

Eric Rhein Celebrates Stonewall with Two Kentucky Exhibitions

Hank Trout

From June 19 through July 27, Institute 193 in Lexington will present “Lifelines,” an exhibition of Eric Rhein’s photography and related work. Although Rhein’s roots are in Appalachia (his family is from Kentucky), this is his first exhibit in Kentucky. The exhibit commemorates the Stonewall uprising in 1969, but is also dedicated to the memory of his uncle Elijah (Lige) Clarke, a leading pioneer in the Gay Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, for his courage and inspiration, Rhein said in a release.

This series of photographs was taken over twenty years, roughly the years from 1987 when Rhein was diagnosed with HIV—including his suffering compromised health and near-death experiences—through the mid-1990s and Rhein’s renewed vitality with the introduction of life-saving medications in 1996. Rhein’s photographs in this exhibit explore “the role of intimacy and care as survival tactics” as they record one man’s (Rhein’s) response to the global crisis from its early days.

The exhibit also features Rhein’s work in video, wire drawing, and watercolors, expressing, Rhein says, his understanding of the world around him through spiritual and mystic readings of lineage, family, and healing.

A companion exhibit at 21C Museum Lexington-MGallery, opening June 19 and running through August, will also feature Rhein’s photography and other works.

Rhein received his BFA and MFA at the School of Visual Arts. He has exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum of the City of New York, the Leslie-Lohman Museum, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and American Embassies in Austria, Cameroon, Greece, and Malta. He is included in the Smithsonian Archives of American Art’s “Visual Arts & the AIDS Epidemic Oral History Project.”



Lifeline (self-portrait with Ken Davis), 1996, Silver gelatin print, 16 by 20 inches

The opening reception at Institute 193 will be held on June 28, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

For more information, contact Paul Brown at Paul@institute193.org, telephone 270-925-2311; Institute 193 is located at 193 N. Limestone Street, Lexington, Kentucky 40507. 21c Museum Hotel Lexington—MGallery is at 167 West Main Street, Lexington Kentucky 40507.

—*Reporting by Hank Trout*

Hank Trout, Senior Editor, edited Drummer, Malebox, and Folsom magazines in the early 1980s. A long-term survivor of HIV/AIDS (diagnosed in 1989), he is a forty-year resident of San Francisco, where he lives with his fiancé Rick. Follow him on Twitter [@HankTroutWriter](#).