

SOLIDARITY OFFERINGS: THREE CURATORIAL APPROACHES TO ECO-CRITICAL ART



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Daniela Lieja Quintanar
Andrew McNeely
Anna Milone

This publication is a collaboration between Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) and France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX).



unraveling collective forms

Exhibition Dates: April 3 to May 25, 2019

With Tanya Aguiñiga, Holland Andrews, Julia Bogany, Carolina Caycedo, Tania Candiani, Patrisse Cullors, Demian DinéYazhi', East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, Mercedes Dorame, Jorge González and Mónica Rodríguez, Harry Gamboa Jr., Jeannette Ehlers, Arshia Fatima Haq, Sky Hopinka, Israel Martínez, Sayak Valencia, Cecilia Vicuña, and Kim Zumpfe

Curated by Daniela Lieja Quintanar, LACE curator

A NonHuman Horizon

Exhibition Dates: June 29 to September 1, 2019

With Andrea Chung, Eddie Aparicio, Jenny Yurshansky, and The Harrison Studio.

Curated by Andrew McNeely

Exhibition Design: Kim Zumpfe

Paroxysm of Sublime

Exhibition in partnership with France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX)

Exhibition Dates: September 18 to November 3, 2019

With Eddie Aparicio, Carmen Argote, Beatriz Cortez, Sara Favriau, Etienne de France, David Horvitz, iris yirei hu, Candice Lin, Laura Huertas Millán, Eva Nielsen, Nine Herbs Charm (Eric Kim, Hannah Mjølshnes, Saewon Oh), Hubert Robert, SMITH x DIPLOMATES, and Daniel Otero Torres

Curated by Anna Milone, FLAX Program Director and Curator and Ana Iwataki, FLAX Associate Curator.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2019, three successive exhibitions presented at LOS ANGELES CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS (LACE) gravitated towards similar themes and considerations: new conceptions of nature and culture, resistance and oppression, finding new paradigms for our current ecological, sociological and political situation. At the invitation of FRANCE LOS ANGELES EXCHANGE (FLAX), partner of the last exhibition, the curators explore the parallels and divergences in their approaches.

LACE Curator **DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR** organized UNRAVELING COLLECTIVE FORMS, (April 3 to May 25, 2019), which presented artworks and collaborations by TANYA AGUIÑIGA, HOLLAND ANDREWS, JULIA BOGANY, CAROLINA CAYCEDO, TANIA CANDIANI, PATRISSE CULLORS, DEMIAN DINÉYAZHI', EAST YARD COMMUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, MERCEDES DORAME, KIM ZUMPF, HARRY GAMBOA JR., JEANNETTE EHLERS, ARSHIA FATIMA HAQ, SKY HOPINKA, ISRAEL MARTÍNEZ, SAYAK VALENCIA, CECILIA VICUÑA, and JORGE GONZÁLEZ and MÓNICA RODRÍGUEZ.

ANDREW MCNEELY curated A NON-HUMAN HORIZON (June 29 to September 1, 2019), which features works ANDREA CHUNG, EDDIE APARICIO, JENNY YURSHANSKY, and THE HARRISON STUDIO.

FLAX'S Program Director and Curator, **ANNA MILONE**, and **ANA IWATAKI**, FLAX'S Associate Curator co-curated PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME (September 18 to November 3, 2019) with EDDIE APARICIO, CARMEN ARGOTE, BEATRIZ CORTEZ, SARA FAVRIAU, ETIENNE DE FRANCE, DAVID HORVITZ, IRIS YIREI HU, CANDICE LIN, LAURA HUERTAS MILLÁN, EVA NIELSEN, NINE HERBS CHARM (ERIC KIM, HANNAH MJØLSNES, SAEWON OH), HUBERT ROBERT, SMITH X DIPLOMATES, and DANIEL OTERO TORRES.

ANNA MILONE

Perhaps we should begin with our individual approaches to these shared topics. I have a tendency towards chronology so I like to start with research. How did these exhibitions come to be, and how did our respective research lead us to our different approaches?

ANDREW MCNEELY

So the project that I did at LACE grew out of another project that I had proposed to the gallery a year prior. That earlier show was narrowly focused on artists of color engaging with environmental politics in order to draw attention to present-day iniquities along racial lines. Even though LACE expressed an interest in it, they weren't able to fit me into their schedule at the time. But, not too long after, LACE approached me about tailoring my idea towards their SUMMER STOREFRONT SERIES, which aims to highlight a historically important California artist. It was at that point that I began to think about what links environmentalist concerns in the present with conservation-minded artistic production in the past beyond a focus on the natural world.

Shifting gears, I became less interested in the political interests of artists, whose work I was exploring at the time, and more attentive to how they reflect upon markers of race and elaborate them through natural imagery. The experience of being a person marked by race and its description through natural imagery, therefore, became the throughline that framed my curatorial focus. And this central concern ultimately led me to a deeper meditation on the shaky assumptions

around empathic reasoning that I think connects artistic production around identity politics and environmental advocacy.

What I mean by that is that I think that activism in the arts when it comes to environmentalism takes one of three or four shapes. Such work either tries to conjure sympathy towards environmental destruction or resort to survivalist reasoning or scare tactics to compel people towards action. Other times, artists will indulge in far-reaching philosophical ruminations on the relationship of Humanity to Nature. I very much wanted to move away from this impulse. I began to start back at zero by thinking about empathy and personification, specifically the way in which people try to morally reason with others by appealing towards a belief that our inner worlds are comparable. This puts environmentalist advocacy in conversation with histories of dehumanization at the center of legacies of racist ideologies. This is the connection that I wanted to dig into deeper with the show.

ANNA MILONE

Your take on empathy and how you describe its relationship to ecology, in trying to move away from activist environmentalism, is definitely something we talked a lot about during our own research. We also focused on an affective element in our relationship with our environment in a broader sense. A starting point was the concept of SOLASTALGIA, which was developed by an Australian philosopher and psychologist called GLEN ALBRECHT.

SOLASTALGIA is a syndrome that stems from the feeling of grief or loss of your own home. You haven't gone anywhere but you don't feel at home anymore because your environment has been changing so quickly. The reasons for this change are always external like gentrification or climate change, for example. This psychosomatic relationship with nature and environment was an interesting entry point for the show, even though we also found this concept problematic in certain ways. To talk about SOLASTALGIA, we were still using the concepts that have been coined during the last centuries in philosophy and anthropology such as environment, home, nature and culture. In most cases these concepts were coined as humanistic but also anthropocentric. Everything is conceptualized from the human point of view, with Mankind at the center of everything. As Andrew decided to go back to the concept of empathy to talk about environmentalist activism, we decided to try to think about these concepts critically through different points of view, with artists from France who reference and question the heritage of the Enlightenment and French philosophy. It was also important for us to put these artists in conversation with artists from LA and other places like Colombia with their different approaches and references.

The idea of SOLASTALGIA and the emotional take on our relationship with our surroundings also echoes with another book our exhibition originated from—**JARED FARMER's TREES IN PARADISE: THE BOTANICAL CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA**. Farmer documents colonization through nature, trees and plants, which is a particularly insidious one as it looks “natural.” He wrote the history of colonization of the land, obviously happening at the same time of the human colonization of the territory of California. What I learned in that book is that one of the first reasons to bring new species of plants was for affective reasons, to recreate a familiar environment. We started to question what it means to colonize a space with plants to recreate a familiar environment to actually feel at home while transforming the ecosystem. He also describes a movement happening at the same time called “imparadise Los Angeles” in which they tried to turn Los Angeles into a garden of Eden according to a very specific model coming from the East Coast or Europe with big green lush lawns, big trees, the opposite of the Californian ecosystem. It required a lot of water, which was always a scarce resource in the area. Everything happening in Los Angeles today trickled down from that transformation.

It is important to mention that for every exhibition and project that I curated here in Los Angeles with **FLAX**, I acknowledge my outsider's point of view. I'm French and all the years I spent working here focus on the difference between the representation that we have of Los Angeles from outside and the reality of it. Living here, you realize that the question of nature, of the trees, of everything around the natural world in Los Angeles is very specific to the landscape of the city. It defines its cityscape and somehow its identity, but it is not something that appears in the various representations of Los Angeles that are broadly shared with the world as part of the cultural hegemony of the United States.

In terms of research, I wanted to add that on top of that psychosomatic thinking of feeling grief and references to a history of philosophy; we were also very influenced by many texts in anthropology, with thinkers like **PHILIPPE DESCOLA** who explored that notion of nature and environment in many different parts of the world, working with different cultures and different countries. It really helped us shift away from this anthropocentric point of view around these concepts. Another very influential book was **ANNA TSING's "THE MUSHROOM AT THE END OF THE WORLD."**

ANA IWATAKI

I think TSING became particularly important when we were trying to exit out of some of the binary conditions that were set up by the weight of western philosophy: the stark contrast between nature and culture, native and foreign, pre- and post-apocalypse. Her work and thinking about how to live in ruins—to recognize the ruins that we are already in—in order to build from there also became an important touchstone. DONNA HARAWAY similarly spoke to those kinds of concerns.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Going back to the research phase, to connect with what you were saying about being anthropocentric, my research and my practice have always been driven by an interest in looking into collective practices and social movements. I have been influenced by the history of contemporary art in Mexico, specifically the decades of late 1960's and 1970's with the generation of LOS GRUPOS. These artists, who were critically responding to the political context of their time, created work collectively out in the streets.

The other side of my practice has been to always try and distance myself from western theory because that's what you learn in Mexico and here too. You learn all about French philosophers, which is also why Beatriz's talk during PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME was so interesting. I've been trying to take some distance from these theories and look into reading more non-western texts. In my curatorial statement for the exhibition, I talk about having the gaze towards indigenous knowledge, those are the other texts. I like the idea of a lighthouse that points out and gives directions in different ways. Those two things—collectivity and looking into other ways of thinking—were very important for this show and it also forms what I've been trying to practice as a curator, but that is not always a success. I feel like western theories are the shadows behind me. These European and American traditions are inevitable references because I learned through those lenses, but I consider that such learning experiences are affected by interpretations and translation.

