

# VICTOR ARROYO

documentary | installation | video art

# ARTIST STATEMENT

I expand the traditional codes of documentary filmmaking, rather employing them as vehicles for a critique of ethnographic codings and realistic impulses in documentary practice. My practice explores the possibilities laying dormant between ethnographic research, academic writing and artistic practice.

I am interested in the intersection between materiality, landscape and identity seen through the lenses of cultural geography, postcolonial and critical theory. Often, my artistic practice sits at the crossroads between cultural anthropology, documentary filmmaking, and community collaboration.

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AFTER THE FOREST



After the Forest  
Feature Documentary  
Color, Stereo  
HD  
100 mins.  
2020.



A quiet revolution is taking place in the P'urhépecha forest of Michoacan in Mexico. The 2011 P'urhépecha uprising in Cherán battled against illegal logging, narco-cartels, and various forms of extraction. Cherán is the first autonomous Indigenous community with a system of governance built on P'urhépecha traditions, officially recognized by the state authorities. The Indigenous P'urhépecha are ancestral victims of state power and colonial forms of governance woven with violent disparities of race, class and geography.

This ethnographic study weaves in various geographies and rural environments, from campesinos and local activists to Indigenous local militia. Lingered between cinema vérité and ethnography, this documentary emphasizes rural space and the forest as sets of relationships, distributing in the landscape in ways we may not always see.



# PORTRAIT OF A NATION



Portrait of a Nation  
Video Installation  
B&W, Stereo  
SD surveillance footage  
22 mins.  
2019.

José María Velasco remains as the most important painter who made Mexican geography a symbol of national identity through his landscape paintings. The premise in Velasco's 19th century pastoral painting is a narrative of magnificence and opulence, highlighting the splendors of the imperial court and ethnic harmony in the newly established colonial state, meanwhile concealing Indigenous genocide and colonial violence.

The video installation 'portrait of a nation' examines José María Velasco's pastoral landscapes as instruments of surveillance and colonial violence. By rephotographing Velasco's landscape paintings with a surveillance camera and re-staging them with the collaboration of the Indigenous Purhépecha of Central Mexico, the installation produces depictions of landscape inaccessible to ordinary gaze, situating video recording and landscape painting as technologies of violence. This video piece addresses the complexities of the political geography of race in Mexico, rendering landscape painting and video technologies as surveillance assemblages.





TIME IS OUT  
OF JOINT



*What was your role in the kidnapping?*

Time is out of Joint  
Short Documentary  
Color, Stereo  
HD  
25 mins.  
2018.



Narco-capitalism has significantly modified the rural and urban environments of contemporary Mexico. More than 40,000 acres of Indigenous forest in Michoacán, mx., have been appropriated by narco industries, turning it into a composite site of hidden dynamics, cartel-drug crimes and state-sponsored violence, leaving no apparent material residue, however, still affecting the production of landscape. Landscapes of extermination have the ability to conceal realities of inequality and violence, normalizing a politically complex reality.

Blending performance with observational approaches and ethnography, this documentary provides a glimpse into Indigenous rural Mexico at the intersection between ecocide, narcolabour and enforced disappearance.



After having carefully examined the case made against  
I find that the said accused is sufficiently guilty and  
having started the fire in the house of the widow Fra  
caused the conflagration of part of the town. For pu  
that she be condemned to make honourable amend  
hand cut off, and that she be thrown alive into the fire  
town deemed most appropriate, after having been s  
question ordinaire et extraordinaire in order that she n  
accomplices and that the judgement of the one name  
delayed until the said accused has suffered such inte

# ANNA O AND THE CASE OF DISPLACED MEMORY



A person's hand is visible in the foreground, reaching out towards a car window. The background shows the interior of a car, including a rearview mirror and the dashboard. The lighting is dim, creating a somber and contemplative atmosphere.

