

UNWEAVE,
UNVEIL:
CHIRAL
LANDSCAPES
OF EXILE

Eugenia Reznik
Patil Tchilinguirian

Curator: Anna Kerekes

April 8 - July 31 2022



9, rue Front, Gatineau (Québec) J9H 4W8
(819) 684-1445 | www.limagier.qc.ca

LISTENING, WEAVING, DEVELOPING KINSHIP

Unweave, Unveil: Chiral Landscapes of Exile is a dialogue between two artists, Eugenia Reznik and Patil Tchilinguirian. The exhibition brings to life the intimate stories of uprooting and the sense of belonging the artists bring back from their encounters.

Born in Ukraine, Eugenia currently lives between France and Quebec. Patil was born in Lebanon and from an Armenian family, currently lives in Quebec. Their experiences as immigrants have led them to pay close attention to listening to themselves and to each other. Consequently, the works showcased here – most of which were produced especially for this exhibition – respond to a need to bring to light these stories that have been heard, but little told. They contribute to promoting cultural resiliency by giving a voice to the silenced or at least the underrepresented in our society.

Eugenia and Patil's practices touch on both on fibre and language. They intertwine oral histories in the form of sound installations, sculptures, videos, drawings and embroideries. Thus, it is interesting to note that textile and text share the same etymology. The patterns and fabric wefts constitute a codified language that remains hidden in one way or another, in front of untrained eyes.

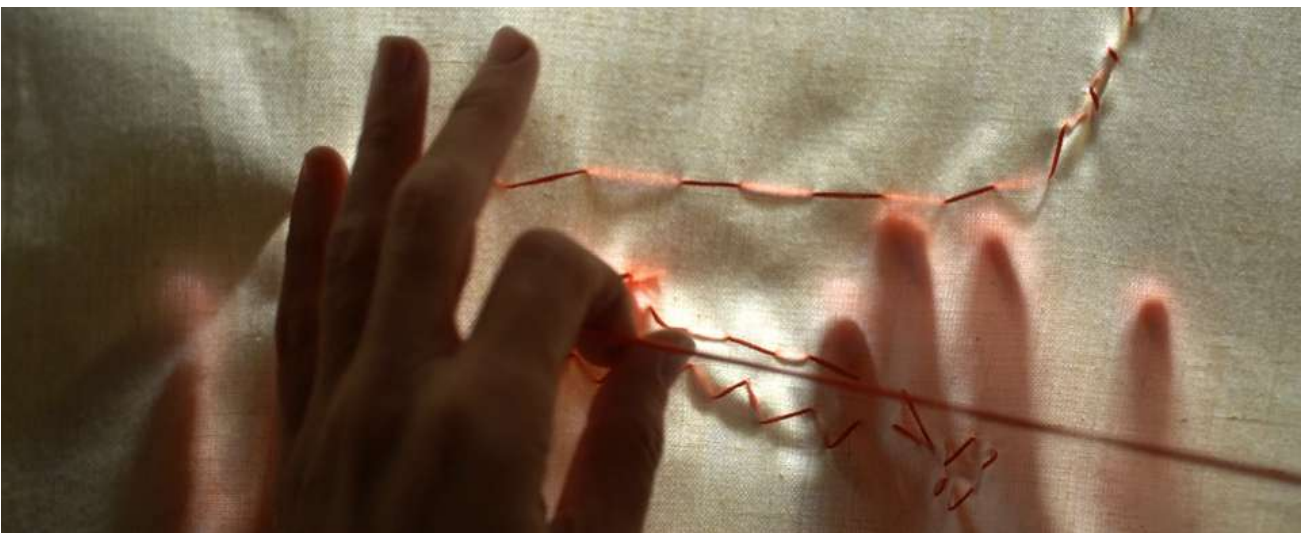
The practices of the two artists complement each other like two hands that are similar but different in their nature. They offer visitors shared questioning, although asymmetrical. The title of the exhibition thus refers to the notion of chirality^[1] to designate a particular strategy of artistic collaboration. The source of their chiral approach is punctuated by their relationship to fibres, plants and more generally to the living. The interdependence of the four hands forms a harmonious association where an alliance is woven with loved ones, whether with human beings or other living species.

[1] The word chirality is derived from the Greek χείρ (kheir), meaning "hand". It refers to the property of an object that exists in two forms that are mirrored and cannot be superposed.



