



# LIVING IN HOPE

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Curatorial Incubator v.16

# CONTENTS

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## **03 Introduction**

Lisa Steele

## **06 Mnemoscenes: Subjective Impulses And Social Memory**

Madeline Bogoch

*Program notes on pg. 7*

## **10 .exe**

Warren Chan

*Program notes on pg. 11*

## **14 Slow Unfurling**

Sanjit Dhillon

*Program notes on pg. 15*

## **17 A truth, if it is a truth**

Ivana Dizdar

*Program notes on pg. 18*

## **22 Endarkened Perspectives**

Karina Griffith

*Program notes on pg. 23*

## **28 "It could be a good day. It needs to be treated carefully."**

Robin Alex McDonald

*Program notes on pg. 29*

## **33 Performative Faiths**

Camilla Salcedo

*Program notes on pg. 34 | Spanish version on pg. 37*

## **41 love as rupturous as I know it to be**

Shalon Webber-Heffernan

*Program notes on pg. 42*

## **46 Artists' and Curators' Biographies**

# INTRODUCTION

***“We live in hope of deliverance from the darkness that surrounds us.”***

*P. McCartney*

“The darkness. We each have our own and then there’s the shared sense of despair that bubbles up when we consider the degradation of our Mother Earth through our own polluting ways, the never ending wars that sweep refugees towards borders that close in their faces, the stories that are told, the lies that circulate. There is no end.

And yet we move on. Not in the way the so-called Enlightenment projected – towards greater and more perfect perfection. But just *moving*: towards love, towards caring, towards hope. At Vtape, we felt that we needed some of this spirit, so we propose that the Incubatees look for works in our holdings that exemplify this spirit...”

I wrote this call for submissions to the Curatorial Incubator v.16 on March 2, 2020.

And then the unthinkable happened – the pandemic – and Vtape closed to the public on March 14, 2020. All this meant that the Curatorial Incubator v.16: *Living In Hope* would go completely on-line. Given the unusual – indeed unique – circumstances of this Incubator, we decided to invite an unusually large number of participants – 8 – to put together programs responding to this theme.

We tried to develop an exhibition format that would mimic the in-person viewer experience, with a live introduction by the curator – on Instagram or FacebookLive – on a Friday at 7pm ET. This was followed by the first title in their program posted to our website, with one title rolling out per week until the full program was up. As the final title was about to run, we posted a pre-recorded Zoom conversation between the curator and the artists onto our website.

After nearly a year and a half of on-line screenings, talks, panels and exhibitions, it’s easy to forget how difficult it was back in early 2020. The logistics of Zoom had to be mastered for everything from staff meetings to artist’s talks. Live events went on-line with mixed results – dropped audio, late starts, screen sharing problems.

Yet our audiences persevered at Vtape, turning in for our introductions, conversations and programs.

This year's participants range from artists to curators to scholars – and combinations of all sometimes. They are:

**Madeline Bogoch** is a writer and MA student at Concordia University whose work is focused primarily on experimental moving image practices. She is on the programming committee for the Winnipeg Underground Film Festival (WUFF) and is a Project Coordinator at Video Pool Media Arts Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**Warren Chan** is a filmmaker who is currently completing his MA in Cinema and Media Studies at York University, where he is researching the usage of A.I. generated images in experimental cinema.

**Sanjit Dhillon** is a multidisciplinary artist, curator and cultural worker based in Tkaranto/Toronto, Canada. Her practice interrogates constructions of memory, embodied subjectivity, precarity, and the limits of visual culture in creating and disseminating identity.

**Ivana Dizdar** is a scholar, curator, and artist just beginning her PhD studies at the University of Toronto in Art History. She works on the intersection of art, politics, and law, with particular interest in decolonial gestures and acts of epistemic disobedience.

**Karina Griffith** is a visual art, film scholar and curator based in Berlin and Toronto. Her moving image, textile and paper works explore the themes of fear and fantasy, often focusing on how they relate to belonging. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto's Cinema Studies Institute.

**Robin Alex McDonald** is an academic, independent curator, and arts writer. They currently work as a part-time faculty member at Nipissing University in North Bay and OCAD University in Tkaronto/Toronto, and a PhD Candidate in the Cultural Studies Program at Queen's University in Katarokwi/Kingston, Ontario.

**Camila Salcedo** is an interdisciplinary artist, independent curator, community facilitator and arts educator based in Toronto. She is interested in unlearning, questioning, and dismantling systems and institutions that were created to define us such as nations, identity, politics, and migration. She has a BFA from NSCAD University from 2018.

**Shalon T. Webber-Heffernan** is a curator and doctoral candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at York University. Her work broadly explores contemporary site-specific and feminist performance projects that respond to issues surrounding borderlands, space, and disappearance throughout the Americas.

This year, **Jeanne Randolph** joined me to select the participants from the submissions. Jeanne is one of Canada's foremost cultural theorists. She is the author of the influential book *Psychoanalysis & Synchronized Swimming* (1991) as well as *Symbolization and Its Discontents* (1997), *Why Stoics Box* (2003), *Ethics of Luxury* (2007), *Shopping Cart Pantheism* (2015), *Prairie Modernist Noir: The Disappearance of the Manitoba Telephone Booth* (2018), and, most recently, *My Claustrophobic Happiness*.

Jeanne met with the participants in the summer of 2020 in a workshop where she discussed the importance of "free association" when

it comes to both curating and writing. A second workshop was presented by art historian/scholar **John Paul Ricco** who offered several readings for the participants including one by Calvin Warren featuring a critique of “the politics of hope” in relation to anti-Black racism. The conversations that evolved from these workshops were fascinating and led the participants to consider their selections in light of some different ideas.

With their selections made and approved, participants moved on to their writing. Each had an opportunity to work with a professional in the field. Madeline Bogoch worked with **Frances Loeffler** who is the chief curator at the Oakville Galleries and a member of the ICI (Independent Curators International). Warren Chan’s editor was **Gareth Long**, an artist who has produced large-scale public art installations, publications and sculptural works and has shown most recently at Art Basel, fall 2021. Sanjit Dhillon had the opportunity to work with **Sajdeep Soomal**, a PhD student in the Department of History at the University of Toronto whose research focuses on science and technology studies, the history of consciousness and madness, and contemporary art practices within and beyond South Asia. Performance artist, writer, and Professor Emerita OCADU **Johanna Householder** worked as an editor with Ivana Dizdar. **Warren Crichlow**, Professor, Faculty of Education, York University and associate of the Centre for Humanities Research, edited the texts of Karina Griffith. Robin Alex McDonald’s editor was **Nahed Mansour**, a Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist, curator, programmer, and arts-administrator whose research-based practice draws from archival images, found footage, and material-culture to investigate notions

of race and power through dance. Camila Salcedo received the editing expertise of **Dot Tuer** who has published widely on Canadian and Latin American art, with a focus on photography, performance, and new media. And artist **Erika DeFreitas** edited the texts of Shalon T. Webber-Heffernan. Thanks to all for their skill, knowledge and generosity in offering their time to our Incubatees. It was much appreciated.

I extend my appreciation to all the staff at Vtape who each contribute their expertise and encouragement: Distribution Director Wanda Vanderstoop, Kim Tomczak, Restoration & Collections Management Director, Distribution Assistant Dustin Lawrence, and Kiera Boulton, Submissions and Communications Coordinator who each work directly with each Incubatee to make sure they have access to the titles they want to preview while they are in the research phase of the project. And many thanks to Chris Gehman Director of Administration; and Deirdre Logue, Development Director who make sure all fees are paid in a timely fashion to the Incubatees and to their artists. And many thanks to Philip Jonlin Lee and all at Linseed Projects for giving us this handsome publication.

Finally I thank the eight Curatorial Incubator participants for their focussed research that has examined Vtape titles to find just the right work to speak to their curatorial intention, truly reflecting the depth of our holdings. I hope viewers will find the hope that we all need in these very strange time we have found ourselves in.

**Lisa Steele**  
*Creative Director, Vtape*

# MNEMOSCENES: SUBJECTIVE IMPULSES AND SOCIAL MEMORY

MADELINE BOGOCH

Outside of this residency I work in a video archive, so much of my day is spent organizing content in a way that is legible to those who wish to access it. Despite my best efforts, the residues of my own subjectivity inevitably leave their mark on this process. In reflecting on this intrusion of the self into the realm of objectivity, I gravitated towards works that develop their own distinctive methods of sorting through the excess of images and content we exist amongst. This program presents three films: *The Innocents* by Jean-Paul Kelly (2014), *Bunte Kuh* by Parastoo Anoushahpour, Ryan Ferko, and Faraz Anoushahpour (2015), and *Hobbit Love is the Greatest Love* by Steve Reinke (2007). Relying heavily on found imagery, these works are evidence of what Hal Foster refers to in his essay in *October 110* as the “archival impulse,” a utopian drive which seeks to gauge the present and forecast the future through the remnants of the past.

There is an economical quality in this impulse of recombination and juxtaposition, one which produces meanings greater than the sum

of their parts. In *The Innocents*, this is used to undermine the fidelity of the documentary genre, while *Bunte Kuh* obscures the prototypical travelogue into something hazier and more ominous. This impulse reappears in Reinke’s acerbic video essay *Hobbit Love is the Greatest Love*, most explicitly in the image stream of U.S. military personnel killed in the Second Gulf War, arranged by attractiveness. While the relation between Kelly’s images remain opaque, his and Reinke’s image streams share a libidinal classification system which signals the desire to parse an overwhelming supply of content through a personal logic. Something in this drive speaks to an empathic sensibility shared by all three works, which pursues new dialogues by superimposing the artist’s own inflections onto their sources. By developing new ways of ordering and thinking about existing material, these artists exhibit a private approach to the public archive. I present these works as ways of overcoming an impasse of imagination, clever approaches that incubate new futures through existing material and unlikely interlocutors.

