

35 Days



Strangers answer the call to locate a lost pet.

Film by Heidi Kumao

35 Days

A Film by Heidi Kumao

6:49 minutes / Digital file / 16x9 / color / stereo / USA / 2025 / English

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<https://heidikumao.net/portfolio-items/35-days/?fb-edit=1>

Logline: Strangers answer the call to locate a lost pet.

Synopsis:

“35 Days” is an experimental, stop motion animation about what happens when a coalition of strangers answers the call to locate a missing cat during the pandemic lockdown of 2020. Voicemail messages from neighbors reveal the empathy and core connection we have for, and with, our pets and each other, demonstrating how a virtual community can transcend the isolation of the pandemic.

The audio narrative is pieced together like clues to a crime using anonymous voicemail messages left by neighbors in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was animated frame-by-frame using hand-made elements: fabric and paper cutouts, thread, embroidery floss, and wool.

Credits

Directed, edited, animated and produced by:

Heidi Kumao

Music

Frank Pahl from "Music for Architecture"

Sound design, edit and mix:

Heidi Kumao

Animation assistant:

Sophie Hullinger

Graphics assistant:

Valerie Matula

With support from:

The University of Michigan Office of the Vice President Research and the Arts Initiative

The Puffin Foundation

Vashon Island Artist's Residency (Washington)

Ragdale Residency (Illinois)

About the filmmaker

Heidi Kumao is an award-winning media artist who creates animations, fabric works, video installations, and kinetic sculpture. She has exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally in the USA, Brazil, Argentina, Singapore, Korea, Australia, China, Spain, and Canada including: Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona), ArtScience Museum (Singapore), San Jose Museum of Art (California), Museo de Arte Moderno (Buenos Aires), Museu da Imagem e do Som (MIS) (São Paulo). She has received grants/fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Creative Capital, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, *Art Papers*, *Sculpture Magazine*, and *After Image*. Her sculptural and photographic work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Arizona State University Art Museum, and Light Work. She is a professor at the University of Michigan Stamps School of Art & Design.

Her film, "Swallowed Whole," about breaking her back, screened in over 25 film international film festivals and was awarded "Best Experimental Film" at the Seoul International Extremely Short Film Festival, and Humboldt International Film Festival. The publication, "Heidi Kumao: Real and Imagined" (2022), documents her solo exhibition of narrative fabric works and animations and received a Gold Award from the Midwest Book Awards.

Director's Statement

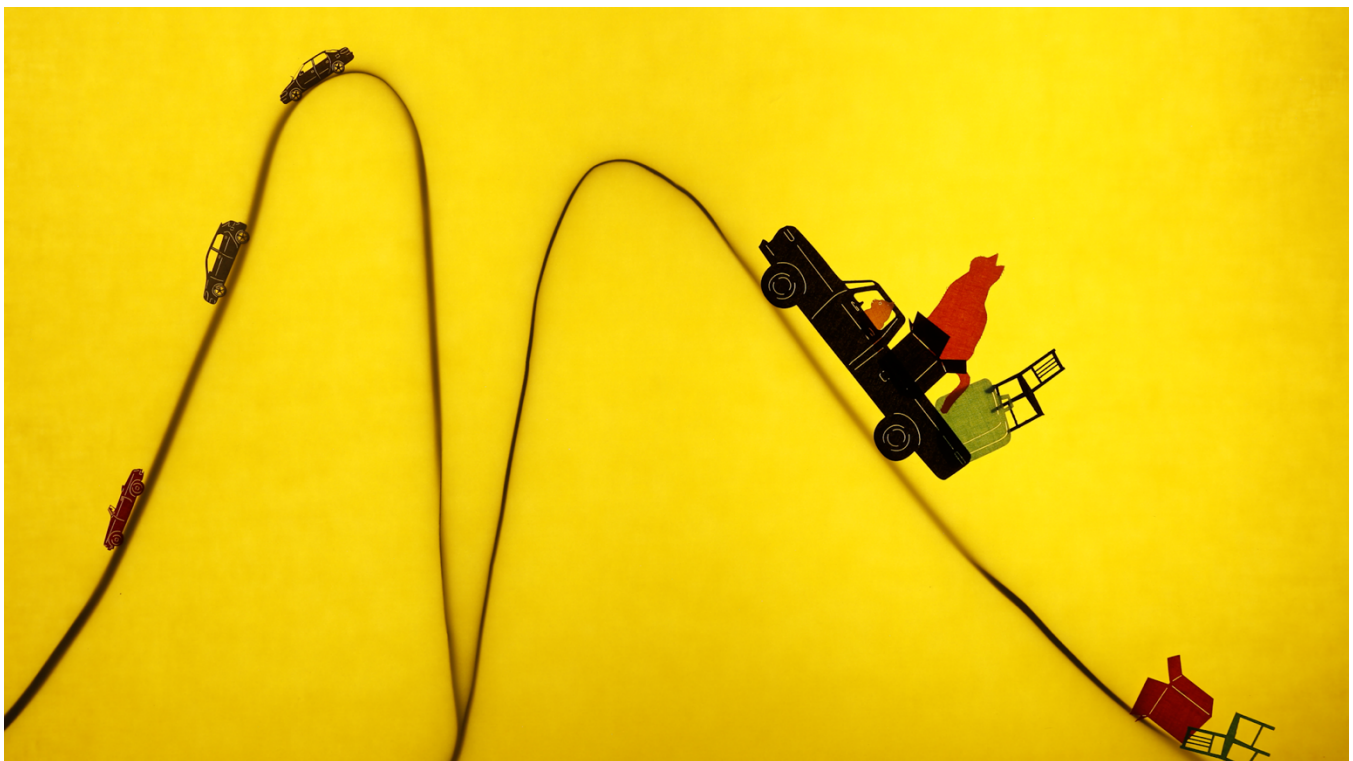
True story: my cat went missing during the pandemic lockdown of 2020. After having experienced several traumas in my personal life (my parents' deaths, divorce) during the isolation of COVID, losing my cat was the last straw. I launched a major search for him, distributing flyers, knocking on doors, and following every lead. I received dozens of calls from concerned neighbors and strangers who claimed to have seen my orange tabby. This is their story (and mine)—pieced together like clues to a crime.

More information: <http://www.heidikumao.net>

Heidi Kumao

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USA





I learn where all
the orange cats live.





