



NEW RELEASE

Sara Macel What Did the Deep Sea Say

Text by Sara Macel
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Macel's work considers the role of photography to connect us with our past and affirm universal truths about love.

We have many archives and untold stories to uncover. Macel is at the forefront of a growing community of young photographers and historians excavating these photographic histories and allowing us to understand ourselves and the medium's cultural implications in new ways. She asks the waters to rush forth.

– Ashlyn Davis Burns, Assembly

When Sara Macel discovered a suitcase full of photographs belonging to her deceased grandmother, she unearthed an unknown chapter in her family history that led to Hollywood, Florida. In this seaside town that appears lost in time, Macel retraces her grandmother's footsteps while also photographing the landscape, her mother, and herself. By interspersing medium-format color photographs with her grandmother's black-and-white images from the 1940s and her mother's color snapshots from the 1970s, a visual conversation emerges. *What Did the Deep Sea Say* explores the private lives of women dealing with their own unique circumstances at different points in time while swimming in the same waters.

Introduction by **Sara Macel**:

For years, I have had the same dream: My family and I are all swimming in the ocean. They laugh in the waves and float on their backs, blissfully unaware of the deep dark shadows that circle us below. I am the only one who sees the sharks. But instead of alerting them to the danger, I dive down to get a closer look. And that's when I wake up.

In 2014, I discovered a suitcase full of photographs and negatives that belonged to my deceased grandmother Carolyn. The same handsome shirtless man appears in many of her photos. I only knew him when he was much older but instantly recognized him

as our family priest. Upon closer investigation, and after questioning my mother about the suitcase's contents, I came to find out that before she became a wife and mother of six, Carolyn had a whole life in Hollywood, Florida that she never talked about.

The place was called "Dream City" when founded a hundred years ago, but it never quite lived up to its name. Curious to know more, I spent the next four years researching Hollywood and traveling there to revisit scenes from Carolyn's life.

My grandmother and I weren't close. The strained relationship between her and my mother meant that we were kept apart for most of my life. She died twenty-six years ago when I was too young to know the questions I now wish I could ask. Everyone who knows what happened on that beach in 1944 is gone.

I'll never know the whole story. This is just part of it. The rest is for her to keep. Her and the sea.

Sara Macel (b. 1981 Houston, TX) is a visual artist based in Queens, NY. She received her BFA in Photography + Imaging from NYU (2003) and her MFA in Photography, Video & Related Media from the School of Visual Arts (2011). Her photographic work is narratively-based and often deals with themes of the archive, family, memory, place and time. She is currently the Photography Program Coordinator and Faculty Instructor at the State University of New York's Rockland Community College. Macel's work has been internationally exhibited and is in various collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Center for Photography at Woodstock. Her first monograph, *May the Road Rise to Meet You*, was named one of PDN's best photo books of the year. *What Did the Deep Sea Say* received an Editor's Choice award at CENTER Santa Fe. www.saramacel.com

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