Marie-Josèphe Angélique is the name of a Black slave in New France (Montreal, Canada, 1734), who was tortured, hanged and burned down to ashes. She was convicted with arson, burning down much of what is now known as Old Montreal. There is no consensus regarding her innocence neither about the motivations behind the fire. The conflicting interpretations of Marie-Angélique's case seem to rather reflect internalized notions on class, gender and race.

My video piece uses the case of the hanging of Marie-Angélique as an investigation of postcolonial politics of memory, examining the dynamics of the Black experience as a hybrid negotiation between displaced collective memory and racialized political history. I'm seeking for emergent metaphors of identity, gender and race to emerge by re-formulating the archive as a site of active engagement.

450 M

4 Turn left onto Rue Saint-Denis

900 M

5 Turn right onto Boulevard Saint Joseph E

4.0 KM

6 Turn left onto Boulevard Pie-IX/QC-125 N

6.0 KM

7 Turn right onto Boulevard Industriel

2.4 KM

8 Turn left onto Boulevard Lacordaire

450 M

9 Take the 2nd right onto Boulevard Henri-Bourassa E N

600 M

10 Turn left onto Boulevard Rolland

destination 12004 Boulevard Rolland will be on the left

1.1 KM

MTL NORD



- 1 Take the 1st right onto Rue Sherbrooke O.C.
- 2 Turn left onto Boulevard St-Laurent  
1.5 KM
- 3 Take the 1st right onto Rue Rachel E.  
450 M
- 4 Turn left onto Rue Saint-Denis  
900 M
- 5 Turn right onto Boulevard Saint-Joseph E.  
4.0 KM
- 6 Turn left onto Boulevard Pie-IX, Q.C. 125 N  
6.0 KM
- 7 Turn right onto Boulevard Industriel  
2.4 KM
- 8 Turn left onto Boulevard Lacordaire  
450 M
- 9 Take the 2nd right onto Boulevard Henri-Bourassa  
N
- 10 Turn left onto Boulevard Rolland  
destination 12004 Boulevard Rolland will be  
ft  
KM



MTL Nord  
Victor Arroyo

On August 9, 2008, Fredy Villanueva, a police officer at the Henri-Bourassa station, was installing a video camera. The installation underlines issues of racial profiling still relevant today.

Le 9 août 2008, Fredy Villanueva, un policier à l'Aréna Henri-Bourassa, était en train d'installer une caméra vidéo. Cette installation souligne les problèmes de surveillance policière encore d'actualité.

MTL Nord  
Video Installation  
1 video, silent, B&W. 1 text panel  
SD Surveillance footage  
35 mins.  
2016.

