

June 14 to December 9, 2023

On Americanity & Other Experiences of Belonging

curated by
Analays Álvarez Hernández & Colette Laliberté



Patricio Dávila + Immony Mèn, *Passing Through the Heart*, 2021-2023 (Digital Illustration), Image courtesy of the artists.

Patricio Dávila + Immony Mèn | Estey Ducuara
Eddy Firmin | Fredy Forero | Alexandra Gelis
Caroline Monnet | Ximena Velásquez



ONSITE
GALLERY

This publication accompanies the exhibition, *On Americanity and Other Experiences of Belonging* presented at Onsite Gallery, OCAD University, Toronto.

EXHIBITION:

On Americanity and Other Experiences of Belonging

June 14 to December 9, 2023

Onsite Gallery

199 Richmond St. W.

Toronto, ON M5V 0H4

PUBLISHER:

OCAD University

CURATORS/AUTHORS:

Analays Álvarez Hernández and Colette Laliberté

DESIGNER:

Elliot Lahman

© Onsite Gallery 2023

For the creation of the exhibition *On Americanity and Other Experiences of Belonging*, Colette Laliberté and Analays Álvarez Hernández would like to thank: their spouses Pablo S Cazaurang, and Marc Bazin; all the artists in the exhibition; Gail Young, Mercedes Fosalba; Stella and Natalie L. Pierre-Louis, John Dickson; OCAD University: Ryan Rice, Lisa Deanne Smith, Susan Jama, Kesa Smith, Marie-Josée Therrien; Université de Montréal: Dr. Ersy Contogouris; and the generous financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts.

Onsite Gallery is grateful for the support of: OCAD University: Sayeda Akbary, Renzi Guarin, Omar Qureshi and Nicholas Sagar; guest curators Analays Álvarez Hernández and Colette Laliberté and the artists.

ONSITE GALLERY ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Tim Gilbert (Chair), Patrick Burke, Andrea Carson Barker, Anshu Chaudhary, Nancy Jain, K.J. McCusker, and Ana Serrano.

ONSITE GALLERY STAFF:

Ryan Rice, Executive Director + Curator, Indigenous Art; Lisa Deanne Smith, Senior Curator; Susan Jama, Programs + Community Coordinator; Kesa Smith, Administrative Assistant.

ONSITE GALLERY STUDENT STAFF:

Nina Ankisetty, Zain Bhanapatel, Mariam Fahmy, Haven Hughes, Angie Sanchez Garcia, Evan Prinos, Ghislan Timm, Anna Tran, Victor Vázquez and Xintong Zuo



Eddy Firmin, *Punching Bags* (detail), 2021-2023. Image by Mike Patten

On Americanity

and Other Experiences of Belonging

Sur l'américanité

et autres expériences d'appartenance

Sobre la americanidad

y otras experiencias de pertenencia

This exhibition brings together two curators, eight artists and their artworks, and audiences around the notion of “Americanity” and what it stands for today. We explore the sense of belonging(s) that an individual or group entertains with the territories¹ they inhabit or to which they are related, whether by actual or inherited ties. Does Americanity imply the same whether a person lives in Bacatá (Bogotá), Tiohtiá:ke/Mooniyang (Montréal), or Tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto), and whether they were born in Abya-Yala² (America) or on another continent?

For over two centuries, Americanity has been debated across the continent, but also in various languages and concerning different time frames, be it since the nineteenth century in former Spanish colonies in the cultural region known as Latin America (“americanidad”), or since the 1970s in the province of Québec (“américanité”) and Brazil (“americanidade”). In these instances, the notion of Americanity heralded

a reaction to the cultural imperialism of Europe and the United States and a claim for a (shared cultural) belonging to the American continent (Kurasawa 2008; De Oliveira Bahia 2004). In the 1990s, decolonial authors began to scrutinize the colonial roots of Americanity and shed light on its development alongside the Modernity/Coloniality duo (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992). Intertwined with the formation of America as a geo-social construct (the so-called “new world”),

Americanity refers [for decolonial scholars] to the way in which the continent served as a stage for the implementation of capitalist exploitation and a racialized system of domination imposed on different populations, with brutal consequences to the indigenous peoples and to the people brought from Africa as chattel slaves, in order to boost the economic endeavors of European powers. (Cholant 2016)

In light of this critique, it seems challenging to disengage the notion of Americanity from the colonial matrix of power in which it is enmeshed. Can we embrace it without perpetuating the erasures of coloniality? “America,” as a name and an idea, was imposed through violent colonization. The continent was named after Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci, but with “a slight change to the ending to make it fit with the already existing non-European continents, Africa and Asia” (Mignolo 2005,³), as a (female) mass of land that was available to be taken and exploited. Is it possible to decolonize the stolen lands we inhabit without renaming them? Does Americanity have the potential to become a symbolic commons for us to understand/see our everyday anew and to re-evaluate

how we relate to one another? Can this be done without romanticizing its colonial roots or imperialistic connotations?

This exhibition explores Americanness through the artists' works and the public's contact with them. How do these artists and audiences situate themselves in relation to this continent's name and cultural, linguistic, religious, or class plurality?—to name but a few markers of difference. *On Americanness and Other Experiences of Belonging* aims to foster a bodily understanding of the concept that challenges and changes people's perception of the continent. It seeks to put into dialogue its inhabitants beyond divisions such as Global North and Global South, North America and South America, or centre and periphery. It also examines the potential and limits of re-signifying or reclaiming a colonial name and concept. The artists in this transcontinental exhibition consider the complex colonial histories across Abya-Yala and explore the possibility of shifting existing continental identities and experiences of belonging through their engagement in ever-continuing horizontal dialogues and creative mechanisms.

While the artists and curators are currently based in Bacatá (Bogotá), Tiohtiá:ke/Mooniyang (Montréal), or Tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto), they have ties to different countries beyond Colombia and Canada—such as Cuba, Chile, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Thailand, Panama, Venezuela, Guadeloupe, France, and Brazil—and they carry with them African, Asian, European, and Indigenous heritages and traditions. Therefore, the artists' cross-disciplinary practices reflect multiple geographies, histories, changing worldviews, and



Patricio Dávila + Immony Mèn, *Passing Through the Heart*, 2021–2023, Digital video. Image by Immony Mèn

critical interrogations of colonization, land, capitalism, and power.

