

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
IRVINE

How to Build a Mountain House

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in Art

by

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## DEDICATION

This work is for my little child, Henry Bear Eugene who— as I write this is asking for my help to post a wooden sign that reads, *Mountain House* on the wall— with *scotch tape*. This is my prayer for him: his body, spirit, and heart, that he may know through witnessing and sharing in this labor, being in relationship, stewarding this place, this time, that the world can be

transformed.

*O MY DARLIN'  
O MY DARLIN'  
O MY DARLIN' HENRY BEAR!  
YOU FLEW TO ME  
ON A MOONBEAM  
SPREADIN' MAGIC EVERYWHERE!  
WHEN I SAW YOU  
THEN I SOON KNEW  
NEVER'GAIN WOULD I DESPAIR!  
FOR MEANT TO BE  
THAT I'M YOUR MAMA  
AND THAT YOU'RE MY HENRY BEAR!*

I love you, Goose.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Abstract	vii
Introduction	1
Aleupkinga, Cabin #112	2
Refusal	3
Talking to California.	5
My Mother is a genealogist.	9
Genealogy of the present.	16
Return to the site of injury.	44
Matching	49
What is remembered lives.	77
What then— if you weren't here?	87
They were so thirsty they mistook the sky for water.	118
Moving Haystacks	130
Mountain House	142
Appendix 1: Fissures	147
Appendix 2: MH Reparations Fund	148
Appendix 3: MH Free Thrift	149
Notes	150
Works Cited	159

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Cabin #112, Aleupkinga, Cabin #112 (Kristy Lovich)	2
Figure 2 Another Sleeping Venus (Kristy Lovich)	8
Figure 3 Homestead (Kristy Lovich)	15
Figure 4 A line through the room (Kristy Lovich)	38
Figure 5 We can stop here (Kristy Lovich)	43
Figure 6 Something happened here. (Kristy Lovich)	47
Figure 7 (UN) dressed, Regino Rodriguez Vazquez	53
Figures 8-10 Video Stills, Our bodies warm in the sun, unsettled (Daniel Obzejta)	57
Figure 11 Performance documentation, Chiffon and Indiscrete Glitter, Michael Thurin	63
Figure 12 Unsettled, partner activity, Monrovia Canyon Park (Kristy Lovich)	66
Figure 13 Unsettled, partner activity, University Art Gallery (Yubo Dong)	66
Figure 14-15 Performance Documentation, University Art Gallery (Cameron Crone)	70
Figure 16 Stakes (Kristy Lovich)	73
Figure 17 Arrivals, 14x21" inkjet, Edition of 3 (Sebastian Sarti)	105
Figures 18-21 For Two Weeks in May, preparing (Kristy Lovich)	112
Figures 22-23 Unsettled, Procession piece (Cameron)	113
Figures 24-27 Unsettled, opening night (Kristy Lovich)	114
Figures 28-32 For two Weeks in May, using the space (Kristy Lovich)	116
Figure 33 I saw the Coyote and he saw me, Devil's Gate Dam (Kristy Lovich)	119
Figure 34 Vessel from Inside the Arroyo (Kristy Lovich)	129
Figure 35 Crossing the Bridge (Christina M. Simons)	129
Figure 36 Video Still, Boot is another word for milk. (Kristy Lovich)	140

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all my relations, my ancestors, my descendants, and

*THE MOUNTAIN*

## **ABSTRACT**

The following text was co-created over a period of three years through conversations with Clare Fox, Sarah Ashkin, Paolo Speirn, Sebastian Sarti, Regino Rodriguez Vazquez, Michael Thurin, Juliane Lovich, Israel Francisco Haros Lopez, and my mother, Holli Teltoe. My role as a caretaker of this information was to document, preserve, and arrange the oral histories and testimony collected. The selected transcripts are stitched together to create an origin story of Mountain House, a collective that practices radical stewardship of land, relationships, and culture. As a formation of many voices and bodies, Mountain House comes into being and exists through the form of relationship. Those relationships are built and fortified through storytelling, deep listening, and responsive care. What results from the knowledge created in conversation takes the shape of cultural work, networks of mutual aid, and the conditions that are necessary for the creation of lasting social transformation.

## INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

The following text was co-created over a period of three years through conversations with Clare Fox, Sarah Ashkin, Paolo Speirn, Sebastian Sarti, Regino Rodriguez Vazquez, Michael Thurin, Juliane Lovich, Israel Francisco Haros Lopez, and my mother, Holli Teltoe. My role as a caretaker of this information was to document, preserve, and arrange the oral histories and testimony collected.

The selected transcripts are stitched together to create an origin story of Mountain House, a collective that practices radical stewardship of land, relationships, and culture. As a formation of many voices and bodies, Mountain House comes into being and exists through the form of relationship. Those relationships are built and fortified through storytelling, deep listening, and responsive care. What results from the knowledge created in conversation takes the shape of cultural work, networks of mutual aid, and the conditions that are necessary for the creation of lasting social transformation.

I have Dr. Nicholas Centino, PhD to thank for his counsel in navigating the problems embedded in referencing knowledges that are not my own and for pointing me in the direction of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book, Decolonizing Methodologies (1999). It is through his guidance and Smith's text that I found a doorway into articulating my attempt at writing from the place of a white settler-descendent within a North American context in a way that makes appropriate acknowledgements without reproducing harm. I emphasize that this is only an *attempt* because I readily anticipate the lifelong practice of decolonizing my own understanding of the world that lies ahead. As I work to build this practice I am grateful for the support and generosity of scholars like Nicholas and Smith and the many bodies of knowledge I have been gifted by friends and elders that I would not have otherwise encountered.

My hope is that this document contributes to practices of knowledge-building through relationship, connects with the vast history of under-recognized persons' use of storytelling and conversation as a form of care, historical record, the safe-keeping of knowledge— *and the resistance to and dismantling of white supremacist-cis-hetero-patriarchal culture and all settler colonial projects*. As well, that white folks— who in our history and present most often rely on the primacy of empirical evidence, formal academic expertise, and a separation between emotional and intellectual thought can source in the pages to come strategies and methods for a deeper engagement with their whiteness and stakes in abolishing white supremacy, with all of our relatives, kindreds, and with the lands we are responsible to care for.

Many thanks to you for  
building this work with me,

**KRISTY**

FADE IN

INTER-TITLE: Aleupkinga, Cabin #112

CUT TO

EXT: Aleupkinga/Big Santa Anita Canyon/Lower Winter  
Creek Trail - Mid-Day

[A white woman (KRISTY) sits on the steps of a concrete  
cabin foundation surrounded by overgrowth. It is quiet  
except for the sounds of water moving steadily down a  
full creek, birds, and wind swaying tall sycamores.  
She takes a deep breath.]

Figure 1



KRISTY (Voiceover)

(speaking quietly) Something, someone died here.  
(pause) You keep moving further away. I feel you  
disappearing— or is it me?

CUT TO

**INTERTITLE: Refusal**

CUT TO

**INT: Studio – UCI – Night**

**[Two white women (SARAH, KRISTY) sit across from one another in conversation.]**

SARAH

Yes, so you can do something like... "Kristy walks to the mountain, citation, footnote one— I may not and will not share what 'Kristy walks to the mountain' means. I will not be referencing that genealogy because I'm coming from this coded language..."

KRISTY

Yes, exactly. I think... I don't know, it feels powerful to refuse participation and to set a boundary because it contains so much about what we're trying to do at every stage and in the production of the work of any kind, each moment is cared for through this ethic and so it's also cared for in the citation process. It's cared for in the language and creates another model to think about... well how? I do think... (pause) white people should talk about indigeneity, their relationship to indigeneity, yes. But how are we going to do that in a way that does not reproduce violence?<sup>1</sup> Is that even possible?

SARAH

Yes, and something that was coming to me when I when I was writing the dissertation was- how is this thing that I'm making in line with the thesis statement of the research? How is the actual writing object for me- as I was trying to subvert the white academic artifact, how can the writing subvert the archive of whiteness and power?<sup>2</sup> And it doesn't work at all (laughter) but it attempts to use form and acknowledgement and humility and prose, leaving the academic speak behind as a means of resistance<sup>3</sup>. Asking- what does it mean to practice embodied somatic writing?

CUT TO

**INTERTITLE: Talking to California.**

CUT TO

**EXT: Steps of the cabin #112, dusk**

**[KRISTY is lying on her back on the concrete foundation  
staring into the canopy above.]**

KRISTY

Yeah... My mom and I shared this little two-bedroom duplex. Tiny. And I started to work on the little bit of land around the house, building a small garden, needed something to do with my hands. One day I sat on the front step and looked up toward the peak we could see from the house. Mount Zion. And I decided I should walk there. The next morning, I got up early, packed food and water and set out. I walked the twelve miles from our doorstep, up the road and to the top. Then walked back. I did this about three times a week for several months without any particular intent or goal – except that I was sort of asking for the walking to change me. To work on me. This opened up a lot of thinking and feeling about this place and eventually pushed me to declare to myself, to you, a commitment to get to know this place very intimately – the curves of the road, the architectural forms that intervened on your body, these communities of plants, animals, the geology, history, sounds.

One day while walking into the canyon I saw a square, about twenty by twenty feet of flat concrete off the trail. Looking closer I realized it was this foundation of a dwelling, front steps, a turned over chimney. I cleared the platform and sat there for a long time.

***THIS SPOT BECAME A PORTAL.***

I spent a lot of time here, listening, observing, asking questions about the house that was once there, why settlers chose to build there, and what the mountain itself— them-self, yourself might remember about its inhabitants — as the constant observer— presence, a sentient being. How did the mountain's memory, will, agency express itself through the sublimation of the cabin? How could this relationship be understood as an allegory for settler colonialism? Then, connecting this back to my personal experiences that were so violently shaped by the consequences of social harm, poverty, gendered violence could I use my own experiences as a way enter another kind of relationship with this place? Or help to facilitate and support the your agency through my cultural work? Through a stewardship and care for this place? How were the human relationships, the way that failure unfolds at the foot of the peaks echoed back through

the movement of the land, the way it changes perpetually? How you change?

The San Gabriels are a very young range and their geological composition is such that they crumble as fast as they grow.<sup>4</sup> I saw— or see something tragic and funny about this— the way folks build at the foot only to have their homes destroyed by fires then mudslides, the way this old cabin in the canyon was built through idealism, settler “bravery” and will — only to be taken out by a firestorm (I eventually learned).<sup>5</sup> In this constellation of stone and people I found slapstick, the horror and humor of settler intent, Los Angeles, Charlie Chaplin, impossible architecture, retaining walls, dams, folly, the joy in making toward my own obsolescence, the contradictions in the desire to make “house,” the oppositional arrangement between house and mountain, the terror of home, the safety of mountain. Sublimation. Abolition. Possibility. How very California, huh?

Figure 2



KRISTY

So, the mountain looks back at you?

KRISTY

Yes. How could it not?

CUT TO

**INTERTITLE: My Mother is a genealogist.**

CUT TO

**INT: Living room – Day (late afternoon)**

**[KRISTY and HOLLI are seated on a couch that's covered in a floral print. The sound of the fish tank whirls.]**

KRISTY

You know ...so I found that ritual<sup>6</sup> really interesting, very important and I think that's another reason I started thinking about your work as a genealogist but it made me think actually more about (pause) not so much about the technical practice of genealogy but what informs the impulse to do that. And for these folks, what is informing the impulse to do it is an obvious kind of traumatic injury to lineage..

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

...through the act of slavery and erasure. Intentional erasure. It wasn't only just a travel issue ...like somebody is going from one place to another but it was that records were intentionally destroyed in order to psychologically damage the Black family.

HOLLI

And not created. Just ...If not just destroyed but simply not created.

KRISTY

And sort of this willful neglect of documenting a birth or a marriage.

HOLLI

Or (pause) and you don't give people last names.

KRISTY

Or they all take the last name of the slave owner.

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

Yeah and so thinking about the impulse to document genealogy as a restoration or reflection or meditation on these sites of injury to the genealogy, I was curious about (pause) what informs that desire. And I think it's different of course for different people according of course, to their personality and disposition but then also to their specific social location...

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

...and the ways that whichever community they identify with has been involved in a kind of a (pause) sort of a (pause) collective— web of relationships. And so, for us (pause) it's really important to say that there's been over the last three to four generations, a matrilineal leadership in our family and that the reasons for that, it's not— are not a reflection of the culture that we live in, by any means, except that certain cultures of misogyny and poverty created the conditions which led to that phenomenon. That generational phenomenon. So, I've just been thinking a lot about (pause) the ways that historical experience, personal experience shapes the desire to (pause) reconstruct a history or something like it.

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

Like. I don't know. I wanted to know. Maybe grounding it not even so much in a (pause) like not necessarily for you— I don't want you to necessarily try to account for that in a completely linear way but I'm curious

about maybe even, if you can remember the moment you became inclined to write it down.

HOLLI

I don't know. I think that'll take a little bit of thinking.

KRISTY

'Cause you were probably thinking and considering "Oh this and this and this." But what was that moment you said "You know what, I need to sit down and put this on paper."

HOLLI

So, I should preface it by saying that family stories have always been an important part of my life from as far back as I can remember. We are kind of a family of storytellers. Women telling stories, primarily. Your Grandma Bertina was the person who told the most stories and the best remembered stories. But Grandma Lovey, also is a storyteller. And so, that tradition, you know having grown up with that, I was always interested. I had this sense of family even as a child; that family isn't just your parents and your brothers and your sisters. Family is (pause) the generations that came before you. So, I don't think, I think a lot of kids don't grow up having that feeling. It's like,

"This is my family. This is my house. This is what we do everyday." and they don't have a sense that they belong to something that started well beyond that, you know, what that looks like. So, I started getting interested in actually documenting our family history. I guess it was the late 80's, early 90's. Now we had, I had older cousins, actually cousins of your Grandma that had been involved in it and we had gone to some family things and I had seen some of their research. At this time, nothing was online.

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

You know, it was all- If you needed a document from Cincinnati you had to write to them, send 'em some money and hopefully they would find what you wanted and they would send it to you. So, I actually did start doing that in the late 80's, early 90's.

KRISTY

Where were you living?

HOLLI

Let's see ...where were we living? I guess we were living on Lemarsh. But yeah, we were living on Lemarsh but I

didn't get really into it until we moved to La Crescenta which was maybe '94?

KRISTY

Well, it was after the earthquake.<sup>7</sup>

HOLLI

So, that must have been— January, yeah March of '94. I had started collecting documentation and I was interested in the, I don't know— '89, '90 but I was also really busy, you know? Juliane was a baby, you were going through a lot you know, family stuff going on. Huh ...and I ...it just occurs to me now I wonder if, if any of that, had any— me and your dad splitting had anything to do with it. I never really connected those things but...

HER

Had anything to do with your...

HOLLI

My interest.

KRISTY

Your res— you know, reaching out to that?

HOLLI

My interest, yeah. I haven't really thought that through but it's a possibility.

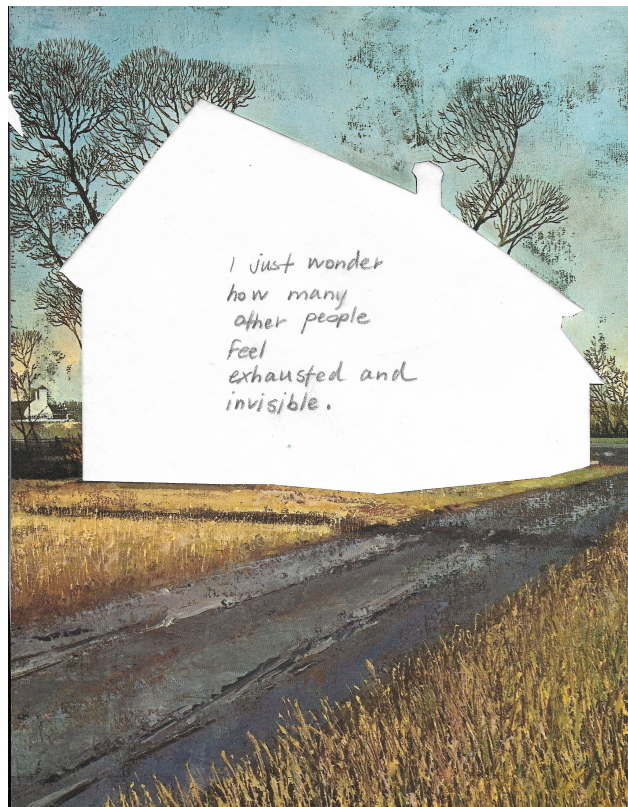
KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

You know in the sense that um... (pause) ...you know, you feel when your family is being disrupted like that you gotta try to hold on to something, right? Well, you can always hold onto the past.

Figure 3



CUT TO

**INTERTITLE: Genealogy of the present.**

CUT TO

**INT: Dining Room - Dusk**

**[KRISTY is seated at the dining table near the window, cup of coffee in hand. HOLLI stands at the stove, preparing a meal. She takes breaks now and then to take a drag from a cigarette out the back door. The sun is setting and golden light pours through the windows, frosting all the surfaces in the room.]**

KRISTY

Okay. So, I bumped into that phrase, "genealogy of the present" that's coined by Foucault<sup>8</sup> and ...it resonated because I think in part, what led me to want to talk to you about your genealogical practice and methods is because I, as a kind of culture worker, maker of things am trying to apprehend my own sensibilities. Like, what kinds of decisions am I making? What do I choose to pay attention to? What do I choose to ignore? What comes up as a perpetual pattern of thinking or logic? And how does the kind of enactment of those different methods and sensibilities point to maybe deeper values or desires or orientations in the world that I have? And then not just me as the individual "Kristy" with this kind of specific life history or whatever but also me as a social actor, somebody who's a part of a

larger social system and then everything that's kind of embedded in that, which is my racialized identity, my identity as a woman, the way that I uh ...interact as a person growing up with- to varying degrees a predominantly working class, working poor upbringing and the culture that comes with that. And so, all of these different kinds of sculptors that sort of shape or form my social location.

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

I think that the way that I look at making artworks or building information for other people to look at is informed by ...yeah, my personal history that's idiosyncratic, some of its personality, some of its-

HOLLI

Experience.

KRISTY

Yes, experiences, the ways that I've interacted with or conflicted with others, the ways that I was raised. All of those are influencing yes but they are also in relationship with me as a social actor. And so, in trying to, I guess in a sense even build a genealogy

of my own practice— like what's the genealogical framework that led me to this moment of consciousness I am occupying?

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

You know? It's very specific but even in its specificity it's also highly applicable to the processes that occur for others not even just art-makers but all people who are in the world doing things, making things, contributing, taking, whatever. We are all kind of dealing with this sort of equation of influence and agency, and privilege, and oppression, and the ways that it fluctuates and changes— So, that all sounds really complicated.  
(laughs)

HOLLI

(laughs) Yes.