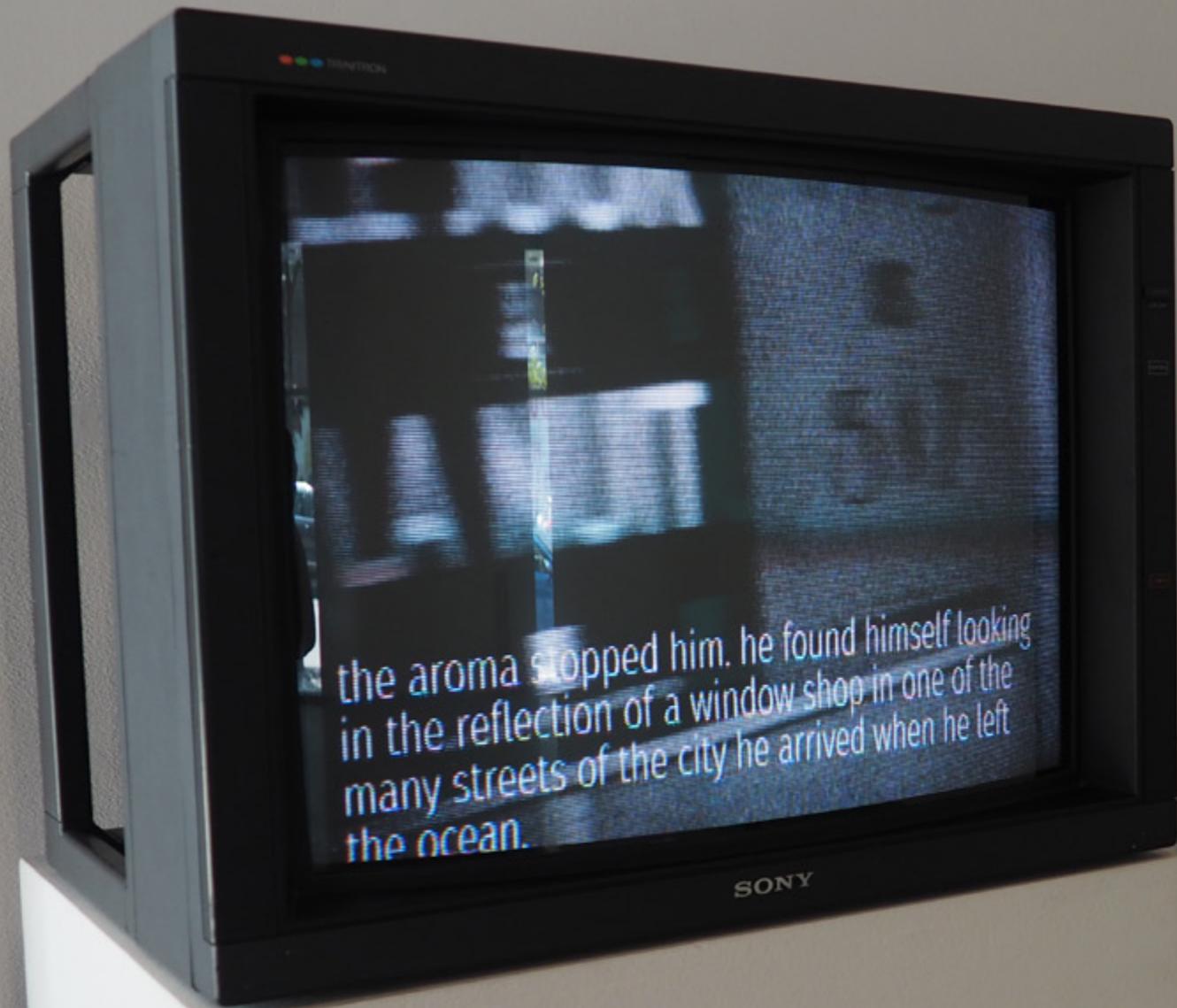


The killing of Freddy Villanueva not only stirred up years of social exclusion and discontent, but also brought visibility to current tactics of police surveillance, institutional power asymmetries and racial profiling. I documented the Montreal Nord grassroots movement and their sites of resistance with a surveillance camera in order to multiply the sites of surveillance, and to rupture the unidirectional nature of the gaze, transforming surveillance into a dynamic relationship, undermining the distinction between watchers and watched.

I used counter video surveillance as a tool of reflection, exploring relationships of identity, site, history, and memory, seeking to challenge institutional power asymmetries in documentary practices at the intersection of site-specific issues of social justice and political oppression.

during his stay in the ocean, he never spoke.  
had nothing to say.  
he waited until his face could tell him:  
you can talk again. the city has restored his face.  
no need to know the entire story.  
recovering his face was enough to tell  
the whole story.