Some artists put together physical and virtual spaces, which echo current times, and unveil the caring potential of new technologies and their role in memory-making. **Immony Mèn and Patricio Dávila's** installation *Passing Through the Heart* (2021–2023) combines diasporic experiences and traditional recipes with motion capture, animation, photogrammetry, and virtual environments. Mèn and Dávila share recorded memories of friends and family cooking. Because they(we) cook with their whole body, it is more than preparing recipes that a camera records: it is gestures, gazes, smiles, facial expressions, stories, and affects. Intergenerational food memories provide a diasporic frame: the “there” and the “here” overlap



Alexandra Gelis, *Phragmite(s)* (detail), 2023, three-screen projection with sculptural objects made with plant-based grasses, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist.

to create a sense of belonging to a place constituted of multiple elsewhere. Similarly, **Alexandra Gelis** bridges traditional practices with DIY electrical components in *Migrant Superpositions: convertirse en* (2023). The installation juxtaposes ambisonic recordings of soundscapes, motors, and sculptures with paper made out of dry cattails and phragmites from Costa Rica and Ontario. Gelis investigates plants' transformation and weaving traditions, both as a symbolic construct and a concrete process, across time and in several natural and geopolitical landscapes. Gelis's bringing together of distinct weaving traditions in Abya-Yala puts her piece in dialogue with **Ximena Velásquez's** video installation *Acururar*⁴ (2013–2023). The video shows a woman in a black dress, her back

to the audience, weaving strands of women's hair into a ball in a cell-like room in ruins. The ball escapes from the slow-moving image to inhabit our reality in the gallery. From Colombia to Toronto, Velásquez weaves together sorrowful tales while building networks.

Balancing bicultural experiences and transferring ancestral codes to contemporary art practices are constants in **Eddy Firmin's** and **Caroline Monnet's** works. Firmin's *méthode bossale*⁵ pervades his installations and sculptures: he developed this creative strategy of engaging with ancestral practices, such as Gwoka,⁶ to repair a collective imagination broken by centuries of slavery. In *Punching Bags* (2021–2023), the use of ceramics to represent punching bags—that feature scraped faces—creates a tension between



Ximena Velásquez Sánchez, *Acururar* (still), 2013–2023, Video installation. Image courtesy of the artist.

strength and fragility, between the aesthetically pleasing surface of the sculpted elements and the (continuing) suffering of Africans and their descendants in “America” that they reference. One can find a similar tension in Monnet’s work between the roughness of construction materials and the poetry she breathes into them. In *KIWE* (2023), which means in Anishinaabemowin “to return from where one started from, to go home,” she uses glass wool insulation. This toxic material can be found abandoned around construction sites. Monnet’s *Soaring Divide* (2023) recalls houses in Indigenous communities, which often look like unfinished constructions. At the same time, shapes inspired by traditional Anishinaabe iconography occupy the tondo’s surface to signal historical and current Indigenous resilience. The two



Caroline Monnet, *KIWE*, 2023, Glass wool, plexiglass. Image courtesy of the artist.

pieces converse: facing the increasing separation between Indigenous people and their ancestral lands, there is an imperative to bring them closer and “return from where they started from.”

For the installation *Black Hole* (2023), a poetic title that takes us to the stars, **Estey Ducuara** carefully laid out several kilos of mineral coal particles on the floor, bringing to mind images of mines, excavations, and the harshness of labour related to resource extraction across Abya-Yala. The piece is a reminder that colonialism has taken new forms and that the territory referred to as Latin America has been and continues to be seen as a land available for exploitation. Territorial control, surveillance, dispossession, and displacement



Eddy Firmin, *Sans titre I*, 2022. Image by Mike Patten

are at the core of **Fredy Forero**'s installation. As its starting point, *Ejercicios de Poder* (2017) takes the notion of security encoded in the blue and red strobe lights of police cars. Activated by movement sensors, the strobe light in this artwork reveals digital images printed on adhesive vinyl, producing a continuous visual game of hide and reveal. The photographs allude to a troubling reality in Colombia, where the sense of security and protection is in constant disarray, if not failing—a reality shared by many other cities on this continent and beyond.

Today, more than ever, people question how to situate themselves in the places where they live and breathe, whether they are Indigenous, settlers, immigrants, or brought to Abya-Yala against their will. *On Americanness and Other Experiences of Belonging* aims to provide a framework for us all.

— **Analays Álvarez Hernández**



Estey Ducuara, *Black Hole*, 2018, installation, dimensions variable, Mineral coal. Galeria de la Universidad de la Salle, Bogotá. Image courtesy of the artist.

REFERENCES

Cholant, Gonçalo. 2016. "Americanness and Resistance in a Mercy, by Toni Morrison." *Op.Cit.: A Journal of Anglo-American Studies* 2 (5).

De Oliveira Bahia, Marcio. 2004. "The concept of 'americanidad,' 'américanité' and 'americanidade': peripheral perspectives." MA Thesis. University of Ottawa.

Del Valle Escalante, Emilio. 2014. "Self-Determination: A Perspective from Abya Yala." *E-International Relations*.

Kurasawa, Fuyuki. 2008. "Americanness and the Prospects of a Hemispheric Social Imaginary." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29 (4): 347-61.

Mignolo, Walter D. 2005. *The Idea of Latin America*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Quijano, Anibal, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1992. "Americanness as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world." *International social science journal* 44 (4): 549-57.

¹ Territory is understood here as the combination of natural and artificial ecosystems

² The Kuna called Abya-Yala, meaning "land in its full maturity," the territory corresponding to current Panama. Since the 1980s, many Indigenous activists and organizations have adopted the name Abya-Yala to refer to the land that Europeans first called Indias occidentales and then America (Del Valle Escalante 2014).

³ The fact of making it a continent is in itself an act of colonization.

⁴ According to the Sistema Nacional de Información Cultural (SINIC), the Indigenous word "acururar," in the Colombian department of Nariño, describes the action of winding or wrapping the yarn.

⁵ The term "bossale" refers to African-born individuals who were enslaved in the American colonies.

⁶ A Guadeloupean practice that combines dance, music, singing, and storytelling, and that was forged to resist colonial violence in the Caribbean.



Fredy Forero, *Benidorm y Sitges*, 2017, from the series, *Seguridad Nacional*, 250 cm x 376.57 cm, Installation (detail).
Image courtesy of the artist.

Biographies

Artists

ALEXANDRA GELIS

Alexandra Gelis is a Colombian-Venezuelan artist living between Canada, Panama and Colombia. Her practice is research-based, process-oriented and multidisciplinary; it includes film, photography, drawing, and media installation with custom-built interactive electronics and sound. Her projects incorporate personal field research to investigate the ecologies of different landscapes by examining the traces left by various socio-political interventions. Gelis explores, documents and re-creates ecologies that take shape between plants and people and between plants and their multi-species interrelationships. Envisioning plants as political allies and as actors is central to her concept of “Migrated Plants.” Gelis has expanded her practice to work collaboratively with youth and diverse communities in the Americas.