For UNRAVELLING COLLECTIVE FORMS I was trying to find theories or some knowledge that helped me to address social movements but also from here from this land, from LA—being here and feeling like being in a place with many wars and many contexts all around and me feeling being part of that—being an outsider but also now feeling like a part of this community. I found in CECILIA VICUÑA's words an answer for me to build this exhibition, because she works with poetry, and her context is integrated with indigenous knowledge and their



UNRAVELLING COLLECTIVE FORMS, installation view. CECILIA VICUÑA, ORIENTATION TO VARIOUS MEANINGS, from CHANCCANI QUIPU, 2012. Pamphlet and full-color drawing.

cosmologies. Thinking about the anthropocentric idea, she creates in a direction opposite to the western orientation. The body is connected with nature; nature is connected with the cosmos. I was very interested in this because she's a contemporary artist working with materials that are connected with earth, but she also is looking into ancestral knowledge and clashes with the western world—thus the idea of QUIPU that she has been using in her practice for a long time, which is this secret language that we don't know and that we can't read anymore. But this language was tactile and visual. Language is not just letters, like this western idea of a structure. Language could be like knots. It could be colors. They can be read by feeling the fibers. CECILIA says: "Quipu is a poem in space, a way to remember involving the body and the cosmos at once." I tried to assemble an exhibition that can be read through the body too, even in the form of curating.

Of course it is very ambitious but that practice of experimenting with different forms helps a lot. Then connected with this land, artist MERCEDES DORAME's work is a good example of what you were saying about how all the nature in California has been transformed into a new environment. The series that MERCEDES presented in the show, are photographic explorations with ceremonial interventions in the landscape, in an area owned by the side of her family that are non-natives. At the same time, it is the land that was stolen and that in the past belonged to her Tongva people.

She also works as a cultural resource consultant for TONGVA people. So, every time they find human remains, artefacts, or objects, she is in charge of taking care of these memory treasures. And, because the Tongva people are not recognized by the federal government, other Native American groups need to reclaim these artifacts in order to pass them onto the Tongva community. Even if she has access to little knowledge of her ancestors, since they face ongoing erasure, in her practice, she reimagines and preserves their ceremonies. And with her installation at LACE, which connects the universe, land, and salt, she shows all the complex layers that are affected by the colonial project.

I feel like land and colonialism are present in these shows. The relationship to the environment is present in other works too, but how the land connects with the cosmos and the human body is part of what we are all thinking in different ways and directions.

ANNA MILONE

I understood that the poem you read was your curatorial narrative, and I think that we had a similar approach of finding a way through our curatorial practice



UNRAVELING COLLECTIVE FORMS, installation view. MERCEDES DORAME, THE WIND IS SPEAKING - AHIKEN SHISHIINAMOK, 2019. Cast concrete cogged stones, ochre, cinnamon, salt, quartz, stone, shell, yarn, and fountain grass, Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Christopher Wormald.

to bring together different timelines and different layers of spaces and contexts. I do think of PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME as an introduction show, bringing together many threads. We could have followed only one but we decided to have a broad approach, knowing that it was too broad, as well as non-exhaustive. We tried to follow this non-linear narrative through various timelines and spaces.

ANA IWATAKI

I think that the other real affinity is our shared interest in alternative ways of holding and communicating knowledge, other than just through text and other western methods. That's what we were looking to do with the archives that were part of the show. IRIS YIREI HU's work was a really lovely example of that. She presented an embroidery that records her mother's answers to the question: "What would we need to bring with us if the sun devoured the moon?" She answered with different plants and seeds that would allow humans to survive organized according to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine. TINCTURES made by CANDICE LIN that she considers ways of holding knowledge were also available for consumption. BEATRIZ CORTEZ also brought lava rocks as part of the archives of the exhibition.

And then the archive itself was conceived and built by IRIS and ANDREW FREIRE, LACE's Exhibitions and Operations Manager, using recycled materials from past exhibitions. This was also a way to hold infrastructural knowledge and the memory of the space, as well as call attention to the actual material conditions of making an exhibition.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

And you two – ANA and ANNA – being in the exhibition space and giving weekly walkthroughs to the public, can be linked to oral history. It was very important.

ANDREW MCNEELY

ANNA, you had been talking about experiences that people had had in which their environment no longer felt familiar. What was the name of that condition?

ANNA MILONE

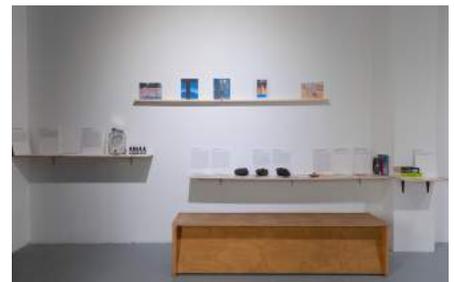
SOLASTALGIA.

ANDREW MCNEELY

I am glad you brought that up, because it calls to mind what I was trying to describe a few minutes ago. So recently there has been a push among



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME, installation view. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. IRIS YIREI HU & MELODY HSIEH (MOTHER), SEED DIAGRAM (FROM SURVIVAL GUIDE: WHEN THE SUN DEVOURS THE MOON), 2018. Ink, natural dyed hemp (indigo, tumeric, hibiscus, elderberry, and lemon juice), pins, cotton and ramie floss on linen. 38 x 46 in. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME, installation view. IRIS YIREI HU & ANDREW FREIRE, Archive display, 2019

With tinctures by CANDICE LIN and various texts, documents, and other objects for holding knowledge offered by the artists, building materials from previous LACE exhibitions, Dimensions variable. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

environmentalists to create rituals or ceremonies in which people mourn things like glacial loss or deforestation. Again, performative mourning is part of what I see as a deeply ingrained idea that if people can empathize with nature, then they can be persuaded towards action. What I find intriguing with this sort of activism is the way in which loss and its implied opposite—possession—already define the terms of people’s relationship with the environment that surrounds them.

If I turn back to the question we began with, which was: What influences led us to pursue the ideas in our shows, then I’d have to list LAURET E. SAVOY’s TRACE: MEMORY, HISTORY, RACE, AND THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE. SAVOY’s book, which is a reflection on race and the American landscape, captures for me the profound alienation that I think many people of color feel towards this country’s great outdoors. Therefore, I wonder what does performative mourning or environmental personification do for those whose relationship to the land is predicated on this alienation?

ANNA MILONE

This is definitely an aspect of the concept of SOLASTALGIA that we found problematic as well. To elaborate on this idea of alienation, we acknowledged a certain history of ideas also by bringing an 18th century French painting into the show, which is a very dated and romantic representation of nature re-taking antique ruins. This painting by HUBERT ROBERT is a witness or a representation of that history of ideas of the Enlightenment, of French philosophers that, as you said DANIELA, “is taught everywhere.” This painter was really close to ROUSSEAU and DIDEROT and other philosophers who really coined that dichotomy in concepts of nature and culture which defined this very alienating and dangerous representation of nature as eternal but also as an endless source of resources to be used by mankind. We had extensive talks with the artists in the show about bringing this painting into the show.

For us, it was really about what we learned and how we can move forward. We had long talks, especially with EDDIE APARICIO, who also makes a reference to the history of a similar time frame in the work we presented in the show but from a different angle. He built a version of a WARDIAN CASE, a device invented to transport plants from the Americas to Europe without them dying during the long months on a boat, bringing back exotic species of the newly colonized lands. During our conversations about the painting, he made the point of emphasizing his desire to move away from this heritage instead of acknowledging it. Our conclusion to this argument was that he is an artist and he wants to use the space for non-dominant thinking. I am, on the other hand, an art historian that always wants to keep a relationship to history. This is the



HUBERT ROBERT CLASSICAL RUINS WITH SOLDIERS GAMBLING, circa 1790. 71x51 1/2 in. Private Collection.



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME, Installation view. (Left to right) HUBERT ROBERT, EDDIE APARICIO, ETIENNE DE FRANCE. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

case even though I open a space to look critically at it. I don't deny it. I am an art historian and a curator.

As curators, we used that painting as part of the narrative of the show, as a counterpoint, as another layer. The show was not built around that piece acting as a lighthouse that would enlighten everyone else, but we made the conscious choice of not hiding these historical references under the rug, to acknowledge them in order to question and challenge them. Somehow, the curatorial narrative of the show fed from these references and made space for the other artists to position themselves.

I can cite the work of French artist and philosopher SMITH. A lot of his work derives from speculative philosophy to rethink and reshape these concepts of nature and culture, and how they impact our conceptual relation to the world. He thinks that our current situation is the result of our lost relationship with the cosmos and the stars. The title of the project "DESIDERATION" is a French play on words, but in English, it would be the contraction between starstruck and desire. It is an historical reference to the sailors who desired to be starstruck in order to find their way on the ocean, navigating the earth thanks to their knowledge and connection to the stars. For SMITH, we need to retrieve a state of "desideration." He founded a research group called the COSMIEL CELL, bringing together astrophysicists, poets, and designers in order to think of how we can find that state again. The piece presented in the show is part of a series and tells the story of the first subject reaching that state of desideration. How do we get back to that connection to the cosmos to be able to get out of this conceptual history that led to our current ecological and social situation?

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Two things came into my mind now while you were talking about the painting, which I was also very suspicious about. But it made me think of how we all have different curatorial approaches and how you wanted to have the painting there to acknowledge that this is still around. You wanted to include it in this context. I think in the opposite way. I want to take out things from my knowledge and rather look to other places. I think both ways are fascinating. And even though I initially felt it was dubious to have this painting in the exhibition, I think it really blended with the other artworks. It was present, but I think the painting was not in the spotlight. With the other artworks and the position of the painting, it was interesting to see your curatorial narrative and how different it was from my perspective of DECOLONIZATION, which tries to take out this colonial heritage but also remaining aware that you cannot take out everything.



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. SMITH X DIPLOMATES DESIDERATION (PROLOGUE), 2019. Wall paper, photographs, fluorescent tubes. Dimensions variable. Collaboration with Galerie les Filles du Calvaire, Paris. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

My methodology looks into things that are not specifically theory. For example, you guys mentioned KANT.

