

To Oblivion: The Speculators' Eden

LACE Summer Residency by Sandra de la Loza

In *To Oblivion: The Speculators' Eden* de la Loza creates a portal inside LACE's main gallery to transport us into a "disturbance zone," a ghostly and haunted space that unveils fragmented stories of this land we call Los Angeles. In excavating the past, unsettling glimpses of the city of the future surface via an immersive installation comprised of an archive of shadows, dematerialized artifacts, performative poems, and spectral ruins and stereoscopes.

De la Loza's installation is based on long term research that investigates the history of transportation infrastructure and its impact on past, present, and future landscapes. Centered around the Los Angeles transit system, the artist evokes the final ride of a Pacific Electric car in 1955, which carried a banner reading "To Oblivion" before the entire system was dismantled and supplanted by a new freeway structures during the postwar era. It was a moment of dramatic change to the Los Angeles landscape and an exacerbation of the struggles of working-class communities.

The latest iteration of this ongoing project, *To Oblivion: The Speculators' Eden* uncovers forgotten strata in and around the Cahuenga Pass, a path that now connects Hollywood to the San Fernando Valley, via the 101 Route, Hollywood Freeway. This thoroughfare has an extensive history as a former early 20th century street carline, a segment of the Camino Real, the main route Spanish settler colonialists traversed, an ancestral way for indigenous groups pre-settlers, a trail for coyotes and other animals, and a waterway for native plants. The early development of Hollywood aligns with our contemporary moment, where rapid development and massive displacement have wreaked havoc on the neighborhood. The speculators of a supposed Eden (Los Angeles and Hollywood) is/was a project of massive construction and imagination imposed on a city without consideration of what it was, leading to a violent erasure ignorant of the land and its inhabitants.

In contemplating pathways, undercurrents, and the scale and scope of transit-oriented development's impact on the land, de la Loza loops the violence of the past into the present, which hauntingly echoes among the cranescape of Hollywood today in the midst of the latest iteration of a development frenzy.

To Oblivion Programming

July 28 Ancestral healing and resilience: A Somatic Experiencing Workshop

August 24, 8pm To Oblivion: The Speculator's Eden: A culminating performance