She has exhibited in film festivals and exhibitions internationally in the Americas, Europe and Africa and she has given talks in Kassel at DOCUMENTA Institute, Germany, Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Mexico, University of Zurich, and many arts and food sovereignty conferences. Gelis has been the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council, The Paavo & Aino Lukkari Award, Musagetes Arts Foundation and rare Charitable Research Reserve.

Alexandra Gelis es una artista colombo-venezolana que vive entre Canadá, Panamá y Colombia. Su práctica se basa en la investigación, está orientada al proceso y es multidisciplinaria. Incluye cine, fotografía, dibujo e instalaciones multimedia con electrónica y sonido interactivos personalizados. Sus proyectos incorporan trabajo de campo personal como herramienta para investigar las ecologías de varios paisajes, examinando las huellas dejadas por diversas intervenciones sociopolíticas. Gelis explora, documenta y recrea ecologías que toman forma entre las plantas y las personas, así como entre las plantas y sus interrelaciones de múltiples especies. La idea de las plantas como aliadas y protagonistas políticas es fundamental en su concepto de “Plantas migradas”. Gelis ha ampliado su práctica para trabajar en colaboración con jóvenes y comunidades diversas en las Américas. Ha expuesto en festivales de cine y exposiciones a nivel internacional en América, Europa y África, el Centro de Arte Walker, Pleasure Dome, Estados Unidos; Festival de Cortometrajes de Oberhausen, Alemania; Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, Suiza; YYY Gallery, Alucine Latin Media Festival, Images Festival, ArtworxTO, Toronto; OBORO, Montreal; Museo de London, Ontario; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Montevideo, Uruguay; Centro Cultural Recoleta, BienalSur, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Película experimental de Kuala Lumpur; Festival de Cine Latino de Vancouver; Museo la Tertulia, Colombia; el Proyecto Paseo Nuevo México. Ha dado charlas

en DOCUMENTA Institute, Kassel, Alemania, en Laboratorio Arte Alameda, México, en la Universidad de Zúrich y en muchas conferencias sobre arte y soberanía alimentaria. Gelis ha recibido numerosos premios, tal como el Premio Paavo & Aino Lukkari y becas del Consejo de la Artes de Canadá, el Consejo de las Artes de Ontario, el Consejo de las Artes de Toronto, Musagetes Arts Foundation y rare Charitable Research Reserve.

FREDY FORERO

Forero was born in Bogotá, Colombia. He graduated from the Francisco José de Caldas District University in 2009 with a master's degree in visual arts, focusing on digital media and video. His artistic process interposes the figurative and the abstract as a primary tool to link the viewer directly to his work. Furthermore, the public relationship with his pieces is not passive. His interest in new media is present in his research through experimentation between different materials and using electronic devices to activate his images. Forero constantly searches for new mechanisms that generate specific dynamics in his artistic proposals. He reaffirms his language by articulating a dialogue between contemporary and traditional media. His work has been exhibited locally and internationally in venues such as the National Museum of San José in Costa Rica (2012), the Bolivian Art Biennial SIART (2016), and the Centro Colombo Americano in Bogotá, Colombia (2017).

Fredy Forero nació en Bogotá, Colombia. Se graduó en la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas en 2009 con un máster en artes visuales, centrándose

en los medios digitales y el vídeo. Su proceso artístico interpone lo figurativo y lo abstracto como herramienta principal para vincular al espectador directamente con su obra. Además, la relación del público con sus piezas no es pasiva: el espectador las activa y por ende las completa. Su interés por los nuevos medios está presente en sus investigaciones a través de la experimentación entre distintos materiales y el uso de dispositivos electrónicos para activar sus imágenes. Forero busca constantemente nuevos mecanismos que generen dinámicas particulares en sus propuestas artísticas, y reafirma su lenguaje articulando un diálogo entre los medios contemporáneos y los tradicionales. Su obra ha sido expuesta en espacios nacionales e internacionales como el Museo Nacional de San José en Costa Rica (2012), la Bienal de Arte Boliviano SIART (2016) y el Centro Colombo Americano en Bogotá, Colombia (2017).

ESTEY DUCUARA

Estey Ducuara lives and works in Bogotá, Colombia. He is a visual artist and graphic designer. He studied Visual Arts at the Academy of Arts of Bogotá (ASAB) at Francisco José de Caldas District University. He also studied Drawing at La Manzarda School of Arts and specialized in Creation, Communication, and the Art Market at the Node Center for Curator Studies in Berlin, Germany. Ducuara's work focuses mainly on issues of a political nature, such as the struggle to construct the Latin American identity, the excessive extraction of natural resources, and the fight for the conservation of territory. Currently, he is a member of the Proyecto Faenza collective based in the city

of Bogotá. He is also the director and founder of CASADUCUARA, Laboratorio de Arte, a non-profit entity that exhibits the work of local and foreign artists of emerging and medium trajectory and whose space is led by the local Contemporary Art Circuit Node 51. He has had individual and collective exhibitions in Colombia, Brazil, Cuba, Martinique, and Mexico. His latest exhibitions include *Parallel Purposes*, Museum of Contemporary Art of Bogotá (MAC), 2021; *Other Voices, Other Places, between other people's walls*, Udara Polo, Bogotá, 2021; *Animal Social_Temp*, LGM Gallery, 2021; and the *International of Engraving and The Incurables*, Verona Studio, Bogotá, 2021.

Estey Ducuara vive y trabaja en la ciudad de Bogotá, Colombia. Es artista plástico y diseñador gráfico, y estudió Artes Plásticas en la Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá (ASAB), en la Facultad de Artes de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. También estudió Dibujo en la escuela de Artes La Manzarda y se especializó en Creación, Comunicación y Mercado del Arte en el Node Center for Curator Studies en Berlín, Alemania. La obra de Ducuara se centra particularmente en temas de carácter político como la lucha por la construcción de la identidad del hombre latinoamericano, la extracción desmesurada de los recursos naturales y la lucha y conservación del territorio. Actualmente, es miembro del colectivo Proyecto Faenza, con sede en Bogotá. También es director, y fundador de CASADUCUARA, Laboratorio de Arte, entidad sin ánimo de lucro que exhibe el trabajo de Artistas locales y foráneos, emergentes y de mediana trayectoria y cuyo espacio lidera el Circuito local de Arte contemporáneo Nodo 51.

Ha realizado exposiciones individuales y colectivas en Colombia, Brasil, Cuba, Martinica y México.

