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Days In Different Cadences

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Publication Date

2021

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Days In Different Cadences

Thesis

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Fine Arts

By

Luis J Moreno Napoles

Thesis Committee:

Professor Amanda Ross-Ho, Chair

Professor Jennifer Pastor

Professor Simon Leung

Associate Professor Liz Glynn

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my committee members, Amanda Ross-Ho, Jennifer Pastor, Simon Leung, Liz Glynn, for walking with, thinking with, being in conversation with, spending time with, dream guiding through, speculating with and teachings during my time at UCI.

Thank you, Cohorts of UCI MFA's classes 2018-2022, for continuing to tend to a beautiful space of discourse and making. Thank you, Cohort of 2021, I did not always know how to respond to the too muchness of it all and your company and support meant the world. It has been a great pleasure to have gotten to work with you over the last three years and look forward to our future conversations. Thank you, all the faculty, staff and alumni, for all of your time and help.

Mom, thank you for all that you have done. None of this would have happened without you. We are in a show together. Coleen you are the reason any of this was possible, Thank You. Rosangela thank you for all your patience, love and support. Evelia and Ashton, I do not think I would be here without you two. Everyone I have worked with at Long Beach City College and UCLA, thank you. Rahel, Thank you for all of your time, conversation, patience and mold making advice. Laura Solomon Thank you for many evenings of conversations on various balconies of varies art buildings. I want to thank my friends and family. My Aunts Veronica and Angelica, Thank you for your support all these years. Aunt Carmen, I miss you. Thank you for encouraging your fool of a nephew for so many years.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Days In Different Cadences

By

Luis J Moreno Napoles

Master of Fine Arts in Art

University of California, Irvine, 2021

Professor Amanda Ross-Ho, Chair

Day after day for a small moment, just a couple of seconds, we attempt to navigate this brutal world by standing still in embrace. We hold each other in an attempt to care for each other, to stop each other from individually and repeatedly reciting our own eulogies.

Introduction

Thank you for making room in this space. Maybe we can think of it as a space where we give each other permission to transcend, repeatedly wrong footed, while trying to get to the thing by getting to the other side of it. There is a desperate necessity for this because I am not sure that I am able to search in any other way. I am also not sure that I can put what I am trying to say into words. At times this space is going to be an attempt against Individualization.

Other times it is going to be an attempt to extricate what we are supposed to want from the things that we love.



Figure 1. *Days in Different Cadences* (2021). Detail View. Image by Luis Moreno Napoles.

Days in Different

Cadences

July 1st 1989

They require we speak of their nothingness, to be nothing.

Speak of nothing unless they ask you. This was

the advice my cayote gave me. We were sitting in a small room somewhere in Tijuana. The cayote, who is sometimes replaced by the north American native canine in my remembrance of the event other times he is a man and his face a blur. There was also a woman, but I do not remember any of her details. I never meant to erase her from my memory, but the cavity of an absent father seemed easier to fill. I think it was an easy violence to look past her. I only remember that they were there as a couple because I was filling in for their ten-year-old son for the duration of the border crossing. They had spent most of the day coaching me to remember what the border guards would consider their son's identifying information such as address, date of birth, place of birth, name of school attended and parents' names. There we were, me and this ten-year-old boy, reeling proxies for the shattered space and time of all the lives I

could imagine for us in one evening, and all the lives I would imagine for us, when remembering, in the future.

April 20th,2021

An account of the things we hold.

"Patient reflection, always directed outside itself, and a fiction that cancels itself out in the void where it undoes its forms" ("Foucaultp 24)"

We stand on the cusp of the white metal security door, holding.

My mom asks me why I think it is important that we take the picture on the cusp of the door. Because I have a very limited way of understanding the world and keep forgetting what I have learned, I say that it is because the cusp is a transitional space between inside and outside. The harm of recursively expressing that transition space as a dichotomy is not easy to break away from. For us the outside, beyond her doorstep, has never really been an outside. When we are at the cusp, we are not between the borders of an inside and an outside. Us being at the cusp of the door is Us being at the cusp of different positions of holding. Us holding each other. Her home, being held as a commodity in rotation, and in that rotation, destabilizing her ability to hold on to the space as a home.

