

GUAPAMACÁTARO

CENTER FOR ART & ECOLOGY

INTER-DISCIPLINARY & ECOLOGY PROGRAM
MARAVATÍO, MICHOACÁN, MÉXICO



WINTER SESSION
JANUARY - 2017



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//ABOUT

www.guapamacataro.org

The Guapamacátaro Hacienda was built in the late 1800's and is located in the culturally rich Purepecha region of Mexico (northern Michocán state), 1.5 hours East from Morelia and 2.5 hours West from Mexico City. Nearby towns include Maravatío, Tlalpujahua and El Oro.


It has been a family ranch for 4 generations, and an active hub for the cultural and agricultural production of the area. The facilities, set on rural farmland, are comprised of living quarters for up to 10 people, several studios, large common areas and ample outdoor space.

The project was launched in 2006 by Mexican artist and curator Alicia Marván, with the objective to communicate and implement sustainable alternatives for development, utilizing art and ecology as tools. Its conceptual framework includes ecology in a broad sense, not limited to its common association with the preservation of the natural environment. All components of the local ecosystem (human, natural and artificial) and their relationship to each other are subject of inquiry, creativity and growth.

Context // Relevance

In Mexico, many rural zones like Guapamacátaro lack cultural opportunities. This phenomenon is due to a complex web of factors such as the priority to fulfill basic needs, economic migration, globalization and lack of support from the public and private sectors. Consequently, this deficiency contributes to severe social issues including alcoholism, violence, repression and learning disabilities. At the same time, many rural zones in México present a high level of ecologic degradation, due primarily to poor education.

Our program addresses these two very important issues. Through education and community organizing, we are creating a more sustainable network of people, technology and resources. Our programming involves local people of all ages in an array of cultural activities: workshops, round tables, exhibitions, performances and screenings. Subjects have included various art techniques, aesthetic appreciation, resource management, organic agriculture and craft making with natural and recycled materials. Already, these new activities are generating a great amount of positive change in society.





BLENDING ART & ECOLOGY

Valeria Montoya (MX)

Guest Curator-Winter Session

www.valeriasmontoya.tumblr.com

“Once the science of synthesis is underway,
what happens to artistic renditions of the natural world?”

Esther Leslie.

The nature of knowledge is usually an objective research process; it needs to be a precise reflection of the actual world, especially in the sciences. Except, facts sometimes become surreal:

A Monarch butterfly travels two thousand, five hundred miles from Canada to Central Mexico in less than a month. How is this possible? How does such a tiny insect is able to make such a quest? And more impressively, how is it possible that this tiny insect can remember its migration path? Perhaps because it is linked to its survival.

Complexity, diversity, awareness and climate conditions are some of the concepts that ecology looks at as a field of study. In this sense, ecology is a crossroad practice of anthropology and natural science. In the arts some procedures are alike; in the sense that there is no definitive way to make artistic explorations, the same way that there is no linear methodology when addressing ecological issues.

With the desire to expand the understanding of rural environments, and to explore the intersection between the arts and sciences, five artists were invited to re-think, help us question, and maybe, take action on some ecological issues around the Maravatio area.

The resulting projects put into practice both aesthetic and humanistic resources to explore and transform values of self, place and society within the context of ecology.

Valeria Montoya
Guest Curator,



ANSEL OLIVE KLEIN

Fine Arts and Ecology

[www.cargocollective.com/plethora/](http://www.cargocollective.com/plethora/Traces)

Traces

ig: @___plethora___



I am currently a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley where I study soil science.

I identify as both artist and scientist. While both worldviews heavily complement my practice, I often challenge elements of science and art in order to transcend them in my work.

Engaging across disciplines,

I work intersectionally to stage the complex and gratifying dialogue between the arts, scientific exploration, and organic materials. My approach is highly process-based to mimic the process-based nature of the earth mediums with which I engage.

Currently I'm working on Terra Traces, which seeks to trace the landscape at Guapamacátaro through soil.

The project is composed of two interconnected pieces. The first, Ink Borders, uses soil as tracers of the larger landscape at Guapamacátaro to examine borders and territory. The second, Subterranean Imprints, uses soil as tracers of the micro-scale ecology of the landscape to archive the subterranean.

