

September 6 –
December 11, 2022

Elemental Cinema:
Denise Ferreira da Silva and
Arjuna Neuman

The Works

Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum, 2020

film transferred to video, newspaper (2022) and archive
40 m, edition 1/5

Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery,
purchased with support from the Canada Council for the
Arts and the Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation, 2022

Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum follows the element of earth through its facets, groundings and forms. Like the previous films, its sensibility hails from listening to the blues, to skin, to heat. In order to speculate on how to exist otherwise as humans, *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* explores the construction of subjectivity – how social subjects, identities and categories are formed and recreated in society – in particular, how these processes have been designed as sovereign and interior. *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* gathers examples where subjectivity is unbound from the mind alone, but re-bound to all other existents. The film flows between the historic, the organic, the quantum and the cosmic in its consideration of this interiority being exploited towards racial violence.

Serpent Rain, 2016

video

30 m

Courtesy of the artists

Serpent Rain is a meditation on the impossible task of making a film without time. Inspired by the story of the finding of a sunken slave ship, whose existence was deemed an impossibility, the film speculates on other im-possibilities. It speaks “from inside the cut between slavery and resource extraction, between black lives matter and the matter of life,” phase transition and the elements, temporality and the tarot. Foregrounding colonial and racial violence, it reconsiders the processes

and mechanisms of production of capital and advances an alternative account of commodity and value production. Through insights from geology, biology and paleontology, it invites a materialist approach that challenges current understandings of life and time.

4 Waters – Deep Implicancy, 2019

video and archive

29 m, 10 s

Courtesy of the artists

4 Waters – Deep Implicancy follows the element of water to consider forced migration, colonialism and ecological devastation across four bodies of water: the Mediterranean, the Pacific, the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. The film follows the displacement of peoples alongside the transformation of matter, at a quantum level, from one state to another. The form and ubiquity of water functions as a model for undermining the seminal influence of Plato and his metaphysics, which separates the world in terms of fixed, ideal abstractions and an illusory sensorial materialism. Presenting an alternative to the violent separations that organize our existence, the film foregrounds entanglement, the moment of “Deep Implicancy” that prevails beyond the separation of matter imposed by modern thinking.

Curtains courtesy Frederic Wood Theatre

Archive Reading Room

The archives related to *4 Waters – Deep Implicancy* and *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* expand the films through texts, audio, video interviews and other media. These resources delve further into subjecthood, identity politics and representation in cultural practice to form additional facets of interface for myriad ways of thinking of and acting in the world.

Outdoor Screen

Crossroads, 2019

digitized archival photographs

2 m, 6 s

Courtesy of the artists

Corresponding with *4 Waters – Deep Implicancy*, this slideshow includes images from the Smithsonian Institution Archives' Operation Crossroads (1946-55), a US Navy-led scientific study of the effects of the atom bomb testing on the Marshall Islands and Bikini Atoll. Images were taken by Leonard P. Schultz, Curator of Ichthyology, Smithsonian Institution, who was part of the study. The group studied the relative abundance of flora and fauna before and after the atom bomb tests. Specimens were collected for the purpose of comparison and to make possible a study of anatomical variations among the various island fish populations. The biological survey collected plants and animals on and around Bikini, Eniwetok, Rongelap and Rongerik Atolls.

