future catalogs, will be housed at their Thomas J. Watson Library, one of the largest art research libraries in the world.



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