

STANYA KAHN

“Don't Go Back To Sleep”

*“People are going back and forth
across the doorsill where the two worlds touch.
The door is round and open
Don't go back to sleep!”*
—Rumi

“When you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected in turn, and in a slightly different way than you might have been the moment before. You have made a transition, however slight. You have stepped over a threshold.”

—Brian Massumi, *Navigating Movements*

“Don't Go Back to Sleep” is an experimental narrative, feature-length video by Stanya Kahn. Kahn created, directed, shot, and edited the 75-minute piece. Her sound design forms a core of the film's infrastructure and includes original compositions by Kahn and musician Keith Wood (of Hush Arbors and Thurston Moore's band Chelsea Light Moving). Further extending a video practice that allows fluid boundaries between the real and the fictive, between narrative and abstraction, Kahn directs an ensemble cast of mostly non-actors to perform in scripted and improvised scenarios in which their subjectivity and agency become central to the film's construction. Shooting almost entirely in Kansas City, Kahn builds darkly comedic and uncanny scenes revolving around groups of medical professionals stationed in newly built, vacant homes as they prepare for impending emergencies. Time alternately slows and speeds as the characters are suspended in the in-between of waiting, their affective potential activated by constant uncertainty and disasters already underway.