**SALIX TREE**



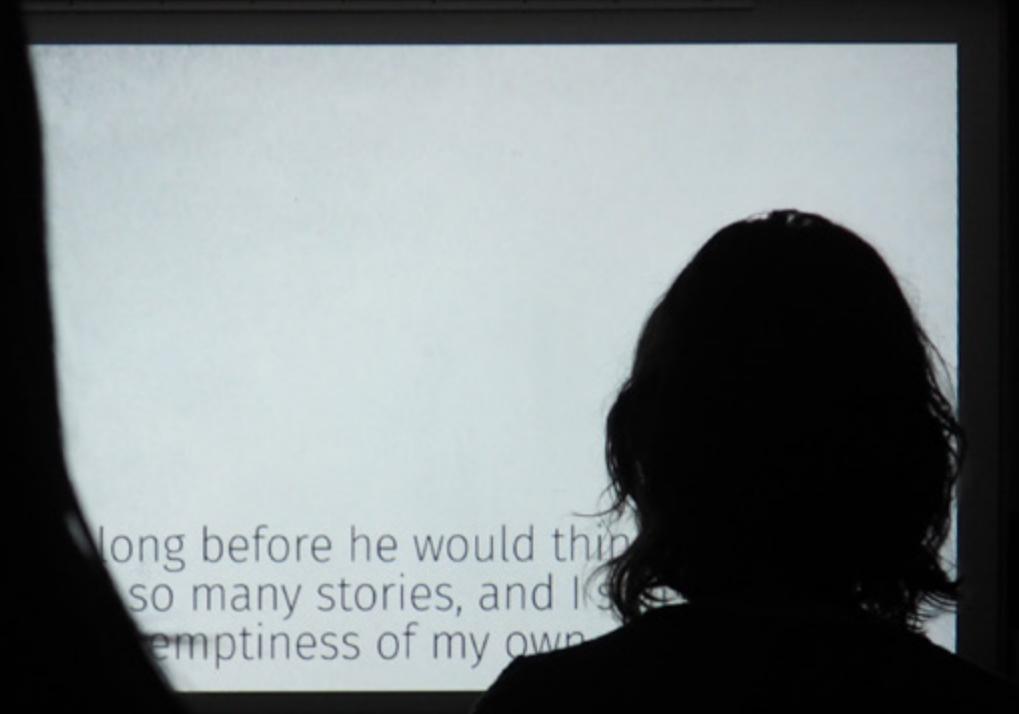
the aroma stopped him. he found himself looking  
in the reflection of a window shop in one of the  
many streets of the city he arrived when he left  
the ocean.



Salix Tree  
Short Documentary  
B&W, Stereo  
Super8mm to 2k  
10mins.  
2015.

'Salix Tree' is the documentation of a displaced domestic space, a self-ethnographic document meant to be experienced as a passage between languages, a concentration of voices whose identity remains opaque. Some of these voices materialize into complete translation, while others provide a departure from national identity and its dominant linguistic form. Is the narrator who is telling the story identical with the narrator about whom the story is being told?. Whatever second language we are communicating with, no matter how much we master it, we never quite own it. Language is a masquerade as much as a product of domestication and control.

This home movie is not only a place for the transmission of personal history and documentation of kinship affiliations, but is also a place for self-ethnographic practice, colliding family representation with avant-garde pursuits.



long before he would thin  
so many stories, and I s  
emptiness of my own



01. 01. 1994  
nafta came into effect

01. 01. 1994  
ezln uprising

03. 23. 1994  
pri presidential candidate is murdered

12. 20. 1994  
economic crisis

03. 31. 1995  
murder attempt on my father

12. 08. 1995  
my eighteenth birthday

04. 01. 1996  
our family estate is confiscated

03. 10. 1997  
my father is jailed

03. 22. 1997  
i become homeless

04. 03. 1997  
i began to work in a shoe sole factory

12. 22. 1997  
a'ceal indigenous people massacre



# CRISIS



10 B&W photographs, 2 texts panels, 1 SD video, silent, 2014.



Crisis  
Video Installation  
10 B&W photographs, 2 texts panels,  
1 SD video, silent,  
2014.

A black and white photograph of a weathered wooden post standing on a sandy beach. The post is the central focus, leaning slightly to the right. The background shows a calm ocean meeting a cloudy sky at a distant horizon. The lighting is soft, creating a somber and contemplative mood.

These photographs are my personal memorial to the 1994 Mexican economic crisis, aiming to broaden the conversation about historical authorship and cultural property. Public memorials mainly reinforce certain ideas about a nation, however, memorials should also have the potential to disrupt fixed notions of nationalism and identity. Resistance to state narratives of commemoration opens the possibility for multilayered memorials.