KRISTY

But that's always what I am considering. So, I'm not just considering, "What am I making?" but I'm like, "Why do I wanna make that?" That's a really important question to me that I think deserves interrogation.

And so, it makes me think a lot about where I grew up and with whom I grew up (laughs) and what the implied sensibilities were embedded in that culture. And (pause) ...and then taking that a step further and saying, "Well, why did those things end up being predominant influencers onto me and my siblings and the state of our beliefs?" ...or whatever. I think a lot about the value placed on storytelling, not only as a form of historical record, like our familial historical record— It's a way to document essentially, oral documentation of things that happened— to acknowledge "That thing over there happened and it was important" and for memory and conversation to become a document ...but also as a way of constructing models and (pause) mythologies and the way in which people are characterized and interpreted becomes a really important influence. It becomes a way of doing history. And so, in our case I think the archetype of the "Surviving Woman"—

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

Is a like, "capital S, capital W" is a...

HOLLI

Yes.

KRISTY

...an extremely important character and caricature...

HOLLI

Mmm hmm.

KRISTY

...in our family history that's for me, in my mind with Grandma Bertina, she's— cause that's who I have the most access to, like that's the furthest back I can go with the most access...

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

...to her as an actual person having had a relationship with her. But also, she and her life is the most talked about as kind of the "origin story."

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

You know? For how we got to California, how we became who we are, how we ended up here. So, when I bumped into this phrase, I was really grateful for it because it articulated really clearly maybe what my impulses are and then connected me to well— maybe those impulses were actually formed by these other sorts of things.

So, then I found these transcripts of interviews with Foucault talking about this method and he says, "What I am trying to do is grasp the implicit systems which determine our most familiar behavior without our knowing it. Trying to find their origin, to show their formation, the constraint they impose on us and therefore trying to place myself at a distance from them and show how one could actually escape."<sup>9</sup> and then he says, "My problem is essentially the definition of the implicit systems in which we find ourselves prisoners, that I would like to grasp the system of limits and exclusion which we practice without knowing. I would like to make the cultural unconscious apparent."<sup>10</sup> And so, this like ...desire to reveal what's present and try to reconstruct the, the lineage of consciousness that produces the present moment. And that all, then kind of implies that the present moment is also going to produce the future moment...

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

And so, it's that the present is this connector ...and then there was another thing that he said (reads through notes) where is it... "I was interested in the subjects because I saw in them ways of thinking and behaving that are still with us and I try to show based on the historical establishment the formation of the systems that are still ours today and within which we are trapped. It's a question basically of presenting a critique of our own time based upon a retrospective analysis."<sup>11</sup> So, always like ...from the present looking backward.

So, I say all that maybe just to like be really transparent about what I'm thinking about right now and so, at first I thought, "Oh, I'm trying to build this family history." and I don't think that's it. I think in my work I'm trying to actually build something out of the impulse of what it means to build a family history or to reconstruct. And to kinda tie that into the ways that trauma impacts the construction of that family history, the construction of the myth-mythologies, the characterizations of the individuals in that genealogy. How that intersects with whiteness,

our whiteness and participation in white supremacy.  
And I'm not sure to what end except that I can only  
assume that in part by doing it, it helps me to  
reconcile certain traumas and my relationship with a  
traumatic history. And to then make something new.

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

If that makes sense.

HOLLI

So, can I ask a question?

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

So, (sigh, pause) I don't know if I can articulate  
this very well.

KRISTY

That's even better. (laughs)

HOLLI

Ok. (pause) So, are you in effect trying to look at the experiences of people in our family to shed light on your own behavior?

KRISTY

(sigh)

HOLLI

Whether its intellectually, emotionally, in whatever way. Is that, is that fair to say? Or is that just too simplistic?

KRISTY

No, I think that's- there is definitely- there's a pretty (pause) large space in all of this occupied by that-

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

...desire but it's not necessarily to like resolve my own (pause) I don't know, my own (pause) like, personal problems or anything. I don't feel-

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

Yeah. I don't feel— I don't feel like it's an exercise in my own psychoanalytic—

HOLLI

Ok.

KRISTY

...situation. I think more so, my guess is (pause) that we, individuals who are actors in larger social systems can arrive at a more meaningful form of social contribution and empathy if we are able to have experiences that (pause) connect us more deeply with the ways that our consciousness and unconsciousness are actually working. You know? How did I become who I am? Because inside of that there is a lot that we take for granted.

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

Like, "I just got here and I am this person that benefits in this way, in that way." and might not even

have the consciousness to say, "Oh I'm benefitting from something." Which requires the knowledge that like, others don't benefit from that thing. Some people don't even get there. And that— in this current moment politically and socially, the conditions that we are all immersed in together are asking us to come up with a more poignant and responsible form of being a conscious actor in the world. Like we're (pause) we absolutely need to. And so obviously, race is involved in this too like as a white person I am curious about the whiteness in our history and that— how that is interlaced with a deeply gendered experience that impacts economic circumstances and physical circumstances too around just (pause) safety of the body and survival—

HOLLI

Well, first of all I wanna say that intellectualizing..

HOLLI

...there are some risks.

KRISTY

Yeah. (writes in notebook)

HOLLI

...because basically you can, for instance there, there are experiences that generations of women in our family have had that you could, you could link together and come up with ...like a hypothesis or ...I don't know- a theory. You could come up with a theory based on that. The danger is that you're- not that that's not a worthwhile thing to do and I have done it-

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

But it (pause) you have to be careful because you're intellectualizing a person's experience and that's always fraught with problems.

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

Its (pause) they exist on different planes but for instance, what I'll say is that you come from four generations of women that have been sexually assaulted. (pause) Maybe more. I just don't happen to know. I don't (pause) I can't ask my great grandmother those questions. But what I do know is that your

Grandma Bertina, Grandma Lovey, me, and you (pause) four generations. And that absolutely has to shape who we are and what our family has become. And I think that you noting, you know we have this matrilineal dominance, I think that that's an expression of resistance. And, but, so I've drawn my own conclusions. I've come up with this theory but how valid is it? You have to leave room for— you know, room for that to be flawed. I don't know...

KRISTY

Hmm.

HOLLI

...how reliable it is.

KRISTY

Do you think that the (pause) ...in your own construction of that logic ...like, you're witnessing all these facts, you're paying attention to all these facts, you're pulling them together and drawing lines together and you come to the conclusion that this matrilineal leadership and stewardship of our family is a form of resistance as a result of it developing out of or in reaction to generational trauma and sexualized violence ...does your own telling to yourself of that story help you?

HOLLI

Yes. (pause) It does. But it's also shaped— and here's something that's different that I've also observed and you know, again I have to keep repeating that my theory making, you know, you just have to take it with a grain of salt. But one thing I've observed is that in your Grandma Bertina's family and your Grandma Lovey's family (pause) they did not have— I had a very different reaction to that (pause) from them as far as, oh I'm not even saying this very well. (pause) I'll just say the thing that's different. The thing that I did with it that's different was that I decided that family was the most important thing to me in my life. And that (pause) as a defense. And it has some drawbacks. You know? They didn't do that. They, they had their families but there— like in my family of origin there wasn't a sense of "We can stick together. We can get through anything." I didn't feel that. I felt very alone.

But in our family, me and you girls I did feel that and I fed it. Now, I've regretted it at some points because it has made it difficult for partnerships to form, I think, for you guys, initially it's like, I feel like I may have unwittingly promoted this idea that partners are accessories, that they're in the family but you know, only to a point. Now, I don't

feel that way but I feel like at some points in our history that that may have (pause) that may have developed without me trying to shape that in our relationships with partners.

KRISTY

Uh huh.

HOLLI

So, that's one of the things that— I mean and I think it's gotten much better in recent years like as you guys have gone on and started your own families I feel like we're really, that's not really a major problem anymore but it was. Like, for me in my interpersonal relationships like with Scott, he wasn't, he was an accessory. (pause) Part of it was that he didn't wanna be part of our family. If he'd have expressed the need or desire to be in our family then he would have— we would have taken him in like that. But he didn't. So, he was, he was excluded. And that wasn't because we said, "Hey, you're excluded." It was just the dynamic, it's just the way the family was run. So (pause) what I, back to my original point was that (pause) I, that's a different, that's a different way of being than it was for (pause) your Grandma and me and Leslie and then Grandma Bertina and Roger and (pause) Gary and

Grandma. So, they didn't have that. That's where we started, I started that.

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

And that's toward self-preservation. (pause) You know, it's like this idea like, "Yeah, friends'll come and go but you really can't depend on anybody else." I don't know if that's true.

KRISTY

Hmm.

HOLLI

...Anyway, that's just an observation that I've made. I don't know if its relevant to your... (laughs)

KRISTY

No, it is I mean, 'cause the original question is just around like how your interpretation of these connections and narratives, if it provides a helpful-

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

...conclusion or a helpful method to kind of produce a sense of reconciliation, or recovery, or—

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

You know, like the storytelling itself, not even...

HOLLI

Yes.

KRISTY

...is the thing that actually produces the healing element or the strengthening—

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

...a device, you know? A way of enacting, embodying healing, that the speaking itself is the salve. To acknowledge when and what happened but also where.  
(pause)

KRISTY

Yeah.

KRISTY

Yeah. (pause) Makes me think a lot about site, like the origin site. That like the, if you think about the kind of collection of all these narratives, individual experiences. If we're drawing lines between them, which to me, visually kind of is what genealogy does—

HOLLI

Yeah it does.

KRISTY

It takes this like really scattered sprawl of information and starts to make a line, these— this is a connection, this is a connection and then through that you have this kind of interlacing structure. It's sort of an architectural situation— or a topography, a map.

HOLLI

Yeah, it definitely is.

KRISTY

And that— at the points of connection between events there's a certain site that builds, a place that occurs

and then also another form of site is the site of an impact. So, if we think about (pause) this relative that you were talking about earlier who lost six of her seven children decides to migrate from Mississippi to Ohio...

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

...that that movement itself, like the space from Mississippi to Ohio, that route becomes a site that isn't, that has this kind of impact that changes the course or the direction. So, the site itself, the migration to and from places as a place in and of itself become actors.

HOLLI

Yes.

KRISTY

Right? So, I think about Grandma Bertina when her mother dies and her dad packs up all these kids and they get on a train and go out to Dinuba, California-

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

This like weird-

HOLLI

(Interjects) Where he had family-

KRISTY

Yes. But still, it was like kind of this exotic place  
to Grandma-

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

...in the mind of these tenant farmers from the dust in  
Terrell, Texas. It, it, and it obviously produced a  
whole new arm of the family structure and future which  
brings her family to Compton and then to the San  
Fernando Valley, eventually.

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

And so, these kinds of sites, like there's a connection  
that makes a site and then there's a break sometimes  
that makes a site. So, when, when a narrative needs to

break off from the larger more established narrative, for whatever reason ...sometimes it's a famine, a death, an earthquake ...in the case of like social histories in the United States, a racialized violence. Sometimes it's a combination of all of those things—

HOLLI

(Interjects) Sometimes its economic—

KRISTY

Yeah! There's this like kinda puncture or severance of the dominant narrative— a fissure, (see appendix 1) and then it breaks off and moves into another and so thinking about that as even like a visual, really architectural structure ...cause then also you kinda have these sites, these locations ...but then there's stuff in between those and under those and around those. These kind of— It's really (pause) interesting. It starts to become this kind of animal thing that is nebulous and always moving and—

HOLLI

It is always moving.

KRISTY

Yeah. Yeah. And so, I have been thinking too in the last several days a lot as I was kind of preparing to

talk to you (pause) about these sites and like in your own personal history what are the sites, like the— not just a site in a physical sense but the— it's like this moment in time and the physical place kind of doing something that caused a—

HOLLI

A radical change—

KRISTY

That ultimately changed our genealogy, right? Because it—

HOLLI

Yes.

KRISTY

It changes the course of relationships. It marks a time, place, event that deserves recognition or care.<sup>12</sup>

HOLLI

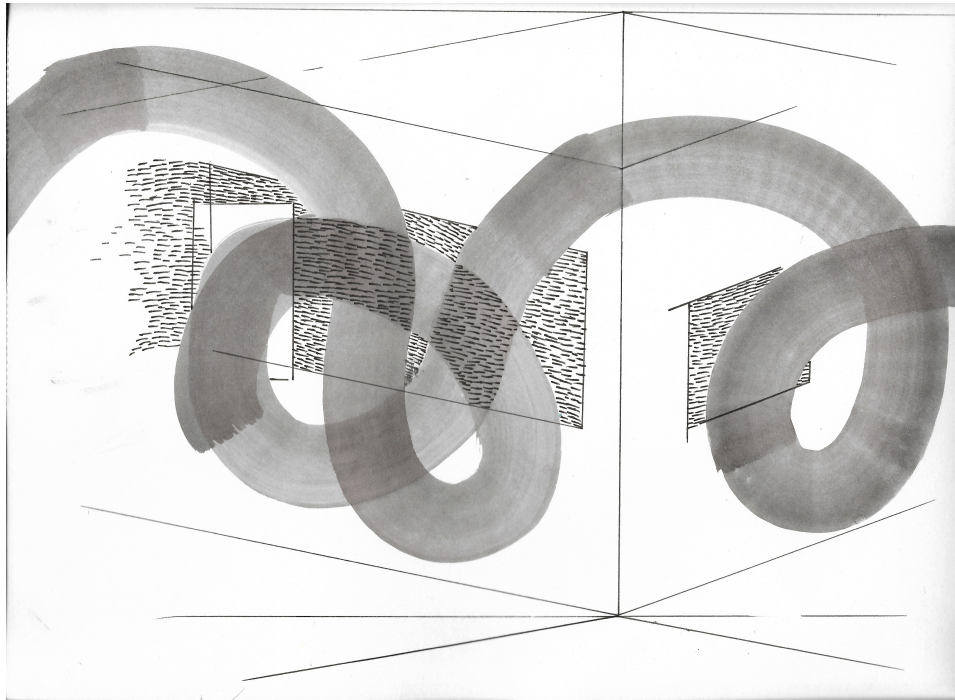
Yeah. (pause) Um ...that's interesting. Um ...when my parents uh ...divorced, we were living in Westminster in an apartment and I think in the— I was six so in three years I think we moved seven times. So, I just felt like a complete vagabond at that point ...but what was

a radical change was when your Grandma married Don Miller...

KRISTY

Hmm.

Figure 4



HOLLI

...and we moved to the suburbs which-

KRISTY

In the San Fernando Valley?

HOLLI

In the San Fernando Valley which was radical. I mean, in 1969 there was just open, mostly open space and tract housing. And I had never lived in like a neighborhood where like kids played outside and you rode your bike and there was a mom and a dad..

KRISTY

(laughs)

HOLLI

...and like you know, like you see on T.V. So, that was really radical for me and that was the place where I developed all my long-lasting relationships. And I mean some, I'm not close with but I still stay in touch with. But um ...yeah that was, that was radical change. You know? It was also um ...because my stepfather didn't like me, that was also a really painful time. So, I had this kind of dual experience going on. "Yay! I get to be like the kids on T.V." (pause) "Boo, the dad doesn't like me." So, that would be like uh ...but then you know within four- let's see... I was nine- within five years we started the moving thing again. So...

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

It was like ...yeah and that just continued ...moving, moving...

KRISTY

So, there was this kind of placeless-ness.

HOLLI

Yes. (pause) Yeah and the idea that you didn't want to get too dug in. And so, dur- for my adult life I've done nothing but strive to dig in. (laughs) You know.

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

And ...but again, you know we had a, there was a transitional phase too where you know we had to move out of the Community house, we moved in with Scott, we moved to Altura, then we broke up. There was like these few years where there was all this moving and that's always represented for me a time of great trial. The moving. It just pushes my buttons. Um ...let's see, other ...yeah like, moving to La Crescenta was a huge deal. Um ...moving into a rock house. I mean, come on.

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

(laughs) A place that had existed for over, for over a hundred years. You know, looking for— if that's not looking for stability, I don't know what is. You know?

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

...moving, so again you have these dueling ideas. You've got this rock house that represents stability and security but you're in a neighborhood that's totally alien to you.

KRISTY

Uh huh.

HOLLI

Alien. Like, we didn't fit in. So that was...

KRISTY

Still a displacement. Despite the physical...

HOLLI

Still a displacement, yeah. You know moving from an area that was super diverse and...

KRISTY

And economically diverse too. There was always...

HOLLI

Yeah.

KRISTY

...this really kind of widespread spectrum of-

HOLLI

Right.

KRISTY

...economies and...

HOLLI

From block to block, you know?

KRISTY

Yeah.

HOLLI

So, (pause) but you had exposure to all different kinds of people and ...had I known that, I don't know that I

would have made that change but at the time you know, we were traumatized by the earthquake. I really wasn't ...I just needed a place that was stable. And um ...yeah ...that was tough, you know? And it was hard to know that it was that, it wasn't what I would have hoped for you guys but I felt kind of helpless to change it. (pause) Anyway.

KRISTY

We can stop it there I think.

Figure 5



CUT TO

INTERTITLE: Return the site of injury.

CUT TO

INT: Queen's Burgers - Tujunga, CA - Day

[KRISTY is seated in a booth. She can see the Mountain from the window. Radio plays top 40, grill sizzles, two women behind the counter yell at each other in Spanish, at the customers in English. The place smells like french fries and pine sol.]

KRISTY

As a kid I remember my mom always talking about living in the Valley, in Southern California, starting that narrative with a professed "need to live where she could see the mountains." The mountains she was talking about were the San Gabriels, looking east from our house in the valley, just on the west side of the 405 they were always visible. I have always lived in close proximity to those mountains (save for a handful of years living in Boyle Heights. When our house was red tagged after the '94 earthquake in Northridge my mom was given FEMA money to resettle. She moved us to La Crescenta in the Foothills of the mountains, to a neighborhood she thought would be safer in part because it was built on bedrock and another part because it was a middle-class suburb that presented as peaceful, far away from things that scare single moms raising

girls in the 90's. It was also a very white neighborhood. Her understanding of it as safer is not apart from the town's white middle class presentation. We lived there, renting a house we couldn't really afford without my mom working several jobs. I started 7<sup>th</sup> grade at the middle school up the road. That period was sort of the beginning of an unraveling for safety for me.

This was the first place I ever experienced a predominantly white environment. In my old neighborhood, we were actually the only white family on the block. This was also the first place that I ever bore witness to casual white racism, the use of racial slurs in everyday language, and I soon learned that there were folks very nearby, neighbors really, that were openly a part of white supremacist organizing, hanging a Confederate Flag on their front porch and would later learn that this neighborhood had a long history— since its inception, of violent white supremacist activity. This was also the place where I experienced violence done by white men, to me. These two happenings too were not apart from one another. As I understood it then (and perhaps with more nuance now) the relational sites and cultural formations that gave way to violent white racism were the same sites

that created gendered violence that I experienced firsthand.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade I was suspended for fighting at school. The first time I was ever in trouble at school in my life. I punched a kid for calling me a kike. About six months later I experienced a sexual assault done by a twenty-three-year-old man (I was fourteen), a counselor at the church youth group down the street from my house. It happened in the parking lot of the playground at the church. I left school about a year after that and went to work full time as a nanny and housekeeper. All of this made me hate this place. Hate this neighborhood. It was an inherently unsafe place and all around me the adults in charge either couldn't see the root causes of my trouble in school or saw it and had absolutely zero skills or will to address it. I moved through that period feeling like I didn't really have any options, friends, community but the mountains were a constant.