Firmly planted at the crossroads of the scientific, the cultural, the archival, the spiritual, and the aesthetic, I find the ecological to invite intersectionality.

Given my interest in soil, the ecological underpins all my work, and also serves as the main collaborator in my process as an artist. For me, at a fundamental level, the ecological is being in process with the natural world, its rhythms, transformations, and dynamism. My approach therefore seeks to move away from attempts to "capture" the ecological, and instead "trace" the ecological.



INK BORDERS

Ansel Olive Klein

www.cargocollective.com/plethora/Traces

ig:@___plethora___



While at the residency, I have been exploring territory and borders, in particular examining how borders produce a space, both in terms of the physical landscape and the cultural impressions. Borders are often conceptualized as firmly delineated boundaries. But in reality, borders mark a transition zone laden with the liminal and the in-between. It is this in-between that I explore using soil as a medium and as a tracer of the landscape and its borders. Collecting soil samples from across the landscape, I transform the soil into oil-based inks in order to capture the color palette that traces the borderlands of the Guapmacátaro landscape. The colors span a range of hues, from deep brown and reds to light greys and greens. To present the work, I constructed a symbolic marker of borders in this particular landscape of Mexico. The simple wooden structures, referred to as Ranchitos, are used among farmers and ranchers to mark their territory and right to the land.





Ink Borders, Ansel Olive Klein, Guapamacátaro, 2017.



SUBTERRANEAN IMPRINTS

Ansel Olive Klein

[www.cargocollective.com/plethora/](http://www.cargocollective.com/plethora/Traces)

Traces

ig:@___plethora___



Whereas Ink Borders spans across the landscape, Subterranean Imprints zooms into the land, archiving the belowground ecology of Guapamacátaro. To trace the landscape, I use the rich agricultural lands known as “La Joyita,” or “Little Gem,” as my work space. Working in collaboration with microbes, minerals and water, I bury fabric—hemp, linen, and cotton—deep within the soils of La Joyita for a week. In this way, I develop imprints of the landscape that reveal patterns of the soil ecosystem below. Unlike traditional field surveys, which capture soil based on its intrinsic properties, I offer a new archival form for recording “soil profiles” that recognizes its natural processes. In soaking the canvas in deep earth, my intention is to imbue them with the essence of the land itself, as an aesthetic self-portrait and archival snapshot of the agricultural lands they capture. Thus, the unearthed canvas present a physical manifestation of the subterranean universe, literal imprints at the intersection of the aesthetic, scientific, and archival.







Subterranean Imprints, Ansel Olive Klein, Guapamacátaro, 2017.





