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Le travail en soi The work itself El trabajo de uno

**Maria Ezcurra
Meera Margaret Singh
Ifeoma U. Anyaeji**

**Bécharud Hudon
Annie Lord**

Curator

Nuria Carton de Grammont

Exhibition

15/08 - 27/09 2020



This exhibition seeks to give meaning to the notion of work, not only as an economic activity, but also as a phenomenon unto itself, where the subject in question self-reflects on it's own cultural condition. Beyond productivity and the capital it constitutes, work highlights a space for the affirmation of uses, know-hows and shared knowledge. In this sense, labour, as such, has both a personal and a social significance. By describing the work as being done by oneself (rather than as labour assigned by someone), it represents a will to claim identity in its relationship to the construction of the territory in its geographic as much as in its sensorial dimensions.

Meera Margaret Singh presents, in her *Farmland* Photo Series (2015), the portraits of immigrants, now farmers, on different farms across Ontario. These images show the faces of the workers behind the agrifood chain of neoliberalism, those who proudly harvest local products. However, these photographs reveal the precariousness of Canadian temporary migration policies, which once stood out for their humanitarian value. These privileged workers



MEERA MARGARET SINGH, *GEORGE*, *FARMLAND* SERIES,
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH, 2011.
© MEERA MARGARET SINGH



MARIA EZCURRA, *PASSANT / PASSING*,
INSTALLATION, 2020.
© MARIA EZCURRA

- according to government rhetoric - are too often seen as an unwanted otherness of north-south geopolitics. As a result, they face major obstacles when they attempt to establish themselves in the territory and in the defense of their rights. A sense of dislocation emerges in these images where belonging to an identity is affected by the experience of deterritorialization. The deferred time of seasonal immigration makes these workers vulnerable to the benefits of industrial food productivity.

In the installation *Passant / Passing* (2020), **Maria Ezcurrea** explores the political dimension of clothing as an identity marker and as an object of an economic system, bringing to the fore relations pertaining to production and globalized work. For example, the concentration of the shoe industry factories in Asia or Latin America under precarious working conditions, has conquered the Canadian market. The shoes - recycled, cut and transformed - are assembled to create an immersive and sensory environment. The work here refers to the migratory birds that cross the north of the continent, between Canada and Mexico,

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at different times of the year. The artist conceives the installation as a recognition mark of the seasonal work of immigrant farm workers, laborers and domestic workers.

For her part, **Ifeoma U. Anyaeji** presents *Ezuhu ezu (In[complete])* (2019-2020), a process based installation inspired by the Ikpa Owu hair weaving techniques of West African culture. This recovery work made with found objects and unconventional materials (such as plastic), is referred to by the artist as «Plasto-art». Through artisanal work, Anyaeji engages in a reflection on the territory since neo-colonization. To this end, the work highlights the power relations that arise from capitalism as well as its impacts on the environment. At the heart of this composite structure, the collective dimension of the transfer of traditional knowledge and oral history is activated so as to rethink the materiality of space and its social implications. Beyond multiculturalist narratives, it also constitutes a recognition of the diasporic experiences and lives that make up the socio-cultural complexity of Canada.

While this exhibition highlights the work of three artists *from* the notion of work as a space for the production of meaning, it is also a balance of power which, on the whole, brings forth the (invisible) practice of women, especially those of color. It is about the taking into account of differences: it is also a gesture of emancipation in the face of cultural determinism. In this context, work situates itself *from* self-fulfillment through political and social positioning.



IFEOMA U. ANYAEJI, *EZUHU EZU (IN[COMPLETE])* (DETAIL),
SCULPTURAL INSTALLATION, 2017 - ONGOING.
© IFEOMA U. ANYAEJI MAY 2017

Sound tour and creative workshop

The artist duo **Béchard Hudon** invites the public to engage in a sound tour in order to discover the territory through intimate listening. The stroll is the starting point to outwit the productive constraint of work and consumption that distort our creative potentialities and our relationships with the senses (tactile, visual, sound, etc.). By amplifying certain ambient sounds and muting low frequencies, *The Listeners* (2011- ongoing) activates the subversive performativity of walking as an unproductive gesture, while stimulating the anchoring of the self to the territory. By putting on the headsets, a new reality awakens in the exploration of everyday life with its own subjectifying characteristics.

Floral artist and *coureuse des bois*, **Annie Lord** is invited to carry out a wild plant picking workshop during a tour at Parc de L'Imaginaire, which will take place on August 29, 2020. Based on an ecosystem



BÉCHARD HUDON, *THE LISTENERS*, LISTENING STROLL WITH HEARING APPARATUS, 2011 – ONGOING.
© BÉCHARD HUDON

approach to nature, her practice involves recognition of the territory through the visual arts, horticulture and environmental sciences. The act of picking becomes a performative act that allows people to think outside the box of contemporary art by the transmission of knowledge about the traditional know-how of local plants. In this walk, following to the practice of *Land art*, the object disappears to make way for collective sharing.