ANNA MILONE

Yes, when the title of the exhibition is "PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME," it is difficult to avoid KANT.

ANDREW MCNEELY

If I may ask you, ANNA and ANA, one of the major associations of your exhibition was the old idea of the sublime: Why was this a consideration of the show?

ANNA MILONE

The goal was to look critically at this idea of sublime as a direct historical reference to KANT. "PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME" is a redundant phrase, a hyperbola as in KANT, the experience of the sublime is already a paroxysm. You reach a climax in an aesthetic experience, and we were interested in the aftermath of this state of sublime that is generated by the natural world as seen through KANT's lens. We connected this idea to the notion of dystopia that is very present in Los Angeles and everywhere else with the semantics of chaos and collapse and ruins as dominant in the discourse about climate change. This title was a way for us to reference, historically, a dominant western theory but using a hyperbola allowed us to start a shift and looking critically at this idea of the sublime. It also allowed us to consider how other philosophical approaches including non-western approaches would be built to surpass this concept as it is coined by a dominant, historical and problematic way of thinking.

ANA IWATAKI

This leads us into the work of trying to accept that the natural is not at all separate from our everyday experience, such as realizing that the rubber in your shoes that comes from a plant, even if its been transformed and made toxic by human intervention. This is the environment that we are creating and the environment that we are existing in. How do we accept that, and where do we go from there?

That is where EDDIE's work becomes very pertinent and interesting. He explores DECOLONIAL ideas through material culture. And I imagine this is why we were interested in his work just as you were ANDREW.

ANDREW MCNEELY

No doubt. But he made such a different piece for your show.

ANNA MILONE

Yes. He was already working on this piece, but he really finalized it for our show as the conversations we had resonated with his idea for this piece. Everything you said DANIELA about your relationship to this western dominant philosophy and how he wanted to strip himself away from it.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I think I took a very different path as I was writing to think outside of theory, trying not to use theory and looking more into poetry. I have also been looking into the ZAPATISTA movement and ideologies as a form of theory. And I have been using those references but also recognizing that theory is a colonial structure.

ANDREW MCNEELY

The theory coming from Europe?

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

In order to try to create these paths, maybe you can talk about your decision to approach your exhibition in those terms we are all talking about, colonial issues. Another question would be why any of us were approaching one specific thing. I don't have an answer now, but why did we feel the necessity to show different issues or a broader picture—things are still connected—and why we did not just feel to do a show about a specific topic?

ANDREW MCNEELY

So DANIELA, the question that you are asking—not the last one but the one prior to it—is asking in a curatorial sense: How are we situating ourselves in relationship to the project of DECOLONIZATION?

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I think I would like to talk more about ways to approach the decision of including this painting or not, curatorial choices of including certain artists or references. So, ANDREW, why did you decide to use these two artists from California who are white artists talking about an indigenous group, the TONGVA?



A NONHUMAN HORIZON, installation view.
THE HARRISON STUDIO, MEDITATIONS
ON THE GABRIELIÑO, 1976, 2019.
Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

ANDREW MCNEELY

That is a very good question that I think helps me describe something I find to be a subtle difference between you and I. We share a lot of politics and pursue similar aims but one feature that I think distinguishes us is that I am interested in entering into DYNAMICS OF POWER in my work from my own privileged vantage point. I see your work operating in a different direction, which is to highlight marginalized voices and foreground non-western traditions of knowledge production. Conversely, I practice my political commitments by trying to unpack the problematics around those who are in a position of power but sympathize with the plight of the marginalized.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I guess one clarification would be that in my show I was of course, looking at the point of view of power and oppression, but I was looking into the work that has been going on to resist it.

ANDREW MCNEELY

Yes, I see your work as interested in practices of resistance.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Yes but not from the point of view of oppression. I wanted to show the power of resistance more than oppression. I just wanted to clarify that. And I think that I have a problem with this concept of marginalization. What do you mean by that?

ANDREW MCNEELY

People who are either dispossessed of power or disenfranchised. I mean, I think that marginalization is a fairly useful term to talk about people who are disempowered either because they lack representation or are victims of injustice.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I think my problem with that word would be that you are putting them in a position in which they don't have power anymore. And that's what I like to highlight: even if you are dispossessed of some power you are still in power.

ANDREW MCNEELY

But, this is exactly our respective relationships to the politics of power. You want to highlight resistance and I am more interested in the critique of the good soldiers. Good soldiers, privileged people who believe they are doing something for the benefit of those who don't possess power, are ultimately the viewers I

am trying to make an impression on. I am not placing a value on either of these curatorial orientations. I am just saying that there are two different ways to crack the DECOLONIZATION egg.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Yes, but I am not a purist! I do not say no to any western historical theory, but I see it as a practice and something I am trying to use as a method. Some of the artworks that I brought in have this critical point like the tree video that was in the back by JEANNETTE EHLERS video installation OFF THE PIG, THE MARCH, BLACK BULLETS (2012) that refers to the Haitian Revolution which is the first revolution and independence in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. The influence and impact other independences, could be the positive view but it's more complex. She shows the documentation of pigs eating trash in contemporary Haiti and, at the same time, puts layers of speeches by the BLACK PANTHERS MOVEMENT—dissolved in 80s—together with speeches from the HAITIAN REVOLUTION. Therefore, I think that the artworks are not just showing one side of the power or the resistance. I think they're very critical, and it's very interesting to me to highlight these different layers that they are there. It is very complex and they are different things to see. So she connects the symbolism of pigs with how the BLACK PANTHERS made popular the idea of the police as the pig.

In VOODOO CULTURE, the pig, and specifically black pigs, are sacred animals. That is why a black pig was sacrificed before the rebellion happened in Haiti in 1791. So by just putting together all the animals that are there in trash, she allows for other totally different ways to approach or to understand the culture and the context. I don't want to sound like a purist saying that only the resistance is positive. There are so many complexities around it.

ANNA MILONE

I think this is one of the big differences in our three exhibitions. The DYNAMICS OF POWER, whether from the oppressor's point of view or the resistance, are central in your curatorial approaches whereas it is an underlying thread in ours. We focused on knowledge being a tool of power and how questioning and challenging concepts can open new paths. All the artists of the show raised the question of power within their artwork, but that is not what we highlighted as curators. For example, DANIEL OTERO TORRES associates hands of protestors in Bogotá with a native plant from the Andes that was brought in Los Angeles, referring to both the political struggles and the history of soft



UNRAVELLING COLLECTIVE FORMS, installation view. JEANNETTE EHLERS, OFF THE PIG, THE MARCH, BLACK BULLETS, 2012. Series of videos 05:03 min, 04:40 min, 04:33 min. All videos courtesy of the artist. Photo credits Christopher Wormald



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME, installation view. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. DANIEL OTERO TORRES, EL BORRACHERO, 2019. Pencil on stainless steel, nylon, steel.

power through plant exchanges. **BEATRIZ's** work, "OUR ROOTS", refers to the practice of referring to indigenous people and origins as if they are in the past, or subterranean, rather than in the present or the future. She turns this idea on its head, encouraging both resistance and transformation.

You both talked a lot about poetry. Our show made many references to philosophy and anthropology, but it was also nourished by science fiction with **OCTAVIA BUTLER** and **URSULA K. LE GUIN – IRIS'** piece, for example. You can call it science fiction, speculative philosophy or poetry but the point is how it displaces the idea of theory in a broader approach. And that is what we were trying to do within the exhibition.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I was also thinking about the Tongva piece in your show, Andrew. **JULIA BOGANY** who did a workshop in my show. She wanted that book that you have there – **THE INDIANS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY**. She is a **TONGVA** educator and connects in different ways to this piece.

I was wondering how, when we decide to include something, we relate to the people who come see it. I'm aware that this was produced by the **HARRISONS**, the environmentalist artists, but if you came from another context I wonder how that person might see it. I think the same with a painting. How people will read the artworks in different ways.

ANNA MILONE

And in the specific context of the exhibition and in relationship with the other artworks of the show.

ANDREW MCNEELY

DANIELA and I have spoken about our relationship to indigenous politics and I am curious how you, **ANNA** and **ANA**, engage specifically with Southern California? I actually don't know if that came up in your show.

ANNA MILONE

We had a piece in the show by one of our artists in residence **ETIENNE DE FRANCE** who did a project in collaboration with the **MOJAVE TRIBE** from the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation.

He wanted to work with the **MOJAVE TRIBE** for many reasons but one of them is that a French anthropologist and founder of the ethnopsychiatry **GEORGE**



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME, installation view. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. **BEATRIZ CORTEZ**, OUR ROOTS / NUESTRAS RAÍCES, 2014-2019. Plants and trees. Dimensions variable. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.



PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME, Installation view. **ETIENNE DE FRANCE**, LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT LANDSCAPE, 2017-2019 Three-channel video installation, central video 28 minutes loop. Produced by FLAX in collaboration with the **COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES RESERVATION**. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

DEVEREUX dedicated a big part of his work to THE MOHAVE. His ashes were actually buried on MOHAVE sacred land. His research is very accessible in France, which is not always the case for other tribes. So ETIENNE did a lot of research about THE MOHAVE and their relation to the land. He was also interested in many topics related to the tribe like the colonization and desacralization of the land by the road, the railroad, and solar plants. ETIENNE's work focuses on the relation between nature and landscape.

At the core of this reflection is the idea of representation, of constructed images, of deserted landscapes, with all their symbolic and political baggage. We were aware that his position could appear problematic, as a white French artist coming to California to work with this tribe. We trusted him as I have been following his work for many years, and he worked with indigenous people all over the world. I trusted him to be genuine in his approach and in his collaboration. But we definitely took a bet. We asked the Chairman of the tribe, DAVID HARPER, for a meeting and after Etienne presented him the project, he was completely on board and invited him to spend time at the reservation. ETIENNE followed many steps, meeting people, getting authorization from the TRIBAL COUNCIL to be able to shoot on the reservation.