Her, if only temporarily, being held by the space. When we step beyond that, we unwillingly hold the labels that the state has placed on us: Unlawful, illegal, undocumented, and within those labels, the state, which does not want us, takes hold. And that hold continues after the labels are removed but even after their removal, we are not really at the cusp of which leads to an outside. In the process of having these labels removed we are forced to bring ourselves closer to the state. We fill out applications, and sign forms agreeing to abide by the state. We make ourselves easier to be held by the state. And this relationship continues even when you step outside, because now the contract has been signed.

July 2, 1989

The more we were able to push beyond the border, the more we were able to hold our own truths. Able to recognize the fragility of the border by its need to overcompensate. Expressed by the second check point we passed by in San Clemente. The signs, warnings, ice... An existential conflicted border tricked by a sleepy eight-year-old boy who could not learn his new name. The more we were able to move away from it, but not too far, the more we were able to assert our own value over it.

The border wants.

The border yearns to define.

But we desire.

We desired so much all we knew was desire. It didn't require me being in Tijuana to have already imagined different lives. We knew. I knew since the age of five that we would make this journey. There were people moving with me that were not even there. We were just leaving a trace. Everybody, we knew, knew somebody, somewhere, that would make the trip to el norte. We knew, no matter what else we were doing, whether it was going to school, playing football, running in the fields. We knew. Even the objects that we touched were being imbedded with this knowledge. The ball that we would kick, whether it was flat, mangled by a dog, peeled or not even really a ball. We knew that whoever had someone en el norte or had already gone to el norte would have the nice new ball, the nice new dress, the nice new shoes. They would have already made the journey. The aspiration of the things we were holding were also living another life. In this, the entropy began before our own lives. We had traversed this space multiple times before and would again.

May 12th, 2021

A door.

We stand at the cusp of the door. We have been doing this for a little over three months. It isn't always the case but making the work today, makes me feel like I am leaping off an invisible cliff. Maybe it is because most of the plants being gone makes the ground more visible through the 2nd floor rail. I know partly it is because I have lost track of how to name the work we are doing. Partly it is also because the plants not being there reminds me that there is a new landlord who wanted the plants removed, afraid that any runoff from watering them would deteriorate the balcony concrete. I wonder about how recursively lingering on the cusp of my mom's door day after day can speak to time and change's irreducible relationship to decay. The material we used that day was a particularly wet paper mâché mixture a bit too heavy on the CMC. I also have a few flowers I took from the plants before my uncle took them away, I press those against the paper mâché. I decide that it is a good idea for documentation, to put the phone on the balcony floor with the timer and shoot up to capture our embrace. We hold the mass of paper mâché together and begin to squeeze. My mom begins to lose her shit because she thinks all the liquid raining down will permanently damage the phone. Her laugh is

contagious. I begin to lose it surprised by how much liquid paper mâché holds. (enough liquid to fill what?) The is phone is drenched but ok. So is the balcony. We remind each other that sometimes, it rains in California and that we can always get new plants once the landlord loses interested in their newly acquired property.

My mom mentions her concern about the rent going up before the new renovations began. (I wish I knew how to make work against rent going up) My Art doesn't pay the rent.

April 4th, 2021

"The experiment is a disruption of the Newtonian sense of space and time... to hold two places at the same time... one of those places is a place that is defined by the capacity to have a place and a time and the other is not." ("Moten" 1:26:37-27:26)

On the morning of April 4th, I found myself Cleaning a gravestone with Saliva. Not Covid safe but there wasn't any water about, and I felt desperate that the space was cared for. I told this to my friend Laura Solomon via text. She thought it was an *"appropriate solvent, coming from where one speaks, eats"*. Ablution seems to hold inside it the word 'absolution', together making a moment or a space for an instance of expression- a humble and tender act of care and loyalty, a making sacred or rather an acknowledgement of a sacredness

that's already there." In some ways this act is also one of calling. A calling to the rain. A calling to the loss. A calling to the space imbued by their remains. The grave holds three generations of Morenos.