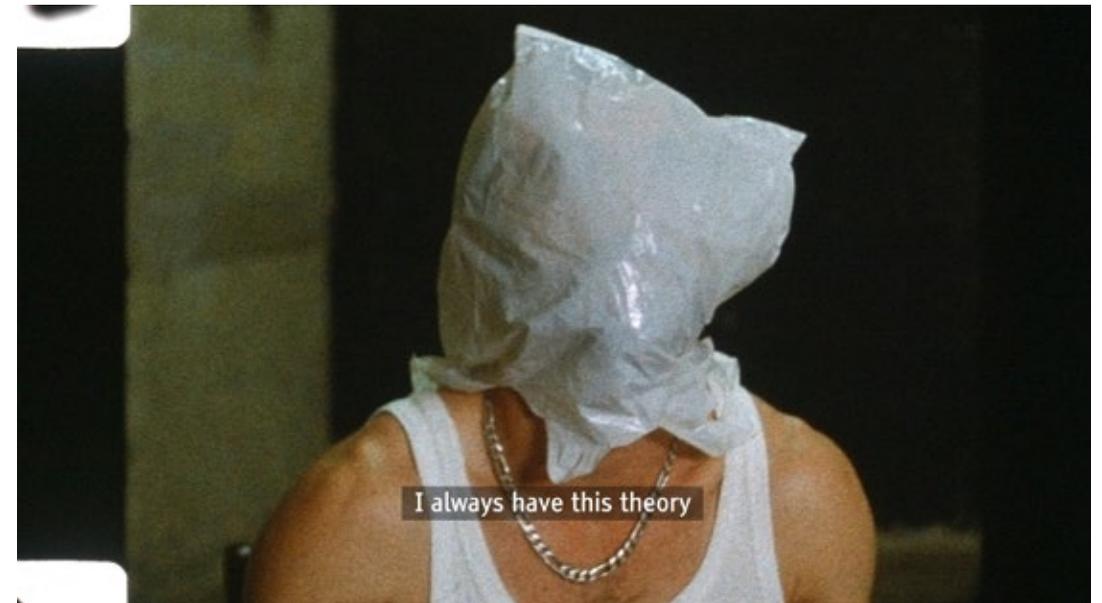
# MNEMOSCENES: SUBJECTIVE IMPULSES AND SOCIAL MEMORY

MADÉLINE BOGOCH

## 1. Jean-Paul Kelly

### *The Innocents*, 2014, 12:50

*The Innocents* begins with the artist presenting 42 prints of images culled from online sources. Lacking any explicit criteria, the stream includes images of violence, sex, and several portraits of Truman Capote, a figure who functions as a sort of conceptual guide throughout the film. Each photo has one or more holes punched out, voids which reappear later as solids in a Super 8 animation. Between these scenes, Capote reappears through a surrogate who wears a plastic bag over his head, and re-enacts an interview with the author, mimicking his gestures. What Capote refers to in the interview as “poetic reporting” could be aptly applied to Kelly’s practice as a whole, particularly his capacity to extract the essence of the documentary image by prying it apart at the seams. In *The Innocents*, the source material is reduced to its most basic properties, only to be reassembled in new forms which probe at the tangled connections between material, representation, and perception.



*The Innocents*, 2014

**2. Faraz Anoushahpour, Parastoo Anoushahpour, Ryan Ferko**  
***Bunte Kuh*, 2015, 5:45**

Tolstoy wrote that that all happy families are alike. Following from that, it could be said that all travel photos share a similar homogeneity. In *Bunte Kuh*, the artists mix documentation of a family trip with footage of swimming koi fish. The image rapidly flickers between the two, with overlaid audio of fireworks, and a voice-over reading a found postcard. The integration of the layered audio against the sharp edits creates a rhythmic cadence, which lulls you into a trance-like reverie. The tone and the content strikes a stark contrast—an implication of violence lurking behind the leisure-class luxury of seeking exotic experiences. This disorienting ambience is produced by the artists' manipulation of the audiovisual afterlife of memories, defamiliarizing their otherwise prosaic content. What transpires is a sensation not unlike déjà vu, an elusive familiarity, which leaves an eerie residue in its wake.

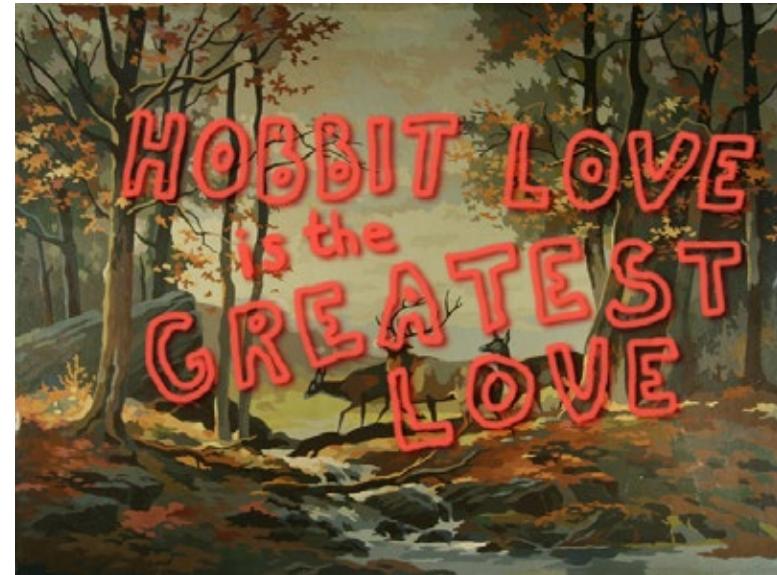


*Bunte Kuh*, 2015

### 3. Steve Reinke

#### ***Hobbit Love is the Greatest Love, 2007, 14:00***

Reinke opens his desktop essay with an immodest proposal to update Adrian Piper's *Calling Card* project. Penned as an open letter, and speaking in the plural pronoun "we," Reinke offers a sarcastic polemic against "that increasingly impossible category: autobiography." In a later chapter, Reinke graphically elaborates his hyperbolic historical diagram as a diamond shape, the widest point at the centre representing the present situated between two points, past ("trauma") and future ("apocalypse"). He arrives at this figure by combining a teleological view of history hurtling towards eventual apocalypse, with a retrospective view of biography which is derived out of an unnamed proto-trauma. Reinke's work thrives at this crossroad of biography and history. There's an elegant brevity to his organizational logic, often illustrated through diagrams and delivered by his resonant voice and authoritative tone. In the final chapter of *Hobbit Love*, Reinke presents a series of portraits of military casualties from the Second Gulf War, arranged by attractiveness. While the conceit of this gesture is certainly provocative, the sheer volume of the sample size reflects the unmanageable violence with which we are continually confronted. In response to this magnitude Reinke responds rationally, exhibiting them according to his own desire—a way of ordering the world and its overabundance of images and trauma, which makes about as much (non)sense as anything else.



*Hobbit Love is the Greatest Love, 2007*

**.EXE**

WARREN CHAN

What does hope look like in the digital age? As digital depictions of the world become increasingly integral to our experience of the world, to live in a world with hope requires also finding hope in the digital realm. Yet, I sometimes find it difficult to be hopeful in an environment where we have been reduced to data points and our fates seem predetermined by code and algorithms.

The world we live in is a hybrid of the physical space we occupy and the digital spaces through which our vision of the world is continually refracted. As our experiences of reality are subsumed by experiences defined by corporate technologies, liberation from this mediated version of the world appears distant. What hope remains in finding humanity and freedom in a digital reality obfuscated by corporate agendas, where the language of ones and zeroes have been co-opted by corporate tech development?

In this program, I find hope in this digital reality through video works that recontextualize digital images, reject the rules of virtual realities, and interrogate the boundaries between physical space and the infinite worlds on the other side of our screens. Digital

photographs, videogame worlds, and computer-generated realities are critically examined in these video works. Through this, I find hope that the opaque systems of the digital world can be understood, reclaimed, and reshaped.

Beginning with the white light of a digital screen and ending with the black void of digital nothingness, the extremes of the digital world are symbolized here. By titling this program **.exe**, I aim to represent hope in the digital age as executable and actionable. The featured artists here do not find liberation by opting out of new technology. Rather, they confront the new status quo and carve out their own spaces of reflection and expression within this new digital world. Hope here lies not in Ludditism but in methods of participation that critically engage with these mediums and reject the corporate-defined parameters of these technologies.

