

EXHIBITION LIST

Allora & Calzadilla [Puerto Rico/USA] <i>Returning A Sound (Vieques Series)</i> , 2004 <i>Under Discussion (Vieques Series)</i> , 2005	Carlos Maravilla & Ehecatl Morales-Valdelamar [Mexico] <i>Semilla y sembrador</i> , 2016 (Carlos Maravilla Santos) <i>Embarcaderos</i> , 2015 (Ehecatl Morales-Valdelamar) <i>Haciendo Chinampa</i> , 2015 (In collaboration with Maleny Cedillo Inclán)
Maria Thereza Alves [Brazil] <i>The Return of a Lake</i> , 2012	Dylan AT Miner [Wiisaakodewinini / Métis] <i>No Pipelines on Indigenous Land</i> , 2016 <i>No Pipelines in the Great Lakes</i> , 2016 <i>No Mines Near Sacred Sites</i> , 2016
Michael P. Berman [New Mexico] <i>The Pope on TV</i> , Pueblo Nuevo, TX, 2013	
Virginia Colwell [Mexico/USA] <i>Goodbye to All That</i> , 2014	
Basia Irland [New Mexico] <i>What the River Knows</i> , 2017	Sandra Monterroso [Guatemala] <i>Colorando/Decolorando las Hebras</i> , 2011 <i>Expoliada II</i> , 2011 <i>Expoliada III</i> , 2016

Decolonizing Nature: Resistance, Resilience, Revitalization is sponsored by the Land Arts of the American West and Art & Ecology programs in the Department of Art at the University of New Mexico in partnership with the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 516 ARTS, UNM Art Museum, Friends of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Los Jardines Institute, and the Santa Fe Art Institute. The project is coordinated by Subhankar Banerjee, Lannan Chair and professor of Art & Ecology, University of New Mexico. Organizers are grateful for the generous support provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the New Mexico Humanities Council, and University of New Mexico’s Office of the Vice President for Research, Center for Regional Studies, College of Fine Arts, and the Department of Art. decolonizingnature.unm.edu

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COVER: Carlos Maravilla Santos, *Semilla y sembrador*, 2016



Sandra Monterroso, *Expoliada II*, 2011

516 ARTS is an independent, nonprofit contemporary arts organization, operating a museum-style gallery in the center of Downtown Albuquerque. 516 ARTS offers programs that inspire curiosity, dialogue, risk-taking and creative experimentation, showcasing a mix of established, emerging, local, national and international artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Programs include exhibitions, collaborations with museums and organizations around the region and beyond, public art projects, talks, workshops, youth programs, performances and more.

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DECOLONIZING NATURE

A pop-up exhibition in conjunction with the conference
Decolonizing Nature: Resistance, Resilience, Revitalization



516 ARTS

April 15 – 29, 2017
Albuquerque, New Mexico

DECOLONIZING NATURE

Decolonizing Nature brings together diverse voices to the conversation on geopolitical power structures, coloniality, and their severe impact on ecology and indigenous communities. Together the artists reveal the complexity, as well as the interconnected relationships between ecological and social injustices. Looking at the work of **Allora & Calzadilla**, addressing the military occupation and ensuing environmental and social injustices in Vieques, Puerto Rico, or the installation *Return of a Lake* by Brazilian artist **Maria Thereza Alves**, points to the continuous reproduction of hierarchical power structures. *Return of a Lake* represents both the artist’s research practice as well as her deep collaboration with the community of Xico in the Valley of Mexico, examining the impact coloniality (the continuation of the logics that made colonization possible) has had and still has on that community and its agricultural practices.

The relationships between many of the works reveal a broad concern with documenting, practicing, and revitalizing indigenous agricultural methods and ways of relating to our environment as an act of resistance. The work of New Mexico-based artist and activist **Basia Irland** meditates upon the historical, cultural, and environmental significance of various rivers that have been subject to industrial and political exploitation, destroying not only natural habitats, but also the communities who depend upon these rivers. Likewise Guatemalan artist **Sandra Monterroso** recovers and restores both her own heritage as a Maya artist, as well as larger cultural practices, relating the tradition and process of dying textiles to the incremental but serious destruction of the land and water. Reconsidering these histories counters the systemic erasure of Maya existence and history in Guatemala. Similarly, the work of **Carlos Maravilla Santos** and **Ehecatl Morales Valdelamar**, a collective based in Mexico City, studies and collaborates with Xochimilco, a region which still reflects the canals, *chinampas*, and waterways that comprised the original structure of the city before colonization. Their community-based practice involves workshops, performances, and many collaborations with local advocacy groups to maintain these traditional and sustainable agricultural practices, reinforcing their importance and making them present within the larger urban environment of Mexico City. The importance of art and visual imagery as elements of social movements