*AND SO WAS PUNK ROCK.*

Figure 6



After living in other neighborhoods throughout my twenties I have come back to this neighborhood – or to Tujunga (the “poor side” of the Foothills). This was a calculated decision – to return to this site, to live, raise my child, perhaps to confront all of this, to transform it. Over the last several years the mountain has come to take up more space as a central figure or character in this narrative and in the way that this personal narrative reaches out toward (or scales up) a collective narrative (or one aspect of it). To look toward the Mountain and my proximity to it, relationship to it became a way to talk about how my personal history is integrated with a collective history. The hope here, to create a model of building knowledge that moves toward a transformative practice

of being in the world, of using a reflection on autobiography as an entry point into meaningful engagement with the world, an entry point into deeper connection.<sup>13</sup>

CUT TO

**INTERTITLE: Matching**

CUT TO

**INT: University Art Gallery, UCI - Night**

**[KRISTY and SARAH are seated across from each other at a kitchen table. The room contains building materials, stones, 10 bags full of soil, and three boxes of books.]**

KRISTY

So, as we are preparing for this performance, I have been thinking about the territory of art-making and of cultural work holds profound and unique and untapped potential for people with privilege and specifically white people in making radical futures— I mean, we know when we see it this potential activated and we know when we don't see it— or when we see more harm being done<sup>14</sup> and with that I was thinking so much about something we've talked about in terms of white folks showing up to conversation about cultural production in a way that is at least in kind— or in the pursuit of working as hard as folks of color, particularly Black people, afro-futurist thinkers and indigenous futurist thinkers that are working to imagine those futures. And that white people and white artists that are charged with the task of imagining a new way of

being in the world, that we are as a collective body not showing up to that work even in kind. Right?

And so, that brought me to this text I've been reading a book called Futures of Black Radicalism and there's a section where this particular writer, Francois Verges talks about what he calls a "politic of the possible" and that afro-futurism, what it does is it sort of lays out this template or a blueprint to begin to construct a politic of the possible and that that kind of turn or that sort of ignition in that is authored by Black people out of this extreme expertise in imagination.<sup>15</sup> And so I wanted to maybe start there as a point of departure and then and asked you about your own practice individually but then how you come into collective work through GROUND SERIES<sup>16</sup> how you're relating to that idea— what is what could be a complimentary discourse in terms of how white people are responding to this notion of futurism, the future— and in the future, where does whiteness end up? What is whiteness in that construct? Does it even survive? I know that's huge (pause) and you here, right now in your body, in your work, how are you oriented around that proposition or that question and how does stewardship to care for come into that space?

SARAH

Immediately (pause) I have so many ideas okay.. immediately I want to speak to my mentor Colin Pool in the UK who is a Black English choreographer making work with my other mentor Simon Ellis who is a white dude from New Zealand and the two of them make-work in a project called "Colin, Simon, and I"<sup>17</sup> ...even though it's just the two of them, in which Colin really is the director and he imagines situations in which Simon, the white guy can match his proposal as a Black body on stage. And so, Colin will put his body inert on stage and you can make assumptions— that's the beautiful thing about dance is that we just create patterns so quickly. We see something or just like already you know (pause) maybe we assume violence, maybe we assume safety, maybe we assume drunkenness, maybe we assume laziness. He doesn't say any of that but he's lying on the floor face down. And so, with very little preparation or with plenty of preparation it works differently. Simon has to deal, as a white person on stage, publicly in front of other people with these proposals.

**CUT TO**

**EXT/INT: Bridge between Humanities and Art, University  
Art Gallery, UCI - Day**

**[REGINO is seated on the floor against the wall,  
looking down onto the screen of their phone, they**

ignore the audience, texting to Siri. We hear Siri speak.]

REGINO (through Siri)

To be visibly queer and femme,  
is to sacrifice my safety.

A fear of embarrassment,  
an anxiety.

But,  
that ceased to exist;  
& I *existed*.

A silencing of the body.

An act of erasure.

The masculine voice  
remains auditory.

In this world,  
The woman leads the dialogue.  
The woman leads the play.  
*Action.*

To take over a space.

A random space.

A cruised space.

An auditory space.

To be gazed at.

To be questioned.

To be punished?

To be concerned.

To be joined.

To be unified.

No me lo puedes quitar.

I declare this space:

a safe space;

for any one

who identifies with it

(un)consciously.

This is *not* the end.

Figure 7



CUT TO

**INT: (back to) University Art Gallery, UCI - Night**  
**[KRISTY and SARAH are seated across from each other**  
**at a kitchen table.]**

SARAH

So, the way that Colin talks about that is that he wants Simon to match him. Another example is Colin's legs hanging in the top of a frame and inside there's a man sitting in a desk. And so, for Colin that's all about "What Will Simon do with my proposed hanging body?" There isn't a gore in the work but there is violence and histories of violence. So, we are training and understanding quotidian space and the subtlety of racist spectacle. I think that's something that Colin is interested in putting on stage and asking his white collaborator, his friends, his students, "How is it that you are matching the risk that I am taking?"

So, I say all of that because that really ...you know I just think about it all the time. Colin wanted me to do a piece where the question was "What would it take for you to give up your chair? For you to give up your seat?" (pause, deep breath) and you know I was able to answer it with all of these pleasantries and kindnesses but the answer (pause) really giving up my seat- (pause) I can say that I'm brave enough to do that but

what does that look like? Where do I go if I don't have a seat? White people can't even imagine what it would be like to not have a chair. (pause, deep breath) And all of this is happening in fucking dance rehearsal, right? The space of this conversation, this conversation of actual whiteness and Blackness, and violence and privilege is just situated in a present scenario: I'll be in a chair and you won't and what will we do? (pause, deep breath) So, I think about that experience and that prompting from my mentors, these extremely brave radical Black artists and these curious, smart, intellectual type white people. I would describe Simon as someone who's like "oh here's a problem I'd like to untangle" and then he comes to it that way and arrives with his entire self, split open. (laughter) So, I thank Colin for that really clear language of how is it that you "white person" literally in your art making across from me as a person of color- or just your thrust as a white artist- how are you matching me? (pause)

Colin and Simon's work is coming at- I wouldn't necessarily describe it as futurist. I would describe it as contending with and living with and tarrying with violence, transgenerational violence that is inside of our bodies in the present. So, a past and present. I think that informs a lot of where I am

because part of my reading of Yancy<sup>18</sup> and Sara Ahmed<sup>19</sup> is that a projection in which things are suddenly better or different or cleansed for white people can't be my goal as an artist. This is something that became very clear— it's like having a cork— and it's something I always imagined plugged into my ribs and I can't pull the cork and then the white privilege just (pause) will just spill out, will just go away. So, for me the power of futurism for people of color is immensely critical for me as a white artist and particularly engaging in this work that— and now I'm thinking of another Black colleague of mine, Adam McKinney<sup>20</sup> who is so invested in his work as a dance artist working on trans-generational trauma. Whereas (pause, deep breath) the work for me in the matching is to do my homework on my family, on my land, on the places that I call home, and that my family has called home, the places that my female-dancing-trained-in-ballet-body gets to occupy.

Something that becomes really clear to me is that my commitment to anti-racist work is grounded in all of that which I love. Because if I don't understand the harm in the things, places, actions, people, histories that I think I love then the love, it holds a falseness or it's sleeping. Then its love because of ignorance, out of ignorance. So, because I am (pause) I believe

in the power of love, our love, my ability to make change based on love, I have so much work to do in the category that I understand as places or things or actions that I love. So concretely, that looks like kicking open the door so wide on dance and racism! Really, really wondering and thinking and asking about my family and the very many levels of my privilege inside of my family. What it means to be in friendship— How can I be (pause) how can I practice love with my white friends and how can I practice love with my friends of color? And then this piece, Kristy! The outdoors!

SARAH and KRISTY

(laugh and take a deep breath)

Figures 8-10





KRISTY

Something that is coming up, you know I was sort of starting to visualize... when we think about matching (pause) I was visualizing a thoroughfare or something in space (pause) moving forward and I'm thinking about conditions and the question and oh! I wrote this down the other day. (looks through notebooks)

I keep coming back to you, the fact for me, that Mountain House is not the work it's a tool to do the work and so then my aim with Mountain House is to change certain conditions very strategically to get to a space where we have the capacity collectively to actually do the work and so, when you were describing the homework, this is where I'm at- that has to be the aim because I'm not even in a placed intellectually or spiritually or cognitively as a white person- I do not have the cognitive capacity to make the kind of imagination the folks of color are so expert in because I still have all this homework to do. Right?

SARAH

Yeah.

KRISTY

So, each of us, we can be moving forward, are moving somewhere? Not necessarily even forward. We're moving together but we're moving in different vehicles, with different capacities and our task is to change certain conditions, to meet certain needs that are in relationship with our social location. So, maybe that brings me to a question about Unsettled<sup>21</sup> and then I think probably for GROUND SERIES as a whole, in terms of this body of work that's being built. Thinking about

conditions, what sorts of conditions do you envision a performance like Unsettled changing or shifting?

SARAH

So, I do like this word intervention, performance as intervention, and I like it because— maybe performance isn't right, maybe it's just intervention. I really like the idea that a thesis or dissertation is an intervention or a brochure it's an intervention, our conversation with administration is an intervention. Yeah, that this activity— and it is related to conditions (pause) for me my metaphor is to tear, like to allow for a rip in the fabric to occur so that we become aware of the fabric.

**CUT TO**

**INT: Room Gallery, UCI - Night**

**[MICHAEL is seated on a stack of a dozen eight by eight-foot wood floor panels. More panels rest against the walls. House lights are on. Whitney Houston's *Saving All My Love* is playing, heard softly through a set of headphones on the concrete floor.]**

MICHAEL

The body knows, the body speaks. But how do you how do I how do we listen? Do I give them a chance to know me on my terms? That sounds exhausting. I button my coat and find the rest of the pall-bearers. Show time.

*Score: Move The Floor.* The floor knows, the floor speaks. But how do you how do I how do we listen? Somatic openings. We were five, they are four, now we are nine. Body brush, gloves on, let's work. *Stillness.* Is there movement in stillness? Viewer: you're giving us so much, here's something in return, an equitable exchange of labor and attention, we're here together after all and when I roll over and my arm continues to unfold it goes into your space, between these two bodies, and by bodies I mean anchors. I feel like we are here, together, but differently, we each have power that the other might not fully know. I wonder what this is like for you. *How do you arrive?* To set up the conditions for the not-yet-possible. To establish the terms of engagement. *Is this the thing?* The third group comes in the back door. Sovereignty and the dancer's, I mean your body. *What is a body? Proscenium.* When being becomes becoming. House lights: on. Another type of becoming. *To the right: Knee two three four five six seven, knee two three, over two three. To the left: Knee two three four five six seven, knee two three, over two three.* Side sevens, the first dance I learned. *Shoulders back, arms against your side, stop moving your arms and dammit close your fists! Why do you keep moving your arms? What did I just tell you? Get the hell out of my studio.* When I think of my dad, I see him wearing his IRA t-shirt. I call to ask him

about the dance floor we made in our garage when I was thirteen. I understand performance as a practice of being: being of, being with, being for each other. I identify dance as: my primary process and form in facilitating these practices; as a container of time and space; as moving, or to not moving, with intention; an execution of intention that, when fully committed to and embodied, has material and affective consequence. I believe that dance *does*, and the dancer *is*. Or, maybe it is the other way around: dance *is*, dancer *does*. Why not both? I also believe that when we dance we are within our own and each other's respective, overlapping, sometimes contradicting histories. And when we are within said histories, we are within knowledge. Embodied knowledge. This is a theoretical, conceptual proposition as much as it is a material, physical fact. "YOU ARE NOW ENTERING FREE DERRY." In my studio in Irvine, California, I am on Tongva land. At my grandfather's funeral in Benicia, California, we are on Ohlone land. Your movement is a historical event. Acknowledging is an entry. Acknowledging is not enough. To work, to rest; to refuse to work; to have the privilege of refusing to work. Red-magenta air, pockets of darkness. I grab a blanket. So does Sophia. Our blankets touch. One Body.

Figure 11



From the shoulders: release, pour, give, receive. How long have we been here? I'm not ready to leave. So I don't. None of us are ready to leave, *it's just too good in here*, so we don't. This is what this space is for. Grandma drops her shawl. David and Sophia trade shirts. Generative friction. Stay, won't you? Here, together, but differently. Slow dance. Dance party. House dance. *Wait, people are actually cruising.* Togetherness. This is what this space is for. One Body. Amen. I whisper these words, the prayer spilling out of my mouth. My grandmother across the aisle, her mouth making the same shapes and sounds. *Fascia.* Now it is time to kneel. I kneel. Some don't. We all lift the final panel together. Slow, quick quick, slow, quick quick, slow, quick quick slow. We work until we decide

we are done. Because otherwise, the work will never end. Leave it alone and rest. Where do you feel the difference? Stay there. [*Let's Hear for the Boy* by Deniece Williams is the next song on the playlist.]

**CUT TO**

**INT: (back to) University Art Gallery, UCI - Night**  
**[KRISTY and SARAH are seated across from each other at a kitchen table.]**

SARAH

So, for the piece, this upcoming piece, this version of it in the gallery I think about creating conditions in which (pause) okay so if privilege, according to Sarah Ahmed is (pause) if whiteness creates a comfort, it creates a body in comfort because it's been allowed to recede into coziness. A performance has the capacity— and the one that we're going to make I'm hoping has the capacity to present discomfort for gallery goers, such that they feel a sense of questioning and criticality about their presence in the gallery and with landscape, and being here with (pause) loving nature and all it has to offer us. I think there's (pause) often when things are just comfortable, white people, we say no. Performances are so awesome because they're this funny container where you could walk out— and sure that's happened to me in a GROUND SERIES show or people you know— when I'm doing

very interactive work they talk back at me with their discomfort and how cool is that? But for the most part people are pretty conditioned to just stick it out with me. So yeah, I'm hoping that the performance creates conditions around which discomfort, vulnerability, self-reflection can happen (pause) and the big, big hope is that they might see that white people are doing this work and that there are role models and conversations to have, there are connections that we can make with each other to help each other do this work. That might not happen but it's always a big, big goal. And maybe that is what Mountain House and GROUND SERIES can be seen as, as resources for people. Those are conditions that I hope can change.

Figures 12-13



KRISTY

So, in the production of discomfort what— and then this to goes back to this idea of the politic of the possible— what's possible in the space of discomfort?

SARAH

I borrow that word from Urban Bush Women<sup>22</sup> who are this 25, 30-year-old dance company out of Brooklyn, all Black women dance company. And they lead is Summer Leadership Institute also for many years probably around 10 years, which is an anti-racist training with dancers from all over the country and all over the world. And that word discomfort gets talked about in our technique classes where we're training— as the "growing edge"— which I love. Where is the place? Where is the place? Rather than to push out of your comfort zone— to use this idea that a place where discomfort happens, growth happens. As opposed to a zone where you have to step into it (or can easily opt out of it) an edge is already with you, always. It's understanding it is already with us. I am moved by that. That's how we try to train in the metaphor for this discomfort. I think particularly for white people and absolutely for folks of color dealing with internalized oppression and racism, just—comfort is where the possibility for personal historical failure lives. Right? (pause, deep breath) When we're

uncomfortable, often times with white people it's met with defense. Discomfort is met with defense and for me I'm not actually totally against that. I think that it's like grief and alcoholism and addiction, defensiveness is just part of our deal. And it models for other people when we watch folks spring on defense or if we have to deal with defensiveness when we're dealing with other white people. Maybe discomfort also has other outcomes besides defensiveness like apologies or desire curiosity to learn more— I mean wow, this thing of politics of the possible! I think it's important and I know I keep going back to this but I think it's important not to imagine escaping discomfort as the future. I guess discomfort is generative in the way that dislodgement is generative. If something shifts in you then new work gets to happen, new questions get to happen. I don't think it necessarily goes away it's a tool of refocusing. Discomfort is a tool of refocusing.

KRISTY

Is there Joy or pleasure in this kind of discomfort?

SARAH

Paolo and I are in rehearsal right now for the ranger art talk it's just so funny to me. I laugh giant belly laughs when Paolo says things like "nature was invented

in the late 1800s by the painters of the Hudson River Valley" (laughter) I crack up but I know that that's satire and so that's an interesting question. Is there pleasure and joy in satire? I think so. It's release—laughter and humor in the face of the ridiculousness of racism is a release. I think also, laughing allows us to connect with each other and participate. So, the laughter and the humor that's been now in three or four GROUND SERIES works around racism and colonialism, it's both a joy and a tool. And I can't lie it's a little manipulative— a little bit like "I'm going to make you laugh. I'm going to ask for you to participate and join me in this and then once I get you laughing and your body going and your participation as an embodied person in my work, we're going to then start doing other things. We're going to keep that opening and that channel between us, keep it widening." And so, laughter is one way in.