**.EXE**

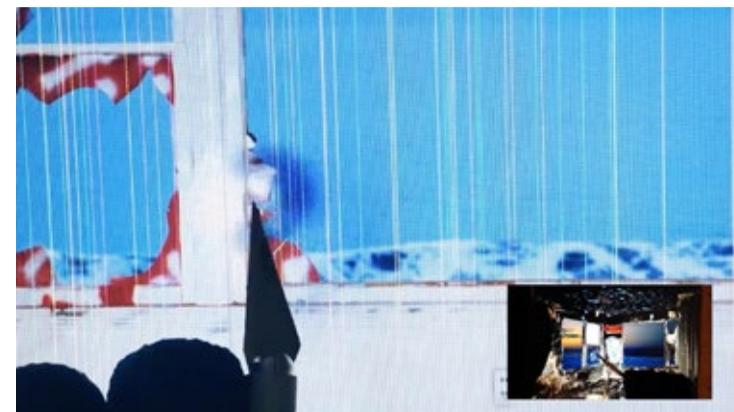
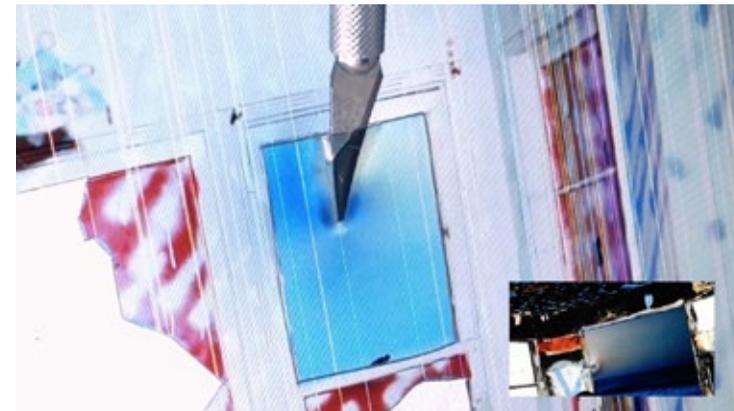
CURATED BY WARREN CHAN

## 1. Alejandro Šajgalík

***zuma\_cuts.mov*, 2016, 06:06**

*Zuma* was a photo series by John Divola, wherein the deterioration of an abandoned building used for firefighter training was documented over a year. Contributing to the building's decay himself during his photography, Divola frames his process of documentation as part of the structure's continued change.

In *zuma\_cuts.mov*, Šajgalík recontextualizes these images on the computer screen and continues the building's deterioration as he cuts into the screen with a utility knife. The image on the screen distorts under the blade, foregrounding the materiality of the digital image and its existence within physical space. As the view outside the window is replaced by whiteness, the image ceases to index an absolute space in the physical world, but becomes a window to the infinite space on the other side of the screen. The building Divola photographed lives on in this digital space and continues to change. Through this, Šajgalík investigates the reciprocal relationship of the digital and non-digital.



*zuma\_cuts.mov*, 2016

## 2. Peggy Ahwesh

### *She Puppet*, 2001, 15:15

Most virtual worlds of videogames are governed by rules that dictate what one can and cannot do. In *She Puppet*, Ahwesh uses the *Tomb Raider* videogame series to examine the limits of our actions in these coded realities and posits that we can reject those rules and find liberation within the parameters of these spaces. Through this defiance of the videogame's predetermined goals and limitations, the virtual world becomes a space of reflection and expression.

Death in games is intended to be a lose-state. Yet, Ahwesh recontextualizes death here and examines it as a victorious liberation from the confines of the videogame world's rules. Death symbolizes defiance of the world's rules and with each death, one is reborn once again to keep forging their own path. Accompanied by quotations from Fernando Pessoa, Joanna Russ, and Sun Ra, Ahwesh turns *Tomb Raider's* world into a platform to explore themes of identity and gender.

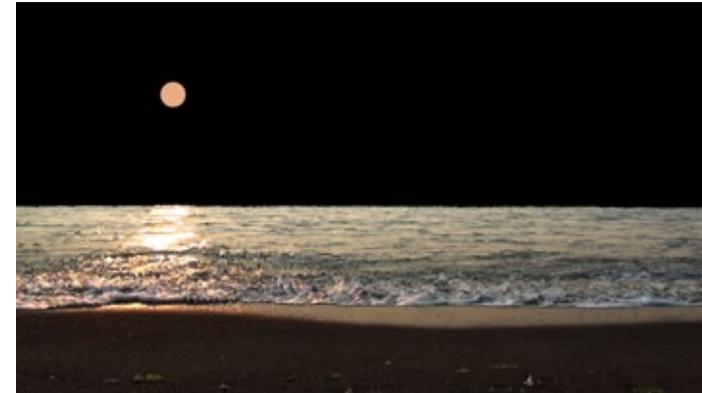


*She Puppet*, 2001

### 3. Yoshiki Nishimura *Somewhere*, 2016, 07:55

In *Somewhere*, the natural world and the digital world form a dialogue as footage of ocean waves are translated into 3D computer images. These resulting images of waves may not represent any physical location, but this video work argues that these uncanny bodies of water do, in fact, exist *somewhere*. Nishimura documents and explores digital space as real and meaningful, and foregrounds its relation to natural space. Digital images here are not mechanical reproductions of scenes in the natural world, but acts of creation that use real world references to construct a new space.

In this digital somewhere, we confront the black void of nothingness beyond the horizon. Shrouded in darkness, the image is at first haunting and alien. Yet, as the computer generated sun sets, there is hope that it will rise once again in a new day – a reminder that the future of this digital landscape has not yet been determined.



*Somewhere*, 2016

# SLOW UNFURLING

SANJIT DHILLON

I began the process of selecting these films as our established modes of being were brought to a halt. The routines and rituals that we regularly engaged in without any thought transformed into absences overnight. A rupture formed in our accelerated culture of individualism and competition.

It is this rupture, however, that has impelled a collective probing of many of the values entrenched in capitalist life. This program forms a deeper investigation into how these values are upheld and have consequently shaped our ability to imagine a future outside of capitalism. The films presented in Slow Unfurling arrest these socio-political constructs with stillness, contemplation and reflection.

Mark Fisher says that capitalism has not only become the only viable political and economic system, it has become impossible to imagine a coherent alternative. In the contemporary moment, the only option is to envision and work towards an alternative. Through ongoing reflection, as exemplified by these tapes, the potential for imagining new ways of living beyond reformist principles can be proposed. To do so is to live in hope.

# SLOW UNFURLING

CURATED BY SANJIT DHILLON

## 1. Saskia Holmkvist

### ***Blind Understanding*, 2009, 12:05**

In Audre Lorde's seminal speech, *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*, she urges the audience to consider their commitment to language and the power of language. It is not only imperative to interrogate the truths we speak, but to examine the language in which these truths are spoken. "What are the words you do not yet have?" Lorde asks, "What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own?"

In *Blind Understanding*, Holmkvist poses a parallel question: "How do we know what we think we know?" Through a series of loosely connected fragments, the artist meditatively explores the arbitrary codification of language and its relation to power, change, and assimilation. Holmkvist illustrates how our modes of communicating are rarely neutral and at times insufficient, yet perpetually in flux.



*Blind Understanding*, 2009

## 2. Johan Grimonprez

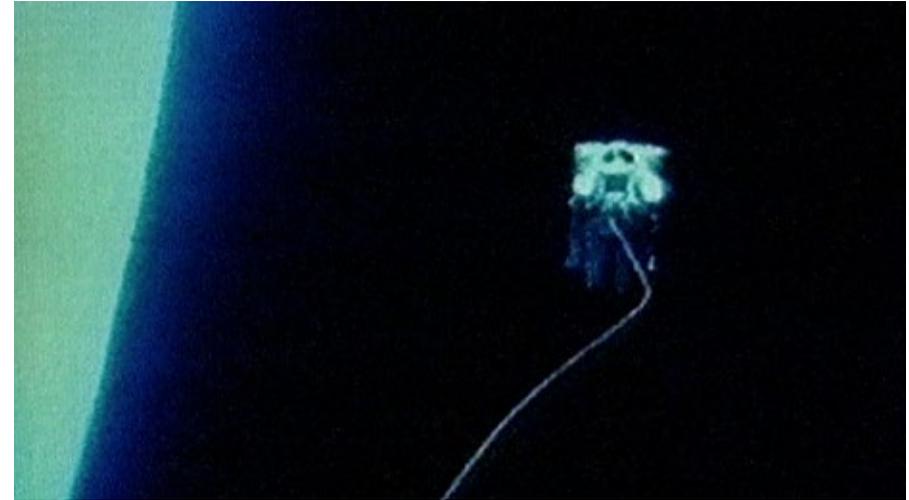
### ***Raymond Tallis on tickling*, 2017, 08:00 minutes**

Neoliberal individualism requires a collective consciousness to uphold and sustain it. *Raymond Tallis on Tickling* proposes that there are no individuals, as consciousness is fundamentally relational. Tallis remarks: "We are ourselves only through being in dialogue with others." Tallis challenges the notion that humans are merely organisms acting according to their nature, and that much of the human experience cannot be quantified as much as science has tried to do so.