is abundantly apparent through the prints of **Dylan AT Miner**, which helped galvanize awareness and support for the opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016, and point to the economic interests continuing colonial structures of power, and the consequences this has for land, water, and communities. The poetic photographs of **Michael P. Berman** allude to the physical displacement and fragmented identities caused by the implicit and actual violence of the borderlands, and the historical and continuing enforcement of hierarchies of power through structures such as race, religion, and capitalism.

The artworks included, with their potential to raise questions and provoke critical thought, show us a way in which we can begin to question the historical narratives and assumed knowledges that continue to dictate the conversations surrounding social, economic, ecological and political injustices. As such, **Virginia Colwell**’s installation destabilizes the parameters of predominant narratives of knowledge through its critical understanding of how museums, academies, and other institutions have systematically reified these histories, provoking a reconsideration of hegemonic thought and knowledge systems as well as which cultural practices are considered valid—or not.

In their various connections to specific communities and struggles of decolonizing histories, landscapes, and nature, these artists make the broad concepts of resistance, resilience, and revitalization tangible. The ways in which the works de-link from official narratives and recover memories, both individual and collective, remind us that art offers a powerful space from which to speak, and from which to decolonize.

We are incredibly grateful to the participating artists for sharing their work, which we strongly believe asks us to question hegemonic ways of understanding the world we live in, and pushes us as individuals to seek new ways of thinking, resisting, and connecting to the environment and each other.

— Chloë Courtney & Lara Esther Goldmann
Exhibition Co-Curators

did you take a note
that time when someone explained to you
what you should know

that perhaps then
but what does that mean
that perhaps then

do you expect me to spell it out
and set the context
and give an answer

i’d rather not

perhaps then it might be best
to take a look
and possibly walking away
half way turning
the glimpse of an answer
before it disappears

that perhaps then again

is the nature of answers
they do not linger
there is no permanence
it’s only one of many thoughts
that for a moment
feels better than most others
as if there was

a certainty

a reason

a cause

it would be a comfort
most likely
undeserved

some are where they are
because they did what they did
and then

some others are
where they are because of what
the ones doing did

and then there are some that are nowhere

but that then
perhaps again
is besides the point
or is it then

perhaps

the doing and the undoing
done
and then again

it might be easier
as if there was a right, a wrong
as if
really all to know
then
to be implicated perhaps
most certainly
in both

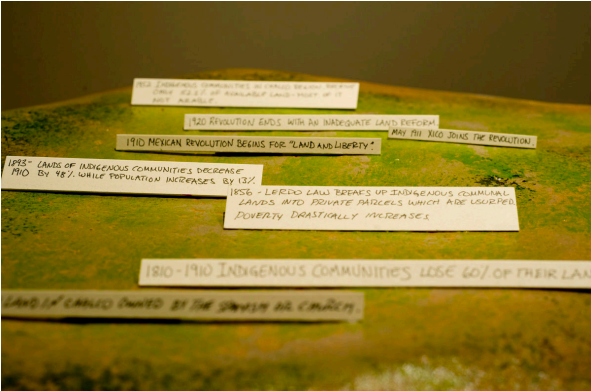
if it was a choice
the doing and undoing
and then again

someone said you tried
you still are

again
but perhaps different this time

then
before you lose the note
take a moment
to remember you took it
half way turning

— lara esther goldmann



Dylan AT Miner, *No Pipelines on Indigenous Land*, 2016 • Michael P. Berman, *Pope on TV, Pueblo Nuevo*, TX, 2013 • Maria Thereza Alves, *The Return of a Lake*, 2012 • Basia Irland, *What the River Knows*, 2017
Virginia Colwell, *Goodbye to All That*, 2014 • Maleny Cedillo Inclán, in collaboration with Carlos Maravilla & Ehecatl Morales-Valdelamar, *Haciendo Chinampa*, 2015