He met JAMAHKE, a bird singer who became the protagonist of the film. ETIENNE gathered a crew only comprised of indigenous film professionals. He didn't write the script, only a fictional starting point in which JAMAHKE is contacted by a big Hollywood production company to scout locations on the reservation for a film about the first encounters between THE SPANIARDS and THE MOHAVE. So we follow JAMHAKE as he meets with several members of the tribe who talk to him about his own land. The result was many hours of rush of very precious interviews with members of the tribe. All these interviews were edited by ETIENNE and given to the tribe library as archives. He edited a first version of his film, always in collaboration with the tribe, focusing on JAMAHKE's discovery of his own land. One scene that was in the installation presented in the exhibition shows DAVID HARPER telling JAMHAKE that the land on which they stand has died because of the power plant, so the tribe held a funeral for the land that really resonates with what we wanted to bring in the exhibition. Another scene is a conversation with a 94-year-old elder, GERTRUDE, in which JAMHAKE asks her where he can find a good landscape and she answers: "All our lands are good." This was absolutely beautiful and talks deeply about the concepts of land, landscape, nature. All the encounters actually brought JAMAHKE back home even though he never left. The last words of the film are a MOHAVE saying: "Always coming home." This is also a reference to URSULA K. LE GUIN. ETIENNE's collaboration with the tribe is still going on, and they are currently working on several new projects together.

It was very long, and I'm really sorry but, to answer your question we didn't include any work referencing the TONGVA directly. But, we definitely include Indigenous questions from Southern California.

ANDREW MCNEELY

By this question I don't mean to lump together indigenous politics and environmental issues but rather to address how we as curators choose to grapple with these diverse topics with exhibitions that exist in situ. How do we specifically respond to Southern California or at least to the American Southwest? Each of us with our own background.

ANA IWATAKI

I am from LA and, of course, my relationship to this show is filtered through my own lens. The relationship of people in diaspora to place is very complicated especially when crossed with vehicles of gentrification and displacement. I am a fourth-generation Angeleno but being displaced and displacing is still part of my history. I think it is something that really runs through several artists' works in the show like DAVID HORVITZ, IRIS, EDDIE, BEATRIZ. So it is something that really influenced what I wanted to work through with the exhibition and it is something that is still very much unresolved for me.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

You were also working with a lot of artists from LA, which means being part of a place and thinking of displacement.

ANNA MILONE

And we also work with Colombian artists living in France who also question this idea of displacement. Their position is very different than Beatriz's or Eddie's history of immigration in Southern California. These histories and contexts are very different. The fact that I moved here not that long ago, I try to learn everything I can about this place and understand. I speak from this place as respectfully as I can as an outsider, taking in consideration the cultural gaps and the difference in conceptual approaches. I am always aware of these differences, but I have been here full-time for three years and I completely shifted. My conceptual approaches shifted on their axis because of everything I observed and learned here.

That's why it's so important to have exhibitions bringing together artists from different backgrounds, contexts and approaches. And that is also why I was so grateful to work with ANA on the show so we would have two very different approaches, each of us bringing our backgrounds and histories—even though she spent a long time in France so she understands my clumsiness. It was really

interesting to have these conversations together. I feel like the show brought our two approaches together.

ANDREW MCNEELY

Yes, it seemed very productive. And also again, I don't know why I am so obsessed with triangulating this, but as a curator: How do you approach the problem of reconciling the divergent issues attended to by the artists you work with, your own commitments, and the site where the exhibition happens? I think it is the most interesting curatorial question to raise.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Andrew can you talk about JENNY's piece? I was thinking of this idea of archives and migration but also trying to circle back to the differences between the shows about the presence of human bodies.

ANDREW MCNEELY

So, just to talk first about JENNY's piece, an herbarium she produced in 2015. It was part of a long series of works called "BLACKLISTED A PLANTED ALLEGORY," which researched California's blacklisted non-native plant species that are deemed hazardous to the local ecosystem. In her residency, where she constructed this piece, she toured the area around the residency and found 133 species of plants that were on this BLACKLIST. So there are 133 plant-cutouts in paper that document each species and the date they are believed to have entered the United States. As an archive, then, or really as a way of writing history, these non-native species of plants become a way of recording the story of human migration into California—because, where are these seeds coming from? They are being carried on people or sometimes in their gut. So JENNY's piece, in a very direct way, collapses the ecological onto the social.

Even though JENNY describes her work as a way of talking about the migration of people in the United States, I made the connection because these are non-native species and they are coming here because of migration waves. That was my original intrigue in that work. There was a second part to your question that I wanted to connect this thing to—

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

How in my show the question of representation of the body was more present.

ANDREW MCNEELY

For me the distinguishing feature is a focus on critical resistance.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I was talking about the video where you see bodies. And I was asking you about the presence of bodies in your show.

ANDREW MCNEELY

I strived for an omission of bodies in my show. ANDREA CHUNG's work was the closest the show came to overtly representing bodies. Removing bodies, for me, was a choice I made to emphasize non-human experience. When I use the word non-human, I merely mean biological life that is so far outside of what we can relate to that it is utterly opaque to us.

A tree would be a perfect example of that. We can personify trees in order to try to empathize with the suffering of the tree. And yet when we do that we are effectively erasing other experiences of the world. This aspect of ecological politics has intriguing connections to issues around the plurality of human experience in my opinion. I kind of wanted to underscore that with the omission of the body.

Let me put my cards on the table. I often think of myself more as a writer than a curator. Curating is part of the process of writing. I feel like for me, as a writer, I can't write on artists who are totally situated within a critical tradition too distant from my cultural experience. For me to do so would be equivalent to erasing them or really just sustaining the colonization of such traditions. And so I am much more interested in deconstructing the good soldiers or the people who claim solidarity with marginalized groups by dismantling the presuppositions that they believe justify their beliefs.

ANNA MILONE

Is it something that you would not be comfortable doing?

ANDREW MCNEELY

I can write about them, but I just don't think that it is a good way to practice solidarity. Solidarity for me begins with dismantling the beliefs that I have inherited. I don't do a service to people who disproportionately suffer from dynamics of power by focusing narrowly on their work and trying to create a space for them. That is not how I practice solidarity. I practice solidarity by aiming to disabuse myself and others of the beliefs that predispose us to erroneous ideas. That is my personal relationship to curating.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I think that is what the four of us are doing just in different ways. When I am trying to strip my western knowledge away, because I want to separate from that.



A NONHUMAN HORIZON, installation view.
ANDREA CHUNG, 'IM HOLE 'IM CANHER,
2007. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

ANNA MILONE

And us acknowledging this heritage to be able to move away from it.

ANDREW MCNEELY

You see similarities where I see difference. Maybe my misreading of that is intriguing. I see it as a productive difference.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I think I was also thinking of this concept of solidarity that you are just bringing in. What do you mean by solidarity?

ANDREW MCNEELY

I write in solidarity.

ANNA MILONE

And you curate in solidarity. And as DANIELA I think it is something we all have in common.

ANDREW MCNEELY

I see all cultural production as, in some way, in solidarity with how fucked the world is.

ANA IWATAKI

For me, curating is always a very visceral process because it begins with something that nags at me like an everyday problem or preoccupation. Through collaboration and conversation, I try to find a way to even begin to think about it, how to approach it, to determine what the questions are.

I think it brings us back to why all of us made shows in such different ways about these anchor points: the very problem of the place where we live and the air that we breathe and the land we walk on. To grapple with these questions, the tools that I have are those of a curator and a writer.

ANNA MILONE

It is hard to define curating as a single experience as all projects are unique. This specific one was a long process with two years of research. It really brought me from and to different points. I talked earlier about how I shifted my axis and stripped away some of my past certitudes. Some shows I curated are not so embedded in theory building relationships between artworks in space in a more formal and poetical way. They are probably more formal, building relationships between artworks in space in a more formal and poetical way.

This show was different because it is the first time that I actually decided to really reflect on my own history of knowledge and challenge it. It is not a surprise that this is my last show in Los Angeles, after a few years here running an artists residency focusing on French artists. I spent all my time here questioning that mission. And this show concentrates all the questions and problematics I raised. All the discussions I had with the artists that I brought here and the experience they had here. And collaborating with local artists and professionals. And everything that emerged from those encounters.

That's the very general context. About the shared thematics of our shows, I have a very similar position to yours: curating a show around those questions is my way to deal with them, opening spaces of dialogue to tackle the "universal" issue of global warming. I tend not to use that word—

ANDREW MCNEELY

I think this might be one of the few times in which it is appropriate to use the word universal. We are universally facing climate catastrophe.

ANNA MILONE

You are probably right. I always try to avoid this word—

ANDREW MCNEELY

I understand and I appreciate that, but I think you are in the right on this one.

ANNA MILONE

And I really like your word curating in solidarity with a cause. And facing this universal issue, we all have to have our take, to participate in any way we can.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Yeah, I think that's the shared question of curating. Also that one visceral necessity was learning and sharing knowledge. I see exhibitions always as a place to learn myself but also learn from others and to share experiences. And I think in this specific show I was thinking a lot about coalitions. I was reading **SAYAK VALENCIA**. She has all these ideas about **TRANSFEMINISM**.

ANDREW MCNEELY

She wrote **GORE CAPITALISM**, no?

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Yes. She is a great philosopher and artist from Tijuana. She went to study in Spain. Before coming back to build her knowledge from Tijuana. CECILIA VICUÑA talks a lot about the clash between the western world and indigenous world, and she doesn't deny her western side. She is combining them.

Going back to SAYAK's ideas about TRANSFEMINISM that is not only related to gender or trans or feminism but it is also about building alliances, she speaks about racism and migrants too. And I consider exhibitions and programming as places for building coalitions and for sharing. And that's why I am very happy about the all the 2019 programming at LACE because it really became a place, a container, where all these questions were activated. And we were sharing a lot about issues as humans in this context, in this society, we all have. I like that people were not advocating their "unique" idea. We all shared similar questions and we all have different approaches because we are living in the moment. Going back to curating in solidarity. Historically, this word, in my mind, can be problematic but I remember when we invited SAYAK, I told her that we did not have a big budget. She answered: "I am coming in solidarity with your project. I'll drive from Tijuana to LA in solidarity with this project."

