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King-Smith, Leah

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LEAH KING-SMITH

Evocations: A Visual Song/Poem for Canaipa

Abstract

Evocations is a video work made from photographs taken at the conservation-zoned Turtle Swamp Wetlands on Canaipa (Russell Island) in southern Moreton Bay, Quandamooka Country, Queensland, Australia. The accompanying poem is a written response to the images, and evokes their sense of movement and energy.

Keywords: *First Nations, Country, ancestry, Indigenous poetry, Aboriginal Australian art, sovereignty, photography, digital media*



Figure 1. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 013*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist

Evocations is a video work made from photographs taken at the conservation-zoned Turtle Swamp Wetlands on Canaipa (Russell Island) in southern Moreton Bay, Quandamooka Country, Queensland, Australia. Its images are the result of

moving with the camera and using long shutter speeds to record embodied experiences of being on Aboriginal Country. These pictures blur the ontological boundaries between dreams and physical reality. I wrote the poem below as a written response to the images to evoke their sense of movement and energy. I would like to pay my respects to the Quandamooka people, the traditional custodians of the nation of bay islands where Canaipa is situated. I would like to thank the Indigenous and Canaipa Mudlines communities of artists for the opportunity to meet and play alongside creatives who are passionate about natural coastal environments.

Birthed as natural and human
born of ancestral lineage
with nature, co-creative
land and peoples are one

Birthed as mechanical and chemical
born of Imperialist fathers
rapacious dominant plunderers
man and machine are one

The mechanics of capture
over decades of change
industry engineered
optical laws pervade

Pain and injustice
felt in place, on Country
deep in the earth and in all things
Nature balances, balancing heals

Synergy in motion
rendered by the artist
swaying with the weight
of the device assuaged

Flickers reveal
spatial and natural laws
a rock, a stick, a leaf
wedged in the medium's craw

Change is the constant
cycles embedded deep

Country long time being
unceded Sovereignty

Evocations of place
Not limited by yardstick or mechanisms of measure
energies pulsing in waves
everywhere and everywhen

Leah King-Smith is a Bigambul/Australian visual artist, poet, and academic at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. Her focus is particularly driven by change for equity and cultural competence in teaching and learning, as well as the promotion of cultural perspectives in practice-led research. King-Smith has an extensive exhibition career as a photo and digital media artist, and her work is held in numerous gallery collections. She also works with Indigenous and non-Indigenous creatives and communities across a broad range of media forms—such as theatre, dance, and imaging for music—and performs as a singer and musician.

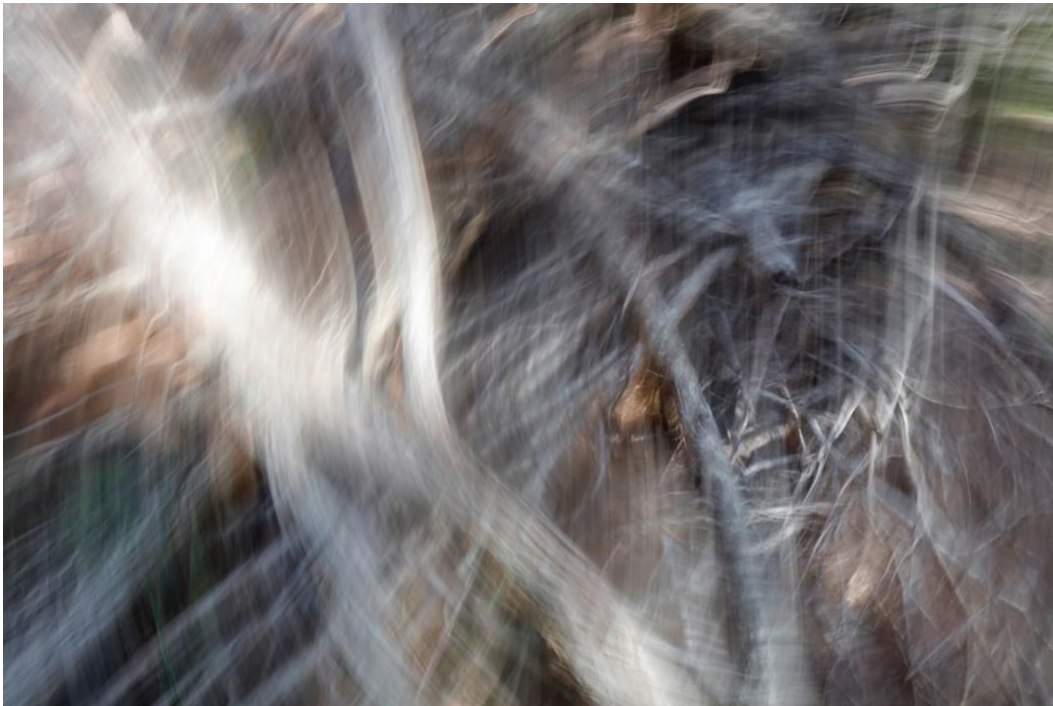


Figure 2. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 002*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 3. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 010*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 4. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 019*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 5. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 020*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist

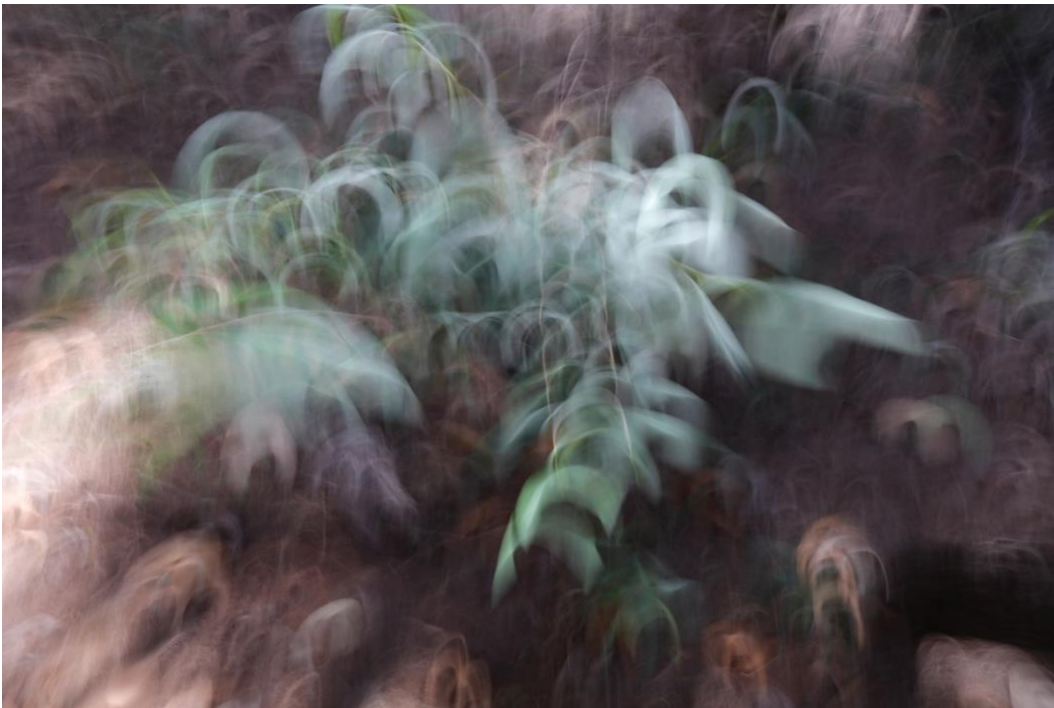


Figure 6. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 022*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 7. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 018*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist

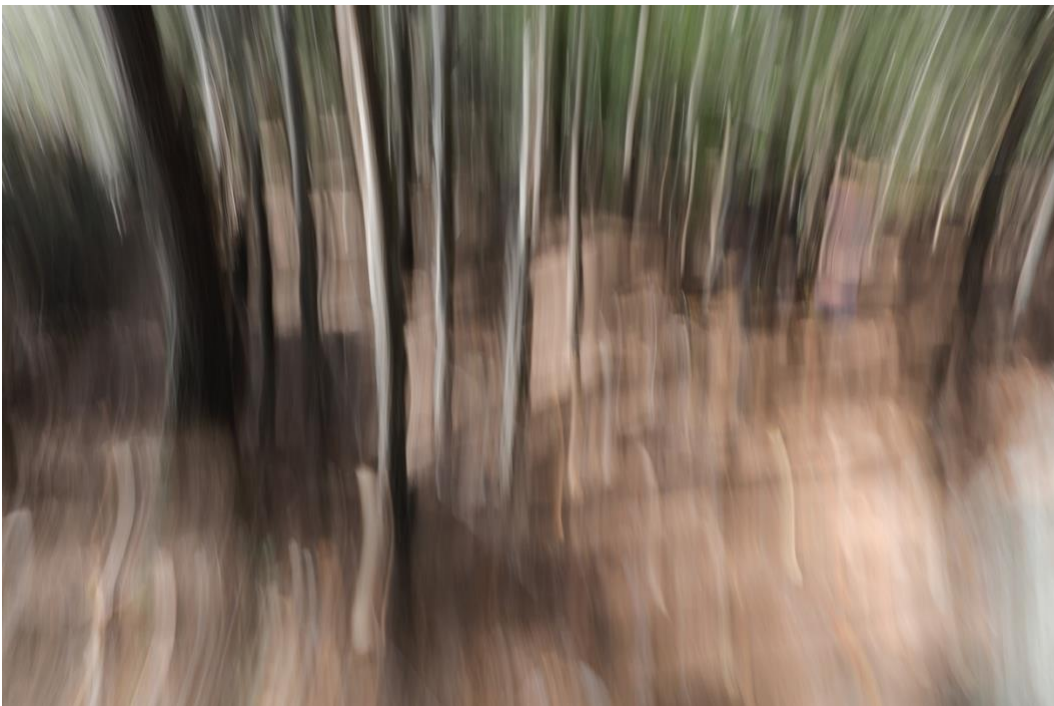


Figure 8. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 012*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 9. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 023*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist



Figure 10. Leah King-Smith, *Canaipa 050*, 2020. Still photograph from the video *Evocations*, 7:32, 2020. Courtesy of the artist