Entre sus últimas exposiciones se encuentran: *Con fines paralelos*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Bogotá (MAC), 2021; *Otras voces, otros lugares: entre muros ajenos*, Udara Polo, Bogotá, 2021; *Animal Social_Temp*, LGM Galería, 2021; la Internacional Gráfica Impresa e *Incurables*, Verona Studio, Bogotá, 2021; *Tras lo numinoso*, LGM galería, Bogotá, 2018; *Pretérito perfecto*, LGM galería, Bogotá, 2019; *One Thousand Feed*, Galería Melaká, Bogotá 2018.

CAROLINE MONNET

Born to an Anishinaabe mother and a French father, Caroline Monnet is from Outaouais, Québec, and is now based in Montréal. After studying at the University of Ottawa and the University of Granada, in Spain, she pursued a career in visual arts and film. Her work is regularly presented internationally and can be found in prestigious museum, private, and corporate collections. Monnet has become known for minimalist yet emotionally charged work that uses industrial materials and combines the vocabulary of popular and traditional visual cultures with the tropes of modernist abstraction to create unique hybrid forms. She is represented by Blouin Division Gallery.

Née d'une mère anishinaabe et d'un père français, Caroline Monnet est originaire de l'Outaouais au Québec, elle est actuellement basée à Montréal. Depuis la fin de ses études à l'Université d'Ottawa et à l'Université de Grenade en Espagne, elle fait

carrière en arts visuels et en cinéma. Son travail est régulièrement présenté à l'échelle internationale et fait partie de prestigieuses collections muséales, privées et d'entreprises. Monnet est connue pour son travail minimaliste, bien que chargé d'émotions, qui utilise des matériaux industriels et combine les vocabulaires des cultures visuelles populaires et traditionnelles aux tropes de l'abstraction moderniste afin de créer des formes hybrides singulières. Elle est représentée par la galerie Blouin Division.

Anishnabe kwe kak pi odiseh, anmitchigoshiyon odadamin, Outaouais Quebec, pi odiseh Caroline Monnet, anish Montreal nogom tijikeh. Ka ijskwa pi kinamagozitic Ottawa University mamowi Granada University, Spain. Ki matcita ododimitawin eh ija kishkitog kidja wabidjigadenig kijendig kegoni actic mizinazowinikag. Kakina okitikimig nagoni ododimitawin actic kida mikimowan nibjesidjigadeh migwamik. Mamowi kinendasowini kak. Ka ija pi kendagozitic Monnet, ododimitawin nisidwinagoni eh-pitendik koni eh-nimidjyotc madjiyabiksidok odinabidjitowin mamowi odijigijewin, mamowisini weshkitc mamowi nogom ihnendimowini. Blouin Division Gallery o-widokagon kidja kendagozitic.

XIMENA VELÁSQUEZ SÁNCHEZ

Visual artist, researcher, and professor at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, Colombia, Ximena Velásquez holds an M.A. in Visual Arts from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and Ph.D. in Visual Arts from the Universidad Estadual de Campinas, Brazil. Her work focuses on the family photographic archive, the photochemical processes of the image,

the feminine world and the form of the landscape as experience. Since 2001, she has participated in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally. Some of Velásquez recent exhibitions include *If the ears of Humboldt and Bonpland spoke*, FUGA Gilberto Alzate Avendaño Foundation, Bogotá, 2022; SLAM-Latin American Symposium of Media Art, Bogotá, 2021; *Desmontajes (dispositivos como plagas)*, ARTBO/SALAS, Bogotá, 2019. She was the Artist in Residence at the Cerveira Biennial Foundation in Portugal, in 2017, and has been selected to participate in numerous international art events such as the 19th International Art Biennial of Cerveira (2017); *Iberoamericanos*, a photography contest in La Paz, Bolivia (2012); *Videobrasil*, International Festival of Contemporary Art, in São Paulo, Brazil (2011); ARTBO, Bogotá International Art Fair 2012. She has also received several grants and prizes including the Production grant for established artists, Ministerio de Cultura Colombia, 2021.

Artista visual, investigadora y docente en la Universidad Pontificia Javeriana de Bogotá, Colombia, Ximena Velásquez tiene una maestría en Artes Visuales de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia y un doctorado en Artes Visuales de la Universidad Estatal de Campinas, Brasil. Su trabajo se centra en el archivo fotográfico familiar, los procesos fotoquímicos de la imagen, el mundo femenino y la forma del paisaje como experiencia. Desde 2001 ha participado en exposiciones individuales y colectivas a nivel nacional e internacional. Algunas de las exposiciones recientes de Velásquez incluyen *Si los oídos de Humboldt y Bonpland, hablaran*, FUGA, Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño, Bogotá, 2022; SPAM-Simposio



Ximena Velásquez Sánchez, *Acururar (detail)*, 2013-2023. Desk with woven ball of hair. Image courtesy of the artist.

latinoamericano de artes mediáticas, Bogotá, 2021; *Desmontajes (dispositivos como plagas)*, ARTBO/SALAS, Bogotá, 2019. Fue Artista en Residencia en la Fundación bienal de Cerveira en Portugal, en 2017, y ha sido seleccionada para participar en numerosos eventos internacionales de arte como la 19ª Bienal internacional de arte de Cerveira (2017); Iberoamericanos, concurso de fotografía en La Paz, Bolivia (2012); *Videobrasil*, Festival internacional de arte contemporáneo, en Sao Paulo, Brasil (2011); ARTBO, Feria internacional de arte de Bogotá 2012. También ha recibido varias becas y premios: Beca de producción para artistas consagrados, Ministerio de cultura, Colombia, 2021; Beca de circulación internacional, Ministerio de Cultura, Colombia, 2017; Beca de circulación internacional IDARTES, Colombia, 2017; 2do premio en el XI Concurso nacional de pintura, Banco ganadero, Colombia, 2003; 1.er premio en Salones locales de jóvenes artistas, Colombia, 2001.

EDDY FIRMIN

Born in the French Caribbean, Eddy Firmin is a decolonial artist-researcher. He holds a Ph.D. in Arts Studies and Practices from the Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada), a master's degree from the visual art school of Le Havre-Rouen (France), and a bachelor in art and design from the Campus Caraïbéen des Arts (Martinique).

Firmin is interested in the politics of knowledge sharing and the epistemic conflicts they engender in the colonized artist. Influenced by secular Afro-Caribbean practices, his art and research delve into artistic

expressions of transnational identity to bring forth a vision of an alternative modernity, a culture of orality reinventing and adapting its codes and systems when faced with the fast pace of our current world. Firmin strives to remediate the codes of a Caribbean ancestral custom, le Gwoka (at the crossroads of dance, song, storytelling and music). Le Gwoka is part of the very large family of Afro-Caribbean customs created to resist colonial violence, such as Paracumbé, Guineo, Bèlè, Calenda, Bomba, Tambú and many more. This imperative necessity to transfer ancestral codes to modern visual media derives from the fact that his home islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique did not give rise to a visual tradition to which one can refer, because of the restrictions of slavery on such small territories. He coordinates the publication of the digital decolonial magazine *Minorit'Art* and has recently launched *Af-flux*, the first Black Transnational Biennale, in Québec (2021). He has taught at NSCAD University (Halifax) and Concordia University (Montréal).