Being in at the gravesite makes me want to have a have a place and time in the universe.

April 5th, 1970- January 11th, 1992 Jesus Moreno

August 3rd, 1932- September 25th, 2015 Luis Moreno R

February 22nd, 1956- March 23rd, 2019 Carmen Moreno

"Fuck a body. Don't want one. Ain't got one. don't want one. No such thing anyway. Nobody really has one. If you all get it straight maybe, we'll all be better off" ("Moten" 1:47:49-48:02) This thought holds me. Desperately I want to be able to be malleable, granular and multiple. I want to be able to disperse in every direction and simultaneously be with everyone I have and will ever meet and love. I want to imagine a world where I am just energy, small enough to pass through the pores of concrete and granite. I want to imagine a world where this is possible. That other worlds are possible and even if they are not, the *possibility* other worlds being possible is enough. Enough that the possibility can engulf. A space where you can traverse in your sleep with others. It is not a path you walk by

yourself. It is one performed in unison with others, it is more about being able to recognize the others that move with you and besides you. Maybe the porosity of granite and concrete allow for mass spatial topological movements. In exhaustion we find a way, open to possession, we meander. In exhaustion we detour and get lost in/with each other. We imagine worlds that do not require us to imagine, but in every rendition of the universe something, someone, something will be missing.

April 5th,2021

We stand on the cusp of the door.

April 6th,2021

We stand at the cusp of the door.

April 7th,2021

We stand at the cusp of a door.



Figure 2. *Days in Different Cadences* (2021). Detail view. Image by Luis Moreno Napoles.

August 22nd, 2021

Objects Of Touch:

An account of the things we hold.

Salt.

Salt, a cool white against our warm, sun burnt brown.

Salt to heal. Salt to preserve.

Hibiscus.

Soak yourself in this holy elixir. A vast red desert.

The red moon.

White.

Moby Dick.

Brown Sugar.

Brown bodies. Azucar.

Nothing sweet.

Green.

Praying Mantis, The color
of the witch.

Yellow, Red, Purple, green,
orange, brown, blue.

Our Tinctures.

Dirt.

This is the garden. *I am
dirt, I can't be crushed.*

Mezcal.

All spirit.

Sand.

A glittering Immensity. A
rare material. Gives a
better purchase.

Gauze.

Something we needed.

Plaster. To fill a cavity.

To repair a broken bone.



Figure 3. *Days in Different Cadences* (2021). Image by Luis Moreno Napoles.

February 3rd 2021

Gaps are rendered as small finite things. Unable to delineate without a lining, the byproduct of two hands, and multiple voices, congealing material through a coming together and coming apart.

Inseparable from their relationship to the things that make them up outside of

themselves. They are dependent on their being able to be

perceived as a contradiction. Positive spaces holding negative space. The presence of an absence. The absence of a presence.

There is a particularly fragile moment where whatever is going to be rendered is held between different states and the only way to carry on is by being able to allow the other person's hand to carry on. It becomes a wayward sort of expression not without doubt. The energy from the interaction invests in unexpected ways.

Us, raw sugar, mezcal, hibiscus, turmeric, tortilla, tortilla de masa, clay, tomato paste, rice, maseca, manteca,

news paper, paper, the news, paper mache, the call of different worlds, *Thoughts and Things*, air dry clay red, dry sunny weather, glue, cinnamon, lentils, spearmint gum, thinking of that person's face, desire, a longing, many failures, easy violences, a real anti-aspirational feeling, foil paper, spackling, a napkin, yeast, coconut flour, protein powder, tape, double sided tape, hemp, air dry clay yellow, play doh, epoxy, wax paste, wax, beeswax, filament, an army of ants, empire, erasure, hemp, *all the beauty of those wine urine stained hallways*, blood, gauze, band aids, dahlias, orchids, peonies, robin's plantain, earth, sand, sea water, alginate, jasmine, a desperate necessity, *La Cucaracha*, beginning, beginning again, and again, and again , and again, again, and again, two hands coming together and coming apart, worry about the rent, again, and again, a small but charged resistance carried out over and over again, an iphone, another iphone, melamine, the dimensions of a coffin, our life, the necessity of death, salt, saliva, a gravestone, a tender care and loyalty, the lingering low hum of music we he carry in our chest, mint tea, cast ultracal 13x96x3/4 in, cinder block 4x6x16 in, cinder block 2x4x16, time, gas, salt pink, gloves blue, smoking a cigarette on the sly, gin, tequila, beans, carne, carne seca, cheese stinky, bubble gum pink, air dry clay pink, linseed oil, paraffin wax, tights, wax paper, air dry clay orange, air dry clay green, money, the