Figures 14-15



SARAH

I don't know if it's pleasure or joy but the offering of genuine nostalgia, that's definitely present in Paolo's mom's offering or narrative as she's lovingly describing their family visit to the lake in the mountains. I feel soothing and balm in moments like that. (pause) Back to my love thing. If you can love a moment like that with all of its depth and complexity and know it, that loving this is deep joy and pleasure. I do think about this and I was listening to you speak the other day at the panel<sup>23</sup> talking about your words—obsolescence, stepping away, and stepping back and I just feel complicated in all of that and I recognize and myself that part of my burnout is related to my making now for two years straight, intensive engagement in what I would call “productive guilt and shame.” I don't know yet if I figured out. I feel pleasure when I connect with people about the work afterwards (pause) it's complicated. And I think there's an under text here of— white people, who are thinking about racism, are white people allowed to feel joy and pleasure? (pause) That's definitely (pause) I have not figured out how to relate to that yet. I think. (deep breath)

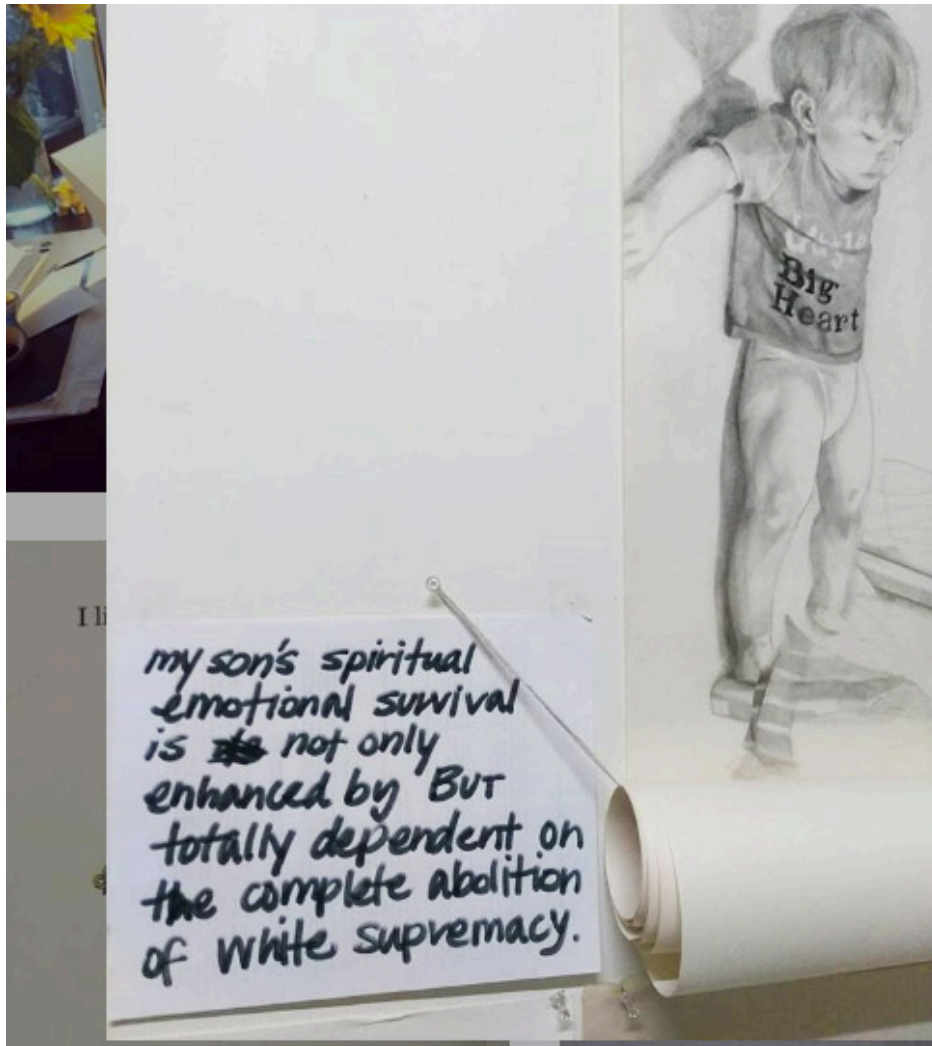
KRISTY

It's very, very difficult for me to make objects or artworks unless I am able to very concretely figure out how they are fitting into some sort of strategic goal, into the larger work around racial justice. Which has always kind of been around when I'm making work and then I think in the last couple years has felt even more escalated, that sense of— almost literally telling myself “You’re not allowed to do that because there's all this other work to do.” Which, I do not think is a sustainable or helpful thing and so I'm really, that's why I think I've been trying to come back to joy and pleasure because I think if we want white people, or if we ourselves— not even just an abstract “white people out in the world,” if we, ourselves as white folks doing this work want to sustain it, our whole humanity must be in it and that includes joy and pleasure.<sup>24</sup> Otherwise it's just another strange perverted resurgence of violence.

SARAH and KRISTY

(Take a deep breath.)

Figure 16



SARAH

It makes me think about something that you posted months ago<sup>25</sup> about advice for artists making work in communities and one of the things was "why make the art? Just give the money!" (laughter) That was the number one thing! "So, you think you're helping communities? Are you giving the money? Then you're probably not helping!" That is, it just stuck with me because I think I might need to make the art. I don't

necessarily need to make the art where I go into disadvantaged communities and uplift them. That's pretty far from my model. But I don't think I'm, you know just knowing what I've done since I was eighteen years old, I've made a dance work or five every single year and I don't think that's going to go anywhere and I don't really feel guilty or bad about that. Because I have to acknowledge that I have a drive and hopefully some type of communicative gifts or power or something to offer that might be a way to offer voice and so I think I might keep making the art. And then it doesn't even need to be for— and this idea of listening to Noni<sup>26</sup> speak on the panel about “are you going out and having the conversation?” and initially being like “oh shit this [Unsettled] is not a process in which we are going out and really working with Tongva communities”— and then I can hold onto the objective of this work, it is to organize white people. I continue to be in conversation with outdoorsy, artistic, hiking [white] people. And at the end of the day, what matters in our world and our effect on a violent capitalist economy is that I'm doing that work with white people with as much of my heart as possible and I'm paying up at the end. We are making a donation to reparative funds. (See Appendix 2) No matter what. So, I think that there's something there and I don't necessarily want to take myself out of the equation. I think I have to

name myself, to say that I am a good dance maker. Okay. I'm going to keep making dance but also ask in what ways is the dance serving people? If the answer is to organize white people— but it can't be just that, I'm not, at the end of the day the money, the money needs to go where it needs to go and I can keep making work if that's something that gives me a purpose. That's great. And on the ground support needs to happen no matter what. Even if I'm making the art work I still need to be doing the hard, boring work of going to the park and giving away deodorant. (See Appendix 3)

SARAH and KRISTY

(Laughter)

SARAH

Does that feel like Mountain House? Is that like what Mountain House is? Because it holds all those things?

KRISTY

It tries. It's trying!

SARAH and KRISTY

(Laughter)

KRISTY

Yeah actually, that brings me to another thing because yes I think Mountain House is in pursuit of that idea. That like, it does try to hold all of those lines and I think that brings me to this idea of fellowship and community, to be in communion around this work. And so, for me it was, I felt like and have felt for a very long time a little bit (pause) this feeling of placelessness, that I don't really have a place.

CUT TO

Intertitle: What is remembered lives.

CUT TO

INT: Upstairs space in Human Resources - Day

[CLARE and KRISTY sit across from each other in a windowless room. The space appears to be under construction and contains building materials, art materials, hand built provisional furniture. They are preparing materials for a meeting.]

CLARE

I'm just really appreciating the Mountain House too, as a place— in all the ways that places can be, where we come together.<sup>27</sup> What's been coming up for me is about ancestors and lineage when you were talking about Mountain House, and relating to this Human Resources opportunity<sup>28</sup> through that lens and that architecture, I was like, oh right! They're visitors! So, thinking about how we're all visitors and visiting with each other and spending time together. I was just appreciating that. So, I guess I'm just going to flow with some things that have been coming up.

(pause)

So, what's missing in in in cognition and beyond cognition is that rootedness in relationship to

lineages and seeing rootlessness, seeing, seeing rootlessness as some symptom of whiteness or some aspect of whiteness. The cutting of ties. The investment in the autonomous nuclear self that doesn't need anybody else, right? That defies interdependence. Its all of the things— man conquering nature, all of the ways that we just like, especially in a white supremacist culture insist upon non-relational— a non-relational reality, which is like the opposite of reality. (laughter) So, then it's like, it is a culture of complete dissonance and denial, ongoing.

This came up at White people for Black Lives<sup>29</sup> the other day. It was my first time there ever. I have never been to that meeting. But the topic was reparations and I really wanted to engage that. But someone named that just like (pause) well, what we talked about was that reparations is not about— is about financial compensation for extracted stolen violently extracted and stolen labor. But that it's like, it starts with the level of psychic repair. And so we worked with Ta-Nehisi Coates' and his article, "The Case for Reparations," and he talks about the redefinition of our self-identity as Americans in reconciliation with the facts of history. We literally have to repair our psyches, collectively, and together we can't do I one or the other, on our own as individuals, and we can't

do it just white people or just black people. It is going to be a collective— an investment repairing collective consciousness and that's the foundation of how we achieve reparations in an externalized form through financial compensation or the re-articulation of institutions infrastructure, etcetera. And someone noted that, they're like "I don't know about your white family, but in my white family— when shit's really fucked up, everyone is like 'everything's great! smiley face!" And I was like, "lol" in my head because that was my Christmas. Our family's home just burned down in a wildfire<sup>30</sup> and everyone was just like, "How are you? Good. How are you?" Just (laughter) a complete lack of capacity to feel, to share feelings, to articulate, to experience, just experience, not even articulate but experience reality. To experience reality (pause) together. You know? And I'm assuming, everyone is doing what they have to do to take time to feel their feelings at home or whatever, maybe with their partner, or maybe they're not? But anyways, I just, just seeing that kind of cultural expression in terms of whiteness. And so, that (pause) tendency also. Yeah, it (pause) my mind is going so many directions. It's words. It's more, I mean obviously it instills in ahistorical perspective. It really means we don't know who we are because we don't know how we got here. We don't know what we come from. Even in our movements.

So, the other thing that kind of popped for me was that I was at this panel on Thursday night for Justice LA. the coalition that's fighting the \$3.5 billion new jail proposal<sup>31</sup> and Melina Abdullah<sup>32</sup> said she starts the whole event, pouring my libations for ancestors, movement ancestors and says jokingly to Dahlia,<sup>33</sup> she's like, "I always say to Dalia and the other white people that I'm close to: Well, y'all got one!" (pause) John Brown,<sup>34</sup> "Y'all got one!" She literally said it like three times, almost like an incantation. "Y'all got one." And I was like (pause) but there's so many more and they're completely gone. Or are they?

In Reclaiming we, we talk about, in Reclaiming Witch tradition<sup>35</sup> – *WHAT IS REMEMBERED LIVES*. And so, the ancestors of revolution or resistance within the white supremacist system who were rendered white, they're dying, they're dying in our consciousness, they're not here. I don't have enough of them with me. I don't bring them with me and I feel rudderless sometimes.

And then the last thing that was like a little pop that I sat with, that I want to look at more, so yeah just wondering about remembering them or remembering that we had a workshop with Aware<sup>36</sup> that was all about ancestors, and that we would do regular histories in

our Saturday Dialogues,<sup>37</sup> it was built into our agenda where we would choose a radical anti-racist white ancestor, and looked at them, and looked at their story. So, we have a lot of those [curriculum] even locally, within our community documented somewhere, I'm sure. So, I've been wanting to just go into the files and bring it back out and feeling a little bit of a responsibility. If not me, then who? And going to White People for Black Lives and seeing a room of like 50 or 60 white people that I don't know who are just sparkling with investment and devotion and showing the fuck up. Not that I, you know, I'm sure that other people are having similar inquiries. That's the thing about the collective tendrils, I'm sure other people are percolating on this. But we need to do that work. And it's not to counter what Melina said, but it just really struck me (pause) that that's not helpful. And that's fine. If that's where we're really at. And it's not Melina's job to carry that history. It's my job, or our job as white anti-racists.

And the next thing that really struck me was that I was reading "The Case for Reparations." and this kind of relates to a little bit of a personal update but I'll just put a little pin in that so you have the context. So I (pause) I'm in a new relationship.

KRISTY

Do you want me to turn off the recorder? (turns off recorder)

**CUT TO**

**INT: (back to) Upstairs at Human Resources, 10 minutes later.**

CLARE

So, in the Case for Reparations. In the first two paragraphs of the article there's this one statement, I don't have it memorized but he basically says from let's say 1872 to 1925- I can't remember what the specific statistic was but he was basically said that the most amount of lynchings in the country were in Mississippi. And maybe he even puts a number to it.<sup>38</sup> I can't recall. But it was about Mississippi and lynchings, and that was ground Zero. That's how white people ran that state. (pause) and I just was really struck because I never think about, Mississippi- until I had this recent conversation with someone who I'm loving. And we're relating to each other, and we're experiencing each other on all these different levels including in terms of our racial identities that are so (pause) that are literally the opposite. And, yeah, so I immediately was like

*WHAT DID YOU SEE, ASKING MY ANCESTORS. WHAT DID YOU SEE HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL. WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SAW IT, I WANT TO KNOW. AND THEN WHAT CHOICES. DID YOU MAKE, BECAUSE YOU MADE CHOICES. YOU MAY NOT HAVE EVEN REALIZED YOU WERE MAKING CHOICES, BUT YOU WERE MAKING CHOICES.*

And then that question, landed for me.

*WHAT DID YOU SEE, AND WHAT DID YOU FEEL, AND THEN WHAT CHOICES, DID YOU MAKE AROUND, AROUND THAT. AND I COULD HEAR THAT QUESTION BEING ASKED TO ME BY THE DESCENDANTS.*

And so, they sort of like come in as visitors, you know? (pause) So, just thinking about that thread. Right? Which was definitely a lot of the work that happened at witchcamp<sup>39</sup>. Over the summer as well around ancestry. We are ancestors, to the future descendants. The descendants are asking us questions. And I'm asking them questions. It's not enough for me to be like "yeah john brown plus all the others." It's like, I actually have to be in real relationship to my own ancestors and all of the lineages. And yeah I guess I just, I don't know where else to go from there. But that's what I want to think about and feel into.

And I thought about Dr. Joy degree Leary's post traumatic slave syndrome,<sup>40</sup> because I felt like that

work was really critical in my consciousness, when that book came out. And she talks about white children, watching lynchings and what happens to their cognition because they're in a cultural environment that insists on rationalizing lynchings.

And also creating pleasure around lynchings with picnics, Sunday outings, and so it just really hurts. (her voice shakes) I feel it, that the central aspect that of those children were put into that situation. And then that gets written into their bodies. And they pass it on. They pass it on to me. What is that, do I need to access it? I don't want to. But where does it go?

If I'm invested in disrupting dissonance and denial. I'm invested in interrupting dissonance then it has to go somewhere, through me. You know what I mean. I think it's disturbing to me. It makes me kind of think about rape culture to. And I was just talking to my friend earlier, sorry I'm talking so much.

KRISTY

No, it's good. It's what we're here for.

CLARE

I was talking to my other friend at breakfast about—do we even know our desires outside of rape culture? What's pleasurable? And you know (pause) we are where we are, so we work with what we have and what feels right for us moment to moment. And we make our choices. And I talked about feminine queer identity and feminists. And yes, this is my inheritance and it stems from oppression. And I'm consciously choosing things, and making them my own, and I'm writing the story, this is my story, I get to write it. No one told me what to write— they did. They did tell me what my story is and then I had a breakthrough of consciousness and then determined for myself what gets to come with me. The Masters tools,<sup>41</sup> you know? (pause) I guess I'm, I'm, it feels almost too much to even go all the way there but there's something else there around whiteness and ancestors and what they felt, what they somatically experienced. Children, I think, is an interesting thing because they don't have the ability, their brains aren't fully developed, so they literally don't know how to process it. And, and so it morphs into something in their bodies. And then that informs their culture and their ideology and their politics and their voting and their relational capacity. (she takes a deep breath)

I guess I'm really happy about the opportunity to have conversations without words, because that is a whole conversation without words that was passed down, and I'm terrified about what I'm going to pass on. I really am. You know, and I think more about that, as I am in this intimate relationship and talking about children, (laughter) talking about children, because that's a desire that I have, to be a mother and that's a desire that he has, to be a father and so it's like then, yeah just those questions of like, "Oh my God" my honest fears about my inadequacies and capacities. And the way that ancestors underdeveloped me and I might under develop— or will I harm?— underdeveloped and harm, right and then will I do that? I'm sure it's what parents ask themselves all the time about all multitude of manner of traumas and inheritances. But specifically, racial inheritance is something that I'm engaging. (deep breath) This went to a place that I didn't think it would. (laughter) It kept going. And I was like, oh, oh, I guess we're over here Kristy!

CLARE and KRISTY

(both laugh)

CUT TO

INTERTITLE: What then— if you weren't here?

CUT TO

INT: University Art Gallery - Night

[SARAH and KRISTY sit across the table from one another in conversation. The room has changed since they were there last. Objects have been left behind, stones, a pair of shoes, baseballs along with a large fragment of a stud wall, library of reading materials, and bunches of black mustard lie around like tumble weeds. The dirt has since been moved. The broom for everyone leans on the wall near a pile of dust.]

KRISTY

So, you know I've done lots of collaborative work with folks and primarily in communities of color where I am a visitor, I am a guest and that work has been really inspiring and beautiful and fulfilling in a lot of ways. Also, doing organizing work when I was living in Boyle Heights and working on trying to co-construct these art spaces<sup>42</sup> and support folks and be together I learned so much. That's where I met Israel. And that of course is extremely important. I think that's where I laid out a lot of multiracial alliances and practices in order to make those deep connections with people. And then, as an artist, the work has always felt in service of that, which was fine in that moment. It

was, is crucial. And then. Here I am. I'm in an art academic space where at least in the visual arts there is no, for me and my experience, and I've now been to two art institutions, very prestigious, esteemed art institutions and with each one have arrived and found very little energy or vocabulary from other white folks around a discussion of whiteness and white people in relationship with white supremacy and what that has to do with making art or culture. Not only is it really kind of silly to me just considering other disciplines and the speed at which other disciplines are creating this work, this conversation— why are white people in art-academia just— not even fucking showing up? How do we account for that divide, the canyon between how a confrontation with white supremacy is enacted in POC, working class spaces and the nearly complete silence around white supremacy in the white art academy?

**CUT TO**

**INT: Mountain House Studio/UCI - Night**

**[SEBASTIAN and KRISTY sit across the table from one another in conversation.]**

SEBASTIAN

Basically, I want to know what a photograph is. How is it made? What are the means of production? How can I deepen this thing that I'm doing for the thesis in

some kind of autobiographical way? I was thinking about myself and then there was something he brought up today which I hadn't been considering when making my own photos which is about data, how data gets represented in the world is some sort of category and how we categorize each other but also how we categorize certain objects in the world who's being better or worse something that succeeds—

KRISTY

More worthy of documentation?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah. Photography has this way in which that it is about data and how we identify things because it is a set of codes. When we look at digital imaging you are looking at pixels and pixels are comprised of you know, small color renditions of an image and then when you blow up or compressed that image it becomes a set of different things you know, which are within that image. Also, photographs as a construction of reality and this construction of reality doesn't mean that I am denying certain things that I don't want to see in the world which sort of become too hard to see—

KRISTY

Like what?

SEBASTIAN

I feel like there is some truths that we don't want to speak about you know, that have been happening perhaps for the last 10 years— the discrimination we see always. We're always putting each other on scales of who is worthy of belonging somewhere. Also, because a picture is something that is perceived through the eyes and then it goes to the mind then it affects the way that our memory functions, right? We remember an image of something but we don't remember the something. But I also feel like the way that I'm making photographs right now, it's a lot more about the process of making a photograph. I know there's a lot of things that I'll have to solidify to keep going with this process.

KRISTY

Do you think there are particular conditions that you experience personally that have guided you toward this set of questions?

SEBASTIAN

Personally, I feel like— I always feel like I'm not from here. Specifically, the United States. Because I don't have any documents. I don't have any legitimate reason for being here because we didn't (pause) my

family and I didn't escape anything problematic in my country. Yeah there are problems in my country-

KRISTY

What is your home-place?

