

**Martin Beck**

*Last Night*

September 8–October 1, 2022

Thursday–Saturday

9 AM–10:30 PM

Artist Martin Beck presents *Last Night*, a film work based on the songs played by musical host David Mancuso on June 2nd, 1984, at one of the last parties at the 99 Prince Street location of the seminal New York dance party, The Loft. The film extends the artist's interest in activating ephemeral collective space, how communal forms are shaped, and the interplay between structure and affect.

Beginning on Valentine's Day 1970, Mancuso regularly hosted dance parties at his home first at 647 Broadway and, from the mid-'70s on, at 99 Prince Street. What came to be known as The Loft parties were unique in their combination of communal atmosphere and high-quality sound, centered around music and dancing. The Loft became a legendary blueprint that many celebrated disco-era New York clubs attempted to replicate. The Loft parties, however, retained their intimacy by being invitation-only with no commercial agenda. As musical host, Mancuso did not mix or blend records. He played each song in full, regardless of its duration, out of respect for the integrity of the music.

Accordingly, *Last Night* shows the records being played in full and in sequence on a vintage turntable in a domestic atmosphere. Using ten different camera angles, the closely framed views of the records alternate from song to song, providing a concise and surprising progression of perspectives. The complete sequence of 119 songs amounts to roughly thirteen-and-a-half hours, offering an intimate sonic journey of lush music and images reflecting a singular night at a particular moment in time.

Summer 1984 marked a turning point in the history of New York City dance culture. The escalating AIDS crisis dramatically impacted the downtown party scene. Real estate development substantially changed New York's SoHo neighborhood and, consequently, pushed Mancuso and The Loft out of its Prince Street home, beginning a period of transition for the party. Beck's film installation provides the circumstances for closeness with this ephemeral night while simultaneously implying historical distance from the actual event. The tight conceptual structure, thoroughly researched historical reference, and expressive potential

of *Last Night* are emblematic of Beck's more extensive practice.

At 47 Canal, the film work is projected in a comfortable, intimate setting with an exquisite sound system, including a pair of Klipschorn speakers and powered by a Mark Levinson amplifier similar to the ones used at The Loft. 47 Canal will show the entire film Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and extend the gallery opening hours to accommodate the full runtime, beginning at 9 AM running until 10:30 PM.

## **Program**

Tuesday, September 13, 7 PM

A conversation with renowned sound engineer Alex Rosner, introduced by Martin Beck.

From the late 1960s onward, Alex Rosner played a seminal role in developing sound systems for New York City's clubs and discotheques. An early friend and interlocutor of David Mancuso, Rosner advised and helped him to perfect the famed Loft sound system that, for decades, was considered a gold standard. Rosner also worked with DJ legends Francis Grasso and Nicky Siano, and he was involved in the creation of the initial design for the Bozak CMA-10-2DL, the 1960s prototype of today's DJ mixer.

The conversation will focus on the early days of The Loft and Rosner's friendship with Mancuso.

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**Martin Beck** (b. 1963) lives and works in New York City. Beck's work has been presented widely in the United States and Europe. Solo exhibitions include "dans un second temps," Frac Lorraine, Metz, France (2018); "rumors and murmurs," Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Vienna, Austria (2017); and "Program," Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University, Cambridge (2014–16). His work was also presented in Front International, Cleveland (2022), the Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale on Hudson (2016 and 2017), the 10th Shanghai Biennale (2014), and the 29th São Paulo Bienal (with Julie Ault) (2010). Beck's publications include *About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe* (Four Corners, 2007); *The Aspen Complex* (2012); *the particular way in which a thing exists* (2015); *An Organized Systems of Instructions* (2017), *rumors and murmurs* (2017); and *Last Night* (2013 and 2019). Together with Julie Ault and Scott Cameron Weaver, he curated "Down the Rabbit Hole: JB in JT," O-Townhouse (2020). Beck was also part of the curatorial team for the exhibitions and publications *Macho Man: Tell It To My Heart* (Kunstmuseum Basel, Culturgest Lisbon, and Artists Space, New York, all 2013; publications 2013 and 2015).