Originaire de la caraïbe française (Guadeloupe), Eddy Firmin est un artiste-chercheur décolonial. Il est titulaire d'un doctorat en études et pratiques des arts de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (Canada), d'une maîtrise de l'École supérieure d'art et design Le Havre-Rouen (France) et d'une licence en art et design du Campus Caraïbéen des Arts (Martinique). Firmin s'intéresse aux politiques de partage du savoir ainsi qu'aux conflits épistémiques qu'ils engendrent chez l'artiste colonisé. Influencé par les pratiques séculaires afro-caribéennes, son art et ses recherches explorent les expressions artistiques de l'identité transnationale pour faire émerger une vision d'une modernité alternative, soit une culture de l'oralité

réinventant et adaptant ses codes et ses systèmes face au rythme rapide de notre monde actuel. Il s'attache ainsi à remédier aux codes d'une pratique ancestrale caribéenne, le Gwoka (entre danse, chant, conte et musique). Cette dernière appartient à une très grande famille de pratiques afro-caribéennes édifiées pour résister aux violences coloniales (telles que le Paracumbé, Guineo, Bèlè, Calenda, Bomba, Tambú, etc.). Cette nécessité impérieuse de transférer des codes ancestraux vers les récents médiums visuels est due au fait que ses îles de Guadeloupe et Martinique n'ont pas produit de tradition visuelle à laquelle se référer, cela à cause des interdits de l'esclavage sur un périmètre restreint.

Il coordonne la publication de la revue décoloniale *Minorit'Art* et a récemment lancé *Af-flux*, la première Biennale transnationale noire, à Québec (2021). Firmin a enseigné à l'Université NSCAD (Halifax) et à l'Université Concordia (Montréal).

Soti nan zòn Karayib franse (Gwadeloup), Eddy Firmin se yon atis-chèchè dekolonizasyon. Li gen yon doktora nan Etid ak Pratik nan domèn atistik de Inivèsite Kebèc nan Monreyal (Kanada), yon metriz nan lekòl siperyè dèza ak konsepsyon ki chita nan Le Havre-Rouen (Lafrans), ak yon bakaloreya nan domèn atistik ak konsepsyon ki soti nan Kanpis karayibeyen dèza (Matinik).

Firmin enterese nan politik pataje konesans ak nan zafè konfli epistemik yo kreye kay atis kolonize a. Enfliyanse pa pratik Afro-Karayib ki egziste depi plizyè syèk, travay atistik li ak rechèch li, eksplòre eksp resyon atistik nan idantite transnasyonal lan, pou fè resòti yon vizyon de yon modènite altènatif, swa yon kilti oral, kap

reyenvante epitou adapte kòd ak sistèm li yo, pou li fè fas ak mache prese nan mond modèn lan. Se konsa, li konsantre zefò li, pou li adapte kòd yo nan koutim ke zansèt Karayib yo kite pou nou nan Gwoka a (ant dans, chante, kont ak mizik). Gwoka fè pati de tout yon fanmi koutim Afro-Karayib ki te mete an plas pou reziste vyolans kolonyal yo (tankou Paracumbé, Guineo, Bèlè, Calenda, Bomba, Tambú, elatriye.). Enperatif sa a pou transfere kòd zansèt yo nan medyòm vizyèl resan yo, soti nan lefèt ke, zile Gwadeloup ak Matinik yo pa t'pwodwi yon tradisyon vizyèl ke nou te ka refere, akòz restriksyon sistèm esklavaj la nan yon perimèt limite.

Firmin kowòdone publikasyon magazin dekolonizasyon *Minoritè'A*, epitou, li fèk lanse *Af-flux*, premye Biennal Nwa Transnasyonal, nan Kebec (2021). Li te anseye nan Inivèsite NSCAD (Halifax) ak nan Inivèsite Konkòdya (Monreyal).

PATRICIO DÁVILA

Patricio Dávila is an artist, designer, researcher and educator based in Toronto, Canada. His creative practice explores locative media projects, essay videos, landscape films, new media installations, and participatory community projects. Recent projects include: *Shadows!*, *Powers of Kin*, *Chthuluscene*, *Tent City Projections*, *The Line*, and *In The Air Tonight*. He has created curatorial projects, including Multiplex Essay Film Festival and the *Diagrams of Power* exhibition, public workshops and a book published by Onomatopée Projects (NL). His creative research practice focuses on the politics and aesthetics of participation in the visualization of spatial issues with a specific focus on urban experiences,

mobile technologies and large-scale interactive public installations. He is also co-author of *Critical Visualization: Rethinking the Representation of Data*, published by Bloomsbury (UK). He is currently Associate Professor in Cinema and Media Arts at York University. Patricio is co-director of Public Visualization Lab / Studio.

Patricio Dávila es un artista, diseñador, investigador y educador radicado en Toronto, Canadá. Su práctica creativa explora proyectos de medios locativos, videos de ensayos, películas de paisajes, instalaciones de nuevos medios y proyectos comunitarios participativos. Los proyectos recientes incluyen: *iShadows!*, *Powers of Kin*, *Chthuluscene*, *Tent City Projections*, *The Line* y *In The Air Tonight*. Ha creado proyectos curatoriales que incluyen Multiplex Essay Film Festival y la exposición *Diagrams of Power*, talleres públicos y un libro publicado por Onomatopee Projects (NL). Su práctica de investigación creativa se centra en la política y la estética de la participación en la visualización de problemas espaciales con un enfoque específico en experiencias urbanas, tecnologías móviles e instalaciones públicas interactivas a gran escala. También es coautor de *Critical Visualization: Rethinking the Representation of Data*, publicado por Bloomsbury (Reino Unido). Actualmente, es profesor asociado de cine y artes mediáticas en la Universidad de York. Patricio es codirector de Public Visualization Lab/Studio.

