

Listening to the Flashes of Summer

For many on the Outer Cape, summer arrives with the first fireflies. Their brief flashes are as familiar as peepers at dusk or the sound of waves after dark. In *Lit From Within*, a one-night-only audiovisual presentation at Farm Projects (355 Main St., Wellfleet), artist Gin Stone asks what those flashes might reveal if we learned to look — and listen — differently.



Gin Stone's audiovisual piece *Lit From Within* is based on thousands of flashes from five species of fireflies. (Photo courtesy Farm Projects)

On a June evening during the new moon, Stone stood in a Harwich field and recorded nearly 2,500 flashes from five species of fireflies. Custom software identified each insect by its distinctive blinking pattern and translated every flash into a particular sound. The rhythms belong entirely to the fireflies; Stone's role is simply to make them perceptible.

In the piece, the sounds accompany flashes that are projected against a deep blue field as the fireflies dissolve into softly pulsing forms that resemble drifting jellyfish. The effect is quietly disorienting, suggesting that distant corners of the natural world, separated by millions of years of evolution, sometimes arrive at remarkably similar solutions. The technology ultimately recedes, leaving viewers less impressed by the software than newly attentive to the world outside the gallery.

While Stone's multidisciplinary practice often incorporates sculpture, drawing, and other fabricated forms, *Lit From Within* shifts her role from maker to listener. Rather than inventing a visual language, she uncovers one already present in the landscape, building a framework that allows fireflies to become collaborators rather than subjects.

Lit From Within is part of *Field Notes: A Requiem*, Stone's ongoing series translating scientific and environmental data into works of art. A requiem is traditionally composed after a loss; Stone's project begins earlier, documenting living systems while they still endure. At a time when firefly populations are declining across much of North America, the installation preserves not only the insects themselves but also a familiar experience of summer on the Outer Cape.

The piece is on view on a continuous loop at Farm Projects on Sunday, Aug. 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. See farmprojectspace.org. —[C. Sean Horton](#)