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Reparative Collectivities, Communities and Ecologies: Toward a Reparative Art History

Introduction

Artists have long participated in reparative efforts in their communities, ranging from educational initiatives and artist-run spaces, to spearheading protest movements. These efforts highlight the drive to repair, rather than destroy, our prevailing systems, while also working to develop alternatives.

For over two decades, a key starting point for thinking about repair has been Eve Sedgwick's call for "reparative reading," a methodological orientation grounded in interpersonal psychoanalytic dynamics occurring at an intimate scale. Today, as the structural integrity of many aspects of society are being questioned, our panel asks how repair can take place at increasingly larger scales: beginning with the artwork and radiating out to the institution, the neighborhood, the city, the nation-state, transnational diasporic populations—even at the level of ecology, exceeding a human-centric perspective.

Weaving together three different approaches, our conversation foregrounds artist-led, collective efforts that expand the notion of the reparative to wider ecologies of practice and creation. Our examples are both historical and contemporary, demonstrating how the work of repair must be ongoing, renewed with each generation.

Organized by Jasmine Magaña and Alexander Strecker
Duke University

Presentations

"Performing History in the Andes: Travesti Methods and Ch'ixi Subjectivities"
Maya Wilson-Sanchez, OCAD University

Created by the late Peruvian artist and philosopher Giuseppe Campuzano, the Travesti Museum of Peru (2003-2013) is a reparative archive and portable conceptual artwork that has been exhibited in galleries, biennials, street corners, public parks, protests, and red-light districts. At its core, it is a political exercise and collective form of activism that calls for a restorative history of travestis/transvestites. Its collection follows the history of Peru through representations of queer bodies that include watercolor and oil paintings, clothing, colonial ordinances outlawing queer/cuir relations, identification cards, precolonial stonework sculptures, photographs, shoes, newspapers, and more.

This paper focuses on the differences between (re)producing memory within the archive and through more embodied practices such as performance art and ritual, namely through a performance art piece based on Andean rituals that mark a return to ancestral conceptions of

gender. It analyzes Campuzano's idea of the travesti as a method for navigating ideas of history, memory, movement, and change, exploring how Campuzano transcends binaries through the travesti as a mnemonic strategy. In this way, the travesti is a transition, mutation, and morphology from which to resist and act. The discussion is influenced by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's conceptualization of ch'ixi, an Aymara term she uses to describe a decolonial collective subjectivity.

This research presents Campuzano's work and methods as strategies for creating memory in order to repair and strengthen historical lineages of transgression and inheritance for contemporary queer and Indigenous peoples in Peru, presenting successful examples of restorative ways of being.

“Seattle Doesn't Need Another Park’: Contrasting Reparative Lineages of Indigenous Reclamation and Earth Art-as-Remediation”

Marianna Davison, University of California Irvine

Focusing on two Seattle-based land reclamation projects, my paper examines divergent lineages initiated by experimental civic-artistic collaborations in the late 1970s and the lasting reparative communities that have coalesced around each site. The Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center was founded in 1977 after an extended period of Indigenous-led community activism and prolonged occupation resulted in the partial reclamation of the decommissioned military base, Fort Lawton.

Today, it remains a prominent Native American cultural-educational center and social services hub, while also housing an art gallery and permanent display of contemporary Indigenous art. Thoroughly engaging the design, development, and ongoing community aspects of the Center allows for a critical comparative analysis of a contemporaneous civic effort at artistic landscape reclamation. Robert Morris's *Untitled* (Johnson Pit #30, 1979), a government-funded earth sculpture designed for use as a public park, served to remediate a four-acre gravel pit south of Seattle. While lauded by civic agents and art scholars alike for the ecological thinking advanced by the project, local residents initially protested the earthwork/park. However, beginning in 1989, nearby communities rallied to steward the park and for the preservation of the site as an artwork.

In contrasting these two examples of land-based reparative ecoaesthetic engagements, I contend that each has resulted in a distinct lineage of reparative collectivities, communities, and ecologies, with one focused on anti-capitalist and anti-colonial demands for Indigenous land reclamation and the other fixated on environmental degradation and climate change awareness.