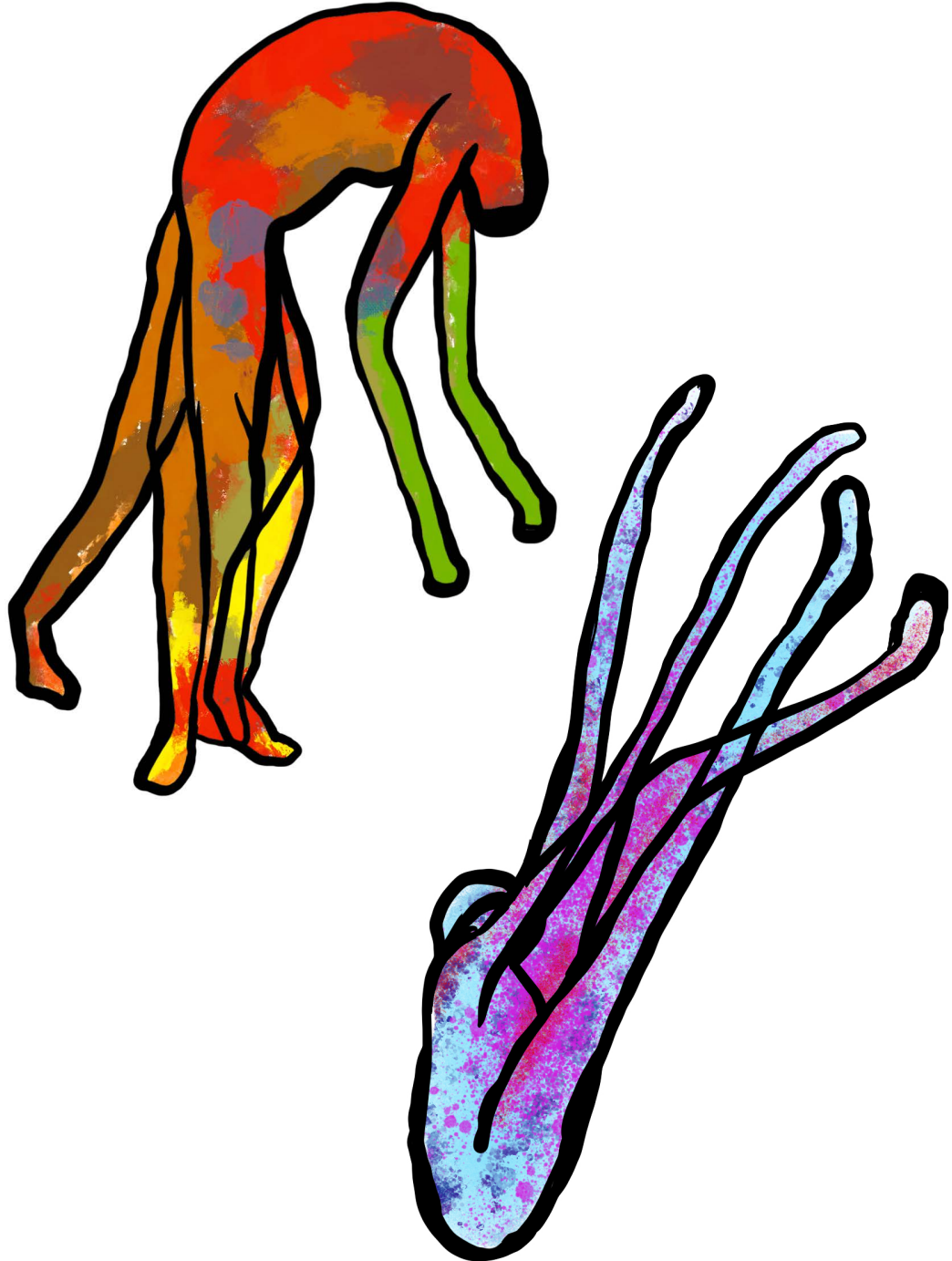
IMMONY MÈN

Mèn is an artist, educator, and community-based researcher. He is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Science at OCAD University. As an artist, he has exhibited nationally and internationally and has been awarded municipal, provincial, and federal arts council grants to support his work. His research focuses on developing a theoretical framework for understanding (specifically Khmer/Cambodian) diasporic experience through media praxis, critical race theory, and various forms of community engagement. Mèn's practice takes the form of research-creation projects such as interactive installations, interdisciplinary performances, social artworks, and participatory community projects. Works include *Receipts*, *Fabulous Ones*, *Post-Colonial Hot Ones*, *Traversal Residency*, *Passing through the Heart*, *Shadows!*, *Cite*, *Chthulucene*, *Powers of Kin*, *Everything in Place*, and *Taking Care of Business*. Immony is co-director of Public Visualization Lab / Studio.

Immony Mèn est un artiste, éducateur et chercheur communautaire. Il est professeur adjoint à la Faculté des arts libéraux et des sciences de l'École universitaire d'art et de design de l'Ontario (OCAD University). Il a présenté ses œuvres à l'échelle nationale et internationale, et a reçu le soutien financier des conseils des arts aux niveaux municipal, provincial et fédéral. Ses recherches visent à développer un cadre théorique permettant de comprendre l'expérience diasporique (en particulier khmère/cambodgienne) à travers l'usage des médias, des théories critiques de la race et de diverses formes d'engagement communautaire. La pratique artistique de Mèn prend

la forme de projets de recherche création telle que des installations interactives, des performances interdisciplinaires, des œuvres d'art à portée sociale et des projets communautaires participatifs. Ses réalisations artistiques comprennent : *Receipts*, *Fabulous Ones*, *Postcolonial Hot Ones*, *Traversal Residency*, *Passing through the Heart*, *Shadows!*, *Cite*, *Chthulucene*, *Powers of Kin*, *Everything in Place* et *Taking Care of Business*. Immony Mèn est codirecteur du Public Visualisation Lab/Studio.

លោក Immony Mèn គឺជាសិល្បករ, អ្នកអប់រំ និងជាអ្នកសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវ។ គាត់ក៏ជាសាស្ត្រាចារ្យនៃសកលវិទ្យាល័យ OCAD ផងដែរ។ ក្នុងនាមជាសិល្បករ គាត់មានធុរការតាំងពីពេលណាដែលគាត់បានចូលរៀនសូត្រនៅជុំវិញសកលលោក និងទទួលបានការកាតសរសើរ រួមទាំងពានរង្វាន់ពីមន្ត្រីក្នុង ខេត្ត និងទទួលបានការជំរុញដំណើរការខាងសហព័ន្ធជុនកែច្នៃផងដែរ។ ការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវមួយនេះ គឺជាការទៅលើការយល់ដឹង ក៏ដូចជាបទពិសោធន៍អំពីការបំលាស់ទីនៃប្រព័ន្ធជុនសហព័ន្ធជុនទៅកាន់អតិថិជន។ ការអនុវត្តសាកល្បងដោយបុរសទៅលើគំរោងសិល្បៈសុនាដខាងជុនកែច្នៃដដែលរួមមាន របៀបដំឡើងអនុគមន៍, ការអនុវត្តបញ្ញត្តិចូលគុណភាពវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រនិងសិល្បៈ, បណ្តាញសង្គមសិល្បៈសុនាដ និង ការចូលរួមពីគំរោងសហគមន៍។ ការងារនេះរួមបញ្ចូល *Receipts*, *Post-Colonial Hot Ones*, *Traversal Residency*, *Passing through the Heart*, *Shadows!*, *Cite*, *Chthulucene*, *Powers of Kin*, *Everything in Place*, និង *Taking Care of Business* ។ លោក Immony គឺជាសហនាយកនៃមន្ទីរពិសោធន៍ដដែលទាក់ទងសិល្បៈរូបភាពនាពេលអនាគត