Eugenia Reznik et Patil Tchilinguirian
Chiral Landscapes of Exile, 2020
Still from video
Credits: Vyosana Shkurti

Work made possible thanks to the support of Hexagram Network



The central work of the exhibition, *Chiral Landscapes of Exile* (2020), is a co-produced video. It testifies to the performative encounter of the two artists coming into direct contact while drawing on their different origins. At first, they feel overwhelmed beyond words as they share the red threaded needle from one hand to the other on both sides of an opaque cloth. The stories start flowing, not in their mother tongue, but rather in French and English. Their memories and life paths answer each other through these foreign languages. In the video, the red thread slowly woven and unwoven appears as a metaphor for the back and forth in this space. It draws the pathways and anchor points on a sensitive membrane, as much a veil as an epidermis, stretched between the two of them.

The filmed performance is accompanied by another co-created work, entitled *The Wall of Displacements* (2022). It consists of two seemingly innocuous objects (a lunch box and a clock). The objects, included in the video, have pursued the artists to this day in their loss of roots and, in parallel, their search for origins. Hung on the wall next to the transcription of their intimate narrative, those objects question the fragility of a material and immaterial heritage.

One thing leading to another, Eugenia and Patil reflect on cultural identities, their preservation and regeneration. From then on, the artists carefully handle the trajectories followed by themselves and their loved ones. They weave, unweave and reweave relationships through the work exhibited, whether it is fabric, embroidery or clothing.



Patil Tchilinguirian
Armenian Spatial Imaginaries (close-up), 2019
Embroidery



Patil Tchilinguirian
Armenian Spatial Imaginaries, 2019
Embroidery

On hand-dyed linen with pomegranate and digitally embroidered, Patil traces a landscape, an affective space that appears beyond geopolitical conflicts. Whether it is from physical materials, such as plant fibres and fabric threads, or from the imagery of landscapes buried in memory, the work *Armenian Spatial Imaginaries* (2019) creates a new mesh of history for the present and the future. This mesh has the particularity of crossing borders and generations.



Eugenia Reznik
Histoire des roses rouges, 2021
Still from video



Eugenia Reznik
Porter, 2019
Digital photography

As a basic material, handmade for millennia, linen stands out as the background of a landscape (*Chiral Landscapes of Exile*, 2020 and *Armenian Spatial Imaginaries*, 2019), but also as the material for the clothing. In the series of three photographs titled *Porter* (2019), Eugenia works on her own clothing legacy from her parents. Since these outfits are carefully kept in boxes, as they are considered too precious to be worn, the artist plays with the ambiguity of having them worn. To portray her mother in her current residence, she asks her not to put on the dress with the Ukrainian patterns, but to support it on her skin directly. The artist thus reverses the function of the dress: it is no longer the dress that protects the body, but conversely, the body that protects it, without being revealed. The entire portrait of her seated mother only appears in the video titled *Histoire des roses rouges* (2021). The voice-over tells of the knowledge sharing from grandmothers to daughters over four generations of a nightgown made with traditional Ukrainian motifs of red roses.



Eugenia Reznik
Through the holes of the embroidery, 2019-2022
Linen embroidery



Patil Tchilinguirian
The Leftovers of the Sword, 2019
Interactive installation
Credits: Agustina Isidori, model: Ceyda Yolgörmez

In Patil's work, clothing is politicized, which is why it is considered too dangerous to wear and therefore threatened to disappear. *The Leftovers of the Sword* (2019) is rooted in an inquiry on how to deal with the Armenian cultural trauma of genocide. By creating this handmade felt 'sound garment,' inspired by the traditional "kepenek," the artist helps promote a safe space where one can immerse oneself in history without judgment. Awareness for the invisible struggle of the "hidden Armenians"[2] materializes itself through touching and listening.



[2] Hidden Armenians is an umbrella term to describe descendants of Ottoman Armenians, also recognized largely by the Turkish as "leftovers of the sword" or "converts." These Armenians were Islamized forcefully and assimilated into Turkish culture to escape the deportations and death marches during the Armenian genocide. Hidden Armenians constitute a very complex group of people with non-homogenous behaviours and attitudes towards their respective Armenian identities. While some are not aware of their ethnic origins and hold on to their Muslim faith, others clandestinely revert to Christianity and intentionally hide their identity because of ongoing ethnic discrimination and physical extermination.