SEBASTIAN

Guatemala- and basically we were escaping the crime but also we came at a point during the economic crisis started, it was developing which was 2008, 2009 and you know, my parents being of an age of at that time, they were in their mid-forties they couldn't find any jobs that could sustain our lives over there anymore. So, when my dad came he was offered a job through a family member who ended up not giving him the job and we were all so confused. So, we decided to stay because how are we going to go back? We were like no, there's more opportunity here and all of a sudden we just ended up staying.

It's been 10 years now for my mom and I and I'm reaching this point where I'm really questioning, how do I go forward? How do I keep going with all of this? I've gotten my education at a very prestigious research university as as UCI is. I'm in the art department and I feel like the art department has helped me realize a lot of things that I wasn't aware of about the

systems that we live in and about the ways in which identity can really be influenced by those systems. And so, basically thinking about the future, what's going to happen right after I graduate, it's something that seems very uncertain. It feels very risky. It feels even more risky than us coming here, for me to just graduate and (pause) I feel like I'm in this— I was telling my friends, I feel like I'm a cloud that doesn't have anywhere to go, that is just sort of floating because everything else, you know the current is just taking me but there is no direct pathway. There is no certain road that says here: be accepted, we're going to give you a job because you know there's these other things that happen that I— I know there is an organization and a system that needs to take place because that's how we're built but at the same time— I'm not a criminal. I'm not someone who wants to cause harm in any way—

KRISTY

You are a contributor.

SEBASTIAN

I'm contributing to the country. I got my education.

KRISTY

You did all the right things. Did you go to high school in the states?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, I've been here since 7th grade. So, middle school, high school, all of it and I'm going to graduate here and I feel like there's always this way in which I feel like I'm being seen which is some sort of perpetrator or the one who causes the problems in a way because that's how the media, you know the presidential cabinet sees me. So, I'm really beginning to question who should I trust? What should I trust? And that is something very hard for me to swallow psychologically because then I don't trust anything. I begin to have some sort of like identity crisis (laughs) where I feel like I don't belong anywhere and the only answer is to leave. I feel pressure to leave. I spoke to my mom on the phone and I told her I feel I need to leave, there's no option for me to be here. I'm tired of being poor and suffering going through all these systems that you know, sometimes I hit something really good like getting in here and then it's like this is the end of the road and I can't go forward. And I feel like after I graduate that's what it is. There is this block. No way of me moving up or

digging down, trying to find some pathway, break it.  
I feel like I'm in a very impotent position.  
So, with art I've been trying to deal with what is  
there, what's happening not only within me but how I  
respond to the things that I'm seeing. And some of the  
things that I've been looking at in my photographs is  
that I always try to stylize so they look so— I would  
call them beautiful, beautified but in a very fake  
way, everything that I'm putting forth in front of the  
camera is fake, completely theatrical, just for the  
aesthetic of it—

KRISTY

Would you describe it as a fiction?

SEBASTIAN

It is a fiction. Its total fiction but it was a fiction  
that I didn't plan because that uncertainty still is  
within me and I don't want to compromise some type of  
identity and I see photography as literally you hiding  
behind the camera. I'm always trying to hide something  
about me in there in some way.

KRISTY

So, it's sort of a way for you to be present but not  
visible?

SEBASTIAN

Exactly. And I think that's why I feel so comfortable with photography because I tried painting and I was— I became visible for some reason because painting, it has a more tangible relationship even though you're still using a tool like the brush but all the choices that you're making are very subjective.

KRISTY

So, there's evidence?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, there's the tracing of the brushes, how you manipulate the space within the painting, and how you interpret the things that you are seeing. It almost became like a— this dangerous territory but I didn't feel—

KRISTY

You felt too exposed?

SEBASTIAN

I felt very exposed with it. I was the only one doing work that looked different from everybody else and I knew consciously but I think also subconsciously that was going to happen the moment that I picked up a brush. So, I'm always trying to negotiate what is the

best media for me so that I can not compromise so much about myself and still make art that is relevant. I think I found this sort of safe space within photography. I didn't need to be subjectively involved with the material but I still created an image.

KRISTY

I really appreciate you talking about your work. Thank you. For this project<sup>43</sup> coming up I think what is happening in this moment is precisely what I would hope would happen, right? Its meaning is derived from the moment of encounter, in contact with the work of others. And it doesn't actually exist until that moment. Which is exciting. And I relate in a way with this concept of finding methods, ways to be present but not visible. I come into that notion from a different place but I can occupy this territory with you. But it's a different entry point.

SEBASTIAN

It is a different entry point.

KRISTY

The way I often think about my visibility as a maker or thinker, trying to put things together, it's through a very fractured, complicated social identity, on a spectrum right? I am a woman, I have a child, there's

all these moments of my being where I encounter the world in painful ways but I also possess a great deal of privilege as a white person. As a person with documentation. As a person with formal education and language, an ability to move in and out of certain spaces. So, I very consciously try to carry that contradiction that exists between those things. The world I encounter is violent toward me in certain ways but that doesn't ever cancel out the ways that the world invites me in. Those things are always next to each other.

#### SEBASTIAN

I feel in a way I'm never invited to anything because one of the things I've always considered was what if something happens? Maybe it's not something— it's that uncertainty of not knowing what's going to happen to me after I step out of the door which always makes me feel on edge. Even when Obama was president. Even if everything was sort of "fine," it was not fine. I still felt that I, that if there was a need for me to expose myself to social situations where I would become visible enough, that someone might have some type of thinking about me. And exposing myself to the larger, you know community where I was being part of, that's something that I always felt like— you know there's a risk. Because I don't want to see my parents suffer.

I don't want to see myself going through that. It would destroy me (laughs) literally the will that I have right now is the last resort (laughs). I told my mom I am reaching a point I feel like I'm running out of everything. I'm running out of will. I'm running out of hope. All this week I have never felt more vulnerable.

KRISTY

Is there something your bearing witness to in terms of-

SEBASTIAN

It's just everything.

KRISTY

So, it's this cumulative feeling?

SEBASTIAN

Yes. I feel like I've accumulated all this pain and all this experience and things that have never worked out and I always ask myself: why do I have to be the one that suffers when I'm doing things correctly? In the eye of what society sees as correct. Right? And I always feel, this is going to sound cliché, but I always feel attacked, that something is going to go wrong and everything that I worked for is just going

to go down the drain. I'm trying to salvage all the things that I have accomplished and all the things that I've made and progressed with intellectually and socially and just like that— it snaps. It could all disappear and a lot of people say “oh it's just starting over.” and I've started over three or four times. I don't want to do it again. I don't want to do that again.

So, I understand that you know, even a lot of my friends they don't quite grasp the situation that I'm in everyday (skateboarder rolls by) It's funny when it's like you know, I'm always trying to put up this facade when I'm with them that “yeah I'm okay”

KRISTY

Don't we often protect people from our own pain?

SEBASTIAN

Yes, it does happen often but I feel like I actually reached a point— you know, like today it's all becoming very visible not only in the way that I'm speaking to people, it's in the way that I'm looking at them, in the way but I'm looking at everything next to us, this accumulation of things. So, I need to make these photographs for this class and I'm going to talk about my immigration status and what's happening right now

with me because I need to do it there's no other way.  
I'm not going to feel good if I don't make work like  
that.

KRISTY

(takes a deep breath) Just listening, processing.  
Sometimes I really need to let information and  
knowledge land for a minute.

SEBASTIAN

And I feel like I know it's no one's fault that we are  
in this—

KRISTY

Well it is. (they both laugh) It actually is. There's  
lots of people that are spectators to what is  
happening, who are not taking up agency to advocate  
and defend and protect their neighbors. They are  
neglecting their responsibilities.

SEBASTIAN

I know. I'm just trying to live. Trying to go through  
the motions of this last quarter. (tears well up in  
his eyes) I'm sorry.

KRISTY

Please don't ever apologize. This is why we're here. Why I'm here. With you right now. This is the interest of my project which is actually very little about making a new thing, an art thing and more about figuring out what kinds of models we need culturally to protect one another.

So, I was given this real estate (points to model of the gallery on the floor) because I'm in this program and we have this tradition of staging a thesis exhibition and so for the last many years now I've been developing this project called Mountain House with a few folks that is explicitly interested in creating new models of relationship through culture. And it is very sharply centered on stewardship— to care for each other, to care for our land and not because it belongs to you or you possess it, quite the opposite because it doesn't belong to any of us. So, there's this moral imperative to care for each other and care for our land. And so, what does that look like? (both laugh) It's a great idea! But what does it look like? So Mountain House takes up this work of learning what that might look like so, building lots of different projects that they try to do this. Now we've been given this capital resource, this piece of land to use and to be able to take up space and the

ethics embedded in our work as a collective in part is to think about the strategic use of resources. So, when something comes our way, something of value, we're in possession of some kind of capital whether it's social or material, that thing is always run through filter— asking strategically: What makes sense? How do we best use this? For this the conclusion that I arrived to was to use the space as a container for some of the projects we've been working on over the last several months so they can come into contact with our community here but then turn over this capital resource, the real estate too people that may have a need or use for it, or have been under-supported and are actually entitled to it.

And so, that makes me think about— and this kind of goes back to that place you described being present but not being visible that prompts me to think a lot about what my role is here as an initiator or coordinator of things, and in that, how you and I discuss what authorship is, the possession of ideas, and possibly to reject the idea that there can be a possession of ideas at all. So, I invite you and a few other folks into this process with me to consider together what we might do with this space during this period of time. I intentionally do not have— I'm not curating an exhibition. I'm not saying— here, here's

a theme, make an artwork. We're not doing that. There's plenty of other places we can do that. I really want to think with you about how we can use the space differently. And together.

#### SEBASTIAN

I'm very interested in the concept of land because I've always questioned that idea. I think it was weirdly emphasized to me when I was a child growing up with my mother. My grandfather owned a farm where they cultivated things and then it became this ranch where they had cattle and bred cattle. He also owned a coffee factory. So she grew up privileged, very privileged. And she had a lot of knowledge about things even though she was still a woman growing up in the 70s and 80s within the Hispanic culture. And the patriarchy, it definitely denied her a lot of things that she would like to have understood. I always grew up conscious about the land and what it signified for people in the sense that it is a place that of course provides things but it's also place for community. She made me aware of certain things that we're very corrupt about the land, that it was being corrupted by different entities of power, the government being one of them. And structurally my country is like this country. Indigenous people are there. We shared that land with them everyday. I was never fully aware of what it meant

for them to live there with us because I don't even know what I am or where I'm from. I just know I could be mixed but there's potential that I couldn't be mixed. I don't know. But I was raised there around other people that didn't know anything about themselves or their past either. So, it became this very strange relationship where I was never seen as lower individual because I feel like the power in class dynamics in Guatemala are very different from here because they're not based on skin color, they're more based on your class background.

So, I don't look like an indigenous person. I don't dress like an indigenous person. I was never raised with any indigenous traditions but I feel like I was always made aware of how the land doesn't just belong to us. It belongs to everyone who lives there. And my mom would always make the case that the Indigenous also have the right to have their own land within Guatemala and whatever they decided to do with that land was their business. And of course there was so much that was out of her hands but it always made me have this interest— what is a country? what does a country really signify? how do we get rid of these arbitrary borders that we've made with each other? In this debate around space— what I am in any space is always a question mark.

KRISTY

Do you have any ideas or thoughts toward what you might do with this real estate? In relation to what it sounds like—and actually before we get there, another thing that feels super important is to address the immediate and acute, to always be very honest about what's immediately here and that includes addressing need, cultural need, spiritual need, physical need-- this complex of human need right in front of us, the next door neighbor, the person sitting across from you. So, what do you need right now?

SEBASTIAN

I need support, affection, understanding.

Figure 17<sup>44</sup>



CUT TO

**INT: (back to) University Art Gallery - Night**

**[SARAH and KRISTY sit across the table from one another in conversation.]**

KRISTY

And it's frustrating, just— as I'm trying to have a conversation and make my work better it feels sometimes like I have no community around it. And folks are amazing in so many ways, such brilliant, sensitive, thinking people but we do not have a shared language or vocabulary to deal with the way whiteness is showing up in our work. And personally, that's also really isolating. And I also understand that as a big part of the work, inviting folks in to make that shared vocabulary. Part of the homework is to build friendship through this, to build it through care.

And now it's back to joy and pleasure... how in this incredibly challenging task to do this critical work that often doesn't feel pleasurable— a lot of the time it really can be quite taxing and then you don't have any people around you to be in communion, to be in fellowship with you— how do you sustain it?

So, I thought well if I'm going to be able to continue making this work I have to build some kind of community around it. There needs to be a social infrastructure

around it to support my humanity in it. That's when JULIANE and I started to feel like we were tired of trying to go to these academic spaces and art spaces for this. Also, we didn't want to bring the burden of this conversation to people of color led cultural spaces. I love and support them so much but I don't need to bring it there.<sup>45</sup> There also just isn't another space and so we have to make that. And that's when we started making work toward this idea, when we made the walking work down the Arroyo and let these intentions comes through that work.<sup>46</sup> So yes, Mountain House does try to hold all of it I think but I'm curious about your sense of the significance of community in making this work. GROUND SERIES is explicitly collaborative and you've talked about that being a really intentional choice so yeah, how does that fit in? To be with people in this work?

SARAH

It reminds me of your first question which is related it has conversation out of joining the conversation in general but in the arts from the place that I stand... choreographers, artists— we need to join the conversation on racism. White people need to join the conversation on racism. White supremacy is a white problem.

So, that feels so central to— ok (pause) in dance and in performance the body is present so the racialized or typically racialized body is present and so every time a white person walks on stage in a— where the Black person that just walked on stage a second ago, or the Native person, or Latino person, or Asian person just walked on stage and they immediately became their racialized selves only— or first and then often times are expected as artists to make work about their racialized identity. And then the white person comes on stage, the person that looks like me, and I get to be the wind or a conversation on fuge or whatever I want— abstraction! Which is this giant beautiful gift. Miguel Gutierrez writes all about this in his article and I think he says “abstraction belongs to white people”<sup>47</sup> and so I think just the way that we're learning how to give land acknowledgement<sup>48</sup> I just need to learn how (pause) white artists need to learn how to frame their work in relationship to race every single time. Because I will never, ever make a dance— ever that's not about me being white. And part of that is sad and fucked up but that's the game that we set up in funding for Folks of Color who never get to make a dance about anything besides their racial identity. And so, I think that that prompt really is useful for me.

Okay and now talking about community. It's so important, this relationship is so important, our relationships with other white folks are important. (pause) I have this cultural currency through my training in my engagement with white people and abstraction, in dance and then that's how I suck them in and then- just kidding! The dance is all about our whiteness! And that way people stay on board with me. Man, I am so lucky.

SARAH & KRISTY

(pause, deep breath.)

SARAH

I don't think- I think collaboration is the only way I know how to work. I have a really difficult time with personal studio practice so I know in myself that if I agree to be to meet Kristy at seven p.m. on Google Chat to talk about racial identity and art practice I will be there and I'll probably try to be my best possible self. And obviously that matters, who's on the other side of the call. (pause) Collaboration. Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. I really do think that if engagement with white privilege is so much about accountability we can't, I can't do that by myself. I need to be in community absolutely.

KRISTY

Part of the agenda and building this document is to make a searchable record of this work. In a lot of this research we're asking about models. Where are the models for this? And acknowledging how hard they are to find. You know, someone like Lucretia Mott<sup>49</sup> often gets absorbed into white feminist history and she's not— recently she is more so discussed in terms of abolitionist work but for a very long time, very often it is just sort of absorbed into a suffragist history or an American feminist movement and her work as an abolitionist becomes a footnote to that. And in reality it's the reverse, she comes into her feminism, into her feminist thinking because she needs to be at a table with fellow abolitionist men and realizes that she's not able to participate fully because she's a woman and so then she uses— in my interpretation of her strategy, in order to participate fully in the movement toward the abolition of slavery she needs to first, or parallel to this change the condition of sexism to be able to show up fully, to be able to do the work of abolition. So, her feminism in effect is actually in service of the goal of Black Liberation. And I love the switch there! That repositions abolition and Black Liberation moves to the center. But how much digging did I have to do to find her and to get there? And so this document, my hope is contributing to some

kind of searchable record, that we're able to start building a record, a contemporary record, a lineage of this work and there's visibility, a presence folks can access. So given that goal, what else in this moment, right now, what feels important to you to go into the record?

SARAH

I think it's something that came up at the talk that you gave this weekend and is related to the medicine of discomfort: failure, mistake making is just par- if you get in the pool you're going to get wet! (laughs) So let's get wet! (laughs, pauses) Failure and discomfort are medicine, the power of having these conversations with family and lovers and friends, this idea of getting right at home before we can get right anywhere else is so real. For the record. (deep breath) White people are white. It's raced. We have to practice moving through the world as racialized people. It's really complicated and everything is set up so that we don't do it and so keep trying. (pause) I just don't know what would be happening to me if you weren't here. Thank you so much.

KRISTY

I feel the same way this work with you has prompted me to make deeper commitments and I don't think it would have happened without this collaboration.

Figures 18-32













CUT TO

INTERTITLE: They were so thirsty  
they mistook the sky for water.

CUT TO

Ext. Hahamongna, Devil's Gate Dam - Day

Subtitle: "June 4, 2016: Hahamongna Watershed to  
Sycamore Grove Overcrossing on foot, 10 miles, five  
hours"

[The sun is overhead and hot. JULIANE and KRISTY stand near a pool of water among the trees behind the dam, their toes touching the edge. KRISTY leans over the black, still water, submerging the vessel completely until it is full. Once pulled from the water, the point is balanced on the dry land, held upright between the legs of person one. JULIANE ties cotton rope around its opening, knotting the ties at the three points of the vessel. A bare branch is inserted into two loops extending out of the knots raised above the full vessel. JULIANE and KRISTY stand at either side of the vessel, holding a stretch of the bare branch and lift. They exchange eye contact and begin walking up the hill and over the dam. Once over the dam they leave the trail and stand in the dry bed of the river. They begin walking, staring forward at the spot in the distance where the wild bed becomes concrete.]

Figure 33



CUT TO

Int. Livingroom, Mom's House – Night

[JULIANE is seated on the brown chair near the window and KRISTY is seated on the floral couch. They just finished eating dinner. Mom is out front watering the plants.]

JULIANE

So, a list of objects?

KRISTY

Yes. Maybe if we close our eyes and try to recover the moment we started walking... Ducks. Oak tree. Black water. Garbage. Empty plastic water bottles. Cigar. Metal Rod. Eye glasses. Arrow. Dead snake. Sand.

JULIANE

I'm having a hard time. But I'm getting there.

KRISTY

It's ok. Maybe it's better to start with what we intended. To establish that, remember that. What were your intentions with this?

JULIANE

My intentions for the walk. I know we talked a lot about walking the path that the water flows. For me it was a lot about paying tribute to that labor

KRISTY

The labor of the water?