Patricio Dávila + Immony Mèn, *Passing Through the Heart*, 2021-2023, Digital illustration. Image by Patricio Davila

Biographies

Curators

ANALAYS ÁLVAREZ HERNÁNDEZ

Álvarez Hernández is an art historian, independent curator, and assistant professor at the Université de Montréal. She holds a BA in Art History from the Universidad de La Habana, and an M.A and Ph.D. in Art History from the Université du Québec à Montréal. From 2016 to 2018, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Toronto. Her research activities focus mainly on public art, alternatives exhibitions venues, diasporic and Latinx-Canadian artists, and decolonial issues. As an independent curator, Álvarez Hernández has organized several exhibitions mostly in Havana, tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto) and Tiohti:áke/Mooniyang (Montreal), such as *The Recipe: Making Latin American Art in Canada* (Sur Gallery, 2018; OBORO, 2020,) and *Au fil des îles, archipels* (Centre d'exposition de l'Université de Montréal, 2022; Musée régional de Rimouski, 2023).

Analays Álvarez Hernández est historienne de l'art, commissaire d'exposition indépendante et professeure adjointe à l'Université de Montréal. Elle détient un baccalauréat en histoire de l'art de l'Universidad de La Habana, et une maîtrise et un doctorat en histoire de l'art de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. De 2016 à 2018, elle a été chercheuse postdoctorale à l'University of Toronto. Elle s'intéresse principalement à l'art public, aux espaces d'exposition alternatifs, aux artistes latinx-canadien·nes et diasporiques, et aux questions décoloniales. En tant que commissaire

indépendante, Álvarez Hernández a organisé plusieurs expositions, principalement à La Havane, Tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto) et Tiohti:áke/Mooniyang (Montréal). Parmi les plus récentes, on compte : *The Recipe. Making Latin American Art in Canada* (Sur Gallery, 2018; OBORO, 2020) et *Au fil des îles, archipels* (Centre d'exposition de l'Université de Montréal, 2022 ; Musée régional de Rimouski, 2023).

Analays Álvarez Hernández es historiadora del arte, curadora y profesora en la Université de Montréal. Es licenciada en Historia del Arte por la Universidad de La Habana, y máster y doctora en Historia del Arte por la Université du Québec à Montréal. De 2016 a 2018, ocupó un puesto de becaria posdoctoral en la University of Toronto. Su investigación se centra en el arte público, los espacios de exposición alternativos, los artistas latinx-canadienses y de la diáspora, y las cuestiones decoloniales. Como curadora ha organizado numerosas exposiciones en La Habana, Tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto) y Tiohti:áke/Mooniyang (Montreal). Entre las más recientes vale mencionar *The Recipe. Making Latin American Art in Canada* (Sur Gallery, 2018; OBORO, 2020) y *Au fil des îles, archipels* (Centre d'exposition de l'Université de Montréal, 2022; Musée régional de Rimouski, 2023).

COLETTE LALIBERTÉ

Working across various media, Colette Laliberté's conceptual approach to abstraction includes drawings, digital prints, paintings, and site-oriented wall artwork. Although the aesthetic of the forms is integral to her pictorial language, abstraction serves as a gateway to establishing a physical and emotional relationship with materials and shapes, invoking narrative, and inviting reflection on a given subject.

Born in Sherbrooke, Québec, Colette Laliberté moved to tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto) in 1985 after living at the Banff Centre for the Arts as Young Artists in Residence. She received her BFA from Université du Québec à Montréal and her MFA from Windsor University. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Canada and abroad. She has also participated in residencies in France, Spain, New York, and Ontario at the Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario in Sudbury; The Durham Gallery in Stouffville, Ontario; and Duntara, Newfoundland.

She is an Associate Professor Emerita at the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD U). She has curated *Penance and Devotion* at the Glendon Gallery, York University, Ontario; *August and Portrait Oval*, at Artcite, Windsor, Ontario and *Valérie Gill and Barbara Claus* at Mercer Union, tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto), Ontario.

La pratique artistique de Colette Laliberté prend forme à travers le dessin, la peinture, l'installation in situ et la photographie. Bien que l'esthétique des formes fasse partie intégrante de son langage pictural, l'abstraction sert de porte d'entrée pour établir une relation

physique et émotionnelle avec les matériaux et les formes, invoquer la narration et inviter à la réflexion sur un sujet donné.

Née à Sherbrooke, Québec, Colette Laliberté s'établit à tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto) en 1985, après un séjour comme jeune artiste en résidence au Banff Centre for the Arts. Elle est titulaire d'un baccalauréat en arts visuels de l'Université du Québec à Montréal et d'une maîtrise en arts visuels de l'Université de Windsor. Ses œuvres ont fait l'objet d'expositions individuelles et collectives au Canada et ailleurs. Elle a également participé à des résidences d'artistes en France, en Espagne, à New York et en Ontario, à la galerie du Nouvel-Ontario à Sudbury, à la Durham Gallery à Stouffville, et à Duntara, Terre-Neuve.

Elle est professeure agrégée émérite à L'Université de l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario. Elle a organisé en tant que commissaire l'exposition *Penance and Devotion* à la Galerie Glendon, Université York, Ontario; *August and portrait Oval*, à Artcite, Windsor, Ontario et *Valérie Gill et Barbara Claus*, à Mercer Union, tsi Tkarón:to (Toronto), Ontario.

Free Public Events

June 14th to December 9, 2023

Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

OPENING RECEPTION

In-person at Onsite Gallery

Join us in-person for the public exhibition launch of *On Americanity and Other Experiences of Belonging*. All welcome.

Saturday, July 29, 2023, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

WORKSHOP: BECOMING AND MOVING

In-person at Onsite Gallery

Becoming and Moving is a plant-based movement improvisation workshop in response to Alexandra Gelis' installation "Migrant Superpositions: convertirse en." Participants will explore themes of migration, discrimination, transformation, and the control of both humans and plants, in a collaboration with dancer and choreographer Victoria Mata, artist/designer Maxyne Baker, and Alexandra Gelis.