sound of hammers on the wall, the vibrations of music at my feet, mask, gloves black, access, help, egg shells, soap, vaseline, hugs, coffee, cocoa butter, sugar, brown sugar, air dry clay brown, brown bodies, empire, the police, Miguel James's *Contra la policia "Boyer"* (11), a real Your welcome but you're in our house kind of attitude, mi gente, tu gente, you.



Figure 4. Estela Moreno (2021). Image by Luis Moreno Napoles.

September 29th, 2021

Etela Moreno and Luis Moreno
holding a conversation

LM- Hi Mom well I wanted to
start by asking for your
thoughts on the objects we
made.

EM- Why do you call them
objects? I do not think I
would call them objects.
Isn't there a difference
between art and other things?

I think of them as parts of a
bigger project of some kind. Something to do with touch and
materials.

LM- What would you call them?

EM- I don't know what that is, but it feels more like it is
trying to realize an idea about contact. I do not know how to
name what it is, but I know that I can recognize and qualify
other things that it is not. I can qualify a chair, a mop, a
dress, gloves, shoes. Those are objects.

LM- Do you have any specific memories or sentiments about the making process that you would like to share?

EM- Well with what intentions did you begin? You came to me, and you asked if I could collaborate with you on this project, you were doing. You told me it would take months. You know this was your thing, I was just a collaborator because you asked.

LM- Well for me the important part was that we collaborated.

EM- You know. I do not know much about art and at first it seemed without sense what we were doing, but then we would shake hands and the materials seemed so beautiful. You would tell me today I am going use masa or hibiscus and I would think about how the things we were making would exist. How would they dry? How would they maintain? It made me think about the possibility of things, and about the work your friend Laura did and of different ways hard things could be expressed. I could see all the hard work that had gone into it. The layout and the placing. But I do think your presentation was missing a list of the makeup of each thing next to each thing. Instead of you having to explain to your visitors maybe you could have included a bit of writing explain the materials.

LM- do you remember all the materials we used?

EM- No.

LM- I did include a list of sorts but it wasn't next to each individual thing. I guess I wanted the viewers to spend time with whatever caught them but I think you're right there were some cases where, I was answering repeated questions about the materials of each thing.

EM- Well I think there is a lot of interest of the makeup of each thing. You looked exhausted going around doing the work of explaining to people.

LM- I mean they were *made* in exhaustion, either by the times or by the day to day. You were helping me make these throughout your work week. That doesn't even account for all the work you did for us to be able to get to where we could take a moment to do this thing. On top of that you would make breakfast and cook up lunch. I was trying not to give you more work. Conversing with people is not *not* work, but it was also important that it happened. It meant a lot to me that they made enough time for the work, that they wanted to talk about it.

EM- But what happens when you are not there? Some sort of list would be required, imagine what a list could also do.

LM- You told me you had some favorites. Can you tell me what you enjoy about your favorites?

EM- Have you sold any?

LM- Someone asked if I could sell them one. But they do not seem like things that should be to sold me. But also, I don't own them. What do you think?

EM- Do you know this person?

LM- Yes. They do a lot of work for the art program.

EM- You can't charge them. I would gift it to them. It should be a gift. If it was some rich stranger off the street, then charge them a lot.

LM- Do you remember any of the days?

EM- Not really. It was such a hurried thing. We were both usually running of to work or school. Also, I am getting old and it takes a lot of work to remember things. You know what I do remember is sites. The garden outside the door, the tree with all the flowers. The balcony when the plants were there. The photos you took help me remember. I also thought those were beautiful.