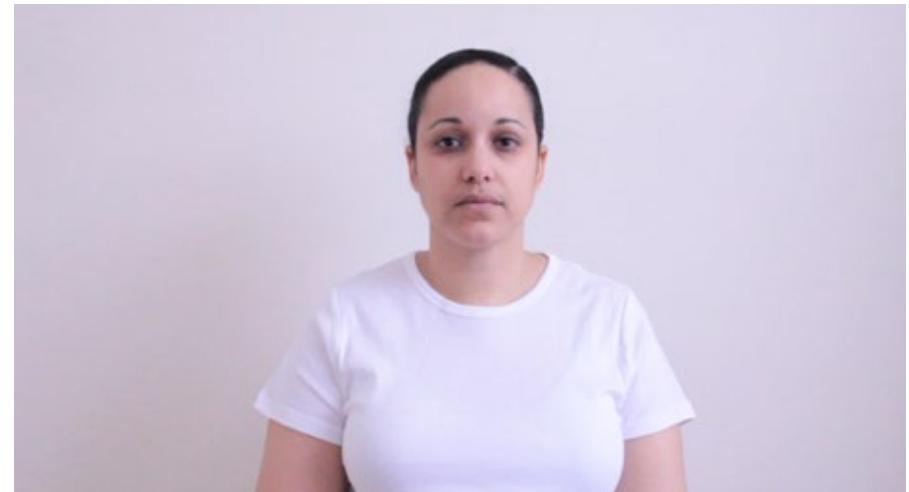
## 3. Erika DeFreitas

### ***forgive me for speaking in my own tongue* - 4 mins and 12 secs before entering melancholy, 2016, 04:12**

*forgive me for speaking in my own tongue - 4 mins and 12 secs before entering melancholy* depicts the artist, Erika DeFreitas, in a state of meditative breathing. Focusing on each inhale and exhale, the act of breathing surpasses biological necessity to become an act of asserting presence. In the larger context where the right to life continues to be contested, the ability to breathe easily—without anxiety or urgency—is not guaranteed for all. Her intentionality towards presence becomes an act of resistance.



*Raymond Tallis on tickling*, 2017



*forgive me for speaking in my own tongue*  
- 4 mins and 12 secs before entering melancholy, 2016

# A TRUTH, IF IT IS A TRUTH

IVANA DIZDAR

My first migration occurred in utero. Having fled their native Yugoslavia during the Civil War, my parents temporarily settled in South Africa. In their first photograph in Cape Town, they are standing on a headland at the southernmost point of the continent, my mother visibly pregnant. Before them is a large wooden signboard inscribed with the words “Cape of Good Hope.” It is an undeniably romantic epithet and, surely, for my parents, there is hope to be found. But just how good, how ubiquitous, could it be? With the end of apartheid approaching yet still a year away, what the Cape could represent was only a discriminative, fraught, and elusive sense of hope.

I see the theme of this year’s Curatorial Incubator, “Living in Hope,” as a complex provocation, and hope itself as something invariably complicated. My pursuit to uncover buried treasures of videography in Vtape’s archive drew me to works that made me reconsider the process of *uncovering* as something equally complicated: something that can be the source of illumination but also of

vulnerability, of risk, of harm and pain and death. Against the axiom that *uncovering* always or necessarily leads to truth and justice, the videos in this selection call for a recognition of its multivalence.

One work traces the controversy that unwinds when an ancient skull is excavated, inciting an alternate narrative to emerge as white supremacists challenge Native American tribes’ indigeneity. Another meditates on objects and artifacts left exposed during moments of crisis and war as susceptible to destruction and erasure. A third draws attention to the forced uncovering of precarious bodies at checkpoints where people are robbed of their dignity and their lives. And, finally, a playful finale uncovers the prevalent misgendering of the falcon, at once prompting an essentialist response and potentiating a radical subversion.

# A TRUTH, IF IT IS A TRUTH

CURATED BY IVANA DIZDAR

## 1. New Red Order

### *The Violence of a Civilization Without Secrets*, 2017, 10:00

Science, mythology, ideology, pathology: strangers, acquaintances, friends, or brothers?

It is 1996 in Kennewick, Washington. The excavation of the “Kennewick Man” provokes a contentious debate: what is his lineage and who was here first? Erroneous and misinterpreted craniological studies incite alternative claims to indigeneity as well as attempts to re-frame, deny, and erase a colonial past.

New Red Order’s documentary-cum-manifesto, *The Violence of a Civilization without Secrets* traces a legal, ethical, and ontological conflict that arises when a community’s right to bury its dead is challenged by calls for anthropological research.

Discovery, evidence, authentication, testimony, and their media coverage are, in this tale of subjectivity, not marked by a pursuit of truth.

In their uses, misuses, and abuses, excavation and burial are kin.



*The Violence of a Civilization Without Secrets*, 2017

## 2. Akram Zaatari

### *Time Capsule Kassel*, 2012, 07:24

Iron, concrete, earth.

I grew up with an understanding that to save something can mean to bury it. Roughly translated, the root of my grandmother's maiden name, Kaljević, is "mud." To protect them from being kidnapped during invasions by the Ottoman militia, my ancestors, I am told, were periodically compelled to bury their children beneath layers of mud.

Artifacts and photographs are a lot like children: precious, delicate, and in need of protection. In *Time Capsule Kassel*, Akram Zaatari re-imagines the National Museum of Beirut's effort to conserve its collection of objects by keeping them sealed within concrete blocks for the entirety of the civil war in Lebanon. Zaatari's work offers an extension of this model, one that entails concealment as well as burial.

Crypts, tombs, and mausoleums signify death, and yet, here, they enable the preservation of cultural life, a treasure covered in favor of its eventual recovery.



*Time Capsule Kassel*, 2012

### 3. Sharif Waked

#### ***Chic Point*, 2003, 07:15**

“Fashion for Israeli checkpoints,” the artist calls it.

To characterize Sharif Waked’s work as a dark comedy feels wrong, and yet it is both unquestionably dark and irrefutably within the margins of humor — no, satire — no, absurdity.

It begins with a runway, with male models and their chiseled abs. High-cropped shirts, a collar misplaced above the naval, a horizontal zipper across the stomach, a gaping hole revealing chest hair and nipple. To be sure, the haute couture in *Chic Point* is designed to accentuate the midriff.

Suddenly, documentary photographs reveal Palestinian men forced by Israeli soldiers to prove they are not carrying explosives by lifting their clothing and exposing their abdomen: an invasive and humiliating surveillance practice, an overture to fatal endings. Why not, Waked suggests, make this biopolitical choreography more efficient, more effortless, through innovations in fashion?

After all, violence, here, has long been in vogue.



*Chic Point*, 2003

#### 4. Niklas Sven Vollmer and Laura Kissel *Unfettering the Falcons*, 2007, 07:20

What's in a name? Would that which we call a falcon by any other name fly as high?

A gender-reveal party—for a bird and a football team—takes center stage in Niklas Sven Vollmer and Laura Kissel's *Unfettering the Falcons*. This is not the kind of nature documentary one is used to seeing on Discovery.

Identical twins Laretta and LaVergne, both experts on birds of prey, want to set the record straight: the falcon is, by definition, a female. The only true Atlanta Falcons, they add, are the team's cheerleaders.

Wishful football fans insist the falcon's athletic namesake would do well to rebrand itself as her male counterpart, as the Atlanta Tercels. Unbeknownst to the fans, the tercel is smaller and—quite literally—the weaker sex.

Replete with the twins' idiosyncratic observations, the video evokes the tension between language and gender, for the latter is unfixed and resistant to definition, sometimes slipping through the cracks of our syntax.



*Unfettering the Falcons*, 2007

# ENDARKENED PERSPECTIVES

KARINA GRIFFITH

What if darkness were not the mere opposite of light, but instead could do and be everything light can do and be, and much more? Comprised of five shorts, this programme muses on possibilities for affirmation, contestation, and delight informed by Cynthia Dillard's metaphorical concept of "endarkenment" (a response to "Enlightenment" that imagines a new world order centring Black feminist thought) put forward in her 2000 essay in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*.

Furtive patois, clandestine acronyms and secret handshakes are the stuff of endarkenment. It is an impromptu session of the Wobble at a Black picnic, a string of custom emoticons that say more than a paragraph ever could. In other words, endarkenment claims the right to *opacité*, Édouard Glissant's world vision of restitution in plain view, a resource for speaking from one's place of difference and living in hope opposed to the bleak monolithic forecast of normalization and assimilation.

To this end, I assembled a video program that animates an aesthetical canon distant from *white male ableist supremacy*. In form and content, the program exhumes from Vtape archives experiments with endarkening through reversals and bold contrasts, foregrounding treatment of sound and cinematography, light and dark. *Endarkened Perspectives* make full use of the productive capacity in ambiguity and resist Enlightenment's fixation on rationality. It evokes other processes, movements, and ways of knowing that cannot be essentialized or tied down to one meaning.

*Endarkened Perspectives* is not meant to be "got" in a rational epistemic way but enjoyed like an eavesdropped conversation where the gist is enough to make you feel something. Here, moving images speak boldly from the heart through radically imagined counter-narrative practices rooted in the rhythms of song and dance, poem and lullaby, language and vision. Eschewing "normality," these works fashion room for diverse intersections of gender, indigeneity, class and other dispossessed positionalities historically situated in oppression but also in ethical practices of resistance.

# ENDARKENED PERSPECTIVES

CURATED BY KARINA GRIFFITH

## 1. Dana Inkster

***From Billie...To Me...And Back Again, 2002, 04:20***

A radio dedication evokes an ephemeral encounter in this short experimental film by Dana Inkster. Exaggerated performances of high and low voices play with gender expectations of Black love before the soundtrack gives way to Billie Holiday's *You're My Thrill* (1949). Reverse photography of a pair of hands switches the perspective, a denial of film convention that turns light into dark. Billowing smoke in the tight frame obscures the image and the identity of the lovers, as does the shadow play of two heads joining in a kiss. The film's cyclical form and use of repetition fit the narrative like a needle in a record groove, a visual and sonic expression of open, endarkened love.



