

# UPFOR

**DANIELLE RONEY**

***Frequencies of Opacity***

**March 5 - April 18, 2020**



## THE WORK

In *Frequencies of Opacity*, artist Danielle Roney presents three bodies of work developed through research and community engagement around contemporary migrant experiences. Migration patterns, immigration policy, and migrant and refugee experiences have been the focus of Roney's work for the last two decades, the center of a practice rooted in nomadic research and the impact of technology on society. Her recent works are poetic visualizations expressing resilient affirmations of strength in difference.

*Whispers* are 3D printed sculptures formed by algorithmically interpreting vocal recordings of readings by and about migrants, intended to embody the physical intimacy of a whisper. *Strata Series: Zero* and *Strata Series: Zero-One* are light-based sculptures, the first in an ongoing series, that translates biofeedback and voice data recorded by migrant collaborators into visual patterns. Finally, *PUBLICS* is a live-streaming camera network accessible only to a migrant collaborator, turning the table on surveillance culture and the norms of art viewership.

This exhibition reprises and builds on Roney's recent participation in *knowledges* at the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas. It was curated by Joey Orr, the Andrew W. Mellon Curator for Research, as part of the Integrated Arts Research Initiative and funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

## THE ARTIST

Danielle Roney is known for site-specific installations and sculpture that explore technology's effect on migration and cultures, designed and animated using algorithms based in data both macrocosmic (such as global migration patterns) and microcosmic (the recording of an individual voice). Roney has produced installations, commissions and works for exhibitions in Beijing, Johannesburg, Venice (IT), Sao Paulo, Istanbul and numerous US museums and permanent public collections. Reviews of her work appeared in *Art in America* and *ArtPapers*, among others. Roney is recipient of grants, awards and recognition from the National Endowment of the Arts, the Loridans Foundation and the 2010 Venice Biennale of Architecture, among others. Roney studied sculpture and digital media at the University of Georgia and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT: Occupying Institutional Spaces through Immateriality

*"We may feel bitterly how little our poems can do in the face of seemingly out of control technological power and seemingly limitless corporate greed, yet it has always been true that poetry can break isolation, show us to ourselves when we are outlawed or made invisible, remind us of beauty where no beauty seems possible, remind us kinship where all is represented as separation."*<sup>1</sup>

To understand and embrace opacity is to claim the sovereignty of self. To live in difference. To evolve in relation to the experiences of exchange. Negating Otherness for totality<sup>2</sup>. Migration is a human right to survival as a part of nature and being in the world. The fractal order of Glissant's *chaos-monde*<sup>3</sup>.

When our bodily presence, in and of itself, is criminalized and the borderlands of institutionalized spaces have collapsed, how does the 'illegal' migrant occupy these spaces?

We must support an irreducible legitimacy, as a means of liberation, sustaining a multiplicity of potentials through interfaces of exchange and thus intersubjectivity. By leveraging immateriality as a strategy of human freedom, we create portals perforating these spaces, where autonomous algorithms empower virtual culture to create radical vehicles of ethnography.

As a series of parallel futures and histories, "self" within a migrant condition is emphasized through layered proximities. Simultaneous, bifurcating movements redefine the spatial relationship of encounters, where time and space are deconstructed and our fragmented reality is negotiated through the lens of a participatory state of exile.

The rhizomatic perspective of these vehicles embraces a personal addressal beyond critique, where from positions of power and beauty, self-determinacy may form in generous and genuine ways.

Emphasizing the complexities of the migrant condition, *Frequencies of Opacity* speaks to the 'in between' state where we negotiate our place in the world, our associations, ideologies and histories of the political in the pursuit of the sovereignty of self. Fluidity and immediacy create a dynamic landscape full of contradictions and conflict as well as new universals and mechanisms of unity through difference.

How we choose to navigate these dynamic constructs is determinate to whom and what we are as much as where we have come from and where we are going; and therefore what we are to become.

*"One must understand that it is impossible to reduce anyone, no matter who, to a truth he would not have generated on his own. That is, within the opacity of his time and place."*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rich, Adrienne., *Defy the Space that Separates*. (The Nation, October 7, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Glissant, Edouard., *Poetics of Relation*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2010) xv. Translator Betsy Wing, interprets Glissant's identities of the world; *totalite-monde*, to be concrete and quantifiable.

<sup>3</sup> See Glissant (2010), *chaos-monde*, referring to spiraling and redundant trajectories. Noting *echos-monde* as the third world identity, feedback.

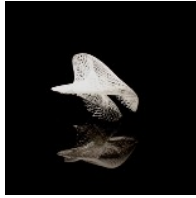
<sup>4</sup> Glissant, *Poetics*, 194.

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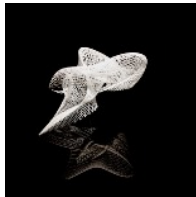
### TITLE LIST



#### *Whispers: Mantras 01, 2019*

3D printed nylon, acrylic, mic stand  
5 x 7 x 8 in. (print), 16 x 16 x 0.5 in. (acrylic), height variable (mic stand),  
edition of 1 + 1 AP

Algorithmically interpreted vocal data: Zohreh, "a directly revolutionary effect", voiceover from Roney's adaptation (2011) of *Refugee Conversations*, by Bertolt Brecht (1940)



#### *Whispers: Mantras 02, 2019*

3D printed nylon, acrylic, mic stand  
5 x 7.5 x 10 in. (print), 16 x 16 x 0.5 in. (acrylic), height variable, edition of 1 + 1 AP

Algorithmically interpreted vocal data: Penny, "you may leave by entering", voiceover from *On the Edge of Self* by Roney (2010)



#### *Whispers: Mantras 03, 2019*

3D printed nylon, acrylic, mic stand  
5.5 x 6.25 x 8 in. (print), 16 x 16 x 0.5 in. (acrylic), height variable (mic stand), edition of 1 + 1 AP

Algorithmically interpreted vocal data: Penny, "there is place hidden in plain site to you", voiceover from *On the Edge of Self*, by Roney (2010)



#### *Strata Series: Zero, 2020*

stainless steel, LED lights, copper wire, computer, algorithmically interpreted voice data  
variable dimensions  
6 min. 45 sec. sequence (loop)



#### *Strata Series: Zero\_One, 2020*

stainless steel, LED lights, copper wire, computer, algorithmically interpreted voice data  
variable dimensions  
3 min. 44 sec. sequence (loop)



#### *PUBLICS, 2020*

5-camera Nest security camera system, cloud-based software, private access peer-to-peer viewing network via dedicate private webpage, 5 c-stands; 5 USB cables and power plugs; variable dimensions

All images: Photos by Mario Gallucci, courtesy the artist and Upfor.