Friday, September 8, 2023, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

CURATORS TOUR WITH ANALAYS ÁLVAREZ HERNÁNDEZ AND COLETTE LALIBERTÉ

In-person at Onsite Gallery

Join the exhibition curators on an in-depth curatorial tour of *On Americanity and Other Experiences of Belonging*. Curators conduct the tour in Spanish & French.

Saturday, September 9, at Onsite Gallery, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

CURATORS TOUR WITH ANALAYS ÁLVAREZ HERNÁNDEZ AND COLETTE LALIBERTÉ

In-person & Recorded

Join the exhibition curators for an in-depth curatorial tour of *On Americanity and Other Experiences of Belonging*. Curators conduct the tour in English.

Friday, October 27, 2023, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

WORKSHOP: PASSING THROUGH THE HEART

In-person at Onsite Gallery

This workshop is informed by the ongoing collaboration between Patricio Dávila and Immony Mèn, who collect recipes and approaches to cultural food practices from immigrants and refugees in Canada. The workshop aims to build an understanding of how diasporic voices and recording technology can form intimate markers for narratives of settlement, refuge, remembering and loss.

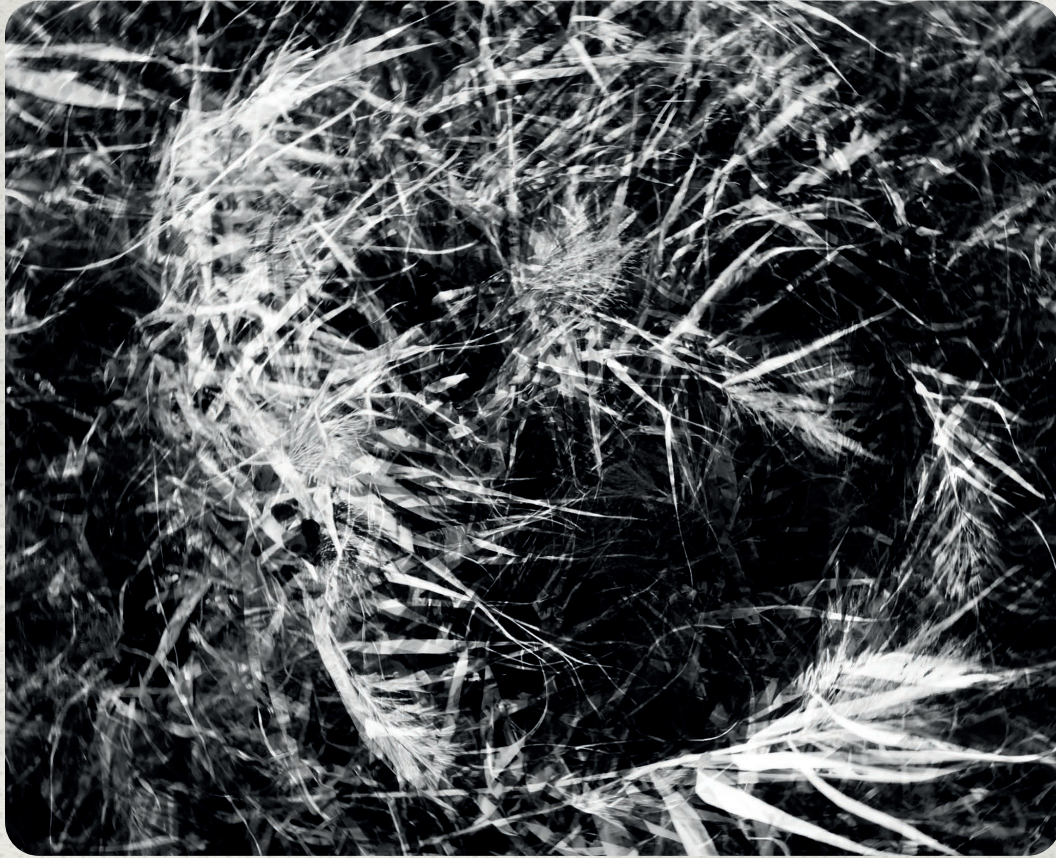
Friday, November 17, 2023, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

CROSSED PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICANITY IN FRANCOPHONE CONTEXTS

Live-Stream Online

In light of their life and intellectual journeys, speakers Louise Vigneault and Eddy Firmin, with moderator Analays Álvarez Hernández, examine the notion of Americanity in different spaces of the Francophonie. What does it mean to be aware of one's Americanity and others in Québec or Guadeloupe? The discussion will be conducted considering historical and current colonial and geopolitical conditions.

Please note this event is only in French.



Alexandra Gelis, *Migrant Superpositions: convertirse en*, 2023, 16mm film. Still from film projection. Image courtesy of the artist.

Thursday, November 30, 2023, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

ANCHORING EXPERIENCES OF BELONGING THROUGH CREATIVE PRACTICES IN ARTS BASED PARTICIPATORY LEARNING

Live-Stream Online

A panel of OCAD U IBPOC faculty members will deliver fast-paced presentations in this online event about anchoring the sense of belonging through creative practices in arts-based research and practice. The presentations are followed by a live Q & A moderated by Onsite Gallery's Programs & Community Coordinator Susan Jama.

Also at Onsite Gallery: *Current + Upcoming Exhibitions*

UP FRONT: INUIT PUBLIC ART @ ONSITE GALLERY

Through August 2023 – Robert Kautuk
September to December 2023 – Tarralik Duffy

POWER

Rocky Dobey, Natalie King, Jamiyla Lowe, Khadijah Morley, Ekow Nimako, Rajni Perera and Fiona Smyth
Curated by Lisa Deanne Smith

A group exhibition of Toronto-based artists that inspire equitable new worlds through repositioning the meaning of the word power to be grounded in respect, persistence, and emotional intelligence.

+

TAQRALIK PARTRIDGE: MAWADISHIWEWIN (VISITS)

Guest-curated by Linda Grussani

January 24 through May 18, 2024

ON AMERICANITY AND OTHER EXPERIENCES OF BELONGING EXHIBITION SUPPORTED BY



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



**Onsite Gallery presents contemporary,
Indigenous, and public art and design to
advance knowledge creation and stimulate
local and international conversations on
the urgent issues of our time.**

*Free admission,
Fully Accessible,
All are welcome*



**ONSITE
GALLERY**

CONTACT



199 Richmond St. West
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5V 0H4



ocadu.ca/onsite
onsite@ocadu.ca



HOURS

WEDNESDAY:

noon to 7 p.m.

THURSDAY TO SATURDAY:

noon to 5 p.m.

FACEBOOK

[OnsiteOCADU](#)

INSTAGRAM

[@onsite_at_ocadu](#)

TWITTER

[@onsiteatocadu](#)

[#onsitegallery](#)