*From Billie...To Me...And Back Again, 2002*

## 2. Thirza Cuthand

### *Sight*, 2012, 03:33

The unseen or endarkened perspectives is given literal form in Thirza Cuthand's film *Sight*. The film tells the true story of a relative of Cuthand, who lost his vision and her own bout with temporary blindness to question Western ideas about sanity and the treatment of mental illness. Cuthand manipulates Super 8 footage to obscure images of exteriors to debase fixation on the visual as truth. *Sight* is about seeing as much as it is about how we are seen - by family, by institutions and by the Enlightenment ideologies that create structural inequalities in Canada. Cuthand subverts the role of the ethnographer's informant - the irresistible deadpan tone typical for their work is full of poisonous red herrings that throw us off the scent of the deeper meaning, meant only for those with a shared history and experience.

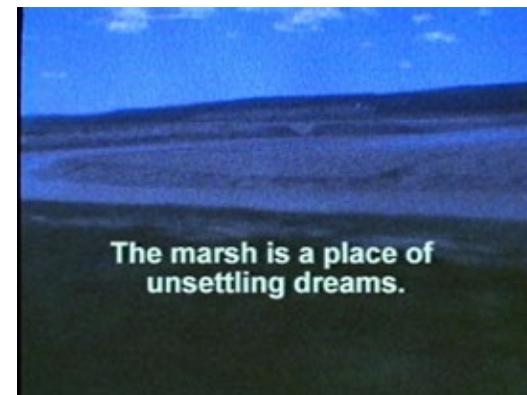


*Sight*, 2012

### 3. Penny McCann

#### ***Marshlands*, 2000, 06:07**

One can think of endarkenment as a tool similar to intersectionality – born in Black feminist experience but helpful for understanding other realities. McCann’s films challenge western expectations of women through narratives of femme magic in rural Canada. Her experiments in super 8, 16mm and video evoke the unseen energies of endarkened possibilities. *Marshlands*, set in and around Sackville, New Brunswick, a town in Eastern Canada, opens with fortune-telling. In her claim of the unknown, McCann’s experimental film feels like wonderful witchery. Overexposed images, fluctuating lighting and barreling trains simulate a feeling of alarm while visually expressing a mood of unintelligibility that defies universal truths.



*Marshlands*, 2000

#### 4. Karina Griffith

***Repair*, 2017, 05:47**

I looked at my body of work for endarkened perspectives and found them in *Repair*, a film about my grandfather's house in Georgetown and the rainforest in Guyana. It is estimated that more Guyanese live outside the country than in it – my diasporic longing for home and my great aunt's knowledge about the healing properties of plants come together in these filmic field notes. Similar to the hidden stories of McCann's *Marshlands*, the mystery of forgotten oral histories hang in the air between the rains in *Repair*. I was struck by a similar approach in another work in the Vtape archive, *Maigre Dog* (part of Yaniya Lee's programme *fractured horizon - a view from the body*). Donna James explores the riddles of Jamaican patois with elders - storytelling with cryptic still life video treatments. Creole is the equivalent of a secret language, an endarkened and empowered tactic for living hope in colonized spaces.



*Repair*, 2017

## 5. Abdi Osman

### ***Labeeb*, 2012, 04:23**

Endarkened perspectives encounter performance in *Labeeb*. Sumaya, a mesmerizing Somali trans-woman, plays with expectations and with the spectator, taunting the gaze on her interpretation of a Somali ritual. The narrative is veiled and opaque, like the translucent shawl between Sumaya's fingers. Where other endarkened cinemas in the programme skirted film convention with photo reversal, Osman balks at expectation with cuts that jump the axis and a dissected frame of diptychs and creative triptychs created with a mirror. Moments of silence between the melodic Buraanbur (a Somali poetic form with the traditional Somali poetry written and sang by women) further assert the right to *opacité*.

In memory of Sumaya Dalmar.



*Labeeb*, 2012

# “IT COULD BE A GOOD DAY. IT NEEDS TO BE TREATED CAREFULLY.”

ROBIN ALEX MCDONALD

In the 1998 novel *The Hours*, Michael Cunningham’s fictionalized character of Virginia Woolf awakens one morning into a liminal state, still half-present in the lush green park she was dreaming of moments ago. As she moves from the park into her bed and then into the bathroom, she carries the feeling of the park – its “banks of lilies and peonies, its graveled paths bordered by cream-colored roses” – with her. Crucially, Virginia avoids looking into the bathroom mirror above the basin, where she knows she will be met with an image that holds the potential to startle and disturb her. Neither does she enter the kitchen, where her servant Nelly awaits. Honouring the fragility of her memory of the park, of her concentration and will to work, of the day itself, she heads straight to her desk where she can buoy the feeling of the park and her own spirits through writing. She declares: “It could be a good day. It needs to be treated carefully.”

Virginia understands that her cautious optimism must be handled with care, like an object prone to shattering. Adopting this same delicate and protective approach, “*It could be a good day. It needs to be treated carefully*” showcases works in the Vtape collection that present hope as “an inherently risky, fragile project.”<sup>1</sup> Each of the four works present narratives of hope anchored in a fragile object – a bowl, a doorway, a butterfly, and a line, respectively. Highlighting precariousness as a fundamental feature of hope’s structures, the underlying question of the program asks: how might we hold out for hope without falling victim to forms of “cruel optimism”?<sup>2</sup> Poetic and anxiety-provoking, desirous yet wary, these four works invite us for a walk along the tenuous line between hope and dejection.

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1 Amy Billingsley, “Hope in a Vice: Carole Pateman, Judith Butler, and Suspicious Hope,” *Hypatia* 30, no. 3 (summer 2015): 599.

2 See Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press), 2011.

**“IT COULD BE A GOOD DAY. IT NEEDS TO BE TREATED CAREFULLY.”**

CURATED BY ROBIN ALEX MCDONALD

**1. Dana Claxton**  
***Hope*, 2007, 09:51**

In Dana Claxton’s *Hope*, a pair of hands carefully repairs a broken bowl, each piece fitting neatly back into its original position. Just when the bowl appears whole again, the hands begin to disassemble it and the process repeats. Though Claxton is Lakota and resides on Coast Salish territory, I cannot help but draw a connection between the bowl in Claxton’s video and the Dish with One Spoon territory: the land on which I spent the first twenty years of my life and on which Vtape’s offices are located. That “we all eat from the same dish” with a single spoon serves as a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for the land—but like the bowl in Claxton’s video, this sense of mutual cooperation is brittle. While every destruction of Claxton’s bowl is swift, each repair becomes increasingly more difficult.



*Hope*, 2007

## 2. Gary Kibbins

### ***Doorway*, 2017, 07:30**

Positing the titular space as both an existential and literal interstice, Gary Kibbins depicts the doorway as a bridge between two realities: what is, and what might be. *Doorway* presents a dramatic narration of the artist's encounter with a particular door, one equipped with a well-worn Nina Olivari lockwood 13-60 handle and laden with promise and potential: "However unexceptional in my life, I could still visualize a different life. A better life. A life full of success, love and adventure on the other side of that door," he explains. For Kibbins, the arc drawn by the door's pathway as it swings open creates a kind of hammock, a space where hopes and possibilities can be temporarily suspended, cherished, and cradled. Although this hopeful space is easily (fore)closed, its mere existence serves as a reminder to viewers of our own abilities to willfully transform quotidian sites into experiences of expectation, anticipation, delusion, and disappointment.



*Doorway*, 2017

### 3. Jorge Lozano

#### ***The Butterfly Effect*, 2018, 06:44**

For a young Jorge Lozano growing up in Columbia, the act of spotting a Blue Morpho butterfly served as a token of good luck. In *The Butterfly Effect*, Lozano's camera scans frantically, possibly hoping to catch a glimpse of another Blue Morpho, but the video's text informs us not to get our hopes up: "good luck and happiness are rapidly disappearing." Like Cunningham's fictitious Virginia Woolf, Lozano's reference to Daoist philosopher Zhuang Zhou's "butterfly dream" suggests that the line that divides dreams from reality (just like the line that divides self from other, or presence from absence) might be more nebulous than we assume.



*The Butterfly Effect*, 2018

#### 4. Rokhshad Nourdeh

##### ***Raid-Line*, 2006, 02:07**

While all four works in *"It could be a good day. It needs to be treated carefully."* explore the figurative line between hope and dejection, Rokhshad Nourdeh makes this line literal by dragging red chalk across the floor below her. In *Raid-Line*, a pair of bare feet struggle to walk the red streak like a tight-rope, bleeding and blurring the chalk as they endeavour to grip the ground. Anxious and uncertain, the feet draw figure-eights in the air as if divining where, exactly, to land. Eventually, they untether themselves from the chalk line, gliding and pivoting across and around it and exposing the false dichotomy it creates.



***Raid-Line*, 2006**

# PERFORMATIVE FAITHS

CAMILLA SALCEDO

*Performative Faiths* brings together works by Julieta Maria, Nela Ochoa and Guillermina Buzio, whose performance-based videos explore popular spiritual beliefs and rituals that are widespread in Latin America. Through their reinterpretations of offerings, altars, and religious gestures, the artists address themes of death, sacrifice, trauma, faith, and mourning.

