

Elemental Cinema: Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman

September 6 - December 11, 2022

Opening reception: Saturday, September 10 from 2 to 4 pm

For details about programs and events, visit belkin.ubc.ca

Elemental Cinema brings together the collaborative film works of Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman. In this series of films, the four elements – water, earth, fire, air – inform the artists' considerations of an entangled existence, and of time and value that reimagine knowledge and existence "otherwise." This exhibition includes installations of their films to date: *Serpent Rain* (2016), *4 Waters – Deep Implicancy* (2019) and *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* (2020), as well archives related to the films.

In the films, the composition and decomposition of the world is structured through the elements. They are fractal compositions, interfacing between the quantic, organic, historic and cosmic, drawing from visual arts, sciences and philosophy. The works edit together footage of both micro and macro landscapes, animation and archival documentation through references that range from quantum mechanics, the blues, diverse philosophies, classical physics, colonial theory to cartomancy. The intellectual and sensorial experience of the works across scale, surface and perspectives demands an assessment of how subjectivity is constructed, how we come to know and ways to unsettle that knowledge through a polyrhythmic entanglement that displaces hierarchies of rational experience.

How can we understand existence other than from the post-Enlightenment notions of *nature* and *world*? How can we approach all that exists without prioritizing the subject (Man, the I, or subjectivity)? Ferreira da Silva and Neuman's work builds on their combined research and Ferreira da Silva's planetary view of the world as plenum (corpus infinitum), a complex terrain in which human, geological, bacterial and meteorological environments are not independent forms and phenomena. As experiments in entanglement and ways of "the Thinking of the World," Ferreira da Silva and Neuman's work proposes alternatives to the destructive consequences of the Western mind. What does it mean to disorder Western thinking? What other ways of knowing – across cultures, time, space and form – can we learn/relearn? The work takes up the long emergency of colonialism and capitalism, raising questions of ecology, extraction, territory, slavery, sovereignty and migrancy through an intersection of colonialism, race and aesthetics. In doing so, the works question how structures of power and categorizations of difference generate rifts between humans, and with the more-than-human, the earth and the cosmos.

Denise Ferreira da Silva is an artist and Professor at UBC's Social Justice Institute-GRSJ and Adjunct Professor at Monash University's School of Art, Design and Architecture. She is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), *A*

Dívida Impagavel (Oficina da Imaginação Política and Living Commons, 2019), *Unpayable Debt* (Sternberg/MIT Press, 2022) and co-editor (with Paula Chakravartty) of *Race, Empire, and the Crisis of the Subprime* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). Her artistic works include the films with Arjuna Neuman and the relational art practices *Poethical Readings and Sensing Salon* in collaboration with Valentina Desideri. She has exhibited and lectured at the Pompidou Center (Paris), Whitechapel Gallery (London), MASP (Sao Paulo), Guggenheim (New York) and MoMA (New York). She has written for publications from Liverpool Biennale, 2017; Sao Paulo Biennale, 2016, Venice Biennale, 2017, and Documenta 14 and published in journals such as *Canadian Art*, *Frieze*, *Pass*, *Texte Zur Kunst* and *e-flux*. She has held visiting professorships at major universities in Australia, Brazil, Britain, Denmark, Germany and the United States and is a member of the collective EhChO.org and an editor of *Third Text*.

Arjuna Neuman is an artist, filmmaker and writer, with recent presentations at CCA Glasgow; Centre Pompidou (Paris); Manifesta 10 (Marseille); Showroom Gallery (London); TPW Gallery (Toronto); Forum Expanded, Berlin Biennale; Jameel Art Centre (Dubai); Serpentine Gallery (London); Gasworks (London); Or Gallery (Vancouver); Whitechapel Gallery (London) and Istanbul Modern, amongst others. As a writer, he has published essays in *Relief Press*, *Into the Pines Press*, *The Journal for New Writing*, *VIA Magazine*, *Concord*, *Art Voices*, *Flaunt*, *LEAP*, *Hearings* and *e-flux*. Recently, he has been dropping mixtapes about the "ecological unconscious" on NTS, Dublab and Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee.

Elemental Cinema: Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman is curated by Melanie O'Brian and made possible with the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and our Belkin Curator's Forum members.

For more information, please contact:

Jana Tyner (jana.tyner@ubc.ca)
UBC Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery
1825 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
t. 604.822.1389
www.belkin.ubc.ca