

PAVED ARTS

To meet the curve of movement with the rhythm of legibility / Erika DeFreitas, Tanya Lukin Linklater, and Cindy Mochizuki



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Curated by Noa Bronstein.

March 18–April 22, 2022

Virtual Curator Talk with Noa Bronstein: Friday, April 8 at 8:30pm CST via ZOOM

On view in the PAVED Arts gallery spaces is the exhibition *To meet the curve of movement with the rhythm of legibility*, curated by Noa Bronstein.

This exciting gathering of work brings together projects by Erika DeFreitas, Tanya Lukin Linklater, and Cindy Mochizuki. Curating work with an interest to develop underlying currents of aesthetic, social and political concern, Bronstein writes;

“To meet the curve of movement with the rhythm of legibility foregrounds artwork that translate texts, documents or language through movement, dance and gesture. Each project within this exhibition looks to create space for lived experiences by quite literally rewriting our relationship to words and dialogue, to certain terms and vocabularies, by way of the body itself. Gesture then becomes a form of knowledge production and a textual plane from which to speak and to listen, while articulation through motion complicates our connection to the written and spoken form.

Shared between the works within this exhibition is that movement helps hold space for those who might otherwise be silenced, overlooked or actively erased by the dominant powering structures of race, class and gender. Taken as a whole *To meet the curve of movement with the rhythm of legibility* considers how meaning is generated in touch and movement and asks how language being transcribed through physical action might move us closer to more embodied ways of knowing.”

Curatorial Essay:

To meet the curve of movement with the rhythm of legibility

The body remembers. It is a vessel that takes in as much as it transmutes. Here within the context of *To meet the curve of movement with the rhythm of legibility* and under the careful guidance of Cindy Mochizuki, Erika DeFreitas and Tanya Lukin Linklater the body is a site of translation and transcription, of knowledge production and transmission. Allowing for embodied understandings, Mochizuki, DeFreitas and Lukin Linklater's deeply suggestive works render the body as a plane through which various texts and words are interpreted and reinterpreted. This reading through movement makes space for a corporeal knowing that recasts what it means to commune and comprehend.

Cindy Mochizuki's *Sue Sada Was Here* (2018) is an experimental dance film that abstractly translates Muriel Kitagawa's texts through movements staged throughout Vancouver's historic Roedde House. Kitagawa (1912-1974) was a *nisei* (second generation) Japanese Canadian writer and, as Mochizuki notes, her editorial writing and unpublished manuscripts speak to the pre- and post-war periods in Vancouver, particularly the injustices of the Canadian government's policies towards Japanese and Japanese Canadians. Kitagawa was a contemporary of Gustav Roedde, Vancouver's first bookbinder, but their relationship to the world of publishing and bookmaking would not have been analogous, owing to both their race and gender.

In the film, ten Japanese Canadian women ages eight to 85 suggestively move through the Roedde House as Sue Sada, one of Kitagawa's pen names. For the first scenes of the film, we follow the youngest Sada, who seems to take on the role of guide as she leads us through the space and brings us into close contact with her older selves. The camera lingers on various figures sorting, moving, piling, tossing, balancing, reading or otherwise handling various books as if precious props in need of constant tending. They move slowly and deliberately in the space suggesting that their welcome is tenuous. Just over halfway through the work the Sadas come together, leaning on one another for support while balancing books between their upright and folded bodies. These gestures are joined by a voice over that speaks and whispers excerpts from Kitagawa's letters to her brother Wes. Words like "Japs keep out" and "my children will not remember the first violence" ground the movements in the enduring legacies of violent pasts. Mochizuki's choreography, collaboratively conceived of with choreographer Lisa Mariko Gelley, thinks about legibility across multiple terrains – the historical, social, political and personal. While at the same time, the Sada's actions offer a rich intertextuality connecting the embodied and the immaterial.

Related strategies of referencing appear in Erika DeFreitas's *I am not tragically colored (after Zora Neale Hurston)* (2013-2014). The nine image self-portrait series depicts DeFreitas posing directly in front of the camera holding a piece of plexiglass to her mouth, allowing her to both suspend her lips mid utterance and to reveal the curvatures of her mouth as she enunciates each syllable in "*I am not tragically colored.*" Each image is paired with a piece of plexiglass that has the corresponding syllable etched into it. When describing the work, DeFreitas notes that as she made the images she was thinking about race, language, the body and bell hooks' assertion that, "words are not without meaning. They are both an action and a resistance." Entering the work through both hooks and Neale Hurston's texts and through DeFreitas's empowered and declarative position renders these words as resilience, as experience, not merely as verse.

"I am not tragically colored" is a quote pulled from Zora Neale Hurston's text *How It Feels to Be Colored Me*, published in 1928. While an accomplished writer and respected activist, Hurston drew criticism from several Black writers and public figures for stylistic and character choices considered by some to perpetuate discriminatory representations of Blackness in literature. DeFreitas's embodied enunciations allow for a kind of intimate, slow reading of Neale Hurston's words, letting them to amass possible meaning by the attention shown to every part of their form and configuration. It is a close reading that attunes us to their suggestibility – what they might mean to Neale Hurston, to her detractors, to her supporters, to DeFreitas – and leaving us to contemplate how the contours of history, race and gender are writ large across the contours of the body just as much as they are across the page.