“Phantom Images, Residual Violences: An Experiment in Method”

Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz, University of Texas at Austin

In 1960, two years prior to the Algerian nation achieving independence from the French colonial rule, a photographer in the French army, Marc Garanger, aided the colonial officials in carrying out an Indigenous identity card program. During a period of only ten days, Garanger, accompanied by officers armed with machine guns, photographed over 2000 women native to

the region of Kabylie. These women were seized from their dwellings, forced to line up on the street, and documented, before subsequently being sent off to concentration camps. Garanger, in the following year, smuggled the negatives in his possession into Switzerland where these images were published in a popular culture magazine *L'Illustré suisse*. The photographs in question continue to be celebrated as a testament to the ravages of war. This paper, however, aims to complicate Garanger's work and argues against the notion of the photographer as a passive witness; it instead treats the photographer as an active participant in the act of dehumanization.

Furthermore, this text draws on the impossibility of the English language in enunciating collective grief and anguish, whilst aiming to create a method of writing about the unwritable towards a reclamation of humanity. Although Garanger's work is referenced throughout, following Saidiya Hartman's footsteps, this paper refuses to reproduce his photographs; it instead strives to generate a method for writing that will confront the scholastic processes that sometimes play an unsuspecting, at others a complicit role in the normalization and casualization of violent encounters. The result, therefore, is a method presented in two acts: an experiment in process, poetry, and lamentation.

Bios

Speakers

Maya Wilson-Sanchez is a curator and writer based in Toronto. She is interested in processes of history-making and building connections between local and international communities to foster networks of exchange and solidarity. Her essays, reviews, and exhibition texts can be found in various publications including *The Senses and Society Journal*, *Canadian Art*, *Contemporary HUM*, and the book *Other Places: Reflections on Media Arts in Canada* (2019). She has worked in numerous galleries and museums, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, Gallery TPW, and the Textile Museum of Canada, and has curated exhibitions at Xpace Cultural Centre, the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Art Gallery of Guelph. The 2020 recipient of the Middlebrook Prize for Young Canadian Curators, she is currently curating a three-part exhibition series for the City of Toronto's Year of Public Art and teaching at OCAD University. She will soon serve as the inaugural Curator-in-Residence at the Gardiner Museum.

Marianna Davison is a Ph.D. candidate in Visual Studies at the University of California, Irvine, focusing on the history of nineteenth and twentieth-century American art, visual culture, and landscape design. Marianna's research considers how urban natures have been popularly imaged and physically shaped and interrogates the interconnections between modernist aesthetics, environmental politics, and the perpetuation of settler colonial governance. Her dissertation, "Sculpting Nature, Making Place: The Aesthetics and Ethics of Land-Shaping in Seattle," traces the propagation and contestations of Seattle's environmentally-focused image of place through a century of landscape design, Indigenous reclamation, and eco-art practices. Marianna was a 2020-21 Junior Fellow in Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks and is a co-organizer of the Climate Futures Collective at the University of California, Irvine.

Sheyda Aisha Khaymaz received their BA in Studio Arts at the University of Northumbria, UK, and their MA in Contemporary Curating at the University of Sunderland, UK. They are a PhD candidate at the University of Texas at Austin, specialising in the modern and contemporary art of the Maghrib. Their dissertation project focuses on Indigenous Amazigh art and resistance: encompassing new artistic forms, from script-based abstraction to Indigenous cinema, that emerged out of decolonial demands and desires. Their research aims to connect modern day instances of Tamazight language activism and revival movements with a larger discourse on Indigeneity and Africanity.

Respondent

Gabrielle Moser is an art historian, writer, and independent curator. She is the author of *Projecting Citizenship: Photography and Belonging in the British Empire* (Penn State University Press, 2019) and, with Adrienne Huard, is co-editing a special double issue of *Journal of Visual Culture* on reparation, forthcoming in April 2022. A founding member of EMILIA-AMALIA, she is an Assistant Professor of Aesthetics and Art Education in the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto, Canada.

Organizers

Jasmine Magana is a PhD candidate in the department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies at Duke University. Her field of research is modern and contemporary art in the Americas, with an emphasis on Central and South America. Specifically, her work explores the function of collectivity in relation to performance, public art initiatives, and urban interventions. She holds an MA in Art History & Theory from the University of Essex and a BA from Seattle University.

Alexander Strecker is a writer, curator, and editor. He is a PhD candidate in Art, Art History and Visual Studies at Duke University. His dissertation project, tentatively titled “Athens in Pieces: Toward a Reparative Art History,” uses a reparative framework to think about the effervescence of visual culture in the Greek capital since 2008. He is interested in how artists draw on the city’s rich past and charged present to imagine how existing forms could be otherwise. At Duke, he is part of the Laboratory for Social Choreography. In Athens, he has collaborated with Onassis AiR, ARTWORKS, Athens Photo Festival, Med Photo, VOID, Zoetrope, MISC, as well as Yo-Yo Ma’s Bach Project.