Walter C. Koerner Library

1958 Main Mall, UBC

Sand, Silt, Soot, Soot (Dark Matter), 2020

chalk on blackboard paint

Courtesy of the artists

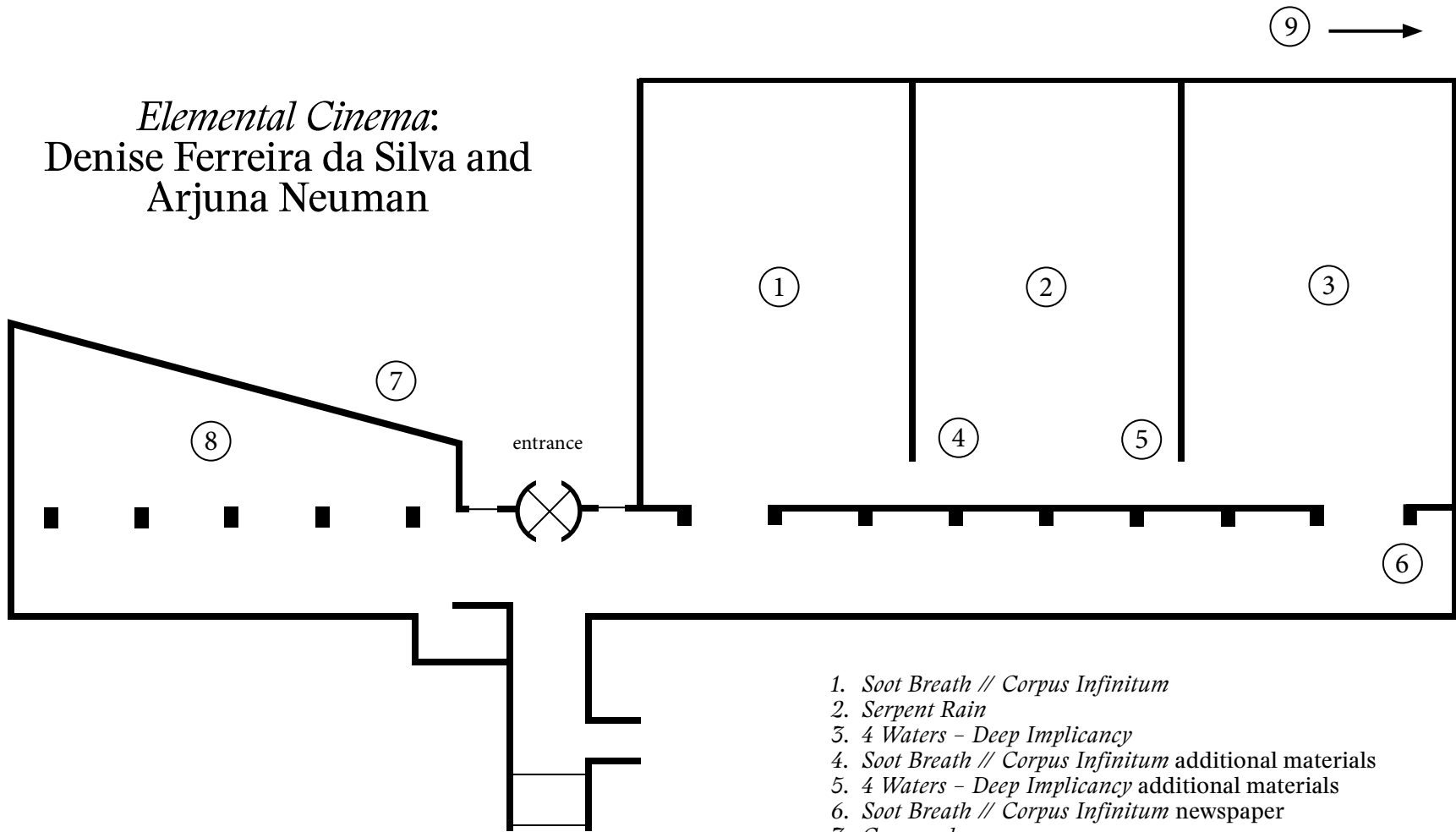
Corresponding to *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum*, this work repurposes the elemental symbols for air, water, fire and earth to sand, silt, soot and soot (dark matter).

The Artists

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 Centre (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; Pompidou Centre (Paris); Manifesta 10 (Marseille); Showroom Gallery (London); Gallery TPW (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.

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Arjuna Neuman



1. *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum*
2. *Serpent Rain*
3. *4 Waters – Deep Implicancy*
4. *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* additional materials
5. *4 Waters – Deep Implicancy* additional materials
6. *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* newspaper
7. *Crossroads*
8. Archive reading room
9. *Sand, Silt, Soot, Soot (Dark Matter)*
at Walter C. Koerner Library, 1958 Main Mall (~250 m)

Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum plays at 10 am, 10:40 am (captioned); 11:20 am; noon (captioned); 12:40 pm; 1:20 pm (captioned); 2 pm; 2:40 pm (captioned); 3:20 pm and 4 pm (captioned).

Serpent Rain plays at the top and bottom of every hour.

4 Waters – Deep Implicancy plays at the top and bottom of every hour.

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. We actively acknowledge that the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery is situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the x̱məθkʷəy̱əm (Musqueam) people.



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Front: Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman, *Soot Breath // Corpus Infinitum* (detail), 2020