LM- I remember the beach because I enjoyed walking at the beach with you in the morning, and I couldn't believe how much water sand could hold. I also the remember the blue gloves because I got my hand stuck and needed your help to get my hands out.

EM- The sand. The sand you know, nothing keeping it together. It just unmade itself. You know sugar too. Or maybe sugar dissolves.

LM- (laughing) Well it's all undoing.

EM- Is it time or climate?

LM- Well both. The gallery changed them. I had a sense of what time and sunny weather did to them. The studio is a dry hot climate. The gallery animated a lot of things I thought had already settled. A lot of things, both the synthetic and the organic, became malleable again and some things are breaking. In that animation another transformation continues.

EM- I guess this gives you a sense of how things react in different environments.

LM- How was it sharing the work we did with mom Josefina (Josefina is my mother's mom)?

To the reader. There is a jump in time here. The conversation from 15:42 to 23:38 has been edited out. Not because it doesn't relate to what the work is about. I think it does in the deepest of ways, but it also references a very difficult journey by someone who was asked but refused to be included in the interview. We will resume on 23:39.

EM- Well I felt good about it because, I think it made her happy. You know all of this is possible because of all the people that have supported your work.

LM- It being my last show before finishing school, I wanted to honor a little bit of that. In some way, I think of the work as being for them. You know, the them isn't even prescribed in any way. I was also thinking of how much you wanted to be in school and that you didn't have the opportunity. It was important that your hands were in the university. In the place were artists study and graduate from. This journey was never made alone. I wouldn't be here without your and many others hard work.

Initially, I was scared that maybe the things we were making wouldn't work out or that they would seem boring, but it became such a bounty of messy, beautifully weird things. There have been times where it took me weeks or months to make things, and these were done in such haste.

EM- Well you know some expressions require haste.

LM- This has been both the lengthiest and briefest work.

EM- That seems like getting somewhere through a series of weird detours. I was often scared that I would be lost in life in a series of unforeseen detours. You know I felt at a dead end with your father, but I also just wanted to run away. Run away from the ranch. When We came to the states, I didn't feel ok being

here. You know being here. So many of us in such a small room. So many brutal strange men living there temporarily before moving on to settle in other parts of the north. All these men thought that because I had you without being married.. I just wanted to run. You know you always say it's the catholic church, but this happens to women all over the world.

LM-

EM- You know your father was educated but he was a brute.

LM- Educated people can be very brutal.

EM- I think where I came from, I had too much of an adventurous spirit. It wasn't seen as something good.

EM- Your grandmother Josefina. She would take the brunt of all our actions. The Moreno name had a bad reputation and it weight heavily on all of us, and I think I made it worst. I had you without being married. After all the work and all the beatings. I would watch her through the darkness of the night consoling herself with a cigarette. You know we were starving. But still when she could, she would give us all the best things. Eggs from the chickens, salted meat, ham, milk, beans, enchiladas, bread, chiles, that cheese that smells real bad but taste real good, dresses, shoes.

We stand at the cusp of the door.

September 25th, 2021,

Vieja Mi Querida Vieja

"Es un buen tipo mi Viejo Una buen tipea mi vieja

Que anda solæa y esperando

Tiene la tristeza larga

De tanto venir andando

Yo ~~lo~~ la miro desde lejos

Pero somos tan distintos

Es que creció con el siglo

Con tranvía y vino tinto

~~Viejo, mi querido Viejo~~

Vieja, mi Querida Vieja Ahora ya caminas lentæa

Como perdonando el viento

Yo soy tu sangre, mi viejæa

Soy tu silencio y tu tiempo" ("Franco de Benedictis" 0:00-1:26)

We sing to her father. I sing to her. We sing to love. We sing to acquired grief.

A site to resist, to trace, to point to other things.

Withdraw to the internal to disintegrate into the multiplicity,
into not just the maternal but also to withdraw into the things
that preoccupy us and into sites where we can meditate on these
things. Resistance is also in the bones.

To Withdraw but not to the self. Even if we think we are
going internal, we fall into someone else or something else and
do it carrying the too muchness of it all.

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