DANNY ROSE

Fine Arts

www.dannyrose.co

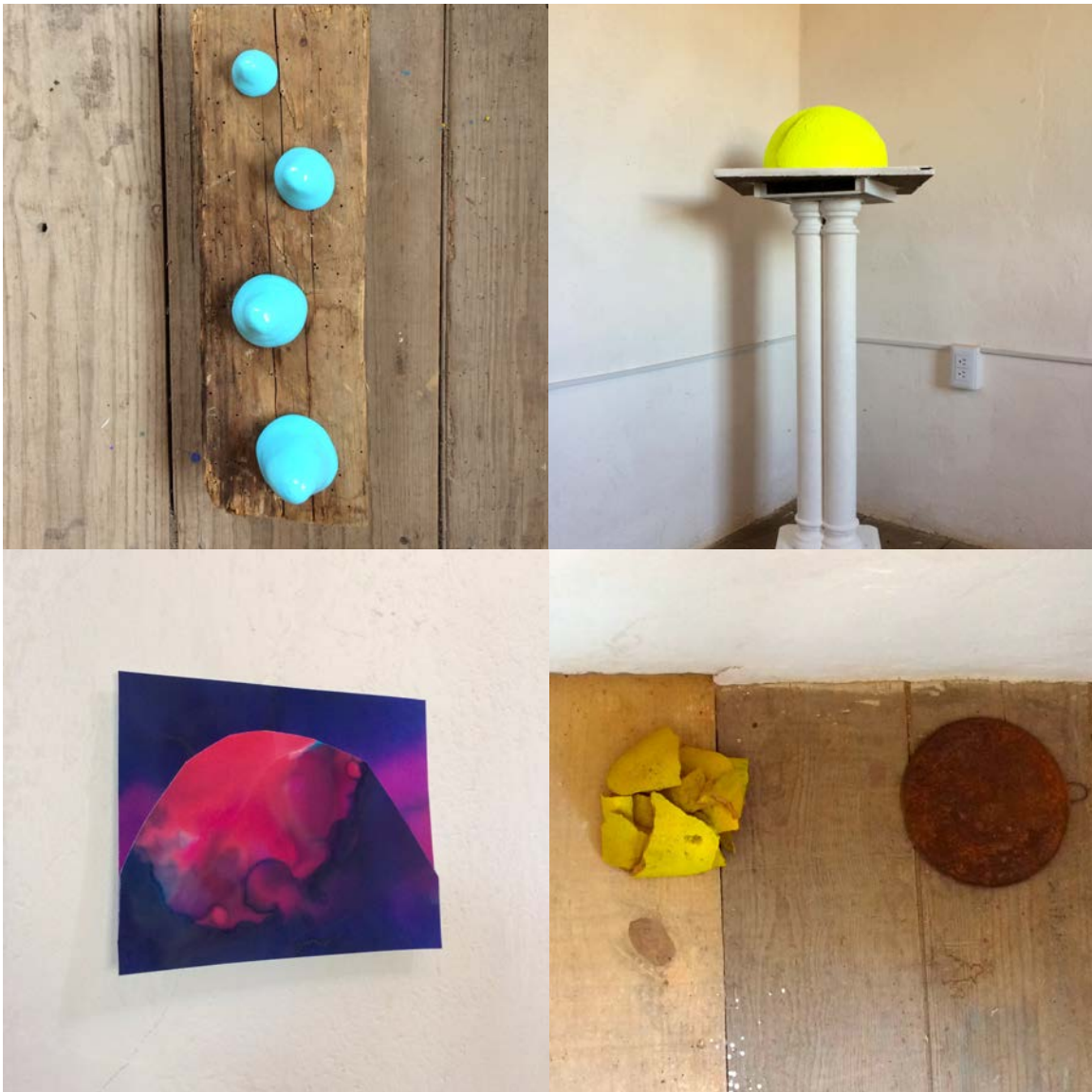
ig:@dannyjoerosehethird

My work is deeply rooted in the natural world, combining nature and abstraction. Using mediums such as paint, digital, performance and sculpture. My work tends to be more intuitive, often beginning with a simple sketch or idea. I transform a work through experimentation and automatic actions.

Upon arriving at the hacienda, I quickly connected with objects I would find on daily walks of the grounds. These objects seemed to contain magic and a part of the sites history. Attempting to transform them into something new, so their final outcomes told a new story, within the old one still.

These methods of exploration pushed me to try new things daily. One outcome was a performance, "Stones Against the Sun". Using a volcanic rock, painted terra cotta and a metal plate; I placed myself into the landscape and explored repeated actions of ritual and rhythm. Even though my work at the residency was a departure from my previous painted works, the themes that arose seemed to naturally gravitate towards the landscape and forms and colors within it.





The Worlds You Seek (and other observations), WIP, Danny Rose, 2017.



Stones Against the Sun, Performance, Danny Rose, 2017.