JULIANE

Yeah. Like the work of the river. Paying tribute to the role that the river plays, and bringing attention to the interruption of that.

KRISTY

I agree. (long pause) Sorry for the delays. It's hard to nail down the words...

JULIANE

It's okay!

KRISTY

This resonates... paying attention, paying tribute to the labor... the labor of the water, the river and inside of that for me was this idea of replicating the action of the river, carrying the water by hand as if to attempt to replicate the gesture. And then of course, it gets very funny...because we are going to fail. Because it is very, very stupid what we are doing.

JULIANE

(laughs) Absolutely. And also, to think that we as humans can in any way do the work of nature is inherently funny.

KRISTY

Exactly. And even funnier is this kind of seriousness we began with - and the seriousness is important in a way, it's important to take this very seriously, solemnly the sacred act, a sacred gesture... but then when it begins to unravel...

JULIANE

...and it unraveled very fast. The universe was laughing at us.

KRISTY

Well yes... The fall... I loved how we began in silence. Nervous. At least I was nervous, felt like we were being watched. And we go marching up this trail, over the hill and I trip on a fucking rock and dump the whole goddamn thing of water out all over the dirt.

JULIANE

Yeah, the fall definitely broke the silence in a big way. And I think it reminded us that it was so sacred, but not to take ourselves too seriously. Like, you're still going to eat shit while you're doing this beautiful thing.

KRISTY

Yes. And right now as I am remembering this, what's coming up is this idea about the notion that you can even touch the sacred... and it sits near the silly idea that you could even replicate nature.

JULIANE

Definitely. And I think that moment really defined the rest of the walk. It sortof shifted us into a very

different place. And what also comes up for me in saying that is that it was sort of a foreshadow for how much was experienced on the walk. From laughing so hard we were crying to walking in silence because there was nothing to focus on but being in that moment in our bodies.

KRISTY

It really deviated away from my expectations. Again, back to the seriousness. I expected silence, solemnness. Here we are doing this serious thing. But truly, we were essentially invisible. Unseen even when we were seen by other people along the way.

JULIANE

Yes! The anticipation of the walk and what I imagined the walk to be was very different from what it ended up looking like. And I had to really calm myself down and tell myself that what we were doing wasn't going to be noticed probably.

KRISTY

Interesting... the anticipation of having an audience was a motivator? I mean originally?

JULIANE

An audience felt scary to me. And in my imagination the audience was a range of people from hikers who wouldn't care to policemen who would potentially harm us.

KRISTY

I wondered a lot about this during the walk... what it meant to be seen or to be invisible. I found some joy in the invisibility. Like, once we realized how invisible we were I could get comfortable and feel the experience. But also, alongside that I was really considering what it means to be invisible in my particular body... or what it meant to be moving through that space, in that way in this body... as a white cis gendered woman, traversing private property, climbing over walls, essentially breaking into spaces and really for the most part feeling perfectly safe to move forward. I mean, we ran into police suspicious of us and our activities. And we are alive.

JULIANE

We ran into police and they ended up helping us, or thinking they were helping us. It was surreal to think that we were two people in the riverbed, who had hopped a dam and were carrying an object that could have

easily looked like a weapon. And we got out of there unharmed because we were presumed two white women who are just lost.

KRISTY

Yeah there was this assumption of innocence.

JULIANE

Absolutely. And we were breaking the law. Like, in that moment that we interacted with the police.

KRISTY

Yes. It was a complicated moment. We admitted guilt. And played it off. And got away with it only to continue doing exactly what we'd set out to do. I felt like as soon as the police were out of sight we just became invisible again. No consequences.

JULIANE

But even in that invisibility, I think, there was so much vulnerability. That if something happened we really had nowhere to go. It was a mix of emotions of the safety of being unseen and the danger of being unseen. Being invisible...oddly enough... was this kind of intense exposure. Nowhere to hide when you are on foot in the center of a concrete ditch.

KRISTY

Yeah I think that fear was with us for a good portion of the walk. Or at least with me.

JULIANE

I thought about it more than once - What would we do if we were in danger? Where would we run? How would we protect ourselves? And maybe that's one of the most important takeaways for me... this long duration of hyper awareness of these contradictory states of being... you know? Being completely vulnerable, especially given my embodied experience as a female presenting or perceived person moving through space... but also in possession of an assumption of safety as a white person - the belief that I would get out of this action alive. Ya know?

KRISTY

Yes, sorry brain needs a minute to articulate.

JULIANE

It's ok. I need more coffee. (Gets up from her chair and goes into the kitchen, begins making coffee)

KRISTY

(Yells toward the kitchen.) I think what's coming up for me is the intersections that were so present in this act of being in public space doing a sacred act that is usually kept for a private space. (Walks into the kitchen) Being white kept us safe and alive. Being presumed female felt dangerous. Being human felt fragile. And yet it was all still funny.

*(SILENCE)*

JULIANE

(Setting up coffee mugs on the kitchen table.) I just remember when the sand became concrete and we had to slide down the dam wall and the only thing that could break our fall was a pile of leaves and garbage. And I think it reminds me that being in that space felt very big and important, but in that moment we were just falling into a pile of garbage. (pours coffee)

JULIANE and KRISTY

(laughter)

Cut-to

Ext. Arroyo Seco Riverbed - Dusk

[JULIANE and KRISTY walk silently while they carry a concrete vessel down the center of a concrete riverbed flanked by concrete walls, parallel to the 110 freeway. The vessel hangs in a rope harness on a bare branch between them and is full of water. The sun is past the mountain that is to the left of the concrete riverbed and footpath that they are walking on. Heat radiates off of the ground. The Sycamore Grove overpassing is in sight. They shift and adjust themselves to compensate for swollen feet and hands. They continue to walk. Once they are under the overcrossing, they veer to the left towards a chain link fence and gate that leads to steps. The pair lift the vessel as they walk up to the footbridge as to not hit the point of the pyramid vessel on the ground. As they walk across the bridge the two pick up speed. They come to the top of the stairs that are closest to Sycamore Grove Park. To their left is a stone and concrete tunnel that leads to the park and to their right is the freeway, fencing, and a tree. Now at the bottom of the stairs, they walk to the front of the tree. Both release the bare branch causing the harness to slouch. While JULIANE steadies the vessel on its point, KRISTY clears leaves and debris from around the tree. Person One shifts their weight from left leg to right leg and finally squats.

The harness is taken off of the vessel, which is then handed off. The water is poured at the base of the tree and the vessel is left upside down.]

Figures 32-33



CUT TO

**INTERTITLE: Moving Haystacks**

CUT TO

**EXT: Porch of the old house in Boyle Heights- Day**  
**[ISRAEL and KRISTY are seated on the edge of the railing on front porch telling stories. The branches of the lemon tree hang into the eaves. Traffic yells, distant music flows through the kids walking from the high school laugh, ride skateboards, It's hot.]**

KRISTY

I'm not sure where to begin. I think you were asking about where or how I started feeling connected to the word stewardship. What that word means for me, for us. I think most people use it or have heard it related to environmentalism or religious contexts. And I think that is common. You know, those conversations, environmentalism, religion are dominated by western vocabularies and so when even something like relationships and the ethic of relationship or caring, to care is referenced the immediate association folks make, mostly white folks often is with the way those concepts have come to us via a western discourse, or white discourse, European discourse.<sup>50</sup> That's not to say there aren't any interesting or helpful ways of thinking about stewardship within a religious context or within environmentalism but for me I try to situate

a definition of that word within my own work that's in a direct relationship with a place— a place with which I am in relationship, in my body, in my experience. For me, that's in North America, specifically the Southwest, South West Coast of North America. So, I want to take cues about that word from folks that know what it means here. To center that.<sup>51</sup>

And for stewardship, there's a couple of stories that are... or experiences that stand out for me around stewardship. One thing happened a couple years ago. I was invited out to see Iz in New Mexico, just outside of Santa Fe, maybe 45 minutes southeast of Santa Fe, where they all have been living for a little while. We first met in Boyle Heights, we were doing a lot of work together, organizing out of our house. Actually, we made sort of... we transformed our home into a studio, gallery, classroom, project space. And I think the mentors I was lucky to learn from (FN Gloria Alvarez) and the relationships that were built through that work, together laid the groundwork for me to begin to understand... and then not only understand just intellectually, but to really embody, internalize what it means to steward something, to take care of something that doesn't, or can't belong to you, but that you're a part of. I can say more about those relationships later. But for now, I guess I just want

to sort of think about how that concept for me played out or one of the experiences in which I think it really played out in a vivid, tangible way.

So, I took the redeye train to Santa Fe, not staying for very long but really just to go out for a quick visit. I think that at that time that I went out there, I was trying to figure out what my next steps would be. I was in a very painful, unhealthy relationship and I didn't feel like I had any resources emotionally or financially. Any way to leave it. And so, going out there was sort of a healing trip, to try to take some space, to be in prayer and to be with people that I knew really loved me and supported me. And so yeah, so I went out there to the land that my friend was living on and taking care of. They were working with the folks there in the community, getting ready to do a lot of work on the land, to prepare for summer. And there were these two spaces on the land that needed specific care. And one day, we all packed into trucks and cars and drove up to the top of the Mesa where we'd be working all day. And there are a lot of people, there's probably I don't know, throughout the day, 20 or 30 people all doing different kinds of work on the space. The first thing that I was asked to do was to remove stones from a large, flat, clear area of the land. This was marked off by a circular perimeter and

basically, I sat in dirt, in the dirt there with the dirt for several hours I think, removing stones and leaving as much soil as possible, and then carefully relocating them to another spot on the land. It was especially meaningful, or became so after a little bit of time, you know, you start to really concentrate on looking very carefully, touching the earth more tenderly than you would normally. And then also just being seated in the dirt, really committing to that position and trying to maintain comfort and maintaining some endurance. The task became really concentrated. And so, I had to go through the earth, find a stone, clean it off, put it in the pile. And when the pile began to grow to about as many stones as I thought I could carry in one trip, I would stop, pick them up, and then move them to the location that they needed to be moved to. During this time, like ...as I'm really concentrating on moving my hands through labor, my mind sort of dislodges from what I'm doing physically. And I begin to wonder, wonder and kind of meander in my thoughts and to start creating these sort of visualizations. And these visualizations were in anticipation of what would be done there on that land later in the summer, who would be using it, who would be sharing space, even if I wasn't going to be present. For those experiences, I felt like I was a part of what was going to be happening. And with the

people that were going to be there. I began to feel very tender and sensitive about their safety and making sure they would be walking, moving quickly and swiftly on land that was safe for them to stand on. I began to think about that a lot. And especially thinking about that in relationship to my friendship with Iz, knowing that he would be there and that I cared so much about him and his safety. And I wanted to care for his body in that space. And so, my capacity to do this work really carefully and thoughtfully had a direct impact on the experience that his body would have later in that place, even if I wasn't present. And so yeah, I just I spent that time on task, really paying attention to the ways that each movement I created in order to clear that land to make it safe was ensuring the safety of others later on. And I sat there with that relationship very quietly, under the sun, it was midday, so the sun was really high. And now, in this place, the sun is so high and so much bigger than it is anywhere else. It feels like— and because we're high up on the Mesa, the wind moves differently. So, as I recount that labor and like the careful movement of my hands through those stones carrying them away, I'm immediately back into that place. (pause) When I think of stewardship, I don't necessarily think about it as this calculated act that I take on. But I'm kind of back in the physical sensation I had up to the task

of doing that work. The work that isn't very interesting, superficially, right? Like it's pretty mundane, repetitive. But to be with a site like that let's you sort of retrieve that kind of sensation. I felt very grounded. I felt very purposeful. I felt like the simple labor of caring for that land could be this really embodied expression of the care I have for my friend and his friends whom I didn't know and probably would never meet. But knowing that the folks together if community would be using that space, I felt really connected to that relationship. Yeah, so moving the stones moving the stones was important for me that day.

The other thing that happened that day. So, people were there and there was a lot to do, and people were being assigned different jobs as they would come up. Maybe certain skill sets or talents would be allocated to different tasks just sort of based on like, who is best suited for that for that job. And it was shifting all day. And so later in the day, after lunch, me and another woman were paired up to go down to a lower part of the land, where there were probably, maybe half a dozen, maybe eight haystacks. And then because it was lower, and they were expecting rain to come pretty soon they wanted to move all those haystacks up to higher ground so they wouldn't rot. And also that

land down on the lower part needed to be prepared for things that were going to happen closer to the end of the month when the moon was full. And so me in this other woman walk down there and it seems like a really simple sort of straightforward task. I don't know what I thought, in terms of the weight of haystacks. But it turns out when they're wet they're extremely heavy, and they had been dampened by a previous rain. And so, they're, you know, they're already heavy. And then here they are kind of soaking up this rain and extremely, extremely heavy. So she and I started talking about it like, Okay, well, let's problem solve, what's the best way to move these haystacks in a way that doesn't kill us? And so, you know, we tried a couple different things and then realized, like, the only way we were going to get them up to the higher part of the place was to carry them. Just to put in that kind of back labor and carry them up. And so, we started doing that. And, you know, she would get on one end, and I would get on the other and we would lift as best we could. And it was really ungraceful, it was really difficult to do. At some point, maybe I would put one on my back, and she would sort of spot me and then we would switch. And so, we were doing this, and we're nearly done, and feeling really proud of ourselves and then suddenly realized, like, I was extremely hot, we're extremely dehydrated, we are not

feeling well, we need to sit down. And so, we go up to the top and sit down there and then we're asked by other folks what we're doing, how it was going, and you look terrible, you are overheated. Why are you so pink? And we explained what we had been doing.

#### ISRAEL

(Laughs, interjects) Its funny because right away I had a flash back to you guys being all bent and hurt and all mad and frustrated and over exerting yourselves for no reason. But it's really awesome how those things teach us so much because there were so many parts about building that moon altar down there that were about doing shit in really paced ways. Like one day that me and Uncle Steve were having to move all this cinder block. It's one of the few times that I can remember in my times working on that land and all the different ceremonial sites that were there that I was like "where the fuck is everyone else. I'm doing all this fucken work." and that lasted a couple of hours I think, that anger and that thought because good lord that shit was intense. But of course, it had to get done. So, I did it and cut my head off and just stopped forcing anything, and just paced and leaned into the work...

KRISTY

Yes, and you know, I in my arrogance and probably that anger I really thought that I would have been commended or thanked for exerting all this energy to try to move these haystacks. That folks would be really fucking impressed with how strong I was. But instead, an elder that came around to check in, she was disappointed, she expressed disappointment and noted our arrogance and she sort of said, and I'm paraphrasing now... But she very plainly, not in a judgmental way but definitely critical— She reprimanded us for not asking for help. And what was really interesting there is I think that we had kind of created in our work together, this sort of narrative about how we didn't really need anyone to do this job. And you know— this might be men's work, but we're women, and we're strong, and we can do it! And we were really trying to move our labor in that way (pause) which is a very typical, sort of typical, like maybe a typically western feminist way of thinking about this? of conflating power with independence? a typical way of thinking about overcoming a sort of extreme physical challenge, intellectual challenge, whatever it may be, and, and then to be reprimanded by our elder, for what was actually an arrogance in our thinking, and really a refusal of the inter relatedness with our relatives who are also working alongside us, that actually, we

do damage to the whole community by over-exerting and not asking for help, and not leaning on the roles that folks are willing and happy to take up and the way that they're happy to lend support (pause) that when we move through arrogance, deny help and don't seek safety with others that we put everyone at risk. Everyone is in danger. And so now we're a liability, we have heatstroke, we haven't eaten enough, we're too tired, we can't work the rest of the day, because we've overdone it.

And all of this is allowed to come through a process of taking care of a piece of land. The process of taking care of a piece of land allowed us to think about the nuances that are embedded in mutual relationships of care. And so, I think about that day a lot, I think about the haystacks, I think about how heavy they were. And I can feel it, I can feel how heavy they were. And I try to keep that experience really close so I can access it not just a recounting of the events, but to be able to access the sensation of carrying something that's just too big, including carrying the largeness of my arrogance, or the largeness of my (pause) of confusing independence with respect for mutual care, that those two things got really muddy that I mistook what was actually an act of self-harm, as an act of independence, autonomy,

strength. So, I always want to be able to go back to that day, and go back to that moment.

#### ISRAEL

I think about the patience I have sometimes these days with art and people and life and things and I watch people get really upset and I'm the one trying to make things move towards the direction I hope is the correct direction and I realize that those days there, so many days there spent cleaning toilets, praying, building, sweating, fasting, working late, something really shifted in all my being. And while I wish it had concluded with building homes for a community, I'm really grateful for so many life lessons. And yeah about what you are saying, about the difference in tending to things...

Figure 36



KRISTY

...tending to (pause) when I think about stewardship, about tending to in relationship to making art in relationship to building Mountain House, I want to go back to those haystacks. And I want to go back to that space where I'm clearing stones and understand making this work from those small places, the intimate places, in the moments where I'm doing the work of care for others— that doesn't always appear as such, but it requires this really careful, really thoughtful and gentle handling of every step of the process. And so, if we can think about cultural work, making art, making experiences with and for others, making community with others. In the same way we think about moving haystacks, and in the same way we think about moving stones ...what begins to happen when we clarify that and make it transparent that that's the principle that's guiding the way the work is constructed? When we think about it... making art is just one way to move haystacks.

**CUT TO**

**INTERTITLE:    I'll do it! We'll get a home  
                  even if I have to work for it.<sup>52</sup>**

**FADE OUT**

**Mountain House: A collective that practices radical stewardship of land, relationships, and culture.**

Mountain House is a collective that works to bring our needs for material sustenance and cultural - intellectual engagement together through the radical stewardship of land, relationships, and culture. We collaborate to build and support projects that emphasize a connection between art-making, knowledge building, and access to care and connection.

***Stewardship: To care for something, someone, someplace with which you belong but can never possess:*** We recognize the act of care as a deeply politicized gesture and choose to center stewardship as our primary mode for producing cultural work. For us, radical stewardship applied to the field of cultural work is a proposal for a form of participation and contribution which rearranges the priorities of cultural work and artistic production as they are historically known by explicitly centering:

- the needs, experience of trauma, and visions for the future as expressed by those most impacted by white supremacist settler colonialism;
- acknowledgement of the role of white people (and folx with other forms of privilege) in perpetuating supremacist culture and commitment to creating responsible practices within the cultural field;
- reckoning, redress, and reparations;
- the rejection of possession or aspiration toward ownership of knowledge;
- the overall health of inter-community relationships;
- and collective liberation

To practice radical stewardship is our attempt to apply the definitions of stewardship to the cultural field as they are authored by cultural workers within the abolitionist movement, a long lineage of indigenous scholarship and sovereignty, and among white people that have historically (and presently) aligned

themselves in solidarity with these movements in North America. To name yourself steward rather than author impacts artistic production and participation in cultural economies – especially for white people and folx with other forms of privilege. By using these aforementioned “centers” to create a unique rubric for cultural work the complex of subject matter, cultural currency and capital, material resources, and labor are held accountable to an ethic of participation aimed at or in service of abolition and de-colonial futures.