ANNA MILONE

I think it is true for all the artists involved in all our shows, working in solidarity to tackle these shared questions. We also related with your conception of the exhibition and programming as a place to learn and share knowledge, questioning what knowledge can be with texts and objects and plants essences in the archive. We tried to include this sharing of knowledge as a part of the curatorial narrative with our "non-labels" with quotes from texts of reference for the show and by collecting objects from the artists—

ANA IWATAKI

Ritual is something that has been briefly touched on by all of us. Sometimes—in my most optimistic moments—I like to think about exhibitions and exhibition-making as a ritual. We're creating this shared space to reflect and to find refuge in each other. I think there's something very hopeful about that. When curating and art making is done in the right way it can be an offering of something that maybe is missing otherwise.

ANDREW MCNEELY

Where does this leave us? What is the question now that we all described at length: What we were trying to do with our shows and our relationship to the question of solidarity. What stakes does it raise for curating in solidarity with the



CECILIA VICUÑA, CHANCCANI QUIPU (DETAIL), 2012. Ink on knotted cords of unspun wool and bamboo, Granary Books, Edition 29/32 Courtesy of UC San Diego Special Collections & Archives Exhibition. Exhibition unraveling collective forms. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Christopher Wormald.

environment, for example? What have we learned from each other?

ANNA MILONE

For me this discussion confirms that despite three very different approaches and, dare I say, curatorial aesthetics we realized that within all our differences, we all work in the same direction which makes me very hopeful.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Yes we all attacked these issues from different directions. I was actually thinking how FLAX, invited us to do this publication together, in terms of offering resources, as an impetus to coming together. That reflects your true interest in sharing knowledge, having conversations and keeping the dialogue open.

ANNA MILONE

Yes, it is the continuity of what we were trying to do in the exhibition and the public programs that we called "A RUSH OF STORIES" after a quote by ANNA TSING. This publication is the perfect example of that: telling several stories to move forward on shared issues.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

ANDREW, you were asking what is next. I wanted to state that I really appreciate this space because we are always producing, making new projects, writing grants, find places and here is so little space for really reflect on what we did. This space of reflection is very important and it should always be a requirement. It is important to think about what is next, but we never take the time to really see what we've done.

ANDREW MCNEELY

We are all responding to the climate crisis. We are in our own ways or similar ways - I think it is both really - responding both to our personal relationship to the question and to decentering the human in environmentalist politics. From that, I want to take stock and ask: What does it mean to curate in solidarity with these issues? Maybe this conversation ends with that question rather than an answer to it. Another question, I might ask, is what kind of shows that strive to address these topics do we dislike?

For me, this would be shows that try to promote the benefits of conservation without even thinking about the way in which the environment is entangled by sociological factors.

DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

I would just add—because this resonates with the piece by **CAROLINA CAYCEDO**, **MY FEMALE LINEAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESISTANCE** (2018-)—looking back at the portraits of these women that are actually activists but also they are really understanding environmentalism through this idea of empathy. That is not new. It is also embedded in indigenous knowledge and visible in the work of the Central American activist **BERTA CÁCERES**. Nature is embedded in their body and vice versa. Looking in that other smaller work is as important as looking as big environmentalists.

UNRAVELLING COLLECTIVE FORMS

With TANYA AGUIÑIGA, HOLLAND ANDREWS, JULIA BOGANY, CAROLINA CAYCEDO, TANIA CANDIANI, PATRISSE CULLORS, DEMIAN DINÉYAZHI', EAST YARD COMMUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, MERCEDES DORAME, JORGE GONZÁLEZ and MÓNICA RODRÍGUEZ, HARRY GAMBOA JR., JEANNETTE EHLERS, ARSHIA FATIMA HAQ, SKY HOPINKA, ISRAEL MARTÍNEZ, SAYAK VALENCIA, CECILIA VICUÑA, and KIM ZUMPFE.

Curated by DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR

Opening Reception and Performance نلم یبن جا

April 3, 2019 7-10 pm

Exhibition dates: April 3, 2019 to May 25, 2019



A QUIPU or KHIPU is a device made of dyed, knotted threads—an ancient Inka, multisensory, extinct language, quipus are the vanished narratives of resistance that inspire this exhibition and public programming.

UNRAVELING COLLECTIVE FORMS knots together artistic reflections centered around collectivity, autonomy, and group manifestations that crack systems.

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Artist CECILIA VICUÑA defines a QUIPU as “a poem in space, a way to remember, involving the body and the cosmos at once.” The artists featured are tracing—from their own geographies and contexts—discursive paths that connect with collective forms of resistance. LA MIRADA (the gaze) is directed toward indigenous groups, specifically their ancestral and present knowledge and comprehension of their worlds. Their living LUCHAS (struggles)—and their group organization—that shape and confront capitalist machines, are the spirit that accompanies this exhibition.

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4 ENSAYOS LIBERTARIOS: MAAYNOK (LIBERTARIAN ESSAYS: MAKING), organized by artists JORGE GONZÁLEZ and MONICA RODRÍGUEZ in collaboration with JULIA BOGANY, basket weaving/out loud readings by LUISA CAPETILLO. OPEN QUIPU/QUIPU ABIERTO, programming as part of UNRAVELING COLLECTIVE FORMS, LACE, April 7, 2019. Courtesy of the artists and LACE. Photo by Tina June Malek.

5-6 UNRAVELING COLLECTIVE FORMS, exhibition view, LACE, April 3 to May 25, 2019. Courtesy of the artists and LACE. Photo by Christopher Wormald.



CHANCCANI QUIPU by CECILIA VICUÑA, is a point of departure where the Andean universe and western world clash with one another.

MERCEDES DORAME ties this land—the one inhabited ancestrally by indigenous groups—with spatial projections of reimagined Tongva ceremonial heritage. At the far end of the gallery, PULSO (2016), by TANIA CANDIANI resonates with pre-Hispanic drums from the guts of Mexico City, its metro system.

CAROLINA CAYCEDO shares MY FEMALE LINEAGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESISTANCE (2018–2019), a collection of portraits of 100 eco activist women that make visible their bold dangerous work.

SKY HOPINKA situates us in Seminole land in Florida, at the historical moment of forced cultural assimilation and the escape of Chieftain Coacoochee from prison. A tapestry, PUNKS CONTRA EL SISTEMA (2016,) portrays a hyperlocal underground scene in the 1990s in Guadalajara, revealing fierce organization that evolved into anarchist and feminist projects.

The Haitian revolution and the Black Panthers social movements are strings that JEANNETTE EHRLES cross-references and elevates in visual forms. THE 6TH EXPANSE (2016), a photo by HARRY GAMBOA JR. features a moment of resistance, literally holding the now demolished 6th Street Bridge in Boyle Heights, ground zero of anti-gentrification.

MÓNICA RODRÍGUEZ and JORGE GONZÁLEZ have created a collaborative space to experiment with processes of learning and exchanging knowledge via popular weaving traditions from Puerto Rico and anarcho-feminist LUISA CAPETILLO's readings.

DEMIAN DINÉYAZHI' threads intergenerational indigenous knowledge with radical queer feminist identity.

KIM ZUMPFER has built a space of pause that allows us to disconnect from the outside rhythms of the crumbling world.



In a first gathering at LACE, TANYA AGUIÑIGA invited women to explore tactile transmissions while knotting and dipping cord into black dye, resulting in a work-in-progress that will culminate in a celebratory event. ARSHIA FATIMA HAQ's artifacts from AJNABI MILAN (STRANGERS' UNION) a procession of SWANA (SOUTH WEST ASIAN & NORTH AFRICAN) diaspora led by FANAA on Hollywood Blvd, shimmers into the gallery with a message of alienation and inclusivity.

UNRAVELING COLLECTIVE FORMS and the programming OPEN QUIPU/QUIPU ABIERTO looks to create a space to gather, remember, learn, and connect with the audience in a common thread. It is an invitation to interlace our own narratives in a KHIPU, to become talking knots. It is a way of both stringing together, and unraveling possibilities to reimagine ourselves.

9



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OPEN QUIPU/QUIPU ABIERTO

Exhibition programming

Opening Reception and Performance — Apr 3

AJNABI MILAN (STRANGERS' UNION)

A procession led by FANAA on Hollywood Blvd.

Organized by ARSHIA FATIMA HAQ.

Ensayos Libertarios: Maaynok (Libertarian Essays: Making) — Apr 7

Boricua artists MÓNICA RODRÍGUEZ and JORGE GONZÁLEZ, in collaboration with educator and cultural TONGVA consultant JULIA BOGANY, lead a workshop at LACE that combines “basket weaving” with “out loud readings” from a selection of texts by Puerto Rican anarcho-feminist writer LUISA CAPETILLO. BOGANY teaches participants how to weave pine needles applying coiling techniques based on Tongva traditions.

All materials are included.

Screening Night with Filmforum — Apr 28

In conjunction with the exhibition Unraveling Collective Forms at LACE Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Filmforum co-presents digital films by artists CECILIA VICUÑA, JEANETTE EHLERS, ARSHIA HAQ and SKY HOPINKA, whose works are on display in the show.

Oral Histories of Environmental Resistance — May 5

Activist members from EAST YARD COMMUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE and artist CAROLINA CAYCEDO share stories of resistance in LA and other places.

Transfeminist Discourses — May 18

SAYAK VALENCIA, Tijuana activist, writer, performer, and author of *Capitalismo Gore* in conversation with LACE curator DANIELA LIEJA QUINTANAR and invited artists.

Followed by a PATRISSE CULLORS performance.

Closing Performance — May 25

AN INFECTED SUNSET, performance by DEMIAN DINÉYAZHI' and HOLLAND ANDREWS.

A NON HUMAN HORIZON

With ANDREA CHUNG, EDDIE APARICIO, JENNY YURSHANSKY, and
THE HARRISON STUDIO.

Curated by ANDREW MCNEELY

Exhibition Design by KIM ZUMPFE

Opening Reception June 29, 2019 2-6 PM

Exhibition Dates June 29, 2019 to September 1, 2019

A NON HUMAN HORIZON explores art that situates California's ecology in meditations of personal and collective social marginalization.

