

Paroxysm of Sublime

September 18 - November 17

Exhibition in partnership with France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX)

Curated by Anna Milone, FLAX Program Director and Curator and Ana Iwataki, Associate Curator.

With Eddie Aparicio, Carmen Argote, Beatriz Cortez, Sara Favriau, Etienne de France, David Horvitz, iris yirei hu, Candice Lin, Laura Huertas Millán, Eva Nielsen, Nine Herbs Charm (Eric Kim, Hannah Mjølsnes, Saewon Oh), Hubert Robert, SMITH x DIPLOMATES and Daniel Otero Torres

There is a clear sense of urgency that is both rising and collective. It seems to be a matter of dis-ease, as philosopher Glenn Albrecht puts it. His diagnosis for our times is that of solastalgia—an illness at once psycho and somatic—affecting humanity at large, caused by a changing, once-familiar environment, whose fate seems beyond our control. Home becomes first uncanny, then hostile, like a nightmare in which one's mother morphs into a stranger, then an enemy.

The title of this exhibition, quoting a poem by sculptor Sara Favriau, emphasizes the unfolding of changes, leading to a paroxysm often followed by a drastic transformation. Directly referencing the overwhelmingness of the sublime as defined by Kant, the exhibition draws from the history and present of philosophy. To take on the concept of solastalgia, we need to question our definitions of “home” and “environment.” The notion of environment can also denote some kind of separation, the control and domination of mankind over its habitat. In Los Angeles, the majority of the city's plant life was brought by settlers to “imparadise” the land and recreate familiar environments, or otherwise introduced to the region to reflect, instill, and develop desire and fantasy, dramatically changing the ecosystem and shaping its visual identity. Solastalgia is a feeling of homesickness while being at home, in a “natural” environment constructed by human presence, perpetually in rapid transformation. This dystopian element of the city points to the question of colonization by nature, all the more insidious for its “natural” disguise.

This exhibition brings together reflections on our shared pathology and pathos. If a sense of dread, fear, and grief is palpable, then so is the desire to act. These reactions are brought into the light, so that we might collectively face what we must collectively correct. In catastrophe, affect becomes not an ending, but a hinge to incite evolution in our relationship to the environment, to loss, and the passing of time, sometimes romanticized or fantasized. The blending of timelines and cartographies works towards a more nuanced view of past, present, and impending change, to ritual and symbiosis as methods of healing. This confluence of time and space encourages the reconsideration of other paradigms — nature/culture, pre/post apocalypse, native/foreign.

The exhibition will examine the effects of solastalgia, its relationship with the history of Western philosophy, its broader significance in multiple temporalities and geographies, and a search for remedies outside of a Western paradigm. Doing so requires various voices, “a rush of stories,” to quote Anna Tsing:

“To listen and to tell a rush of stories is a method. And why not make the strong claim and call it a science, an addition to knowledge? Its research object is contaminated diversity; its unit of analysis is the indeterminate encounter (...) A rush of stories cannot be neatly summed up. Its scales do not nest neatly; they draw attention to interrupting geographies and tempos. These interruptions elicit more stories. This is the rush of stories' power as a science.”

An archive of various textual references and other objects for storing knowledge offered by the curators and artists, including tinctures by Candice Lin, will be presented in various forms throughout the exhibition. iris yirei hu has collaborated with Andrew Freire to conceive a structure that will be a platform for this collection of knowledge and histories. The materiality of the library is itself a partial archive of LACE's exhibition history and will highlight the infrastructural support (in knowledge, labor and materials) that are required to realize an exhibition.

A Rush of Stories

Tuesday, October 8, 7:30pm

Screening, Fabrizio Terranova, *Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival* (2016)

Feminist thinker and historian of science Donna Haraway is perhaps best known as the author of two revolutionary works: the essay “A Cyborg Manifesto” and the book *Primate Visions*. Both set out to upend well-established “common sense” categories: breaking down the boundaries among humans, animals, and machines while challenging gender essentialism and questioning the underlying assumptions of humanity’s fascination with primates through a post-colonial lens.

DONNA HARAWAY: STORY TELLING FOR EARTHLY SURVIVAL features Haraway in a playful and engaging exploration of her life, influences, and ideas. Haraway is a passionate and discursive storyteller, and the film is structured around a series of discussions held in the California home she helped build by hand, on subjects including the capitalism and the anthropocene (a term she “uses but finds troubling”), science fiction writing as philosophical text, unconventional marital and sexual partnerships, the role of Catholicism in her upbringing, humans and dogs, the suppression of women’s writing, the surprisingly fascinating history of orthodontic aesthetics, and the need for new post-colonial and post-patriarchal narratives. It is a remarkably impressive range, from a thinker with a nimble and curious mind.

Haraway and filmmaker Fabrizio Terranova (who we hear but don’t see) are clearly at ease with each other, giving the conversations—which are punctuated by images of artwork and quirky animation—a casual, intimate feel. Terranova makes playful use of green screens to illustrate Haraway’s words, or to comment on them. As Haraway discusses storytelling, we see an image of her in the background, writing. When the conversation turns to her own unorthodox personal relationships and the oppressive power of heteronormativity, the redwoods out her window are replaced by a crisp suburban street. Underwater invertebrates, one of Haraway’s fascinations, float by in the background of a room.

Tuesday, October 22, 7:30pm

Talk, Beatriz Cortez: *A Dialogue of Nomads*

A conversation between Brown border-crossers and dead French philosophers

Reading is a creative act that brings a text to life and allows it to unfold into new contexts and acquire new meanings. The artist explores the act of engaging with the ideas of French philosophers such as Deleuze, Guattari, Clastres, or Foucault from her own experience and in conversation with other Central American thinkers in Los Angeles and in Central America as an active process of creation and transformation across borders, and across time and space.

Sunday, November 3, 3pm

Closing, tea serving by Nine Herbs Charm followed by a meditative walk to Highland Park with David Horvitz

David Horvitz participates in the dispersal of seeds, fruits, or other plants by wind, trade, and other means. He has donated plumeria cuttings from his grandmother’s tree to several art institutions around Los Angeles, including FLAX. The plant travels to each new exhibition site due to the itinerant nature of the FLAX Projects. The plumeria was brought to LACE for the duration of the exhibition. For the closing party, a tea serving in collaboration with Nine Herbs Charm will prepare participants for a meditative walk by attuning them to the consciousness of plumeria and other local plants. This walk will bring the plumeria to its final home where it will be planted in the ground.