DHARA RIVERA

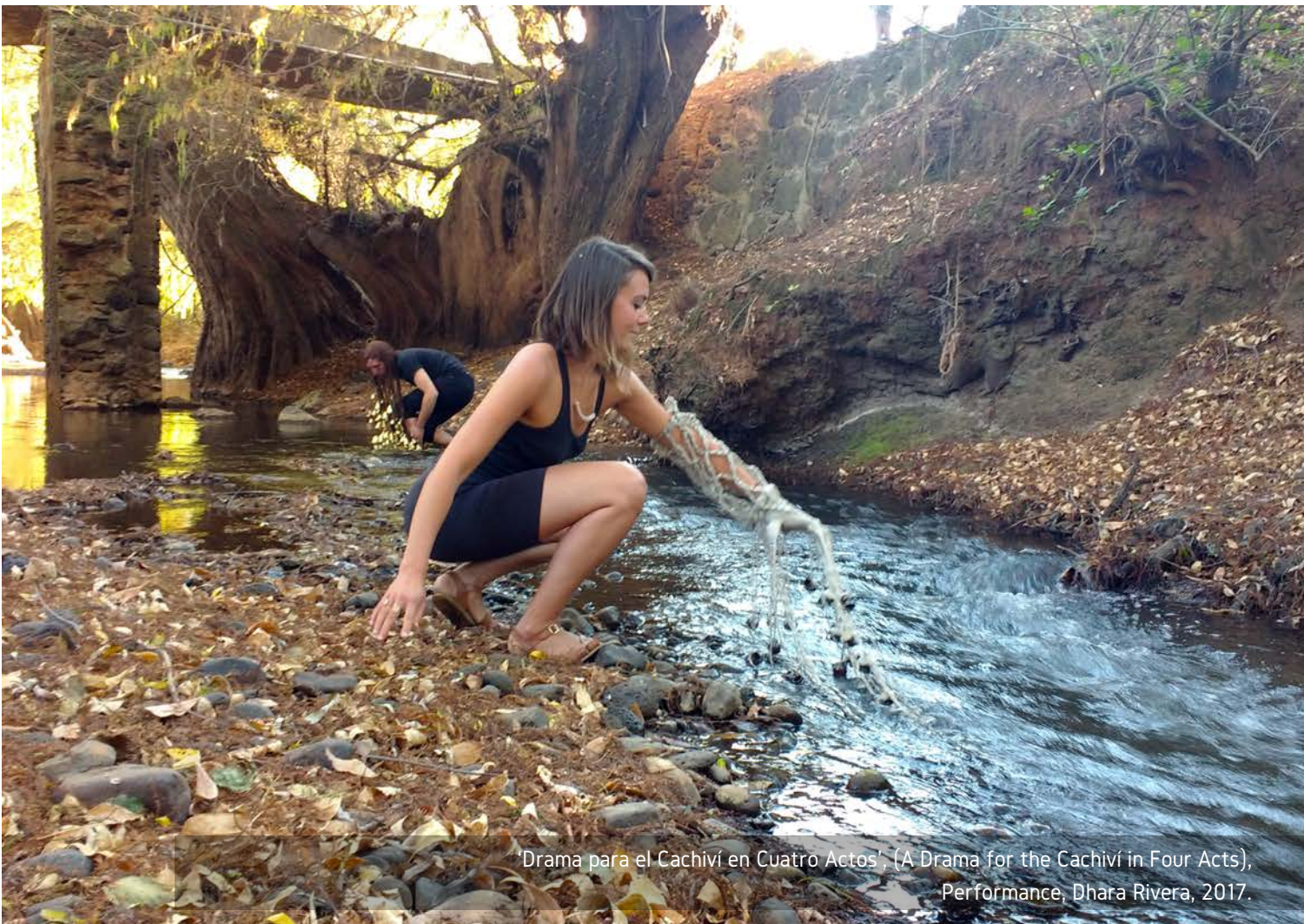
