



Guadaupe Martinez &
Olivia Whetung
Re/search Re/surgence
Or Gallery
Feb 1 - March 14, 2020

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Re/search Re/surgence

Re/search Re/surgence considers knowledge and knowing as embedded in body, memory and land. In particular, water is evoked to illustrate how place-based and embodied knowledge re-emerges into a vital and generative flow after long periods of obscurity, erasure and cover. Artists Guadaupe Martinez and Olivia Whetung are each deeply engaged in the transfer of knowledge.

Through her performance-based practice and her collaborative work with CUERPO, Guadaupe Martinez explores the potential for mentorship and critical pedagogy. Within the inherently relational elements of site-specific performance, Martinez' work articulates between a public, a place and the performers themselves. *From Tree to Fountain* includes tightly edited clips from the video documentation of a June 2019 public performance by CUERPO in Vancouver's Cathedral Square, projected on to the wall at Or Gallery. The event, organized by Or Gallery in connection with *Re/search Re/surgence*, also extends into a risographed book project printed using Or Gallery's stationery. This work circulates through both the gallery, as art object, and Or Bookstore, as artist book. Other installation elements, such as the specific shade of yellow for the wall and wooden shelf holding a bowl, refer to Or Gallery's former Hamilton Street space where the collaboration with Martinez and CUERPO began. The sound of bells from the church that was only steps away from the old gallery recreates the aural backdrop of the Hamilton street space. These elements form the background for a series of performances by CUERPO taking place throughout the exhibition dates. A series of four workshops addressing performance art theory, spiritual traditions and therapeutic practices will also be offered to the public during the exhibition.

The constant presence of the Anishinaabe language and beading in Whetung's work reference her commitment to the revitalization and continuity of Anishinaabe epistemology

and culture through her own study. She gives visibility to Anishinaabe material and language forms to undermine the permanence of infrastructure and policies that settlers have used to alienate the Anishinaabe from their land and livelihoods.

tibewh is an Anishinaabeemowin term for ‘a shoreline that one is in or on.’ Whetung’s series of beadworks is based on birds-eye perspectives of the watery negative spaces of the lift locks comprising the 386 kilometre-long Trent Severn Waterway connecting Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay. The planning for this series of locks to facilitate boat transport across Ontario predates the confederation of Canada, having first been discussed in 1833 and completed in 1920. Over the course of this period, the Anishinaabeg whose territory would be most affected by the establishment of the waterway were never consulted and they lost large areas of land to flooding due to construction in 1844, then again with an expansion of the waterway in 1908. Aside from the loss of homes and sacred grounds, the flooding pushed game that were central food sources for hunting further inland to property that had been claimed by settlers. Whetung’s community of the Curve Lake First Nation was one of those devastated by the flooding of their land and shorelines. This chain of events was one in a continuous colonial theft of land and resources that robbed the Anishinaabeg of their food security, sacred sites and inter-community connections. Whetung highlights that, despite the major changes, the Anishinaabe place names have endured and maintained the connection to the pre-waterway shorelines, waterscape and terrain. In this way, the Anishinaabe language enacts place-making, and the reiteration of such place names transforms language into a teacher of Anishinaabe history and land.

In *Re/search Re/surgence*, water and its relationship to entropy haunts the space, shifting between visibility and invisibility.

Whetung’s work *tibewh* narrates the Trent-Severn Waterway that was built and directed through Anishinaabe land, flooding and destroying First Nations territory and hunting grounds

as a result. Though her representation of the waterway is fragmented to the point of abstraction, still the Czech seed beads shimmer like the surface of a calm lake or pond as viewers walk past.

Intermittently the gallery is filled with the gurgling sounds of a water fountain from the soundtrack to Martinez's video projection. The video and surrounding constellation of objects, that make up *From Tree to Fountain* are a siphon to Or Gallery's previous location at 555 Hamilton Street, where it was the latest in a succession of art galleries that operated on that site from 1972 until August 2019. However, *From Tree to Fountain* also references the precarity and loss of cultural and public space in the current era of accelerated urban gentrification and the corporatization of the commons. Water sourced from the fountain in Cathedral Square is hidden in a vessel positioned above the viewer. The structure holding up this vessel and water was once part of a collection of structures rigged up across the former Or Gallery's ceiling to catch and divert the regular plumbing and water leaks that were slowly disintegrating and destroying the gallery's supporting infrastructure.

The watery link to Or Gallery's previous site is also due to the extended time that Martinez and CUERPO spent there developing their performance and undertaking of a series of workshops together. Over the length of this engagement with the gallery and its nearby environs, CUERPO's performers and performances became a place-making actor alongside, or even more so, than the gallery. CUERPO's durational embodiment of a community of learners in and outside the gallery, to paraphrase writer Miwon Kwon, uproots the physical site and the institutional frame. In its place, CUERPO work inside the fluidity of a discursive site, the fountain through which knowledge and exchange may circulate.

