SUBURBAN HOSPITALITY

A Weekend of Performative Discourse

SEPTEMBER 16 - 17, 2017
ART GALLERY OF YORK UNIVERSITY (AGYU) &
THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (FES)
Suburban Hospitality:
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SATURDAY, 16–17 SEPTEMBER
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As an extension of the opening of Migrating the Margins, AGYU plays host for a weekend of food, movement, and conversations. Anchored by Farrah Miranda’s Speaking Fruit and Sister Co-Resister’s Walking Salon. The weekend’s activities migrate between the AGYU, Black Creek Community Farm, and Stong Farmhouse to activate the histories and geographies of the Keele Campus. Speaking Fruit is a mobile roadside fruit stand and design studio that feeds the movement for migrant farmworker rights. Sister Co-Resister’s Walking Salon works through concepts of belonging, proprietary understandings of land, and Canada’s immigrant paradigm and treaty partnership identity. Artists and academics Syrus Marcus Ware and Gloria Swain, from the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES), guide our collective investigations through performance and discursive workshops.

This performance-research-walking-symposium is action based. Come prepared to move and be moved!

Saturday September 16, 2017
1:00 pm  Meet at the AGYU (Accolade East Building)
Emelie Chhangur & Philip Monk:
Migrating the Margins Curatorial Tour

Migrating the Margins exemplifies the new conditions of artistic production in Toronto reflective of the vast changes in the city’s culture as a result of decades of immigration and life in the suburbs. Featuring commissioned artworks by Erika DeFreitas, Anique Jordan, Tau Lewis, Rajni Perera, and Nep Sidhu as well as public artworks by Farrah Miranda, Sister Co-Resister, and Otherness. Migrating the Margins weaves together various lines of contemporary cultural inquiry, immigrant memory; dialogue with place origins through alliances with and allegiances to mothers; traces of Afro-Caribbean and Indian diasporas; the perseverance of Black life and the recovery of forgotten Black histories in Toronto; paeans to working class immigrant life in the suburbs and their burgeoning aesthetics; spirituality and sacrifice.... Migrating the Margins to the centre does not mean moving them “there,” however. It means realizing that the margins, the suburbs, are now the centre.

1:30 pm  Amy Desjarlais: Opening Remarks

York University’s knowledge keeper, Amy Desjarlais begins the afternoon of discussions and workshops.
1:45 pm  Farrah Miranda: Speaking Fruit

Held on the land at Black Creek Community Farm, Speaking Fruit brings migrant farmworkers and Indigenous food producers together with artists and community organizers. Eating, drumming and dancing, we consider what comes out of the soil and how. Experimenting with music, dance, and growing practices, we till the soil of the future.

Resident members of the Black Creek Food Justice Network and Neighbour to Neighbour Centre (N2N) in Hamilton discuss the social and political realities and intersections of food security and access in their neighbourhoods.

Adrianne Lickers, coordinator of Our Sustenance, a community greenhouse project located on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario, talks about the connections between food, land and community and the ways that linking them can change lives. Produce harvested by migrant farmworkers in Southern Ontario and corn from the greenhouses of Our Sustenance fuel the celebratory soups and stews served during the day.

Evelyn Encalada Grez, organizer and co-founder of Justice for Migrant Workers, leads a participatory discussion on re-envisioning and humanizing our food system. She connects our discussions to current victories and examples of farmworker movements in the USA to expand our capacity to re-envision ethical food justice for all.

Gabriel Allahdua from Justice for Migrant Workers and the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change discuss their efforts to build solidarity with migrant farmworkers and to share their understandings of the land and their relation to it.

Music and dance performances by Ruben Esguerra, Heryka Miranda, and Moyo and Kuda.

Sunday, September 17
1:00 pm  Meet at AGYU
Otherness: Taking a page... artists tour AGYU Vitrines

A montage of text, found images, and narrative taken from a discarded social science textbook entitled The People We Are: Canada’s Multicultural Society (Gage, 1980), Taking a page... questions the Canadian immigrant paradigm by offering up a historiographical lesson on notions of belongingness. Education has always been used as a primary tool of colonial storytelling and “taking a page” from this book begins a process of re-imagining: how might the content of this book, presented anew, disrupt the immigrant-settlers’ positionality of “the perfect stranger” (Dr. Susan D. Dion). Now, for instance, an image of Free Farms for Million (ca. 1893) that promised free farmland for classed and skilled European labour to cultivate Canada’s natural resources might well be called “miseducation.”
1:15 pm  Sister Co-Resister

Co-Resisting is a counter-hegemonic strategy to actively engage in liberation and solidarity consciousness building for the future forward. Come prepared to actively talk, hike, and share with us! This discursive walking salon is focused on walking side-by-side with Indigenous, 2-spirit, and trans lives. As an act of Indigenous sovereignty (land, culture, and people) that also migrates the physical margins of York’s campus, this ambulatory salon centres the points of view of Indigenous social thinkers: Nettie Lambert, Shane Camastro (Titiesg Wicinimintowak Bluejays Dancing Together Collective), Janet Csontos, and Lisa Myers. Together we work through concepts of belonging, what it means to deconstruct the proprietary understanding of land, and find ways to question Canada’s immigrant paradigm and treaty partnership identity.

Be prepared for a 2-hour hike.

3:15 pm  Gloria Swain: Rememory

The front porch of York University’s Stong House becomes a stage for Gloria Swain to tell the story of colonization, slavery, and oppression against Black women’s bodies. Rememory is a dance and spoken word piece addressing ancestral pain and generational trauma. Uttering and scribing the names of unacknowledged Black women (cis and trans) and calling upon the local history of slavery, past and present, Swain honours all who have lost their lives to violence, who are unknown, and not spoken of.

3:30 pm  Regent Park Catering Collective: Lunch Break

Regent Park Catering Collective members provide sustenance after a long walk. The collective shares a passion for cooking, creativity, and learning together to foster personal and community development.

4:00 pm  Syrus Marcus Ware: Long Table Discussion

Ware hosts a Long Table, an experimental performance-installation-discussion format used to facilitate dialogue around the relational context of a word or concept, allowing the group to unpack ideas together via the multitude of lenses present.

5:00 pm  Closing Remarks

Suburban Hospitality is co-presented by the AGYU and FES and programmed by Suzanne Carte, Emelie Chhangur, Lisa Myers, and Honor Ford-Smith. Artist, researcher, Desmond Miller is providing written documentation of the symposium to be made available on the AGYU website.

We would like to thank the generous contributions of Black Creek Community Farm, Black Creek Food Justice Network, PEACH (Promoting Education and Community Health), Justice for Migrant Workers, Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, Real Food Real Jobs, OPIRG York, University of Waterloo Social Development Studies, York University Faculty of Environmental Studies, Our Sustenance, and Neighbour to Neighbour Centre.

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