Growing up in Venezuela, my grandparents had altars in dedicated rooms in their homes, and they lit candles throughout the day for the “*ánimas benditas*,” - souls in limbo that had not yet transcended into heaven. Popular traditions embracing the dead, like this one, are widespread and commonplace sources of hope in Venezuela, primarily for those living in the most impoverished and violent communities, whether in city *barrios* or in rural communities, where untimely death occurs often and unjustly. In Caracas cemeteries in the most crime-ridden areas, people pray to the *santos malandros* (“holy thugs”), a sect of outlaw saints with a large cult following, such as Ismael Sánchez, known for performing crimes of generosity not unlike Robin Hood. These saints derive from the spiritist faith, part of Venezuela’s María Lionza religion, which reveres a mestiza goddess of the same name and borrows

(Spanish version to follow)

from colonial Catholicism, as well as Afro-Caribbean and Indigenous faiths. “María Lionzeros,” those who practice the religion, embrace death through many rituals, including ones by which religious leaders invoke and embody the dead.

Popular beliefs and santos that keep death at the forefront, similar to the ones in Venezuela, are embedded in the social fabric across Latin America. The artists’ works selected for this series reinterpret the rituals of these faith-based traditions. In *the process of making consistent*, Guillermina Buzio examines the tradition of altars dedicated to those who have suffered tragic deaths throughout Argentina. Nela Ochoa fictionalizes her own experience of faith-based rituals while growing up in Venezuela by subverting Catholic gestures in *que en pez descanse*, or “may [they] rest in fish,” a pun on the popular myth that if one bathes in the ocean on Holy Friday one will turn into a fish. In *Exercises in Faith: Embrace*, Julieta Maria questions sacrificial offerings by literally taking the life of a fish by intimately embracing it with her hands. Through their performative actions, the three artists explore popular traditions that give people hope in the face of death in Latin America.

# PERFORMATIVE FAITHS

CURATED BY CAMILLA SALCEDO

## 1. Guillermina Buzio

### *the process of making consistent, 2009, 05:55*

*the process of making consistent* is a video performance in which the artist sits naked in a set that recreates a “Gauchito Gil” altar located near the site of her mother’s accidental death during Argentina’s dictatorship. The artist describes this performance as “healing and painful,” evoking both past and present traumas. In it, she remains motionless as her friends and strangers adorn her with photographs, trinkets, and prayers, emulating altars devoted to those who have died tragically. The work also weaves photographs of the Gauchito Gil altars, a gaucho (cowboy) outlaw figure widely revered in Argentina as a saint, and videos of the Crogmañon Altar, an altar for the 194 people who tragically died in a nightclub fire in Buenos Aires. At the bottom of the screen a text scrolls through invented prayers and written wishes, used by the artist to commemorate her loved ones.



*the process of making consistent, 2009*

## 2. Nela Ochoa

### ***que en pez descanse*, 1986, 16:35**

*que en pez descanse* is a surreal video work modeled after the artist's childhood. All of the characters have cult-tendencies, except for the main character who is distrustful and apprehensive of the society's rules. The characters perform odd choreographic gestures that are slightly "off" from the traditional gestures of the Catholic faith. For example, instead of "crossing" themselves with their right hand, they do it with both hands; instead of kissing the small cross made by their index and thumb, they put their hand into their mouths; instead of taking communion wafers, they ingest a whole live fish. The title is a pun using the word "pez" meaning fish, instead of "paz," meaning peace, and directly translates as "may [they] rest in fish;" it is also a reference to the popular belief that if a person bathes on Good Friday, the day commemorating Christ's crucifixion, they will become a fish.



*que en pez descanse*, 1986

### 3. Julieta Maria

#### ***Exercises in Faith: Embrace, 2011, 06:00***

*Exercises in Faith: Embrace* is a video performance in which the artist sacrifices a live fish that was destined for human consumption and decontextualizes the purpose of its life by killing it for the sake of art. In this “exercise in faith,” she exercises her control and power over the fish by holding it in her hands and hugging it carefully against her chest until it slowly passes away. In the middle of the video, the action subtly starts to replay backwards, so that if looped, the fish will remain in perpetual agony. This can be an incredibly difficult performance to watch, as one observes the artist inflict death upon a live animal during what is usually an act of care – a hug or “embrace.” The artist explores how “faith” and “trust in god” are used as coping mechanisms for living, even though death is our eventual destiny.



*Exercises in Faith: Embrace, 2011*

# SANTAS DEL PESCADO

CAMILA SALCEDO

**Santas del Pescado** reúne los trabajos de Julieta Maria, Nela Ochoa y Guillermina Buzio, cuyos vídeos performáticos exploran creencias espirituales y rituales populares en América Latina. A través de sus reinterpretaciones de ofrendas, altares y gestos religiosos, las artistas dialogan con los temas de la muerte, el sacrificio, el trauma, la fe, y el luto.

Mientras yo crecía en Venezuela, mis abuelos tenían cuartos dedicados a altares en sus casas, donde prendían velas a las ánimas benditas (del purgatorio), almas en el limbo que aún no habían trascendido al cielo. Tradiciones que acogen a la muerte son fuentes comunes y extensas de esperanza en Venezuela, principalmente para aquellos que viven en las zonas más pobres y violentas, como barrios o comunidades rurales, donde asesinatos inesperados suceden con frecuencia. En los cementerios de Caracas ubicados en las zonas más violentas, las personas le rezan a los santos malandros, una secta de santos criminales con grandes seguimiento de culto. Un ejemplo de estos santos es Ismael Sánchez, quien es conocido por haber cometido crímenes generosos como el personaje de Robin Hood. Estos santos provienen de la fe espiritista, parte de la religión María Lionza en Venezuela, la cual venera a una diosa mestiza del mismo nombre, tomando tradiciones y creencias del Catolicismo colonial y religiones

Afro-Caribeñas e Indígenas. Los María Lionzeros involucran la muerte a través de rituales en los que evocan y encarnan los muertos.

Creencias populares que acogen a la muerte y a los santos malandros, similares a los de Venezuela, están inmersos en el tejido social en Latinoamérica. Los trabajos elegidos para esta serie reinterpretan los rituales de estas tradiciones basadas en la fe. En *the process of making consistent* (el proceso de hacer consistente), Guillermina Buzio examina la tradición de los altares dedicados a aquellos que han sufrido muertes trágicas alrededor de Argentina. Nela Ochoa lleva a la ficción los rituales de fe que experimentó durante su niñez en Venezuela, al subvertir gestos Católicos en *que en pez descanse*, obra basada en el mito de que uno se convertirá en un pez si se baña en el mar un Viernes Santo. En *Exercises in Faith: Embrace* (Ejercicios en Fé: Abrazo), Julieta Maria cuestiona ofrendas sacrificiales al literalmente darle muerte a un pez mientras lo abraza íntimamente en sus manos. A través de sus acciones performáticas, las tres artistas exploran tradiciones populares Latinoamericanas que dan esperanza ante la muerte.

# SANTAS DEL PESCADO

CURATED BY CAMILA SALCEDO

## 1. Guillermina Buzio

### *the process of making consistent*, , 2009, 05:55

*the process of making consistent* (el proceso de hacer consistente) es un video-performance en el que la artista está sentada desnuda dentro de un escenario construido que recrea un altar a Gauchito Gil, el cual estaba situado cerca del lugar dónde su madre falleció accidentalmente durante la dictadura argentina. La artista describe este performance como “curativo y doloroso,” ya que evocó traumas de su pasado y su presente. En el video se mantiene inmóvil mientras que sus amigos y extraños la adornan con fotos, objetos y oraciones, emulando altares dedicados a quienes han muerto trágicamente. El video también entrelaza fotos de altares de Gauchito Gil, un gaucho y figura criminal conocida y venerada en Argentina, y videos del Altar de Cromañón, dedicado a las 194 personas que murieron trágicamente en el incendio del “boliche” en Buenos Aires en el 2004. En la parte de abajo de la pantalla hay un texto móvil con oraciones inventadas y deseos, a través de los cuales la artista conmemora a quienes ama.

**Guillermina Buzio** es una artista basada en Toronto con un Bachelor de Bellas Artes de la Universidad Nacional de Bellas Artes P. Pueyrredón (Argentina), un Bachelor de Media Arts del Instituto de Arte y Diseño Emily Carr, y un Máster de Bellas Artes de la Universidad de OCAD. Trabaja en una variedad de medios incluyendo video, instalación y performance.



*the process of making consistent*, 2009

## 2. Nela Ochoa

### ***que en pez descanse, 1986, 16:35***

*que en pez descanse* es un video surreal basado en la niñez de la artista. Todos los personajes tienen tendencias de culto, menos el personaje principal, quien desconfía de las reglas estrictas de la sociedad. Los personajes actúan gestos coreográficos de la fe Católica incorrectamente, como por ejemplo, en vez de hacer la cruz con la mano derecha, lo hacen con ambas manos; en vez de besar la cruz hecha por su pulgar y dedo índice, meten la mano entera dentro de su boca; en vez de tomar la comunión, ingieren un pez vivo. El título es una referencia a la creencia de que si uno se baña un Viernes Santo, el día que conmemora la crucifixión de Jesús, uno se convertirá en pez.

**Nela Ochoa** es una artista Venezolana multidisciplinaria que ha trabajado en video, performance, instalación, pintura y escultura. Estudió baile, pintura y artes en Caracas y París, trasladándose a su práctica a través de exploraciones corpóreas, tanto físicas como científicas. Actualmente reside en Tenerife, España.