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1 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. (Left to right) JENNY YURSHANSKY, EDDIE APARICIO, and ANDREA CHUNG. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

2 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. EDDIE APARICIO. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

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1 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. JENNY YURSHANSKY, BLACKLISTED: A PLANTED ALLEGORY (COLLECTION) (2015). Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

3 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

5 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. ANDREA CHUNG, OONU CAN CUM WID MI (2007). Photo credits Christopher Wormald.



By bringing into dialogue work by **ANDREA CHUNG**, **EDDIE APARICIO**, **JENNY YURSHANSKY**, and **THE HARRISON STUDIO**, this exhibition aims to draw into focus larger questions about the entanglement of the natural world and beliefs in human dignity.

7



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7 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. THE HARRISON STUDIO, MEDITATIONS ON THE GABRIELIÑO (1976, 2019). Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

8 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. SHE WAS AN EVERYDAY EMPATH (2019) (exhibition publication) and HUGO REID'S ACCOUNT OF THE INDIANS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY (1926). Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

In a prospective fashion, the emerging artists gathered in this exhibition reflect on the resonances between the state of exile and invasive plant species, transnational extractive industries and bi-national identity, and entrenched stereotypes around motherhood and “natural” birth. In a retrospective fashion, this exhibition seeks to hold open the above concerns over a reappraisal of California’s eco-critical past. Taken together, these artists’ work call on us to contemplate conservation’s horizon beyond themes of nature’s restoral, reclamation, return, and reconstitution.

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9 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. ANDREA CHUNG, PURE (2017). Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

10 A NONHUMAN HORIZON, Installation view. JENNY YURSHANSKY, BLACKLISTED: A PLANTED ALLEGORY (COLLECTION) (2019). Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

PAROXYSM OF SUBLIME

With EDDIE APARICIO, CARMEN ARGOTE, BEATRIZ CORTEZ, SARA FAVRIAUX, ETIENNE DE FRANCE, DAVID HORVITZ, IRIS YIREI HU, CANDICE LIN, LAURA HUERTAS MILLÁN, EVA NIELSEN, NINE HERBS CHARM (ERIC KIM, HANNAH MJØLSNES, SAEWON OH), HUBERT ROBERT, SMITH X DIPLOMATES, and DANIEL OTERO TORRES.

Curated by ANNA MILONE, FLAX Program Director and Curator and ANA IWATAKI, FLAX Associate Curator.

Exhibition in partnership with France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX)

Opening Reception September 18, 7-10 PM

Exhibition Dates September 18, 2019 to November 3, 2019

There is a clear sense of urgency that is both rising and collective. It seems to be a matter of dis-ease, as philosopher **GLENN ALBRECHT** puts it. His diagnosis for our times is that of SOLASTALGIA—an illness at once psycho and somatic—affecting humanity at large, caused by a changing, once-familiar environment, whose fate seems beyond our control. Home becomes first uncanny, then hostile, like a nightmare in which one's mother morphs into a stranger, then an enemy.

SOLASTALGIA: THE DISTRESS CAUSED BY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE
GLENN ALBRECHT, 2007

“The people I was concerned about were still ‘at home’, but felt a similar melancholia as that caused by nostalgia connected to the breakdown of the normal relationship between their psychic identity and their home. What these people lacked was solace or comfort derived from their present relationship to ‘home’. In addition, they felt a profound sense of isolation about their inability to have a meaningful say and impact on the state of affairs that caused their distress. ‘Solastalgia’ was created to describe the specific form of melancholia connected to lack of solace and intense desolation. Solastalgia is not about looking back to some golden past, nor is it about seeking another place as ‘home’. It is the ‘lived experience’ of the loss of the present as manifest in a feeling of dislocation; of being undermined by forces that destroy the potential for solace to be derived from the present. In short, solastalgia is a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at ‘home’.”

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1 PAROXYSM OF THE SUBLIME, Installation view. France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at LACE. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.



TREES IN PARADISE
JARED FARMER, 2013

“A land blessed with so much sunshine, warmth, and fertility demanded more greenery, flowers, and shade. To eyes trained in the American East and Northern Europe, California didn’t look right. Where nature erred, settlers meant to repair. [...] From roughly 1850 to 1950 - California’s first hundred years as a state - American horticulturists planted innumerable trees in formerly shadeless locales. They emparadised the land. They imported a profusion of ornamental and commercial species and varieties and create moneymaking orchards and picturesque tree-lined streets. In short, tree planters staged a landscape revolution. By the mid-twentieth century, eucalypts defined the look of lowland California, oranges dominated Southland agriculture, and plans symbolised Los Angeles.”

CONTEMPLATING HELL
BERTROLD BRECHT, 1941

*Contemplating Hell, as I once heard it,
My brother Shelley found it to be a place
Much like the city of London. I,
Who do not live in London, but in Los Angeles,
Find, contemplating Hell, that is
Must be even more like Los Angeles.
Also in Hell,
I do not doubt it, there exist these opulent gardens
With flowers as large as trees, wilting, of course,
Very quickly, if they are not watered with very expensive
water. And fruit markets
With great leaps of fruit, which nonetheless
Possess neither scent nor taste. (...)*

The title of this exhibition, quoting a poem by sculptor SARA FAVRIAUI, emphasizes the unfolding of changes, leading to a paroxysm often followed by a drastic transformation. Directly referencing the overwhelmingness of the sublime as defined by KANT, the exhibition draws from the history and present of philosophy. To take on the concept of SOLASTALGIA, we need to question our definitions of “home” and “environment.” The notion of environment can also denote some kind of separation, the control and domination of mankind over its habitat. In Los Angeles, the majority of the city’s plant life was brought by settlers to “imparadise” the land and recreate familiar environments, or otherwise introduced to the region

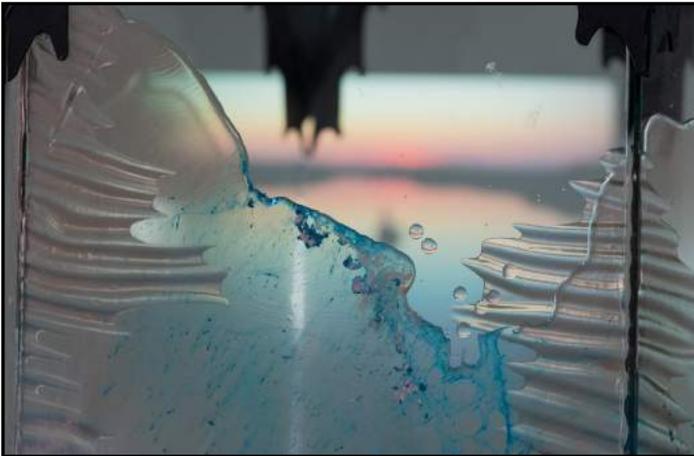
to reflect, instill, and develop desire and fantasy, dramatically changing the ecosystem and shaping its visual identity. SOLASTALGIA is a feeling of homesickness while being at home, in a “natural” environment constructed by human presence, perpetually in rapid transformation. This dystopian element of the city points to the question of colonization by nature, all the more insidious for its “natural” disguise.

TREES IN PARADISE
JARED FARMER, 2013

“From Earth Day to the turn of the millenium, the discourse about California eucalyptus turned upside-down. The Tasmanian blue gum went from being a marker of belonging to a vexed symbol of non-nativeness.”

This exhibition brings together reflections on our shared pathology and pathos. If a sense of dread, fear, and grief is palpable, then so is the desire to act. These reactions are brought into the light, so that we might collectively face what we must collectively correct. In catastrophe, affect becomes not an ending, but a hinge to incite evolution in our relationship to the environment, to loss, and the passing of time, sometimes romanticized or fantasized. The blending of timelines and cartographies works towards a more nuanced view of past, present, and impending change, to ritual and symbiosis as methods of healing. This confluence of time and space encourages the reconsideration of other paradigms—nature/culture, pre/post apocalypse, native/foreign.

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THE MUSHROOM AT THE END OF THE WORLD: ON
THE POSSIBILITY OF LIFE IN CAPITALIST RUINS
ANNA TSING, 2015

“Ever since the Enlightenment, Western philosophers have shown us a Nature that is grand and universal but also passive and mechanical. Nature was a backdrop and resource for the moral intentionality of Man, which could tame and master Nature. It was left to fabulists, including non-Western and non-civilizational storytellers, to remind us of the lively activities of all beings, human and not human.”

The exhibition examines the effects of SOLASTALGIA, its relationship with the history of western philosophy, its broader significance in multiple temporalities and geographies, and a search for remedies outside of a western paradigm. Doing so requires various voices, “a rush of stories”, to quote ANNA TSING: “To listen and to tell a rush of stories is a method. And why not make the strong claim and call it a science, an addition to knowledge? Its research object is contaminated diversity; its unit of analysis is the indeterminate encounter (...) A rush of stories cannot be neatly summed up. Its scales do not nest neatly; they draw attention to interrupting geographies and tempos. These interruptions elicit more stories. This is the rush of stories’ power as a science.”

From LACE’s storefront window, DAVID HORVITZ’s plumeria tree faces Hollywood Boulevard. He has donated plumeria cuttings from his grandmother’s tree to several art institutions around Los Angeles, including FLAX. The plant travels to each new exhibition site due to the itinerant nature of the FLAX Projects. The plumeria was brought to LACE for the duration of the exhibition. For the closing party, a tea ceremony in collaboration with NINE HERBS CHARM was followed by a meditative walk that brought the plumeria to its final home at the FLAX House in Highland Park.



THE AGENCY OF FIRE: BURNING AESTHETICS
E-FLUX JOURNAL #98 T.J. DEMOS, 2019

“Pyro-aesthetics spark affect, discernable too in these flaming images. It begins with the register of fear, including worry, apprehension, dread, foreboding, panic. They extend to pain, invoking agony, anguish, hurt, misery. They move on to sadness, as in depression, dejection, despondency, gloom, melancholy. And they end with disconnection and disassociation, expressed in feelings of alienation and abandonment, immobilization and end-of-world numbness. If climate breakdown evokes emotions of ‘pre-loss,’ similar to what some enviros call ‘pre-traumatic stress syndrome,’ these images concern what’s to come, what’s to lose, what soon will be, what eventually will have been. It makes it hard to carry on, as nihilism tempts. Critically reading these images does some work to restore hopefulness—that provided by research, interpretation, writing, teaching, learning, building community. It grants new life, against all odds, even if against optimism and its cruelties, perhaps resulting in something like undefeated despair. Yet if anything is recovered through its process, then it can’t be in the name of what’s come before, life in the name of hierarchy and privatization, capital and uneven dis/abilities. Any cultural analysis that might emerge must be dedicated to decolonizing knowledge, opposing the nexus of capitalism-colonialism-patriarchy that set fire to the planet in the first place, and building new worlds in the ashes.