Her work *We Are Still Here, Still Bleeding* (2022) is also rooted in the artist's activism to highlight the perpetual, figurative and symbolic hemorrhaging of Armenians as well as the silence of world powers towards recent histories of conflict and human and territorial loss. The carpet with a sound component, designed with a traditional Armenian weaving technique, depicts and reveals old wounds reopened in a battered nation. The substantial time spent by the artist in making the carpet is equivalent to the care taken by those listening to the stories.



Patil Tchilinguirian
We Are Still Here, Still Bleeding, 2022
Fibre sculpture with light component



Eugenia Reznik
Atlas de plantes déracinées, 2022
Sound installation

Starting from the testimonies, Eugenia also puts time to the test through her drawings. For her work *La serre est dans le sac* (2022), she draws on both sides of the same sheet of paper. On one side, is the story of the plant in its original environment and on the other side the plant in its host environment. These drawings are presented in a lightbox whose luminosity increases and decreases slowly, like a breath, letting the two-sided image appear and disappear in transparency. The story of the gooseberry tree is also a large format embroidery for the work *À travers les trous de la broderie* (2019-2022).

As an extension of L'Imagier's exhibition space, the visit continues outdoors in the Parc de L'Imaginaire with the work *Atlas de plantes déracinées* (2022) by Eugenia. To further explore the links between the migration of people and plants, the installation takes shape from a dozen suitcases and travel bags transformed to accommodate soil or plants. A coded 'travel tag,' placed on each bag, allows access to the plant's story. This participative installation will evolve during the exhibition, enriched with new stories of plants being part of the inter-species relationships and collected from the visitors of the site.

In conclusion, Eugenia Reznik and Patil Tchilinguirian's chiral approach offers a look at exile as a phenomenon affecting not only individuals concerned with migration, but also many people who have an experience of uprooting in a broader sense: from one country to another or within the same country; from one city to another; from one neighbourhood to another. In Quebec, these concerns are particularly evident in relation to the social fabric. The exhibition thus claims, in a fleshed-out voice, a space to grant political agency to the lost or buried histories that everyone carries within. It is a place of hospitality for an engaging visitor experience for all the senses and sensibilities.



Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec



Fonds de recherche
Société et culture

Québec



BIOGRAPHIES



Curator, artist and researcher **Anna Kerekes** holds a PhD in art studies and practices from the Université du Québec à Montréal. She embraces research-creation as a *modus operandi* throughout her hybrid practices. Since 2018, at the invitation of Nicolas Bourriaud, she is a senior curator at MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain where she develops exhibition projects, talks and publications. She also intervenes at MO.CO. Esba (École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts) and teaches at the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes. Her collaboration with Jonas Mekas has transformed the way she combines notions of memory and everyday life through artistic practices. Her independent curatorial projects include *Taking Care* (Ars Electronica Festival, Linz, 2018) and *Jonas Mekas. In the Praise of the Ordinary* (Phi Center, Montreal, 2013).



Eugenia Reznik is an artist of Ukrainian origin who lives and works between France and Quebec. She holds a master's degree in visual and media arts from the Université du Québec à Montréal and is pursuing her doctoral studies in art studies and practices at the Université du Québec à Montréal in cotutelle with the Université Jean-Monnet de Saint-Étienne in France. Her artistic research focuses on the issues of uprooting, transmission of memory and forgetting. She collects stories of displaced people and transforms them into visual or sound works, in galleries or public spaces. In her most recent projects, the artist has been interested in the plants that people carry on migration and how these plants testify to the links that people keep with their places of origin.



Patil Tchilinguirian is a Lebanese-Armenian multidisciplinary artist and designer based in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal). Following a degree in graphic design, she turned to the art of fiber and wearable technologies as part of a master's degree in design at Concordia University. She combines craft and technology to interweave interactive storytelling and textile design. Her artistic practice reflects a social engagement driven by transnational, diasporic and political narratives determined by cultural trauma to reveal unknown histories of suffering. Patil Tchilinguirian views fabric as a space for dialogue - both aesthetic and affective - with the power to amplify embodied experience. Passionate about cultural sustainability and alternative modes of transmission, her work blurs the boundaries between design and art in order to raise public awareness of socio-cultural issues.

Opening Hours

Wednesday: upon request

Thursday: upon request

Friday: noon - 4 pm

Saturday: noon - 5 pm

Sunday: noon - 5 pm



9, rue Front, Gatineau (Québec) J9H 4W8
(819) 684-1445 | www.limagier.qc.ca