-Denise Ryner

Guadalupe Martinez is an interdisciplinary artist and educator interested in understanding the complex relationships between place and identity. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she immigrated to Vancouver at age 28, where she lives and works on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

Placing the body at the centre of her practice, Martinez' work often takes the form of installation, performance, and collaborative research with a deep consideration for her personal and inherited histories. Through somatic practices and collaboration Martinez creates alternative spaces of learning and explores the potential for embodied research and love-actions to heal and decolonize the body-mind. Her commitment to spirituality, teaching, and political awareness underlies the development of her work in diverse contexts and she has presented work in Canada, the US, Italy, Mexico and Argentina.

Olivia Whetung is Anishinaabekwe and a member of Curve Lake First Nation. She completed her BFA with a minor in Anishinaabemowin at Algoma University in 2013, and her MFA at the University of British Columbia in 2016. Whetung works in various media including beadwork, printmaking, and digital media. Her work explores acts of/active native presence, as well as the challenges of working with, in, and through Indigenous languages in an art world dominated by English. Her work is informed in part by her experiences as an Anishinaabemowin learner.

Her work has been the focus of solo exhibitions at Gallery 44, Toronto (2018); Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, Kelowna (2018); Artspace, Peterborough (2017); and 180 Projects, Sault Ste. Marie. She was awarded the John Hartman Award in 2018, the William and Meredith Saunderson Prize for Emerging Artists in 2016, and is a recipient of a CGS-M Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Award and an Aboriginal Graduate Fellowship. In 2019 she was awarded a Joseph S. Stauffer Prize by the Canada Council for the Arts.

Events

Artists' talk: Guadalupe Martinez and Olivia Whetung
Saturday February 8th, 2pm.

CUERPO Workshops

Thursday February 13, 3-5pm

Friday February 14, 3-5pm

Guadalupe Martinez is offering two movement workshops that are free and open to the public. All bodies and levels of experience are welcome. The groups will be small: 4 – 8 participants. Please email your name and phone number and preferred workshop date to or@orgallery.org to register for the free workshops.

CUERPO Performances

Following scores, writing, movement sequences, somatic techniques and embodied inquiry developed during the workshops, CUERPO will present a series of performances to take place in the gallery on the following dates. All performances are at 2pm.

Saturday February 15,

Thursday February 20

Friday February 21

Thursday February 27

Friday February 28

Thursday March 5

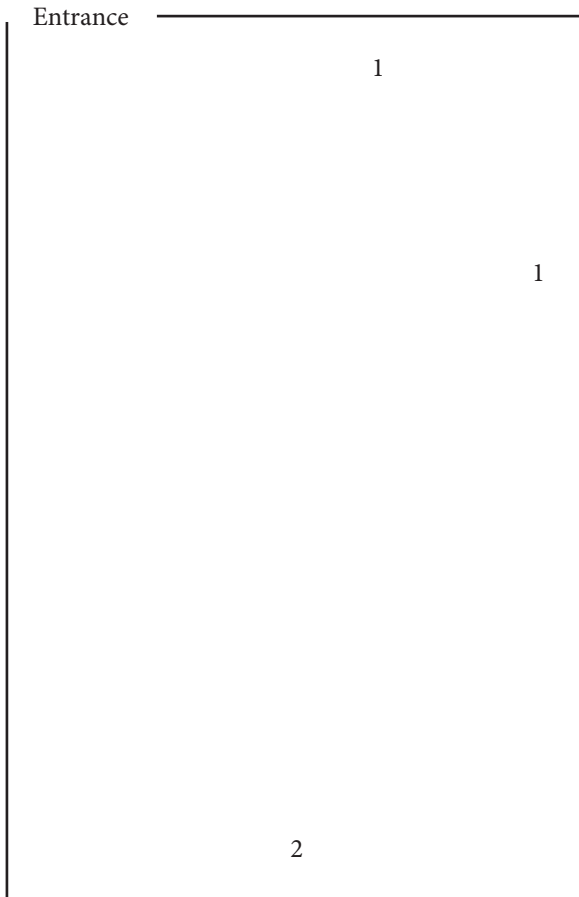
Friday March 6

Thursday March 12

Friday March 13

Performers: Guadalupe Martinez, Stephanie Bueno, Chipo Chipaziwa, Sai Di, Jelena Markovic, Angelica Poversky, Dalia Shalabi, David Ezra Wang, and Yasmine Whaley-Kalaroa.

Gallery Map



1. Olivia Whetung
tibewh
2017
Czech seed beads, shoe canvas
2. Guadalupe Martinez
From Tree to Fountain
2020
installation, video with sound (17 min, 32 sec)

Or Gallery Staff//

Denise Ryner, *Director/ Curator*

Laurie White, *Assistant Curator*

Asia Jong, *Gallery, Bookstore and Communications Coordinator*

The Or Gallery Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council, the Province of BC through the BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, our members, donors, and volunteers. Or Gallery is a member of the Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres (PAARC).

Or Gallery acknowledges its presence on the unceded territory of the x^wm θk^w y' m [Musqueam], Skwxwú7mesh [Squamish] and Səlilwətaʔ4/Selilwitlh [Tsleil-Waututh] First Nations.