Mountain House collaborators and participants come together by acknowledging our varied cultural, political, and personal locations in the world(s) we each inhabit, and in doing so, manifest transformative relationships directed towards mutual liberation. The community that constitutes Mountain House is composed of the Steering Council which takes up the administrative care of projects, process, and resource building and our collaborator-participants. The entry points into our programs and projects are as varied as the communities with which we build and we understand accessible inter-community and inter-class spaces to hold enormous potential for building solidarity across difference. As a compliment to this, we often create community-specific programs that can address the unique needs of a given community, provide privacy, familiarity, and in the case of folx with privilege, the opportunity to unpack their relationships with power without causing harm to others. Caring for the health of relationship is at the heart of our work and our highest priority, shaping the process, pace, and outcomes of our work together.

In its current formation, all three members of Mountain House’s Steering Council are white people. As such, it is crucial to note that a significant part of our work together includes an explicit acknowledgment of our own unearned privileges and power that often come at the expense of others and a commitment to maintaining transparent, accountable anti-racist practices. We hold space for the nuanced ways that whiteness (and how we benefit from white supremacy) is unique to the way our other identities manifest, creating both an abundance of expertise on certain forms of oppression and critical

gaps in knowledge about others. We show up to this work with humility, prepared to take on the challenges and contradictions implicit in the condition of white people producing cultural work in this historical moment. Our hope for the future is that through continued relationship building and co-struggle with our accomplices, the Steering Council will change to reflect the inter-community relationships we are building.

Mountain House attempts to move between a few intersecting strategies for cultural work. We understand the role of art-making, knowledge building, and care to be interlocking forms of participation that are inextricable from one another and have distinct impacts on quality of life and the perpetuation of supremacist culture. Likewise, the scope of “cultural work” for Mountain House is broad and can be understood in this context as any form, gesture, or intervention that acts upon the existing cultural landscape with the intent to transform conditions into a state in which collective liberation is possible. Within this expanded space we endeavor toward our goals through projects that can very much look like “art” but also through forms of community organizing, the creation of mutual aid networks, direct action, and thoughtful care for the lands we live with. Our three primary territories of participation are entry points into transformative engagement with an ecology of our collective experiences that is formed between land, relationships, and culture.

△ **Art-Making:** Projects that utilize visual, spatial, literary, and performative methods of cultural production that enact care for one another, invite folx into the conversation, build personal and collective power, heal, and make tangible the practices of radical cultural stewardship in its various forms.

△ **Knowledge Building:** Projects that utilize research, archival, documentary, and pedagogical practices to build vocabulary, protect and share knowledges of underrepresented communities and ideas, create and document cultural knowledges critical for the political development of folx with privilege.

△ **Connection and Care:** Projects that focus on fortifying relationships to each other, ourselves, and to the lands we live on through restorative labor, direct political action, resource liberation and redistribution, and initiatives that produce observable and felt improvements to quality of life.

**Principles that guide this work:**

- We respond to the moral imperative to restore and protect the land we live on through a de-colonial, abolitionist framework.
- We align the critical need for sustained improvement in quality of life with access to opportunities and resources for cultural, intellectual, and political participation.
- We prioritize target problems, questions, and frameworks that impact us all in distinct ways. The distinction of their impacts are inextricable from an individual and/or community's specific socio-political location and history.
- We emphasize mutual gains and losses for individuals and communities across differences, centering the needs and desires of the most vulnerable.
- We deny the capitalist values of quick returns, immediate results, and quantifiable achievements and replace said values with long-term, on-going, always-changing approaches to culture work, political labor, and knowledge production.

**The Land Holds Us:** Mountain House exists and is held within and between bodies in the form of interpersonal relationships and political affinities, both as a condition of and in response to limited resources, fluctuating life chances, and vulnerable positionalities. Our home-site is situated just outside of Los Angeles proper in Tujunga, California, atop unceded Tongva land, in the Foothills between the San Gabriel Mountain wilderness and the edge of LA sprawl.

We need to be intentional not only about what we are producing but where we are working and the health of the relationship we have with the land on/with which we are working. This includes address of histories/present(s) of white supremacist settler colonial projects, the ways they manifest in our lives and home-places via gentrification, housing inequities, policing, and environmental degradation, and how folx with settler privileges— that possess the socio-economic benefits of being descended from settlers on this land are invited to ask important questions about their inheritances and create strategies for taking action to end harm. With stewardship at the center of this gesture, we understand that we must extend care to land, animal, and plant communities, and that this acknowledgment must be embedded in everything we do.

Two of our three founding members grew up in the East San Fernando Valley and the Foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and hold intimate knowledge of the area, specifically how gendered violence, class inequities, and aggressive white supremacist organizing have impacted the present landscape. We look to models of hyperlocal cultural organizing rooted in relationship building that emphasize the importance of first addressing the conditions with which you share immediate proximity: the body you occupy, the land you stand on, your family and neighbors, the spaces and relationships within your immediate reach that are full of transformative potential. This prompt meets our roles as cultural workers and the urgent need to evaluate and reimagine that position in the world.

The decision to site this work in Tujunga was made in response to calls to action for white folx and settler-descendants to take up the task of confronting white supremacist settler colonialism in their own communities. As well, that white-settler artists interested in engaging with inequities in the cultural field should address the root sources of continued harm as they are perpetuated in large part by white communities that haven't yet been initiated into anti-racism or de-colonial movements, recognizing anti-racist white-settlers as ideally positioned and ethically obligated to steward that work. *[This document was co-written by the Mountain House Steering Council over the period of April 28, 2018 - May 9, 2019.]*

## Appendix 1: Fissures

5 million years ago	San Gabriel Mountains
February 15, 1915	Terrell, Kaufman County, TX
October 1915	California Packing Corporation, Dinuba, CA
1930	US Tire & Rubber Company, 100 Citadel Drive, Commerce, CA Carmelitos Housing Project, 1000 East via Wanda, Long Beach, CA Compton Creek, Los Angeles River Village Green Apartments, 6924 Homer Street, Westminster, CA
June 1969	14011 Rex Street, San Fernando Valley,
February 9, 1971	Sylmar Earthquake, 405 Freeway
1985-1986	14033 Foothill Blvd., Sylmar, CA, 210 Freeway
March 7, 1991	Rodney King Beating, 11800 Foothill Blvd, Lake View Terrace, CA 15642 Lemarsh Street, North Hills, CA
April 29-May 4, 1992	LA Uprising (Also known as the LA Riots),
January 17, 1994	Northridge Earthquake
1995	2729 Community Ave, La Crescenta, CA
1996	First Baptist Church, 4441 La Crescenta Ave, La Crescenta, CA
1997	Crescenta Valley HS, 2900 Community Ave, La Crescenta, CA 91214, 6854 Quinton Lane, Tujunga, CA
2009	Studio Cuarenta y Tres, 2509 E. 4 <sup>th</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA
2009	Ribera, NM
2010	Corazon del Pueblo, 2427 East 1 <sup>st</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA
July 28, 2010	Alto Arizona! Action Against SB1070
2010-2013	Art Center College of Design, 1700 Lida St, Pasadena, CA 91103,
2012-2014	914 West Walnut Ave, Monrovia, CA,
March 29, 2014	Aleupkinga/Big Santa Anita Canyon/Chantry Flats
1924	Big Santa Anita Canyon Dam
7 million years ago	Mount Zion, San Gabriel Mountains, CA
August 21, 2014	478 Toolen Place, Pasadena, CA
January 21, 2015	Switzer Falls
June 17, 2015	Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church
October 28, 2015	Kaiser, Labor and Delivery, 4867 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90027 Hahamongna Watershed, 4550 Oak Grove Dr, Pasadena, CA 91103
1925	Devil's Gate Dam, La Canada, CA Arroyo Seco Creek, Pasadena, CA 110 Freeway
2016	UCI, Claire Trevor School of the Arts, 4002 Mesa Rd, Irvine, CA
November 8, 2016	
April 19, 2017	Found the butterfly, UCI,
October 1, 2018	7561 Valaho Drive, Tujunga, CA
Present	San Gabriel Mountains

## Appendix 2: Mountain House Reparations Fund

Dear Friends,

At mountain house, we build an ongoing reparations fund into all programming and projects. to be clear, this is not an ask for charitable donation but an invitation to the beneficiaries of white supremacy and settler colonialism to contribute material resources toward the unrequitable costs of enslavement, historical and ongoing land theft, institutional racism, family separation, mass incarceration, forced migration (among many other consequential conditions rendered impossible to name in their entirety.). Funds are handed directly to our friends and relatives with whom we stand in solidarity, with no questions asked or limitations placed on use.

And should you have capital and assets to share or land to return we are happy to put you in contact with folx that can make that happen.

Many thanks for your offerings.

With love,

***THE MOUNTAIN HOUSE STEERING COUNCIL***

### **Appendix 3: The Mountain House (free) Thrift & Food Pantry**

**What conditions must be present to construct self-governed systems for creating and distributing material resources within communities?:** The Mountain House (free) Thrift & Food Pantry is a resource for all Mountain House participants and our extended communities. Folks can donate and access quality second hand clothes, staple foods, and personal hygiene products through swaps and resource sharing events held in homes, public parks, and by making an appointment for pick-ups and drop-offs.

#### **Our Guiding Principles**

- Radically trust people and their expressed needs. We do not inquire about anyone's income or personal access to resources to determine or verify needs as a condition for participating. We believe you and how you choose to share your needs with our community.
- Build solidarity through shared interests. We come together across difference through the mutuality of our essential needs and use those points of connection to examine and challenge unequal distribution of resources.
- Money is never exchanged for goods and there are no requirements to donate or trade goods in order to access items for yourself.
- Address quality of life in holistic terms. Partner cultural and intellectual needs with efforts that ensure that cultural participants and producers have their basic needs met.
- Emancipate the means to take care of our communities from large institutions and the state by empowering these efforts to form and function by and for the folks they benefit. Practice creating the Community Thrift & Food Pantry as an accessible working model that can be replicated throughout many communities.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Research in itself is a powerful intervention, even if carried out at a distance, which has traditionally benefited the researcher, and the knowledge base of the dominant group in society. When undertaking research, either across cultures or within a minority culture, it is critical that researchers recognize the power dynamic which is embedded in the relationship with their subjects. Researchers are in receipt of privileged information. They may interpret it within an overt theoretical framework, but also in terms of a covert ideological framework. They have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgements, and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or to perpetuate ignorance. (Decolonizing Methodologies, Negotiating New Relationships with Non-Indigenous Researchers, 176, Linda Tuhiwai, 1999)

<sup>2</sup> See works cited: *Niinwi - Kiinwa - Kiinwi: Building Non-Indigenous Allies in Education through Indigenous Pedagogy*

<sup>3</sup> See works cited: *What Does Being a Settler Ally in Research Mean? A Graduate Students Experience Learning from and Working Within Indigenous Research Paradigms*

<sup>4</sup> See works cited: *McPhee, John. The Control of Nature, 2011 – Los Angeles Against the Mountains*

<sup>5</sup> See works cited: *Taylor, Billy Orville. “The Demise of Cabin 112.”*

<sup>6</sup> “...the practice of root-seeking might be said to involve not simply the reconstruction of a familial narrative, but also one’s response to this genealogical account in the presence of an audience. The public reveal reminds us is that the work of reconciliation and repair that genetic ancestry is used to accomplish is always also about a larger group, be it an audience or a community. For the descendants of slaves, this form of public witness may also be a political occasion—a demand that others make note of the sobering historical dynamics out of which some American family trees grew.” (Nelson)

<sup>7</sup> The 1994 Northridge earthquake was a magnitude of 6.7 that occurred on January 17, 1994 at 4:30 a.m.

<sup>8</sup> See works cited: *Foucault’s ‘History of the Present*, Michael Roth

<sup>9</sup> What I am trying to do is grasp the implicit systems which determine our most familiar behavior without our knowing it. Trying to find their origin, to show their formation, the constraint they impose on us and therefore trying to place myself at a distance from them and show how one could actually escape.” Foucault

<sup>10</sup> See works cited: *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And the Discourse on Language*, Michel Foucault

<sup>11</sup> See works cited: “What Is a ‘History of the Present’? On Foucault’s Genealogies and Their Critical Preconditions.” (David Garland)

<sup>12</sup> “Something of great importance has taken place here.” (Deloria) in discussing how “sacred place” is formed within the framework of indigenous religion, Chapter 16, “Sacred

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Places and Moral Responsibility,” God is Red, Deloria (271-285) The event changes the course of relationships. It marks a time, place, event that deserves recognition or care.

<sup>13</sup> “In her book, *Rebalancing the World*, Carol Lee Flinders defines a culture of belonging as one in which there is an ‘intimate connection with the land to which one belongs, empathic relationship to animals, self-restraint, custodial conservation, deliberateness, balance, expressiveness, generosity, egalitarianism, mutuality, affinity for alternative modes of knowing, playfulness, inclusiveness, nonviolent conflict resolution, and openness to spirit.’ (hooks, *Belonging, Kentucky is My Fate*, 13);

“With reciprocity all things do not need to be equal in order for acceptance and mutuality to thrive. If equality is evoked as the only standard by which it is deemed acceptable for people to meet across boundaries and create community, then there is little hope. Fortunately, mutuality is a more constructive and positive foundation for the building of ties that allow for differences in status, position, and privilege whether determined by race, class, sexuality, religion, or nationality.

Living in a community where many citizens work to end domination in all forms, including racial domination, a central aspect of our local culture is a willingness to be of service, especially to those who are for whatever reason among the disenfranchised. Dominator culture devalues the importance of service. Those of us who work to undo negative hierarchies of power understand the humanizing nature of service, understand that in the act of caregiving and caretaking we make ourselves vulnerable. And in that place of shared vulnerability there is the possibility of recognition, respect, and mutual partnership” (hooks, *Belonging, Again—Segregation must End*, 87)

<sup>14</sup> “Emmett Till’s name has circulated widely since his death. It has come to stand not only for Till himself but also for the mournability (to each other, if not to everyone) of people marked as disposable, for the weight so often given to a white woman’s word above a Black child’s comfort or survival, and for the injustice of anti-Black legal systems. Through his mother’s courage, Till was made available to Black people as an inspiration and warning. Non-Black people must accept that they will never embody and cannot understand this gesture: the evidence of their collective lack of understanding is that Black people go on dying at the hands of white supremacists, that Black communities go on living in desperate poverty not far from the museum where this valuable painting hangs, that Black children are still denied childhood. Even if Schutz has not been gifted with any real sensitivity to history, if Black people are telling her that the painting has caused unnecessary hurt, she and you must accept the truth of this. The painting must go.” (Hannah Black, Open Letter to the Whitney, 2017)

<sup>15</sup> “A curriculum of radical pedagogy for the politics of the possible will challenge all forms of dehumanized work in favor of shared, life-affirmative labor practices, resisting the economy of speed for efficiency and acknowledging that time is needed to nourish knowledge. The politics of the possible also rests on the imagination— on the freedom to dream other pasts and imagine other futures than those suggested by the racial capitalocene. Afrofuturism, for example, offers a way of looking at possible futures or alternate realities through a Black cultural lens, blending the future, the past, and the present. ‘Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.’ Frantz Fanon wrote in 1961. We are at a critical juncture, a historical moment that sends us into our inheritances to find sources and references for the struggle ahead.” (Verges, 82, *Futures of Black Radicalism*, Chapter 4, Racial Capitalocene)

<sup>16</sup> GROUND SERIES Dance Collective, currently based in Southern California, uses performance as embodied intervention. Each GROUND SERIES production is rooted in ensemble collaboration, interdisciplinary approach, inquiry-based content, and site-specific dance-making. In practice and performance, dance is used as a means of personal and communal transformation and a catalyst for

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community dialogue. Since its inception in 2012, GROUND SERIES has created 18 original dance works performed throughout Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, Philadelphia, Northern New Mexico, and London.

<sup>17</sup> “We are Colin Poole (UK) and Simon Ellis (NZ) – two independent contemporary dance artists whom together form the performance duo Colin, Simon and I. We collaborate artistically in the duet form, and choreograph and perform dance that explores male friendship, power and responsibility.”

<sup>18</sup> “I encourage whites to dwell in spaces that make them deeply uncomfortable, to stay with the multiple forms of agony that black people endure from them, especially those whites who deny the ways in which they are complicit in the operations of white racism. I want them to delay the hypothetical questions, to postpone their reach beyond the present. Reaching too quickly for hope can elide the importance of exposure. As in the tale of Odysseus and the Sirens, whites often fail to run the risk of being truly touched by the Other, exposed to the Other's voice, narrative, and experiences. Odysseus wanted to hear the Sirens and yet play it safe. He wanted to be affected by them without risking fundamental transformation through a radical act of exposure.” (Yancy, 157)

<sup>19</sup> “Institutions too involve orientation devices, which keep things in place. The affect of such placement could be described as a form of comfort. To be orientated, or to be at home in the world, is also to feel a certain comfort: we might only notice comfort as an affect when we lose it, when we become uncomfortable. The word ‘comfort’ suggests well-being and satisfaction, but it can also suggest an ease and easiness. Comfort is about an encounter between more than one body, which is the promise of a ‘sinking’ feeling. To be comfortable is to be so at ease with one’s environment that it is hard to distinguish where one’s body ends and the world begins. One fits, and by fitting the surfaces of bodies disappears from view. White bodies are comfortable as they inhabit spaces that extend their shape. The bodies and spaces ‘point’ towards each other, as a ‘point’ that is not seen as it is also ‘the point’ from which we see. In other words, whiteness may function as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape. Those spaces are lived as comfortable as they allow bodies to fit in; the surfaces of social space are already impressed upon by the shape of such bodies. We can think of the chair beside the table. It might acquire its shape by the repetition of some bodies inhabiting it: we can almost see the shape of bodies as ‘impressions’ on the surface. So spaces extend bodies and bodies extend spaces. The impressions of the surface function as traces of such extensions. The surfaces of social as well as bodily space ‘record’ the repetition of acts, and the ‘passing by’ of some and not others.” Ahmed, *Phenomenology of Whiteness* (158)

<sup>20</sup> “Adam W. McKinney is a former member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, and Milwaukee Ballet Company. He has led dance work with diverse populations across the U.S. and in Canada, England, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Palestine, Poland, Serbia, Spain, and South Africa. He served as a U.S. Embassy Culture Connect Envoy to South Africa through the U.S. State Department. Other awards of note include the NYU President’s Service Award for dance work with populations who struggle with heroin addiction, grants from the U.S. Embassy in Budapest and The Trust for Mutual Understanding to work with Roma youth in Hungary, a Jerome Foundation grant for Emerging Choreographers and a U.S. Embassy in Accra grant to lead a video oral history project with a Jewish community in Sefwi Wiawso, Ghana. He was a School of American Ballet’s National Visiting Teaching Fellow, an opportunity to engage in important conversations around diversity and inclusion in classical ballet. Named one of the most influential African Americans in Milwaukee, WI by St. Vincent DePaul, McKinney is the Co-Director of DNAWORKS ([www.dnaworks.org](http://www.dnaworks.org)), an arts and service organization committed to healing through the

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arts and dialogue. He holds a BFA in Dance Performance with high honors from Butler University and an MA in Dance Studies with concentrations in Race and Trauma theories from NYU-Gallatin.”

