

KEVIN KELLY



January 31 – March 15, 2025
Opening Friday January 31, 6–8pm

Kevin Kelly presents *Caute*, an evocative new film employing speculative optics to journey the radical life and philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). Through meticulous research and experimental film techniques, Kelly captures the intimacies of Spinoza's world, formed by his exile by the Amsterdam Sephardic Jewish community at the age of 23 and his life as a lens grinder for microscopes and telescopes — a chosen profession that informed his philosophical ideas.

In *Caute*, Kelly's exploration focuses on micro-details from his biography along with the sensorial. Through an interview with the caretaker of his former places of residence and recreating 17th-century optical perspectives by filming scenes Spinoza is known to have looked upon through his singlet lens. He brings viewers into Spinoza's intellectual landscape and physical surroundings as Spinoza wrestled with radical ideas that linked God and nature, explored the dynamics of emotion, and championed intellectual autonomy in the face of religious dogma and state ideology.

Through poetic visual fragments, the film reflects his pursuit of truth amid religious and social isolation and the tolerant community who supported him. The exhibition title, *Caute*—Spinoza's motto meaning "be cautious"—is a tribute to his steadfast quest. Spinoza's signet ring bore this message, marking letters he sent into the world.

Credits:

Caretaker: Marie-Therese Daniels-Dirven
Mother: Maria Camarena
Baby: Sofia Sinaguglia

Camera/Writing/Color Grade: Kevin Kelly
Editor: Karlis Bergs
Composer: Coleman Zurkowski
Sound Design: Andrew Siedenburg
Compositor: Raza Kazmi
Text Design: Lucas Reif

Special Thanks: Philipp Farra, Adam Golfer, Mike Crane, Lucy Kerr, Will Wiebe, Che Gossett, Kevin Hernandez Rosa, Greicy Mella, Steven Nadler, Volunteers at Het Spinozahuis, Zeiss Museum of Optics

Made with support from 80WSE Gallery

Organized by Howie Chen
Produced by Jon Huron

80WSE Gallery

Founded in 1974, 80 Washington Square East (80WSE), NYU is a not-for-profit gallery presenting contemporary and historical exhibitions. The gallery exhibits in two further locations, at Broadway Windows at Broadway and East 10th Street, and Washington Square Windows.

Curator, Howie Chen and Gallery Manager, Jon Huron.

For more information, please contact Jon Huron at jlh403@nyu.edu