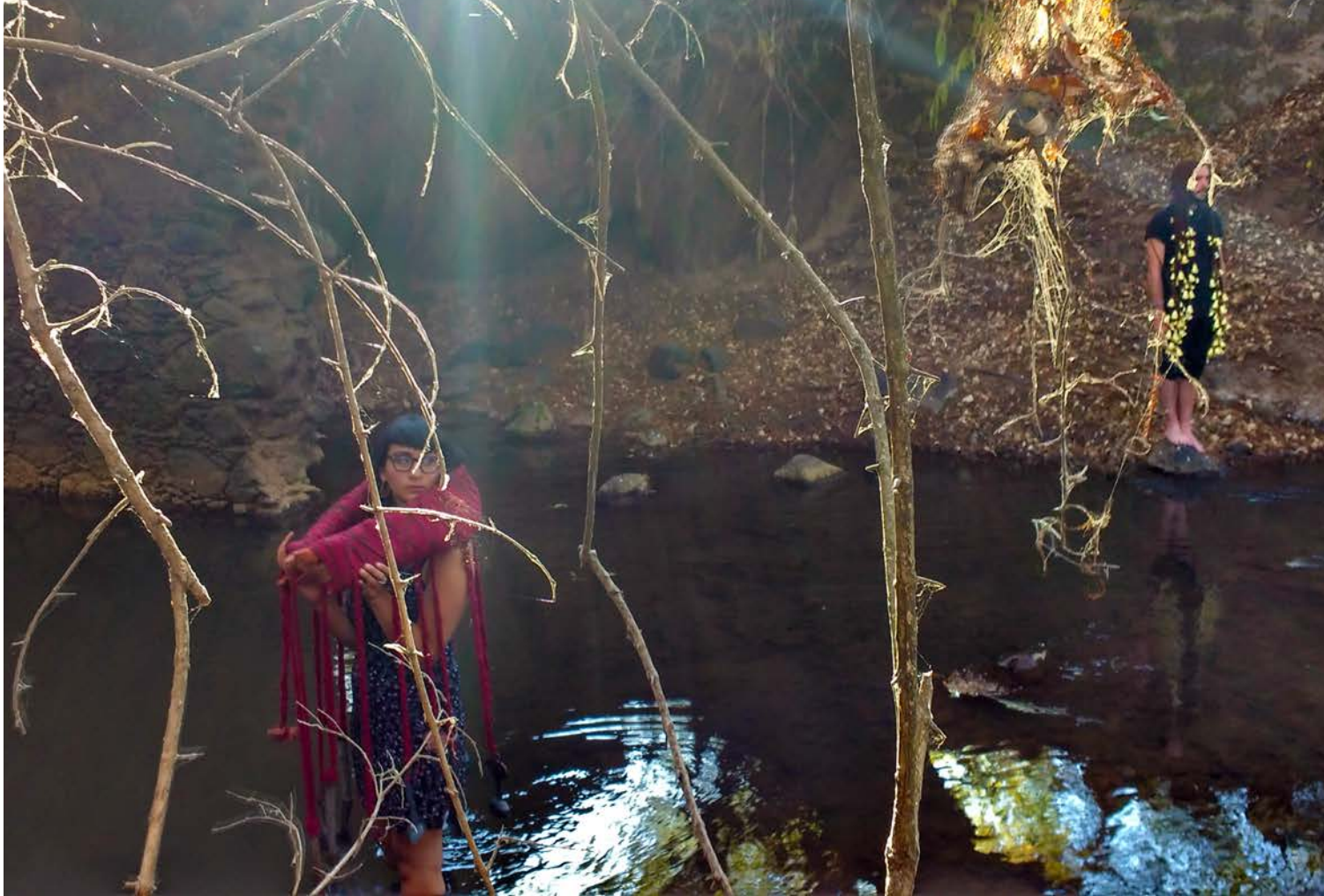
Fine Arts