<sup>21</sup> *“Our bodies warm in the sun, unsettled,”* January 26, 2019, Monrovia Canyon Park: Choreographed and performed by GROUND SERIES dance collective’s Sarah Ashkin and Paolo Speirn, *Our Bodies Warm in the Sun, Unsettled* combines research, satire, and dance improvisation to create a critical reflection on the American Wilderness. Part nature walk, part dance performance, *Unsettled* uses personal, racial, and environmental histories to unearth the complexities of “the great outdoors.” Audience members will meet in the parking lot of Monrovia Canyon Park for a short nature walk to the performance site.

*Unsettled* is inspired by Ashkin and Speirn’s shared love of the outdoors and their work for racial, economic, and environmental justice. The piece attempts to create a self-reflective framework to confront the complex histories and present day practices of settler colonialism embedded in our experiences in nature. The script, choreography, and participatory action that make up *Unsettled* result in a collage of strange contrasts and collision. The legacy of Manifest Destiny overlaps with the voices of the performers’ mothers recalling beloved natural places. The outdoor gear industry is flooded with pioneers’ tea sets and grandfather clocks. Audience members square dance with John Muir and the National Park System. And the genocide of Southern California’s Native peoples is understood in the context of contemporary battles for tribal recognition. *Unsettled* invites and challenges our audiences to join us in asking: For people who are deeply nourished by the natural world, what does it mean for us to play, hike, and heal all on stolen land?

*“Our bodies warm in the sun, unsettled,”* May 18, 2019, Univeristy Art Gallery, University of California Irvine: Choreographed and performed by GROUND SERIES dance collective’s Sarah Ashkin and Paolo Speirn, *Our Bodies Warm in the Sun, Unsettled* combines research, satire, and dance improvisation to create a critical reflection on the American Wilderness. *Unsettled* uses personal, racial, environmental, and artistic histories to unearth the complexities of “the great outdoors.” The performance practice asks: How might representations of the West, like iconic paintings, personal narratives, and political rhetoric, shape contemporary participation and resistance to settler colonialism?

*Unsettled* is inspired by Ashkin and Speirn’s shared love of the outdoors and their work for racial, economic, and environmental justice. The piece attempts to create a self-reflective framework to confront the complex histories and present day practices of settler colonialism embedded in our experiences in nature and the art world. The script, choreography, and participatory action that make up *Unsettled* result in a collage of strange contrasts and collision. The legacy of Manifest Destiny overlaps with the voices of the performers’ mothers recalling beloved natural places. Rangers give presentations on the power of landscape paintings. Audience members square dance with John Muir and the National Park System. And the genocide of Southern California’s Native peoples is understood in the context of contemporary battles for tribal recognition. *Unsettled* invites and challenges audiences to join us in asking: For people who are deeply nourished by the natural world, what does it mean for us to hike, make art, and heal all on stolen land?

<sup>22</sup> *Urban Bush Women*: “UBW galvanizes artists, activists, audiences and communities through performances, artist development, education and community engagement. With the ground-breaking performance ensemble at its core, ongoing initiatives like the Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), BOLD (Builders, Organizers & Leaders through Dance) and the Choreographic Center, UBW continues to affect the overall ecology of the arts by promoting artistic legacies; projecting the voices of the under-heard and people of color; bringing attention to and addressing issues of equity in the dance field and

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throughout the United States; and by providing platforms and serving as a conduit for culturally and socially relevant experimental art makers.”

<sup>23</sup> Art & Activism Panel, presented by LMU’s Marital and Family Therapy Department’s Active Cultural Engagement Committee, April 27, 2019 at Loyola Marymount University; Panelists: Laurel Butler, Kristy Lovich, Noni Olabisi, and Kristina Wong

<sup>24</sup> See works cited: *Aware-LA. Towards A Radical White Identity. 2009.*

<sup>25</sup> See works cited: “*How to Think Differently about Doing Good as a Creative Person,*” Arenyeka, Omayeli

<sup>26</sup> Noni, see “*Loyola Marymount University, Art & Activism Panel*”

<sup>27</sup> See, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, Homeplace (as a site of resistance) (41-49, hooks, “...resistance, at root, must mean more than resistance against war. It is a resistance against all kinds of things that are like war... So perhaps, resistance means opposition to being invaded, occupied, assaulted and destroyed by the system. The purpose of resistance, here, is to seek the healing of yourself in order to be able to see clearly... I think that communities of resistance should be places where people can return to themselves and recover their wholeness.”

<sup>28</sup> We (tbd) at Human Resources, Breburary 11, 2018-March 4, 2018: To begin, a structure made of scaffolding and wood that reorganizes and reshapes the internal space of Human Resources. In the course of this reshaping, we hold an exhibition that serves to model dynamic notions of connection, difference, and community, and to reflect the conscious self-creating of a group process. Inspired by notions of empathy and intersubjectivity in the Netflix original series (now cancelled) *Sense8*, a cluster was created by Olga Koumoundouros: John Booortle, von curtis, Alexander Kroll, Francesca Lalanne, Kristy Lovich, Ofelia Marquez, and Jennifer Moon. Brought together to be part of this material and psychic experiment, this group of artists use a diverse set of strategies to understand people, to build and express empathy. Because of this, the structure, and the events we organize throughout the exhibition, tend towards care and support systems: setting up the conditions to be making work together, to add onto, and to grow into.

<sup>29</sup> White People for Black Lives: “White People 4 Black Lives (WP4BL) is a white anti-racist collective and activist project. We operate within a national network of white anti-racists called Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ). Our work is rooted in showing up for racial justice and acting in alliance with Black Lives Matter: Los Angeles, the Movement 4 Black Lives, and other partners. With full recognition of the privilege we as white people have that allows us to ignore or minimize issues of race and racism, we make a conscious decision to notice, call out, and challenge institutional and cultural racism. Standing on the shoulders of those who came before us, such as white abolitionists like John Brown and the Grimke sisters, and white organizers fighting segregation like Anne Braden, we approach our work with an intersectional lens and a commitment to act accountably in our relationships and alliances with people of color and people-of-color-led organizations. Our work includes fundraising, internal and external education, mobilization, recruitment and networking, action planning, and cultural transformation. We believe strongly that white folks can play a progressive and supportive role in amplifying the voices and demands of Black people, moving the white community to take a more active and participatory stance for racial justice, and apply strategic pressure on institutions to change racist policies.

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<sup>30</sup> Clare's grandparents' home burned to the ground in a wildfire in Tujunga, CA on September 2, 2017

<sup>31</sup> "JusticeLA, in partnership with other organizations working with directly impacted communities, was formed to reclaim, reimagine and reinvest what L.A. County could do with the \$3.5 billion allocated to building two new jails. The JusticeLA Coalition is standing together with one voice to issue our own call to action to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors that reimagines our collective future and launches the JusticeLA campaign, with our own flavor. We're calling for a moratorium on jail construction and expansion in order to fully realize the promise of diversion and re-entry through a justice reinvestment strategy for Los Angeles."

<sup>32</sup> "Melina Abdullah is Professor and Chair of Pan-African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. She earned her Ph.D. and M.A. from the University of Southern California in Political Science and her B.A. from Howard University in African American Studies. She was appointed to the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission in 2014 and is a recognized expert on race, gender, class, and social movements. Abdullah is the author of numerous articles and book chapters, with subjects ranging from political coalition building to womanist mothering. Professor Abdullah is a womanist scholar-activist – understanding the role that she plays in the academy as intrinsically linked to broader struggles for the liberation of oppressed people. Professor Abdullah is a leader in the fight for Ethnic Studies in the K-12 and university systems and was a part of the historic victory that made Ethnic Studies a requirement in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She was among the original group of organizers that convened to form Black Lives Matter and continues to serve as a Los Angeles chapter lead and contributes to the national leadership. She is co-host and co-producer of the weekly radio program Beautiful Struggle which airs on KPFK, part of the Pacifica radio network. Dr. Abdullah also serves on boards for the Black Community, Clergy and Labor Alliance (BCCLA), California Faculty Association-Los Angeles, Los Angeles African American Women's Public Policy Institute, Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA-CAN), National Association for Ethnic Studies, Reverence-Wellness Salon, and Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)."

<sup>33</sup> Dahlia Ferlito is a co-founder of White People 4 Black Lives (WP4BL). WP4BL is a white anti-racist collective and activist project of the Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere (AWARE-LA) and operates within a national network of white anti-racists called Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).

<sup>34</sup> "John Brown - He was white American abolitionist whose attempt to end slavery by force greatly increased anxiety between North and South in the period before the American Civil War. Called Old Brown of Osawatomie, John Brown was from Torrington, Connecticut. His family moved to Ohio when he was five years old. His father became actively hostile to the institution of slavery and so young Brown, early in life acquired the hatred of slavery that marked his subsequent career. While living in Pennsylvania in 1834, Brown initiated a project among sympathetic abolitionists to educate young blacks. The next 20 years of his life were largely dedicated to this and similar abolitionist ventures, entailing many sacrifices for himself and his large family."

<sup>35</sup> "The Reclaiming Tradition is a form of modern, feminist Witchcraft which was initially developed in the classes, workshops, summer programs and public rituals of the Reclaiming Collective (1978-1997). A living religion which continues to evolve, it is a belief system and a style of ritual and Magic, not a church or organization with any kind of formal membership that one can "join." It is a hallmark of the Reclaiming Tradition that initiation does not lead to any sort of entitlement and there is no formal hierarchy of priests and priestesses. People who share the core values described in the Principles of Unity and who practice Magic in the Reclaiming style can, and do, legitimately identify themselves as Reclaiming Witches. The Reclaiming Collective was a group of women and men in the San Francisco Bay

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Area which formed in 1978-80, originally an outgrowth of classes in magic taught by Starhawk and Diane Baker. The Collective was a working group which published a quarterly newsletter; organized and led public rituals for the Sabbats, the eight seasonal holidays of the year; and taught classes from a feminist perspective in Magic and Witchcraft, including week-long summer programs which came to be known as Witch Camp.” (Vibra Willow, Reclaiming Tradition)

<sup>36</sup> Aware-LA, Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere: AWARE-LA was founded November 2003 to create a space for white people to take responsibility for working with ourselves and with other white people to uproot racism, confront white privilege, and take action to dismantle the white supremacist system. We began as a small monthly dialogue group at a local church in Los Angeles, focusing primarily on supporting white anti-racist folks working in different fields of social justice (teachers, social workers, activists, organizers, artists, etc.). In the early work of the organization, we strived to build skills and capacity for being effective white anti-racist allies. See *“ONE STEP FORWARD ON THE PATH TO LIBERATION: White Anti-Racist Organizing and Its Role in the Struggle against the White Supremacist System.*

<sup>37</sup> Saturday Dialogues: “Saturday Dialogue (SD) is a gathering for white anti-racists who want to discuss issues of identity, community, privilege and racism in our lives with the intention to strengthen our practice as anti-racists in alliances, relationships, and interactions with people of color. Regular, recurring dialogues throughout the year focus on the intersections of multiple identities, including Race and Class, Sexuality and Race, and Gender and Race. Other workshops focus on relationships, Radical White Identity and Community, and issues such as police and the prison industrial complex, immigration, and gentrification.” (Aware-LA)

<sup>38</sup> “Between 1882 and 1968, more black people were lynched in Mississippi than in any other state. “You and I know what’s the best way to keep the nigger from voting,” blustered Theodore Bilbo, a Mississippi senator and a proud Klansman. “You do it the night before the election.” (Coates)

<sup>39</sup> witch-camp, see *“Reclaiming Witch Tradition”*

<sup>40</sup> See works cited: *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome : America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*, Joy Degruy Leary

<sup>41</sup> See works cited: *“The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”* (Lorde)

<sup>42</sup> Art Spaces in Boyle Heights: Studio Cuarenta y Tres: Studio Cuarenta y Tres is a homegrown art space built on collective action and the cultivation of a self-sustainable art community. Our goal is to create works of art that reflect our complex identities, politics, and visions for a changing world. We are committed to producing accessible art events and art education programs, carving out the space to heal, build, and change our communities. We have begun the process of transforming a little house in Boyle Heights into a multi-purpose community art space, complete with a gallery “under the stars”, the beginnings of a native garden, and workshop space. In the coming months we will be hosting art exhibitions, youth art and poetry workshops, political education events, and independent markets. (2009); Corazon Del Pueblo: “Corazon Del Pueblo is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit collective, and community cultural center, that promotes peace, social justice and cultural understanding through the arts, education and social action. Corazon Del Pueblo opened up its doors to the community in Boyle Heights December 18, 2009. Since then we’ve managed to keep our doors open without grants, private money, and no staff members. All our board members & instructors are all UNPAID VOLUNTEERS –

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donating their time, skills & knowledge. Since 2009 CDP has offered a wide range of FREE classes & programming, such as: Flowers of fire, our bi-monthly open mic/poetry night, yoga, jiu jitsu, womyns self defense, nahuatl studies, knitting, jewelry, danza azteca, capoiara, zumba, salsa, conga, music appreciation, poetry art classes & workshops and much more!”

<sup>43</sup> May 18-June 1, 2019: *For Two Weeks in May*, Mountain House will take up residence in the University Art Gallery at UC Irvine, holding space for our ongoing projects to come into collaboration with our campus community, offering an opening night performance of *Our bodies warm in the sun, unsettled* (produced by GROUND SERIES Dance Collective), access to our Reading Room, (FREE) Thrift and Food Pantry, Reparations-Restitutions Center, and ongoing skill-share sessions aimed at supporting undergraduate art students in developing their creative practices. We recognize the gallery space as a valuable capital resource and as a central gesture of support throughout this residency we will be turning this real estate over to art department community members that have not historically been afforded vital space and institutional support. Art Department Undergraduates are invited to use the space to work, meet, stage performances and exhibit work, leaning on Mountain House as a supportive structure. Collaborators: Maya Green, Taryn Lee, Anne Lim, Arely Lopez, Veronica Preciado, Sebastian Sarti, and Regino Rodriguez Vazquez

<sup>44</sup> “As an artist, I depend very much on what I want to experience myself. With my photographs, I try to deepen the psychological reads of the image by intervening in the subject matter by constructing what is going to be in front of the camera. Many of my images deal with subjects surrounding, sexuality, being, loss, perspective, and narration.” Sebastian Sarti

<sup>45</sup> See works cited: *Aware-LA, Why a white space?*

<sup>46</sup> *They were so thirsty they mistook the sky for water*, Hekate (Julie & Kristy Lovich) “Hekate walked 10 miles in the Arroyo Seco riverbed from the Hahamongna watershed to the Sycamore Grove pedestrian overcrossing carrying with them a concrete vessel filled with water from the north side of Devil's Gate Dam. The water was delivered to the foot of a tree at the overcrossing as a gesture toward replicating and honoring the vocation of the once active waterway. “ Hekate is a collaboration between siblings Julie and Kristy Lovich, blending reclaimed magick work and multiform art practices. They use their familial tie as a site to unearth the legacies of generational poverty and patriarchal harm as they intersect with the privileges of whiteness and settler colonialism. From an autobiographical standpoint the pair contend with their own whiteness and gendered experiences dealing directly with issues of survival, violence, labor, and land. Audiences are invited to engage in vulnerable considerations of personal complicity, magick-work as medicine and political act, and a loving stewardship for our environment and communities.

<sup>47</sup> “Who has the right not to explain themselves? The people who don't have to. The ones whose subjectivities have been naturalized. It enrages me. No, it confuses me. I'm all for being confused, for searching, for having to do a bit of work. But the absence of explanation is somehow ... somehow ... somehow what?” Miguel Gutierrez, “Does abstraction belong to white people?”

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<sup>48</sup> See *Native Land Digital*: “Why acknowledge territory? Territory acknowledgement is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or any public event. It can be a subtle way to recognize the history of colonialism and a need for change in settler colonial societies.”

<sup>49</sup> Lucretia Mott, “(03 January 1793–11 November 1880), abolitionist and feminist, was born on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, the daughter of Thomas Coffin, Jr., a ship captain, and Anna Folger, a shopkeeper. The second of five children, Lucretia was raised in a family strongly shaped by their membership in the Society of Friends (Quakers), which includes among its tenets the equality of women and men.” (Isenberg, Plamer)

<sup>50</sup> “Whilst colonialism at an economic level, including its ultimate expression through slavery, opened up new materials for exploitation and new markets for trade, as a cultural level, ideas, images and experiences about the Other helped to shape and delineate the essential differences between Europe and the rest. Notions about the Other which already existed in the European imagination, were recast within the framework of Enlightenment philosophies, the industrial revolution and the scientific ‘discoveries’ of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. When discussing Western research, the indigenous contribution to these foundations is rarely mentioned. To have acknowledged their contributions would, in terms of the rules of research practice, be as legitimate as acknowledging the contribution of a variety of plant, a shard of pottery or a preserved head of a native to research. Furthermore, according to Bazin, ‘Europeans could not even imagine that other people could ever have done things before or better than themselves. The objects of research do not have a voice and do not contribute to research or science. In fact, the logic of the argument would suggest that it is simply impossible, ridiculous even, to suggest that the object of research can contribute to anything. An object has no life force, no humanity, no spirit of its own, so therefore ‘it’ cannot make an active contribution.” *Decolonizing Methodologies, Chapter 3, Establishing the Superiority of Western Knowledge, Colonizing Knowledges, Smith (61)*

<sup>51</sup> See works cited: *Indigenous Peoples and the Collaborative Stewardship of Nature: Knowledge Binds and Institutional Conflicts, CHAPTER 6: The Indigenous Stewardship Model, p 286*

<sup>52</sup> Intertitle from *Modern Times* (1936), “As they [Chaplin, Goddard] sit and flirt on a curb in a residential community, she tells him that she lives “no place - anywhere.” They notice a suburban couple parting outside their home, and the Tramp asks: Can you imagine us in a little home like that? They enter into an idealized dream sequence, dreaming of everyday life - it is an Everyman vision of the perfect home in a capitalistic society. They collectively imagine, through a dissolve, their happy life together in a bright cheery home. He plucks an orange from a nearby tree just outside the window. Grapes are visible beyond the kitchen door, easily plucked. An obliging cow is quickly summoned outside the kitchen door, always available for fresh milk. And a steak is cooking on the stove. The Tramp is inspired to promise: “I’ll do it! We’ll get a home, even if I have to work for it.” They are brought back to the rough reality of their situation when a policeman motions them to move along.” (Film Site)

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