



# Chimera Project

“Riis Beach, September 1, 2012, 1:06:32 AM”

“I’m a landlocked lad, struggling to grow a fin and swim into the great big uncertain sea,” model Jax Jackson said of shoreless artist Tobaron Waxman’s *Chimera Project* 2004 -.

“Riis Beach...” was made in 2012 with Jackson and collaborators Nogga Schwartz, Tinker Coalescing, Kerry Downey, Tobi Halberstroh, Shawn Tristan, and Zachary Wager Scholl, with costumes by Aimee Finlay. The initial photos in the series were of an “underwater cruising park,” he created to evoke “the surreal experience of being gay but not yet fitting into the gay landscape.” Like much of Waxman’s work, “Riis Beach...” explores the liminal nature of gender identities, in this case calling on the Mermen as sirens of another world, one of possibility, or its opposite.

This summer, between New York, Toronto, and Chicago, there were four trans suicides in Waxman’s

extended circle. “They were all coming from different milieu, but each one of these deaths affected a lot of people.” In response, he chose to do another *Chimera* shoot at Riis Beach, a popular queer cruising ground and summer destination, “on the blue moon to get the full effect of the night photography and try to archive otherworldliness on land, at the shore, instead of underwater.”

For the boys on the shore, those who are out to sea, and those who don’t come back, the *Chimera Project* is a fantasy and an elegy in one, timeless shot. - JA

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