www.dhararivera.com

I approach the ecological framework on art as a platform from where to explore and question the relationship and the interaction between living and 'non living' organisms, triggered by the preoccupation of the Anthropocene conflict. These inquiries can encompass the ecological from a very specific and practical way, from an interest in water purification structures, to the more abstract realm of ecological philosophy.

At Guapamacátaro I was mainly focused on the design of four performative garments. These wearables were built with daily objects that I found in the streetmarkets at Maravatío. The daily use of these objects is mostly for land work and animal domestication. By intervening them I'm trying to create an oneiric narrative regarding the rural work and it's link with the natural surroundings. Using these garments to highlight the river as a main character, I directed an improvised performance piece: 'Drama para el Cachiví en Cuatro Actos', that was performed at the final exhibition.





'Drama para el Cachiví en Cuatro Actos' (A Drama for the Cachiví in Four Acts),
Performance, Dhara Rivera, 2017.



'Drama para el Cachiví en Cuatro Actos', (A Drama for the Cachiví in Four Acts),
Performance, Dhara Rivera, 2017.



'Drama para el Cachiví en Cuatro Actos', (A Drama for the Cachiví in Four Acts),
Performance, Dhara Rivera, 2017.



EMILLY PRADO

WRITER & INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST

www.emillyprado.com

ig: @emillyp

During my three weeks at Guapamacátaro, I wrote over twenty pieces about family, relationships, racism, immigration, and self-love. I shot four rolls of film using a 35mm Holga toy camera and a Pentax pz-70 with a couple hundred digital images on my Nikon D3100 and iPhone 5S. Select essays, poems, photos, and illustrations were compiled for self-publication in my first ever bilingual zine. My zine, *Con las dos manos //* With both hands documents the connections between the physical landscapes of the Guapamacátaro hacienda with my own history.



Capitalizing on words once used by U.S. President, Donald J. Trump, to describe all Mexican immigrants, 'Donald Trump, criminal y violador' is my first performance piece, completed during my residency at Guapamacátaro. At the intersections of sociopolitical, artistic, and ecological borders, the performance began ceremoniously on inauguration day with a process spanning one week. Through the filling of an already-beaten piñata with canine meat scraps, a symbol of joyous Mexican childhood and celebration destined for trash is repurposed as a vessel to serve carrion for native vultures.