SARA FAVRIAU’s installation MIEL was inspired by her residency with FLAX in 2018. Reflecting on imported wood essences in California and how they impacted the ecosystem of Los Angeles, she explores the vital force of tree trunks and branches through sculptural work, while also revealing their vulnerability. The centers of the trunks appear like subtle layers of wood, a technique she developed to produce both small and monumental sculptures.

Also engaging with this history of plant exchanges between Europe and the Americas, EDDIE APARICIO has embarked on a new series of work stemming from his research on Victorian Wardian cases, an early kind of terrarium used to bring plant specimens back to Europe from colonial voyages. These glass cases allowed plants to survive the sea voyages by allowing for sunlight, providing moisture with condensation, while protecting them from other harsher elements. Wardian cases developed to be beautiful, decorative objects, particularly during the fern craze, but at sea were largely utilitarian and made from glass, wood, and canvas. APARICIO trains a critical eye on the Wardian case and its role as a vehicle of colonization. As a container for “invasive species,” the Wardian case evokes past and present forced removals and detention, rhetorics of contamination and exoticism.

HUBERT ROBERT's painting testifies to the development of the Enlightenment concepts such as the DISTINCTION BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE as defined by ROUSSEAU. He even designed his original mausoleum in the philosophical garden of Ermenonville.

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A TOUR OF THE MONUMENTS OF PASSAIC
ROBERT SMITHSON, 1967

"That zero panorama seemed to contain ruins in reverse, that is-all the new construction that would eventually be built. This is the opposite of the "romantic ruin" because the buildings don't fall into ruin after they are built but rather rise into ruin before they are built. This anti-romantic mise-en-scene suggests the discredited idea of time and many other 'out of date' things. But the suburbs exist without a rational past and without the 'big events' of history. Oh, maybe there are a few statues, a legend, and a couple of curios, but no past—just what passes for a future. A Utopia minus a bottom, a place where the machines are idle, and the sun has turned to glass, and a place where the Passaic Concrete Plant (253 River Drive) does a good business in ST ONE, BITU MIN OUS , SAN D, and CEMENT. Passaic seems full of 'holes' compared to New York City, which seems tightly packed and solid, and those holes in a sense are the monumental vacancies that define, without trying, the memory-traces of an abandoned set of futures."

LA COMPOSITION DES MONDES
PHILIPPE DESCOLA, 2014

"I think that the forms of emancipation shaped by Enlightenment philosophy have played an important role in Europe, to create ways of living together that are more and more acceptable to a large number of people on the surface of the Earth. But these forms still seem to me to disqualify other ways of being present in the world and of making society; it also seems to me that they make it difficult, if not impossible, to better take into account non-humans within our political assemblies. The idea of making Europe and the Western world a special case within the anthropological variations is from this point of view an invitation not to take as an end of history the aspirations and institutions of which democratic Europe endowed itself with over the last two centuries and then spread over a part of the planet. One of the main characteristics of this political and institutional heritage is that it does not give enough rights to non-humans in the processes of political representation, and that it has inhibited the creation of other forms of assembly more open to these beings. I use the term non-human only in lack of a better one, and especially to avoid using the notion of nature, but I think it is important to measure the critical dimensions of these non-humans. And when I talk about these 'non-human critics,' I'm not just thinking about farm animals, tigers, or whales, but about this host of entities that are constantly interacting with us, from CO₂ to glaciers and viruses. Basically, it is a way of speaking about the common destiny of things and men in a world where their sharing no longer makes sense, and which requires rethinking their collective existence."



In scenes such as the one presented in the exhibition, the huge romanticized Corinthian columns, with barreled vaults or left open to the sky, were inspired by the monuments of ancient Rome. These colonnades were frequently graced with famous examples of classical statuary; in this instance the soldiers gamble beneath the statue of the APOLLO BELVEDERE, then as now in the Vatican, one of the classical works most admired during the Enlightenment, while beyond a headless copy of the equally famous APHRODITE OF CNIDUS can be seen, of which several copies or variants were in Rome. The composition strongly recalls one of ROBERT's most famous designs, the imaginary view of the Grand Gallery of the Louvre in ruins, exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1796 and today in the Louvre itself, in which an artist sits sketching beneath the APOLLO BELVEDERE while other figures walk among and ponder on other fragments of classical and Renaissance statuary.

His "POETICS OF RUINS" as defined by DIDEROT resonates with EVA NIELSEN's paintings. She explores the combination of landscapes inspired by old Masters paintings and architectural elements gleaned from the urban periphery. Bringing together

silkscreening and painting, with a contemporary art heritage from figures such as ED RUSCHA and SIGMAR POLKE, she creates utopian landscapes outside of a particular time or place. These brutalist-influenced architectures testify to a hypermodernity in deserted landscapes. Forever changing, landscapes on the outskirts are being endlessly altered. NIELSEN is always fascinated by phases of transformation and transition, such as when concrete construction elements remain as is for more or less brief moments in urban areas, these ready-made giants poised for action. She is deeply attached to areas that are being forever re-defined, areas that are built in layers, chronological and material. These elements have become motifs, as seen in works like HARD SUN and POLHODIE. APHAKIE is NIELSEN's most recent painting and offers new developments in her work. Unlike previous paintings, whose sketches are established beforehand, here techniques come together, superimposing strata. With various steps of dilution and rubbing, she aimed to disturb the original image of the landscape, to observe the various strata reacting to each other, creating a trompe-l'œil.

BEATRIZ CORTEZ's installation OUR ROOTS / NUESTRAS RAÍCES (2014-2019) enables the presence of the subterranean world to interact with the world we inhabit, on the surface of the Earth. Engaging with the idea that Indigenous peoples are often called our roots / nuestras raíces, in a gesture that pushes their existence towards the past and that erases them from the present and the future, this installation invites us to ponder the life that multiplies under the ground, the rhizomatic quality of roots, the great diversity of plants, their ability to transform remnants of other lives into nutrients and new life, and the existence of worlds that are beyond the human realm.

THE CARRIER BAG THEORY OF FICTION
URSULA K. LE GUIN, 1986

"It sometimes seems that that story is approaching its end. Lest there be no more telling of stories at all, some of us out here in the wild oats, amid the alien corn, think we'd better start telling another one, which maybe people can go on with when the old one's finished. Maybe. The trouble is, we've all let ourselves become part of the killer story, and so we may get finished along with it. Hence it is with a certain feeling of urgency that I seek the nature, subject, words of the other story, the untold one, the life story.

It's unfamiliar, it doesn't come easily, thoughtlessly to the lips as the killer story does; but still, 'untold' was an exaggeration. People have been telling the life story for ages, in all sorts of words and ways. Myths of creation and transformation, trickster stories, folktales, jokes, novels..."

THE PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT: ESSAYS IN LIVELIHOOD, DWELLING AND SKILL
TIM INGOLD, 2000

"First, 'environment' is a relative term—relative that is to the being whose environment it is. Just as there can be no organism without an environment, there can be no environment without an organism. Thus my environment is the world as it exists and takes on meaning in relation to me and in that sense it came into existence and undergoes development with me and around me. Secondly, the environment is never complete. If environments are forged through the activities of living beings, then so long as life goes on, their are continually under construction. So too, of course, are organisms themselves. (...)

The third point about the notion of environment stems from the two I have just made. That is that it should on no account be confused with the concept of nature. For the world can exist as nature only for a being that does not belong there, and that can look upon it, in the manner of the detached scientist, from such a safe distance that it is easy to connive in the illusion that it is unaffected by his presence. Thus the distinction between environment and nature corresponds to the difference in perspective between seeing ourselves as beings within a world and as beings without it. Moreover we tend to think of nature as external not only to humanity, as I have already observed, but also to history, as though the natural world provided an enduring backdrop to the conduct of human affairs. Yet environments, since they continually come into being in the process of our lives - since we shape them as they shape us - are themselves fundamentally historical. We have, then, to be wary of such a simple expression as 'the natural environment', for in thus conflating the two terms we already imagine ourselves to be somehow beyond the world, and therefore in a position to intervene in its processes."

ETIENNE DE FRANCE's video triptych is the result of his residency with FLAX in 2017. He collaborated with THE MOHAVE TRIBE of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation for the creation of his film and project LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT LANDSCAPE. The film examines the usage and representation of the territories of the Southwest through the eyes of Jamahke, a young Native American. Grounding his work in MOHAVE culture, this project is a collaboration with elders, cultural practitioners, artists, activists, environmentalists, and archeologists. The video project, its storyline, and its development is based on encounters and meetings between ETIENNE DE FRANCE and the diverse participants he involves.

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PARABLE OF THE SOWER
OCTAVIA BUTLER, 1993

“Things are changing now, too. Our adults haven’t been wiped out by a plague so they’re still anchored in the past, waiting for the good old days to come back. But things have changed a lot, and they’ll change more. Things are always changing. This is just one of the big jumps instead of the little step-by-step changes that are easier to take. People have changed the climate of the world. Now they’re waiting for the old days to come back.”

DANIEL OTERO TORRES' mobile EL BORRACHERO borrows hands from the men in a photograph Machetes by Sady González taken in Bogotá on April 9, 1948. This date marks the assassination of the Colombian liberal JORGE ELIECER GAITAN that sparked a huge and violent revolt in the streets of Bogotá called Bogotazo. The carnage and destruction of the city was absolute and many people said that Bogota never recovered. This episode was followed by decades of violence during the period known as La Violencia. The hands are stripped of their machetes. They float in mid-air with brugmansias, also called Angel's trumpets and el borrachero in Colombia, a beautiful yet very poisonous flower originally from South America near the Andes and now blooming in the streets of Los Angeles.