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Biographies

Nuria Carton de Grammont is an art historian, curator and lecturer at Concordia University, specializing in contemporary Latin American and Latin American Canadian art. She arrived in Quebec in 2004 to complete her master's studies at UQÀM and obtained her doctorate in Art History from Concordia University. As a curator, she has presented several contemporary art exhibitions in Mexico and Canada, including the exhibition *Un, dos, tres por mí y mis compañeras. Latin-Quebec performance* at the Center for Contemporary Art Optica (2020), *Gilberto Esparza. Plantas autofotosintéticas* at Galerie de l'UQAM (2017). She co-produced the artistic installation *Objets personnel / Personal belonging / Objetos personales* for the permanent collection of the Americas at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts where she was also a specialist and consultant for *the Arts of One World*. She is currently director and curator at the SBC Contemporary Art Gallery in Montreal. She has been invited to several conferences, nationally and internationally and has published specialized articles in the journals *Fractal*, *Esse arts + opinions*, *Inter-Art Actuel*, *Les Cahiers ALHIM*, *Artediseño*, *Oltreoceano* and *Archee* and has co-edited the book *Politics, Culture and Economy in Popular Practices in the Americas* (Peter Lang, 2016).

Ifeoma U. Anyaeji is a Nigerian neo-traditional artist born in Benin City. Growing up in a society fueled by the dualities of excesses and repression, where art was yet to be accepted as a “decent” profession, Ifeoma decided to take-up art as a full-time career exploring her boundaries, as a female artist beyond the conventions of her initial academic training in painting. Anyaeji holds an MFA degree in sculpture from Washington University in St Louis, US; a B.A in painting from the University of Benin, Nigeria and is currently an Interdisciplinary PhD candidate at Concordia University, Montreal. She has participated in several exhibitions in Africa, Europe and the USA, including the ongoing exhibitions: *Les Éclaireurs - sculpteurs d'Afrique* (Palais des Papes, France), *Home: Contemporary African Artists Consider Place and Identity in Our Connected World* (The Miller Gallery, Otterbein University, United States of America). Upcoming exhibitions include traveling exhibition *Plastic Entanglements: Ecology, Aesthetics, Materials* (The Pennsylvania State University). Collections include Fondation Blachère (Apt, France), US Embassy (Abuja, Nigeria), and Art in Embassies Program, US State Department, Washington DC.

Maria Ezcurra is an artist, educator, researcher and mother born in Argentina, raised in Mexico, and currently living in Canada. She has participated in numerous exhibits worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico City, the Carl Freedman Gallery in the UK, the *Nuit Blanche* in Toronto, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and a recent solo show at La Centrale Gallery. She obtained a PhD at Concordia University with the first research-creation doctoral project presented at the Department of Art Education, and currently teaches art at the Faculty of Education at McGill University. She is the art facilitator of the McGill Art Hive, where she develops art projects with and for students and other communities, including the co-development and facilitation of art workshops for refugee children and families in Montreal. Her areas of research are collaborative and inclusive art practices, women's (un)dressed body, gender-based violence, memory, identity and immigration.

Meera Margaret Singh is a Winnipeg born, Toronto-based artist. With a background in anthropology and art history, Meera first became interested in photography as a documentary tool. While pursuing her degree in Fine Art (Photography) at OCAD University, Meera began to explore the tension between documentary and fiction. She further seeks to represent fluidity (of culture, of gender, etc.), challenging the viewer to ask questions of her work. Through a succession of photographic series and more recently video works, Meera has interrogated cultural, physical, geographical, and emotional ideas of displacement and suspension. Meera has been selected as a scholarship winner and participant in the *Magnum Workshop* with international photographer Alessandra Sanguinetti and as a selected artist in an international residency with German photographer Thomas Struth at the Atlantic Centre for the Arts in Florida. Her work has been included in numerous exhibitions and festivals throughout Canada and the United States. She is currently an assistant professor of the Faculty of Arts at OCAD University.

Catherine Béchard and **Sabin Hudon (Béchard Hudon)** are based in Montreal. Their interdisciplinary work probes the in-between spaces, and the variations and subtle gaps of time. It operates at the intersection of multiple parameters, such as those of sight and hearing, materiality and its resonance, time and space, movement and immobility, sound, silence and listening. They are interested in meeting lines, hazy areas or in the simultaneity curves that shape our experiences of the territory. They seek to direct a special brand of attention towards the alternative temporalities of the oscillations of matter and to give account for states of the world that escape us by working on the imperceptible.

Béchard Hudon have taken part in numerous exhibitions, most notably in the *Triennale Banlieue* at the Maison des arts de Laval (2018), in the *Biennale nationale de sculpture contemporaine à Trois-Rivières* (2018), at the MA Musée d'art of Rouyn- Noranda (2018), in the *International Digital Art Biennial* in Montreal (BIAN) (2016), in the *Mois Multi* in Quebec (2016), at the Knockdown Center in Brooklyn, as part of the *Quebec Digital Art in NYC* (2015), in the *Device Art* triennial in Zagreb (2015) and at the National Museum of China during the exhibition, *ThingWorld: International Triennial of New Media Art* (2014).

Annie Lord is a floral artist and *coureuse des bois*, living in Val-Morin in the Laurentians. After studying visual arts, horticulture and environmental sciences, Annie began to work as a “researcher-gatherer” of wild plants. Her motivation to join the ancient gesture of picking to her profession as a florist lead her to investigate certain know-hows, like exploring the territories on foot, observing, looking for nearby plants, identifying and harvesting. Driven by an intimate research that characterizes the work of performance artists, her eclectic approach, initiated in 2015 seeks to link the action of gathering, understood in its ethymological sense “to collect, to assemble” or “to collect (oneself)”, to one’s own relationship to the territory, to the local flora and to discovery. In addition to her custom floral arrangement services, Annie Lord offers exploratory picking workshops and is involved in various contemporary art projects.



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Saturday - Sunday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.