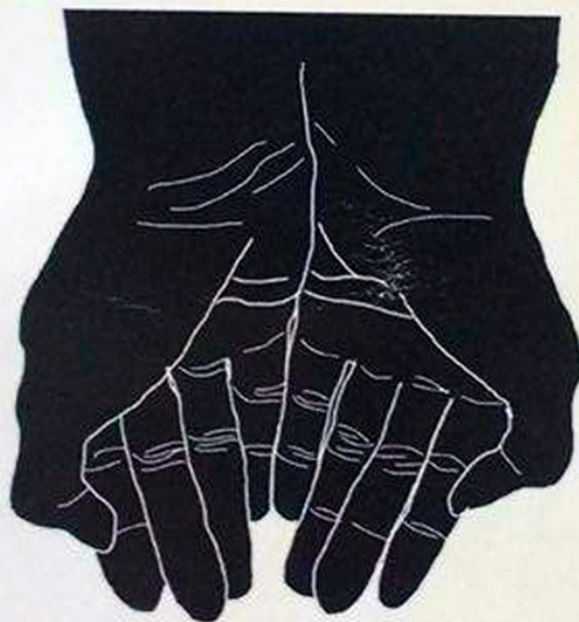


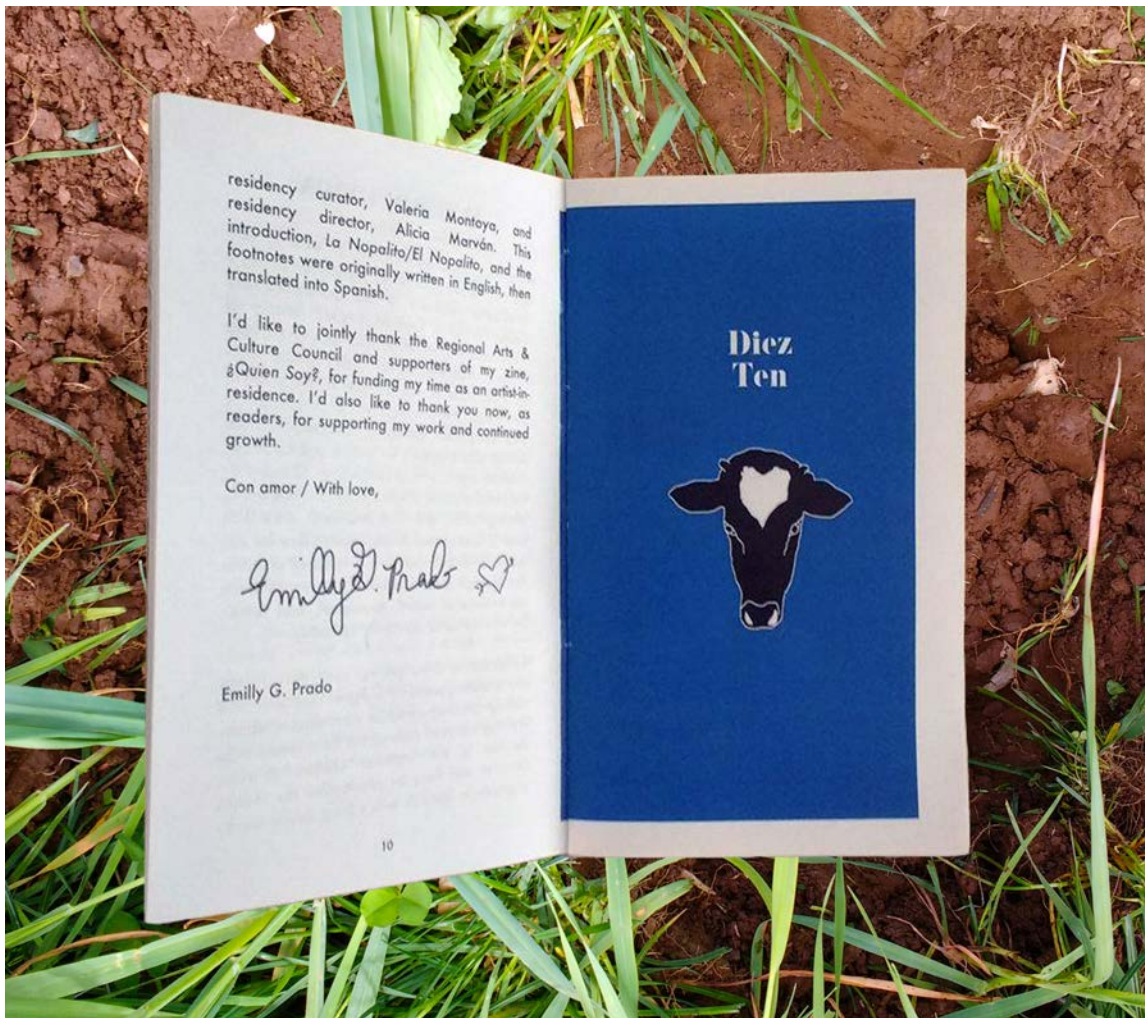
The birds of prey viewed as essential constituents in the earth's ecological cycle and as transporters of the departed, the rotting flesh upon which they feed as representation for the demise of the hate and tyranny at the heart of Donald Trump's wicked, racketeering soul. The caricature, closely surveyed while fully exposed to the environmental elements of the Michoacán landscape, rivals inadequately against Mother Nature herself. Special thanks to Dhara Rivera and Luis Manuel Espinoza Mendoza for their vital structural assistance in the execution of this project.

CON LAS DOS MANOS
WITH BOTH HANDS



EMILLY GISELLE PRADO





Con Las Dos Manos // With Both Hands
Emily Giselle Prado, Zine, México, 2017.



Live readings during the final exhibition, Emilly Giselle Prado, 2017.





HEIDI DYER

Coreographer & Dancer

www.heididyer.me

ig:@hdyer320

As an artist I thrive in an environment that encourages interdisciplinary work and co-creation. I view life as a creative practice and find beauty and inspiration in everyday tasks and the mundane as well as the extraordinary. I hold a B.A. in Dance from Columbia College Chicago and a M.F.A. in Dance from the University of Oregon. In addition to my work as an artist, I am also a healer practicing both manual and movement therapies.



Previously I have mostly created choreography for stage, video, and site-based work for gallery spaces. In recent years I have become increasingly curious about exploring the natural environment as it is where I feel most enlivened and at peace. As a practitioner of the healing arts I am also interested in the impact of nature on human physiology and research in this area informs my practice as does environmental improvisation and Authentic Movement explorations. This project has allowed me to follow this line of inquiry and to generate a response through a variety of lenses including the ecological, the scientific, and the artistic.



Here at Guapamacátaro I decided to start a progressive work investigating the movement that is happening in nature through video and dance. The first stage involved observing the movement already occurring around the grounds of Guapamacátaro. The second explored the dance between the camera, nature, and the human form. For the third stage I intend to repeat this methodology and research in other locations including video and live performance. The final exhibition at Guapamacátaro will include projecting videos created during research onto a custom gown which will act as a kind of active canvas for this performance as well as further studies.







WIP, Performance, Heidi Dyer, 2017.



DIGITAL PRINT

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