CARMEN ARGOTE's photograph is a response to Bogotá, where it was conceived and made. “It started with looking at the mapa topográfico. I became fascinated by the object because it was a translation of the landscape in relationship to scale and to the body. It allowed me to understand Bogota through a translation, giving me a little distance from the constant proximity of the mountain. I found it through the act of walking. I was inclined to work with natural materials because of the tension I felt between the mountain and the architecture of the city. I wanted a way to access nature through human translation. I was responding to a human processing of nature. Color extraction became the visual representation of that

6 ETIENNE DE FRANCE, LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT LANDSCAPE, 2017-2019 Three-channel video installation, central video 28 minutes loop. Produced by FLAX in collaboration with the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

7 CARMEN ARGOTE, MARKS FROM BIRTH, 2018. Printed photograph, framed. 27 x 17.5 in. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

THE MUSHROOM AT THE END OF THE WORLD: ON THE
POSSIBILITY OF LIFE IN CAPITALIST RUINS
ANNA TSING, 2015

“About ecology: For humanists, assumptions of progressive human mastery have encouraged a view of nature as a romantic space of antimodernity. Yet for twentieth-century scientists, progress also unselfconsciously framed the study of landscapes. Assumptions about expansion slipped into the formulation of population biology. New developments in ecology make it possible to think quite differently by introducing crossspecies interactions and disturbance histories. In this time of diminished expectations, I look for disturbance-based ecologies in which many species sometimes live together without either harmony or conquest.”

translation. A photograph is a process of abstracting light, time, and dimensionality. The photograph of the mapa topográfico reverts the map making it more real/closer to the landscape again.”

IRIS YIREI HU is an artist who works in painting, fibers, text, and installation. Her work is often collaborative, through which she makes kin with those that practice collaborative survival in wake of personal, historical, and environmental loss. She is interested in limning transgeographic intimacy through weaving and craft practices that are both thriving and threatened. Her work centers learning as a method of engagement, and is both research-based and dependent on lived experience. Her work in the exhibition is part of her four-part series of installations based on allegorical survival guides. In an embroidery, HU records her mother's answers to her inquiry of what they would need to take with them if the Sun devoured the Moon.

THE LIFE OF PLANTS: A METAPHYSICS OF MIXTURE
EMANUELE COCCIA, 2016

“All things considered, true knowledge of the world can only be a form of speculative atrophy: instead of always living exclusively on ideas and truths already sanctioned by this or that discipline in its history (and this includes philosophy), instead of aiming to build itself out of cognitive elements already structured, ordered, and dressed up, it would have to transform any subject, object, or event into an idea, just as plants are capable of transforming any scrap of earth, air, and light into life. This would be the most radical form of speculative activity, a protean and liminal cosmology, indifferent to the places, forms, and ways in which it is practiced.”

STAYING WITH THE TROUBLE: MAKING KIN IN THE CHTHULUCENE
DONNA HARAWAY, 2016

“Maybe, but only maybe, and only with intense commitment and collaborative work and play with other terrans, flourishing for rich multispecies assemblages that include people will be possible. I am calling all this the Chthulucene—past, present, and to come. These real and possible time-spaces are not named after SF writer H.P. Lovecraft’s misogynist racial-nightmare monster Cthululu (note spelling difference), but rather after the diverse earthwide tentacular powers and forces and collected things with names like Naga, Gaia, Tangarao (burst from waterfull Papa), Terra, Haniyasu-hime, Spider Woman, Pachamama, Oya, Gorgo, Raven, A’akuluujjusi, and many many more. ‘My’ Chthulucene, even burdened with its problematic Greek-ish rootlets, entangles myriad temporalities and spatialities and myriad intra-active entities-in-assemblages—including the more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman, and human-as-humus. Even rendered in an American English-language text like this one, Naga, Gaia, Tangarao, Medusa, Spider Woman, and all their kin are some of the many thousand names proper to a vein of SF that Lovecraft could not have imagined or embraced—namely, the webs of speculative fabulation, speculative feminism, science fiction, and scientific fact. It matters which stories tell stories, which concepts think concepts. Mathematically, visually, and narratively, it matters which figures figure figures, which systems systematize systems.”

SMITH's installation is part of his new project DESIDERATION developed with the COSMIEL CELL composed by astrophysicist JEAN-PHILIPPE UZAN (CNRS, Institut d'Astrophysique de Paris) and writer LUCIEN RAPHMAJ. They coined this new word based on desire to explain the lost celestial object we are now missing. Joined by DIPLOMATES studio and the American composer AKIRA RABELAIS, they are working on the first stage of this project. Between science and fiction, they have imagined the history of a new humanity, on a quest for an organic link with the stars, while becoming physically connected with the cosmos, and opening out to an extra-terrestrial otherness. The piece presented in the exhibition is a part of this long-term research and visual project. It launched at the MAC VAL, France in 2019 and was presented at the Galerie des Filles du Calvaire in October 2019. The installation in the exhibition echoes a longtime ephemeral architecture developed by DIPLOMATES as a backdrop for the journal of the first cosmorgue, the first desiderated person in process of curing their symptoms, SMITH himself—as Patient 0.

MEDITATIONS ON LAST PHILOSOPHY (in which the possibilities of a coevolutionary, spontaneously generated, parasitic future are demonstrated), is part of a larger body of work by CANDICE LIN that retells marginalized stories from science in order to trouble its common categories along with other hegemonic categories, such as that of individualism, gender, and sexuality. This work also references the now obsolete theory of spontaneous generation, which takes its assertion that living organisms could be formed from dissimilar and inanimate matter, to move towards entangled and coevolutionary possibilities.

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THE PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT: ESSAYS IN LIVELIHOOD, DWELLING AND SKILL
TIM INGOLD, 2000

"We are accustomed to calling animals and plants 'living things'. But we call ourselves 'Human beings'."

In EL LABERINTO (THE LABYRINTH), LAURA HUERTAS MILLÁN continues an exploration of the heritage of experimental ethnography to explore colonial violence, the drug wars, and resulting syncretic memory and ruin. The viewer is lead on a tour through a Colombian jungle to an exact replica of the villa from the '80s soap opera DYNASTY built by a notorious drug lord, now in ruins. Scenes from the show are interspersed with this tour of the landmark, creating an enigmatic journey flitting between geographies and time periods.

An archive of various textual references and other objects for storing knowledge offered by the curators and artists, including tinctures by CANDICE LIN, will be presented in various forms throughout the exhibition. IRIS YIREI HU has collaborated with ANDREW FREIRE to conceive a structure that will be a platform for this collection of knowledge and histories. The materiality of the library is itself a partial archive of LACE's exhibition history and will highlight the infrastructural support (in knowledge, labor and materials) that are required to realize an exhibition.

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8 CANDICE LIN MEDITATIONS ON LAST PHILOSOPHY (IN WHICH THE POSSIBILITIES OF A COEVOLUTIONARY, SPONTANEOUSLY GENERATED, PARASITIC FUTURE ARE DEMONSTRATED), 2015. Alien hologram, gold, copper, circadian clocks, wood, plant material, sugarpaste walnuts with Jesus' Vagina (a miniature book), audio text. Dimensions variable. Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles. Photo credits Christopher Wormald.

9 LAURA HUERTAS MILLÁN EL LABERINTO (THE LABYRINTH) (STILL), 2018. 16mm, found footage, HD. 21 minute loop.

A RUSH OF STORIES

Exhibition programming

Screening — Oct 8

DONNA HARAWAY: STORY TELLING FOR EARTHLY SURVIVAL BY FABRIZIO TERRANOVA

Feminist thinker and historian of science Donna Haraway is perhaps best known as the author of two revolutionary works: the essay “A Cyborg Manifesto” and the book *Primate Visions*. Both set out to upend well-established “common sense” categories: breaking down the boundaries among humans, animals, and machines while challenging gender essentialism and questioning the underlying assumptions of humanity’s fascination with primates through a post-colonial lens.

Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival features Haraway in a playful and engaging exploration of her life, influences, and ideas. Haraway is a passionate and discursive storyteller, and the film is structured around a series of discussions held in the California home she helped build by hand, on subjects including the capitalism and the anthropocene (a term she “uses but finds troubling”), science fiction writing as philosophical text, unconventional marital and sexual partnerships, the role of Catholicism in her upbringing, humans and dogs, the suppression of women’s writing, the surprisingly fascinating history of orthodontic aesthetics, and the need for new post-colonial and post-patriarchal narratives. It is a remarkably impressive range, from a thinker with a nimble and curious mind.

Haraway and filmmaker Fabrizio Terranova (who we hear but don’t see) are clearly at ease with each other, giving the conversations—which are punctuated by images of artwork and quirky animation—a casual, intimate feel. Terranova makes playful use of green screens to illustrate Haraway’s words, or to comment on them. As Haraway discusses storytelling, we see an image of her in the background, writing. When the conversation turns to her own unorthodox personal relationships and the oppressive power of heteronormativity, the redwoods out her window are replaced by a crisp suburban street. Underwater invertebrates, one of Haraway’s fascinations, float by in the background of a room.

Artist Talk — Oct 22

BEATRIZ CORTEZ: A DIALOGUE OF NOMADS

Reading is a creative act that brings a text to life and allows it to unfold into new contexts and acquire new meanings. The artist explores the act of engaging with the ideas of French philosophers such as **DELEUZE**, **GUATTARI**, **CLASTRES**, or **FOUCAULT** from her own experience and in conversation with other Central American thinkers in Los Angeles and in Central America as an active process of creation and transformation across borders, and across time and space.

Closing — Nov 3

TEA SERVING BY NINE HERBS CHARM FOLLOWED BY A MEDITATIVE WALK TO HIGHLAND PARK WITH DAVID HORVITZ

In collaboration with **DAVID HORVITZ**, **NINE HERBS CHARM** conducted a tea ceremony at LACE that stems from their research on the plumeria plant. This ceremony prepared participants for a meditative walk by attuning them to the consciousness of plumeria and other local plants. This meditative walk brought the Plumeria Tree for FLAX from LACE in Hollywood to the FLAX House in Highland Park. The artist took the participants on a guided walk to the FLAX House where the plumeria tree was planted.