Situating the landscape as a snapshot from the past, facilitates a critical conversation over the dense and multilayered nature of memorials. Is it possible the co-existence of parallel narratives along with official historical discourses? What is the importance of the dissemination of personal narratives, in contrast with the on-going construction of official history? My photographic work reflects about these questions, opening the space to alternative rhetoric's and rituals against forgetting.



PARC MONT-ROYAL



Parc Mont-Royal  
Video Installation  
Color, B&W, Stereo  
16mm to HD  
6 mins.  
2013.



'Parc Mont-Royal' evidentiates the relationship between the observer, the observed and the gaze, commenting on how the technology of cinema has modified not only our notions about the gaze, but also the gaze in itself. This video piece was born from a lack of conscious design. As Brecht says in his Chance Imagery, "Chance in the arts provides a means for escaping the biases engrained in our personality by our culture and personal past history, that is, it is a means of attaining greater generality". I intended to be absent of intention as structuring principle. A random and meaningless event at Mont-Royal Park got me thinking about how perception and cinema apparatus folds around the present moment through the gaze. 'Parc Mont-Royal' is not going to be ever finished. It needs the interpretation of the observer.

# ABC:MTL

- ARCHITECTES FABG [1]
- CULTE AUDREY WELLS [1]
- DATA NICOLAS BAIER [2]
- EXILE CENTRE FOR ORAL HISTORY AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING [2]
- INDEPENDENT VARIOUS ARTISTS [2]
- MÉTROPOLE [3]
- AUDITORIUM [4]
- THRESHOLD JOSÉ VERGAS-HIDALGO [4]
- ARRIVALS RAMAK FAZEL, ARJUNA NEUMAN [7]
- CITOYENS EMMANUELLE LEONARD [4]
- HIPPODROME MYRIAM YATES [3]
- INTERFACE NEIL CLAVIN
- MOBILISATION FONDRIE DARLING, 7 A NOUS [2]
- RÉGION FRANCISCA INSULZA [3]
- RUELLES THOMAS BERNARD KENNIFF, CLAUDIA DELISLE, EMILY YOUNG [4]
- TURCOT VICTOR ARROYO [5]
- BRIDGE FIONA ANNIS, ROBIN PINEDA GOULD [5]
- CONDO AVENUE 8, SPACING MONTREAL
- ELECTROSMOG JEAN-PIERRE AUBÉ [2]
- HYPERBÂTIMENT ATELIER BIG CITY [4]
- MONTROYALITE ROBERT BURLEY [2]
- SOCCER SAUCIER + PERROTTE ARCHITECTES [7]
- EXCHANGE JONATHAN SA'ADAH [5]
- ISLAND GABOR SZILASI [5]
- PARTITION
- VOYEUR GWENDOLINA GENEST, CELINE HUYGHEBAERT [4]
- CONTINUITÉ SYN-ATELIER D'EXPLORATION URBAINE [4]

**B** 2012.12.12 - 2013.01.27

### LE ANTI-MONTREAL ET MONTREAL

D'après le recensement de 2006, la population de la zone métropolitaine de Montréal est de 3,634,274 habitants, + 40% de plus que les 2,562,036 Montréalais habitant la zone métropolitaine en 1976. Montréal possède une variété de territoires, de types d'espaces, et d'activités, de modes de vie et d'identités. La ville est un carrefour international traversé par un flux constant de personnes, de marchandises et d'idées. La ville physique est le lieu, de la vie d'aujourd'hui, les particularités qui composent sa nature profonde et les trajectoires qui la traversent, laissant leur empreinte.