*que en pez descanse, 1986*

### 3. Julieta Maria

#### ***Exercises in Faith: Embrace, 2011, 06:00***

*Exercises in Faith: Embrace* (Ejercicios en Fé: Abrazo), es un video performance en el que la artista sacrifica la vida de un pez que estaba destinado a morir para ser consumido, y descontextualiza el propósito de su vida al matarlo para hacer arte. En este “ejercicio en fé”, ejerce su control y su poder sobre el pez, al acogerlo en sus manos y abrazarlo en contra de su pecho hasta que lentamente muere y se convierte en pescado. A la mitad del video, la acción empieza a repetirse al revés, de manera de que si es *looped*, el pez se mantendría en agonía perpetua. El performance puede ser muy difícil de ver, ya que uno observa a la artista matar a un pez durante lo que es normalmente un acto de cariño, un abrazo. La artista explora cómo la “fe” y la “confianza en dios” son utilizados como mecanismos de supervivencia, aunque la muerte es nuestro destino eventual.

**Julieta Maria** es una artista basada en Toronto con un Máster en Bellas Artes de la Universidad de York. Trabaja en una variedad de medios incluyendo video, instalación y web. Su trabajo ha estado basado en video documentación de acciones escenificadas, explorando la experiencia de la violencia como intrusión entre el sujeto y el mundo.



*Exercises in Faith: Embrace, 2011*

# LOVE AS RUPTUROUS AS I KNOW IT TO BE

SHALON WEBBER-HEFFERNAN

Becoming a new mom in a global pandemic has been an experience that's shaped me in ways I cannot yet know, but know are extraordinary. My heart's new colossal capacity has prompted me to consider anew a genuine ethics of care that reaches beyond the performative care I see unfolding in a variety of cultural and political settings today. *love as rupturous as I know it to be* ponders caring *otherwise*, prioritizing action while envisioning a radical unbounded love. Intuitively, instinctively, and uninterested in aesthetic distance, I selected works that spoke to me viscerally. I was guided by a desire to explore relationships that exceed those that are strictly between humans to include those that exist between plants, animals, and things, and merge into minerals, energy, land, stars and waters. In her 2017 article in *Canadian Art*, curator Tarah Hogue once described how the work of Michif artist Christi Belcourt "nurture[s] relations through kinship networks that are place-based, inter-species and otherworldly, and in turn demonstrates, through beauty, strength and wonder, that other (to colonial capitalist)

ways of being in relation to one another and to the earth are both possible and desperately urgent." These *other ways of being* have inspired me in thinking through what a hopeful future might feel like.

The title of this series is an excerpt from an essay in *c magazine* (#136) by Karyn Recollet that imagines cosmic kinship and imagines the potent magic of dark matter—the vibrant power of imagining elsewhere. These videos symbolize an ethos of generosity—a central tenant for intimate practices of care in a world wildly in need of renewal. They simultaneously index the grave responsibility necessary if ongoing flourishing of life is to be sustained. Understanding that *all* our complex and fragile interactions are inextricably linked requires acknowledging our dependency, collective need, grief, and reciprocity as basic elements of being. Transformation calls for a rebirth of the world as we know it and demands we are brave enough to face the troubling vulnerability and shattering affective burden of living in hope.

# LOVE AS RUPTUROUS AS I KNOW IT TO BE

CURATED BY SHALON WEBBER-HEFFERNAN

## 1. Ursula Biemann

### ***Acoustic Ocean*, 2018, 18:00**

*I close my eyes and imagine the calmest cold waters  
—a profound solitude.*

The midnight blue sounds and vast environment of Ursula Biemann's *Acoustic Ocean* evoke meditative, magical thinking in deep time. Sonic frequencies and fin whale vocalizations swell in my heart. The absence of a sea butterfly's heartbeat foretells of things to come. A whale's memory chamber holds secrets of an ancient future. A dolphin's ghost is free and swirling away from all entanglement.

Biemann's oceanic video installation probes the acoustic dimensions of marine life in the North Atlantic. Located on the Lofoten Islands in Northern Norway, the video centers on the performance of a Sami marine-biologist-diver who is using a model of a submersible equipped with hydrophones and recording devices. In this science-fictional quest, the aquanaut's task is to sense the submarine space for sonic and bioluminescent forms of expression and feeling—interconnected relations between marine, human, scientific, energetic, and digital worlds become enmeshed.



*Acoustic Ocean*, 2018

## 2. Shelley Niro

### ***Tree*, 2006, 05:00**

*In a dream I had, a pregnant woman was a tree and in her grasp was every kind of plant. She was the holder of wisdom, pain, and all the love in the world.*

Shelley Niro's *Tree* is a tender film that acknowledges the import of spiritual connectivity while illuminating the pernicious nature of slow violence. The atmosphere of Niro's film is austere, barren. A woman personifying earth bears witness to the murderous fallout of capitalism, ecological destruction, and spiritual collapse. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall Kimmerer writes that "grieving is a sign of spiritual health. But it is not enough to weep for our lost landscapes; we have to put our hands in the earth to make ourselves whole again."

The woman listens with a broken heart to the visions of earth. Her body transmutes, returning to eternity. We sense that she may return once healing and the balance between humans, land and water have been restored.



*Tree*, 2006

### 3. prophecy sun

#### ***Traces of Motherhood, 2016, 02:20***

*I've been reflecting on the ordinary, day to day elements of motherhood, like eating cold curry at 10AM on zero sleep while my baby screams—trying to approach these less than fabulous moments with openness, mindful attention, and awe. The entirety of life in a single moment.*

prOphecy sun merges minutiae with magnificence in her video art practice. sun uses smartphone technology to capture task-like movements, and improvisational gestures as she walks with an atmospheric weather balloon and a small child through vast, open land.

*Traces of Motherhood* is part of a multi-channel video and sound installation that considers how the body responds to the agency of things in the world. The work emphasizes temporality and the technological unconscious, and our ability to sense and perceive different forms of media that are visual, aural and tactile. *Traces of Motherhood* contemplates non-human sites as performing entities and the environment as active collaborator.



*Traces of Motherhood, 2016*

#### 4. Sharon Isaac

##### ***Dancing with Naango, 2018, 03:17***

*My daughter stares with wonder at the leaves flitting in the wind and reaches out for their succulent green flesh.*

Sharon Isaac's film *Dancing with Naango* makes me think about matrilineal lineages and of place. I watch it and wonder about dance as embodied knowledge transfer, ancestral presence, trauma, and the healing properties of joy. Isaac's film traces her daughter's journey as a Jingle Dress dancer, and is a gentle dedication to her Great Grandmother, Naango (Star).

The film is an oral and visual retelling of the reasons her daughter dances and the deep importance of maintaining her Ojibwa traditions. The distinctive rattle and clink of the metal cones and the hopeful prayers invoked through the dance spark a tingling sensation. The gestures in this work overflow with jubilation and are sensitive to that which cannot be encapsulated through words. There is a quality of light that shines with undiminished luster.



*Dancing with Naango, 2018*

## ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

**Peggy Ahwesh** began her career using Super-8 film and has since experimented with a diverse range of mediums, including found footage, digital animation, and Pixelvision video. Her wide breadth of works take on different formats and styles, but are unified by a distinct voice that uses levity to investigate digital culture and gender identity.

**Parastoo Anoushahpour, Faraz Anoushahpour, and Ryan Ferko** have worked in collaboration since 2013. Using various performative structures, their projects explore collaboration as a way to upset the authority of a singular narrator or position. Recent work has been shown at New York Film Festival, TIFF, Gallery 44 and Trinity Square Video in Toronto.

**Ursula Biemann** is based in Zurich, Switzerland. Her artistic practice is strongly research oriented and involves fieldwork in remote locations where she investigates climate change and the ecologies of oil and water. Her video installations are exhibited worldwide and she has published several books and is founding member of the collaborative art and media project *World of Matter*.

**Guillermina Buzio** is a Toronto-based artist with a BFA from the National University of Fine Arts P. Pueyrredón (Argentina), a Bachelor of Media Arts from the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design, and an MFA from OCAD University. She works in a range of media, including video installation and performance.

**Dana Claxton** works in film, video, photography, single- and multi-channel video installation, and performance art. Her practice investigates beauty, the body, the socio-political, and the spiritual. Her work has been shown internationally at the Museum of Modern Art, Walker Art Centre, Sundance Film Festival, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney) and is held in several public collections across Canada. She has received numerous awards including the VIVA Award and the Eiteljorg Fellowship.

**Thirza Jean Cuthand** was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, and grew up in Saskatoon. Since 1995 they have been making short experimental narrative videos and films about sexuality, madness, youth, love, and race, which have screened in festivals and galleries internationally. They completed their BFA majoring in Film and Video at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, and their Masters of Arts in Media Production at Ryerson University. They are of Plains Cree and Scots descent, a member of Little Pine First Nation, and currently reside in Toronto.

**Erika DeFreitas** is a Scarborough-based artist whose practice includes the use of performance, photography, video, installation, textiles, works on paper, and writing. Placing an emphasis on process, gesture, the body, documentation, and paranormal phenomena, she works through attempts to understand concepts of loss, post-memory, inheritance, and objecthood.

**Karina Griffith** is a visual art, film scholar and curator based in Berlin and Toronto. Her moving image, textile and paper works explore the themes of fear and fantasy, often focusing on how they relate to belonging. Griffith writes for *Texte Zur Kunst*, *Canadian Art*, *Berlin Art Link*, *Missy Magazine*, *Shadow & Act*, among others. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto's Cinema Studies Institute. She holds a lecturer position at the Institute for Art in Context at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK).