Taking a less direct approach to textual embodiments, Tanya Lukin Linklater's *...you are judged to be going against the flow because you are insistent., Parts I and II* (2017) offers a series of conversations about dance histories and education presented through dialogue and movement. The videos feature Elisa Harkins and Hanako Hoshimi-Caines (projected) and Ivania Aubin-Malo and Ceinwen Gobert (monitor), as they reflect on their

experience within the structures of formal dance, revealing personal narratives around trauma, technical expectations, challenges with training and how racialized bodies are located within certain stylistic practices. The beginning of *Part I*, for instance, turns to talk of particular conformities and value propositions that inform much of classical dance tradition. Throughout the videos, each dancer's distinct movements run counter to this conformism and allude to the ways in which they negotiate their personal relationship to dance, both past and present.

The dancer's movements appear at times improvised and at others more choreographed, echoing the shifts in tone of the utterances being shared on screen. Their movements seem to operate as a transcription of the interview, so that we read their words through their bodies. When silence appears, as it does intermittently in *Part I* and entirely in *Part II*, dance itself serves as form of speech. ...*you are judged to be going against the flow because you are insistent's* entanglements of bodies and dialogue and transfers in rhythm supports an opening into the experiences of the dancers, one that is both a lure and an invitation to listen and see with intention.

Shared between all of the works within this exhibition is that the language of movement proposes alternate vocabularies that re-orient our understandings, attuning us towards deeper empathies and contemplations. These works also connect along their framing of gender and race, pointing towards the intimate associations between bodies, experiences, conversations, texts and histories that inform how we relate to one another and to our selves. Within and between these connective strands, the body as textual vessel resists erasure and allows for a way to be written in.

About the Artists:



(Header image and above) Cindy Mochizuki, *Sue Sada Was Here*, Roedde House, Vancouver, BC, 2018. Detail of film still.

Cindy Mochizuki creates multi-media installation, audio fiction, performance, animation, drawings and community-engaged projects. Her works explore the manifestation of story and its complex relationships to site-specificity, the transpacific, invisible histories, archives, and memory work. Her artistic process moves back and forth between multiple sites of cultural production considering language, performativity, chance, and improvisation. She has worked extensively on a large body of work that is informed by and within Japanese Canadian communities in B.C and Japan. In these projects she works with members of these communities and often includes her paternal family's history both within the internment camps and their experiences as repatriated Japanese Canadians in Japan in the post war.

She has exhibited, performed and screened her work in Canada, US, Australia, and Asia. Exhibitions include the Frye Art Museum (Seattle, Washington), Yonago City Museum (Yonago, Japan), The New Gallery (Calgary), Hamilton Artists Inc (Hamilton), and Koganecho Bazaar (Yokohama). She has performed as part of 7a*11d International Festival of Performance Art (Toronto), Richmond World Festival with Cinevolution Media Arts Society (Richmond) and has worked with numerous collaborators from other disciplines including [Theatre Replacement](#), [Dreamwalker Dance Company](#), and [Project In Situ](#). Her community-engaged projects including *Magic School* (Daisen Laboratory, Japan), *Things on the Shoreline* (Access Artist Run Centre) 2016 and *Shako Club* (grunt gallery) 2015. In 2015, she received the Vancouver's Mayor's Arts Award in New Media and Film. She received her MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies from the School For Contemporary Arts (2006).



Tanya Lukin Linklater, *...you are judged to be going against the flow because you are insistent., Parts 1 and 2*, 2017. Detail of film still.

Tanya Lukin Linklater's performances, works for camera, installations, and writings centre histories of Indigenous peoples' lives, lands, and structures of sustenance. Her performances in relation to objects in exhibition, scores, and ancestral belongings generate what she calls felt structures. She investigates insistence in both concept and application. Her work has been shown at the 2021 New Museum Triennial, SFMOMA, Chicago Architecture Biennial 2019, EFA Project Space + Performa, Art Gallery of Ontario, Remai Modern, and elsewhere.

Her first collection of poetry, *Slow Scrape*, was published in the Documents series by The Centre for Expanded Poetics and Anticism, Montréal in 2020 with a second printing in 2021. In 2021 Tanya received the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts for Visual Art. Her Alutiiq homelands are in the Kodiak archipelago of southwestern Alaska. Tanya Lukin Linklater is represented by Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.



Erika DeFreitas, *I am not tragically colored (after Zora Neale Hurston)*, Digital Photography and Plexi Glass, 2013-2014. Documentation by Daniel Ehrenworth.

Erika DeFreitas's multidisciplinary practice includes performance, photography, video, installation, textiles, drawing and writing. Placing emphasis on gesture, process, the body, documentation and paranormal phenomena, DeFreitas mines concepts of loss, post-memory, legacy and objecthood. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally including: Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery; Platform Centre for Photographic and Digital Arts, Winnipeg; Gallery TPW, Toronto; Project Row Houses and the Museum of African American Culture, Houston; Fort Worth Contemporary Arts; and Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita.

She is a recipient of the 2016 Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts Finalist Artist Prize, the 2016 John Hartman Award, and was longlisted for the 2017 Sobey Art Award. DeFreitas holds a Master of Visual Studies from the University of Toronto.