

Artefact

by Jessica Karuhanga with Francisco-Fernando Granados

Quotations:

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Sign and Trace." *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. 489–98.

Jessica Karuhanga is an artist and writer who lives in Toronto.

Opposite Page:

Francisco-Fernando Granados, *movement study (standard North American strip search procedure)*, 2012–2016, performance.

PHOTO: JOSHUA SCHWELB;
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Francisco-Fernando Granados is a Toronto-based artist. His practice is often live and process-based, extending from performance into a range of media that includes installation, video, drawing and text. Recent projects include a solo exhibition at Third Space in St. John NB, a group show at the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College NY, a billboard project for Nuit Blanche in Toronto, and performances at Queens University and the University of Waterloo. He completed a Masters of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto in 2012 and teaches at OCADU and University of Toronto Scarborough.

"A sign system promises meaning. A trace does not promise anything. It is something that seems to suggest that there was something before."

Flip through a spiral notepad until your index reaches the leaf that feels best. Produce a mark. This mark moves into a line. The line becomes text. These notations attempt to capture the exchange of sounds sliding off tongues. A form of record. This is not merely a trace. It is an index. Saliva becomes the site's residue. Random marks, attempting an arrival, chase trails of speech. These notations are containers for fragments we are able to reach. Hold this vessel. It is through this action we necessitate re-experiencing through different frameworks and passageways.

The moments of enactment, a sacred vestibule between performers and those rendered witness, invariably become trace, echo, shadow. How do these shadows leave haptic marks through their absence, reflection and intangibility? We often long to revisit sites so that we may grasp their shape and retrace the contours of their form. The residue evaporates. It fades with each successive moment. Does one dig for marks somewhere in the fibre of memory? The way ink sinks into the crosshatch of paper? These textures become pools of refuse that we later scavenge or incessantly wade through. The enactment is a reflexive witnessing or experiencing of a work as it unfolds. A wound leaves a scar. A fracture fades. Unfolding is a process of becoming and disappearing. There is intimacy in our weaving threads. The creator is as much witness as the spectator who marks. We all experience – but differently.

The artist emerges as figure, as precariat, slow, fixated on the ritual gesture. In Francisco-Fernando Granados' ongoing *spatial profiling* and *movement study* series, the specificity of his body is anonymized. To say that *spatial profiling* is simply in the spectrum of the racial is to collapse and flatten a space. In *movement study*, a standard strip search acts as both score and text dictating the desired gestures. A position without a subject is implicated at the threshold of all borders. However, there is a necessity to imagine this subject as subaltern – a process that may implicate anyone but which significantly affects specific sites and bodies. As these works expand, Granados turns away from any preoccupation with sites that can only hold space for his body. In order for someone else to perform the score, there must be time and space to hold. Time to respond and recover. There is also a responsibility to take care. In order to give up some control of these elements, one must be open to confluence. To ruptures. To flux. To randomization. In each iteration, the patterns blur and sway. They vibrate and colours seemingly trip, collapsing into each other. This process reveals a field of red, green and blue light.

Revisit the symbiotic energy of these two series. Seated on a bench, Granados quotes Spivak verbatim: "Democracy must always have an abstract subject. A position without identity." These words roll off his tongue: A trace is not a sign for it promises nothing. Often it is the refuse that remains as the only evidence that there was something or someone present before. A haunting relic. A ruin. Saliva. Dust. Granados' shadow is a profile becoming form undone. Lines extend from the mover's movements. His extensions soon become my trace.

"The emptiness, the blankness that analogize with white spaces on the page are framed by the trace of a texting – an edge, a rim, a lip, a shore that lends depth to the emptiness, even direction."

Press a pen into the blank space, then move along the curve. Draw until you feel the periphery. Caress this flesh. Nose. Lips. Chin. Repeat these steps thoroughly until exhaustion. Pivot to rest your cheek on the wall. Roll a die. The spots determine the minutes you endure a single stroke of colour. Our witnessing remains open, random, extending and immeasurable. Anybody can hold this pose and unfold their composure. Hold this position until you are trembling. Reproduce the covering and unveiling. Unveiled through this process is a field of positive and negative space. This veil is a spectre. Some language passes through the crosshatch. Some may grasp it. Others writhe in longing. Murmurs selectively caress, cradle and extol in air through lips. These sounds and pulses precede language. Marks, lines and sharp folds form under the weight of the body's form. This edge is a shoreline. Its trace is an index of memories fading, passing, gone.

"Nothing will 'signify' in this maelstrom of traces, always suggesting that someone, somewhere, made a move, or perhaps not."