**Johan Grimonprez's** work dances on the borders of practice and theory, art and cinema, documentary and fiction, demanding a double take on the part of the viewer. Informed by an archeology of present-day media, his work seeks out the tension between the intimate and the bigger picture of globalization. It questions our contemporary sublime, one framed by a fear industry that has infected political and social dialogue. By suggesting new narratives through which to tell a story, his work emphasizes a multiplicity of realities.

In **Saskia Holmkvist's** work, questions of agency and professionalized language are explored through fractured narrative, employing performance, orality, film and improvisation. The works address consequences of power structures in communication such as translatability of subject positions as well as historical trajectories and post colonial presence by interacting with methods of communication borrowed from fields such as interpretation, psychology, journalism, and improvisational theatre.

**Dana Inkster** is an Alberta-based media artist and cultural producer. Her first film, *Welcome to Africville*, was released in 1999 and won critical acclaim and awards in Canada and internationally. Since that time, Dana has produced and directed award-winning short films and videos spanning the genres of experimental video art to television public service announcements. Her films and videos have been exhibited and acquired throughout Canada and around the world. She continues to make experimental video work that explores the margins of personal history and the imagination.

**Sharon Isaac** is an Anishinaabe Kwe (Ojibway) filmmaker/ storyteller/ and writer from Saugeen First Nation. Through film making, storytelling and writing, she works towards restoring and re-interpreting lost cultural knowledge while actively engaging with contemporary cultural practice. She enjoys speaking to young children, adults, elders, and groups of people about stories and legends concerning her Ojibwa heritage.

**Jean-Paul Kelly** is a Toronto-based artist working in video, drawing, and photography. His practice questions the limits of representation by examining complex associations between found photographs, videos, sounds, and online media streams. He has extensively exhibited and screened works across North America and Europe and is currently a Visual Studies lecturer at the University of Toronto.

**Gary Kibbins** is a media artist and writer currently living in Kingston, Canada. He previously taught at the California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, and now teaches in the Department of Film & Media at Queen's University. A collection of his essays and scripts titled Grammar & Not-Grammar is available from YYZ Books.

**Laura Kissel** is Professor of Media Arts in the School of Visual Art and Design at the University of South Carolina and an Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker. She has received grants from the Fledgling Fund, South Carolina Humanities Council, and was a Fulbright Fellow in 2009.

**Jorge Lozano** has been working as a film and video artist for the last twenty years and has achieved national and international recognition. His fiction films and experimental works have been exhibited at many international festivals and galleries including the Toronto International Film Festival and the Sundance Film Festival. He has been involved with the organization and creation of many cultural and art events, including aluCine Toronto Latin Film + Media Arts Festival.

**Julieta Maria** is a Toronto artist with an MFA from York University. She works in a variety of media, including video, installations and web. Her work has been centred on video documentation of staged actions, exploring the experience of violence as an everyday intrusion between the subject and the world.

**Penny McCann's** body of work spans twenty years and encompasses both dramatic and experimental films and videos. A long-time activist/ worker in the Canadian media and visual arts community, Penny served as president of the Independent Film and Video Alliance from 1996-1999. Penny lives and works in Ottawa, where, since 2004, she has worked as Director of SAW Video Media Art Centre. In 2014, in recognition of her contribution to the Ontario artist-run community, Penny was awarded the ARCCO Achievement Award.

**New Red Order (NRO)** is a public secret society facilitated by core contributors Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil, and Jackson Polys. Working with an interdisciplinary network of informants, the NRO co-produces video, performance, and installation works that confront settler colonial tendencies and obstacles to Indigenous growth and agency.

**Shelley Niro** is a member of the Six Nations Reserve, Bay of Quinte Mohawk, Turtle Clan. A multi-media artist, Niro is conscious of the impact post-colonial media have had on Indigenous people and works to present people in realistic and exploratory portrayals. Some of Niro's films include *Honey Moccasin*, *It Starts with a Whisper*, *The Shirt*, *Kissed by Lightning*, and *Robert's Paintings*.

**Yoshiki Nishimura** is an experimental filmmaker who primarily works with 3D computer graphics. Through this, Nishimura examines the relationship between real and virtual worlds. He teaches film and media arts at Tohoku University of Art and Design in Yamagata, Japan.

**Rokhshad Nourdeh** was born in Téhran in 1963, and arrived in France in 1983. She graduated from the National school of Beaux Arts of Paris in 1986. She continued theoretical research within the university Paris, Sorbonne, for several years. Her pictorial research explores the relationships existing between visual arts, architecture, urban space and cinema.

**Nela Ochoa** is Venezuelan multidisciplinary artist who has worked in video, performance, installation art, painting and sculpture. She studied dance, painting and arts in Caracas and Paris, translating to her practice through explorations of the body, both physically and scientifically. She is currently based in Tenerife, Spain.

**Abdi Osman** is a Somali-Canadian multidisciplinary artist whose work focuses on questions of black masculinity as it intersects with Muslim and queer identities. Osman's video and photography work has been shown in Canada and internationally in both group and solo exhibitions. Osman holds an MFA in Documentary Media from Ryerson University, and a B.A. in African Studies from the University of Toronto.

**Steve Reinke** is a Canadian artist and writer best known for his diaristic videos which express his desires and pop culture appraisals with endearing wit. His work is screened widely, and is in several collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Pompidou (Paris), and the National Gallery (Ottawa).

**Alejandro Sajgalik's** work draws from his academic background in architecture and urban sociology, as well as his experiences with queerness and intimacy. A self-taught interdisciplinary artist, Sajgalik has explored a wide array of artforms including music, dance, video, and text.

**prOphecy sun** is an interdisciplinary performance artist, video and sound maker, mother, and PhD candidate at SFU. Her practice celebrates both conscious and unconscious moments and the vulnerable spaces of the in-between in which art, performance, and life overlap. She performs and exhibits regularly in local, national, and international settings and has authored several peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and journal publications.

**Niklas Vollmer** is an interdisciplinary artist who teaches film production at Georgia State University. Vollmer's experimental documentary work has screened in the US, Canada, Europe, Africa, South America and Asia, and at AFI, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, California Museum of Photography, and the Directors Guild of Los Angeles.

**Sharif Waked** was born in Nazareth to a Palestinian refugee family from the village of Mjedil. He lives and works in Haifa/Nazareth. Through ironic reflections on power and politics, Waked overturns established aesthetic formations and ponders the absurd realities of political conflict.

**Akram Zaatari** has been exploring issues pertinent to postwar Lebanon. Co-founder of the Arab Image Foundation (Beirut), Zaatari based his work on collecting, studying, and archiving the photographic history of the Middle East notably studying the work of Lebanese photographer Hashem el Madani (1928-), as a register of social relationships and of photographic practices.

## CURATORS' BIOGRAPHIES

**Madeline Bogoch** is a writer and MA student at Concordia University whose work is focused primarily on experimental moving image practices. She is on the programming committee for the Winnipeg Underground Film Festival (WUFF) and is a Project Coordinator at Video Pool Media Arts Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**Warren Chan** is currently completing his MA in Cinema and Media Studies at York University, where he is researching the usage of A.I. generated images in experimental cinema. Outside of his studies, Warren is a filmmaker with an interest in experimental video works that analyze digital and new media technologies.

**Sanjit Dhillon** is a multidisciplinary artist, curator and cultural worker based in Tkaranto/Toronto, Canada. Her practice interrogates constructions of memory, embodied subjectivity, precarity, and the limits of visual culture in creating and disseminating identity. She has curated for Xpace Cultural Centre, DUTY FREE zine and participated in residencies at Whippersnapper Gallery and Roundtable Residency.

**Ivana Dizdar** is a scholar, curator, and artist. She works on the intersection of art, politics, and law, with particular interest in decolonial gestures and acts of epistemic disobedience. Her writing recently appeared in MIT's art and architecture journal *Thresholds* and in *Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art*.

**Karina Griffith** is a visual art, film scholar and curator based in Berlin and Toronto. Her moving image, textile and paper works explore the themes of fear and fantasy, often focusing on how they relate to belonging. Griffith writes for *Texte Zur Kunst*, *Canadian Art*, *Berlin Art Link*, *Missy Magazine*, *Shadow & Act*, among others. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto's Cinema Studies Institute. She holds a lecturer position at the Institute for Art in Context at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK).

**Robin Alex McDonald** is an academic, independent curator, and arts writer. They currently work as a part-time faculty member in the Fine and Visual Arts department at Nipissing University in North Bay, an instructor in the Visual and Critical Studies program at OCAD University in Tkaronto/Toronto, and a PhD Candidate in the Cultural Studies Program at Queen's University in Katarokwi/Kingston, Ontario.

**Camila Salcedo** is an interdisciplinary artist, independent curator, community facilitator and arts educator based in Toronto. She is interested in unlearning, questioning, and dismantling systems and institutions that were created to define us such as nations, identity, politics, and migration. She has a BFA from NSCAD University from 2018.

**Shalon T. Webber-Heffernan** is a curator and doctoral candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at York University. Her work broadly explores contemporary site-specific and feminist performance projects that respond to issues surrounding borderlands, space, and disappearance throughout the Americas. She was Curator in Residence at the Curatorial Lab @ Sensorium Centre for Digital Arts and Technology (2019-2020) and has recently worked with Toronto's 7a\*11d International Festival of Performance Art as well as grunt gallery in Vancouver.

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