ABC: MTL - Un développement de Montréal est un projet de planification ouverte dans lequel la ville se donne à voir à travers les contributions de nombreux auteurs différents. Des mots-clés correspondant à des éléments de la configuration de Montréal et de l'expérience de la ville forment un alphabet dynamique. Plus de deux cent cinquante propositions ont été soumises entre juin et septembre 2012 en réponse à l'appel à projet. Nous avons invité le public à découvrir les espaces quotidiens de la ville, notamment à l'usage public de la vie de Montréal. Nous avons reçu des projets architecturaux, des essais photographiques, des films, des enregistrements sonores, des vidéos, des objets trouvés dans la rue et des correspondances en lettres - autant de fragments qui s'ajoutent pour former une vision plurielle. L'écriture est devenue à l'époque contemporaine le lieu éphémère en 1989 par le Centre Canadien d'Architecture avec Montréal métropole, 1989-1993, une exposition qui examinait une période fondatrice pour Montréal qui, à la fin de l'ère industrielle était la quatrième plus grande ville d'Amérique du Nord. Cette recherche s'est poursuivie en 2004 avec l'exposition Les années 80, Montréal voit grand, qui se concentrait sur les développements qui ont permis la forme de la ville future et sur lesquels repose encore sa structure actuelle.

De novembre 2012 à mars 2013, le CCA présente en plusieurs lieux les multiples écritures d'un alphabet ouvert. Composé plus de cinquante propositions, des architectures, des performances, des photographies, des objets et des plans, cette exposition a pour ambition d'élargir un horizon de réflexion sur Montréal.

ABC: MTL est une fenêtre dans le temps. Pendant ces quelques mois l'expérience présente un alphabet ouvert de Montréal toujours à la recherche de la ville qu'elle cherche à devenir - un récit public qui devient un cadre de référence dans lequel nous pouvons tracer nos déplacements sur l'échelle.

### LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE MONTREAL

According to the 2006 census, the population of the greater Montreal area was 3,634,274 - 40 per cent more than the 2,562,036 who lived in 1976. A constantly changing metropolitan territory, Montreal consists of a variety of territories, types of spaces and activities, lifestyles and identities. It is a world full with people, merchandise and ideas constantly passing through it. The physical city is the place where our historical trajectory has left its mark. It is a place where our history is still visible.

ABC: MTL is a multi-faceted project in which the city reveals itself through the contributions of multiple authors. Keywords that correspond to elements of Montreal's structure and experience form a dynamic alphabet. More than two hundred and fifty proposals were submitted between June and September 2012 in response to the general call. We invited the public to discover the spaces where they work, move and study, in other words, to take about the life of the city. We received architectural projects, photographs, films, recordings, objects found in the street and public correspondence - fragments that add up to a pluralistic vision. Our ambition was to access into the present the narrative initiated by the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 1989 with the exhibition Montreal Metropolis, 1989-1993, which examined a formative era for what was then North America's fourth largest city. This research continued in 2004 with the exhibition Les années 80, Montréal voit grand, which focused on developments that set the ground for the city's future and still support its structure today.

From November 2012 through March 2013, the CCA is presenting the results of this writing process in progressive stages. More than fifty proposals, including architecture, performance, photography, objects, and plans, will be presented in a program of public lectures, walks, performances, debates and meetings that provide context for an ongoing public thought in which Montrealers can reflect on their city.

TURCOT



Turcot  
Video Installation  
Boxes, 1 text panel, 4 video channels  
HD, SD, Stereo  
24 mins.  
2012.

This documentary addresses the failure and impending transformation of an icon of Montreal's modernization, the Turcot highway interchange. 'Turcot' investigates the ways in which the discourse of modernist urban design has had a profound effect on the local community. In a contemporary reading of the transformations at play, 'Turcot' paints a complex picture of the social and human landscape around this controversial infrastructure project.

The installation gives voice to a local resident who will be affected and ultimately displaced by the forthcoming reconstruction of the interchange. By offering the camera to Pierre Zoville, one of many citizens living in the area, this installation demonstrates the intricacies of policies and political processes in the area surrounding Turcot. The interchange has become an incendiary topic, with different stakeholders taking divergent, non-negotiable positions.

