

Turn the Light

January 17 - March 7, 2020

Gallery 400, University of Illinois at Chicago

Expanded Exhibition Checklist

Herman Aguirre

Niños sin tambor, 2018

Oil and acrylic skins on canvas, 70 x 65 in.

Courtesy the artist

Niños sin tambor (in English titled Children Without a Drum) and the other three paintings in **this exhibition come from Aguirre's Cicatriz series, which focuses on visceral engagements and representations of traumatic events and how loss lingers in a community.** The depth and thickness of the paint evokes children killed in the horror of drug-related violence.

Herman Aguirre

La corona de Goyito, 2017

Oil and oil/acrylic skins on canvas, 60 x 48 in.

Courtesy the artist

Coronas are often very large floral arrangements used at viewings, funerals, and burials to honor family members who have passed away. *La corona de Goyito* memorializes the **artist's uncle's burial ceremony in Mexico, which immigrant family members in Chicago were unable to attend.**

Herman Aguirre

Testigos de Guerra, 2018

Oil and oil/acrylic skins on canvas, 60 x 77 in.

Courtesy the artist

This painting (in English titled *Witnesses of War*) is constructed from layers and layers of textured paint film, through a process of spreading, drying, peeling, cutting, and adhering. These skins, as the artist calls them, mimic fabric and evoke items left behind, such as clothing, after a violent event.

Herman Aguirre

Mártir, 2018

Oil and acrylic skins on canvas, 60 x 65 in.

Courtesy the artist

Mártir evokes the trauma, urgency, and confusions of gang related violence, which for Aguirre are very immediate because he lives and works in Chicago's Back of the Yards where gang-related violence is a constant risk and because his extended family in Mexico live with the threat of area drug lords.

Jin Lee

Train View series, 2019

Archival pigment prints, 20 x 25 in.

Courtesy the artist and Devening Projects Gallery

Drawing from documentary tradition, Lee's Midwest landscape images explore the complexity of America's socio-political and natural environments. Taken from the train during weekly 2-hour Amtrak commutes between Chicago and central Illinois, Lee's photographs repeatedly capture the beauty of an evolving terrain and reveal the processes through which land is developed and transformed.

Jin Lee

Train View, 2014

Archival pigment print, 20 x 25 in.

Courtesy the artist

Jin Lee

Train View series, 2014-19

Archival pigment prints, 20 x 25 in

Courtesy the artist

Jin Lee

Train View, 2014

Archival pigment print, 20 x 25 in.

Courtesy the artist

Derrick Woods-Morrow

Much handled things are always soft, 2019

Video, 8:36 min.

Commissioned by Visual AIDS for Day

With(out) Art 2019

Courtesy the artist

This video features the artist in conversation with long-term HIV survivor Patric McCoy, who shares how black men in the 1970s used Chicago parks to come together for sex, friendship, and community. Woods-Morrow and McCoy discuss differences between that era and today, including what was lost then and what may be lost now. *Much handled things are always soft* premiered on December 1, 2019 for World Aids Day, as part of the 30th **Annual Day With(out) Art video program “Still Beginning”**, which focuses on the fact that The AIDS Crisis is Still Beginning (as artist and HIV survivor Gregg Bordowitz has proclaimed).

Floating Museum

Ab Lib Vitrine, 2016-19

Installation, Plastic and Terra Cotta, Dimensions Variable

Courtesy the artists

Ab Lib Vitrine is a flexible display system used to present the work of other artists and the public invited into Floating Museum's work. This iteration of *Ab Lib Vitrine* features 3D-printed reproductions of works by artists Juan Angel-Chavez, Elizabeth Barren, Rodrigo Lara, Tony Lewis, Ayanah Moor, Kushala Vord, Rhonda Wheatley, Ricky Willis, Derrick Woods-Morrow, and Santiago X. The reproductions were previously on view on the front lawn of the Austin Town Hall, adjacent to the Central Green Line CTA Station. (Note: Smaller unlabeled pieces and fragments were recovered from the public display.)

The Austin Town Hall display was a part of Floating Museum's two-year project, Cultural Transit Assembly (CTA), developed in partnership with Chicago Transit Authority and Chicago Park District to highlight the cultural work and local histories of neighborhoods along the South and West end of the CTA Green Line. *Ab Lib Vitrine's* transparent display originated in Floating Museum's 2016 participatory exhibition *How to Give Light to a Mountain*, at the DuSable Museum of African American History. Floating Museum is an arts collective that creates new models exploring relationships between art, community, architecture, and public institutions.

Using site-responsive art, design, and programming, Floating Museum explores the potential in these relationships, considering the infrastructure, history, and aesthetics of a space. Floating Museum is co-directed by Avery R. Young, Andrew Schachman, Faheem Majeed, and Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford.

with this work we build
a park of monuments
with noses

& names
tongues & bones
that remember what his-story erased
the indigenous of Chicagoua
a field of garlic mis-named valley of onion
same story that butchered Kitiwaha
into Katherine
&/or silenced

&/or removed
same story that left DuSable faceless
(unlike Lincoln)
with this work we monere
latin in root
meaning remind
or create an again
inside the space reserved for memory
thought & feeling
that this city of skyscrapers
& el-rides
is a grid of anthems
for babies who will see the sun of morrow
& laments for the babies who won't
with this work we build
a We
(like Gwendolyn Brooks)
monument with us
any & every real cool Golden Shovel patron who hymns
under|over
ground
any & every curl
no matter how tight or loose
with us
monument any & every fist in tension
or release

- Avery R. Young

When Floating Museum asked the included artists to make new work for the Austin Town Hall installation, they offered this prompt for the artists to consider.

Hương Ngô

Profile of Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai, 2018

Laser-cut onion-skin paper, teak backing

Courtesy the artist

Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai (1910-1941), was a key female leader in Vietnamese anti-colonialist **revolutionary history**. Minh Khai's history of solidarity and resistance has been marginalized, as were those of many women in Vietnamese revolutionary history. Minh Khai, whose almost mythic history is marked by gaps and fictionalizations, was tracked, captured and ultimately executed by the Sûreté, the colonial French National Police. **Ngô's reproduction of a French Sûreté profile on Minh Khai includes the artist's English notes.**

Hương Ngô

Charmeuse de Serpents en Cochinchine, 2018

Serigraph on Arches Cover, 58 x 43 in.

Courtesy the artist

This work is one in a series that explores the questions, "How were representations of the colonized female body introduced to the world and utilized to sustain the project of colonization?" and "How do representations of these bodies afford or deny subjectivity, and how might we reconsider these women as political subjects seeking agency rather than **flattened figures in history?**" Ngô has paired her ongoing research on women involved in the Vietnamese anti-colonial movement with early 1900s popular media of the same era, focusing on the hypervisible, exoticized concubine who was the subject of a number of novels and widely-circulated colonial postcards of the time. This depiction of an indigenous Indochinese woman was abstracted from one of those postcards.

Hương Ngô

Who Owns The Light?, 2017

Archival pigment print on silk organza and neon, 12 x 6 in.

Courtesy the artist

In this silk reproduction of a mural from the former Palais de Porte Dorée (Palace of the Gilded Gate, now the Museum of the History of Immigration), workers are depicted harvesting rubber and surveying the land. While the mural was intended to display the mutual benefits of colonialism, instead it suggests the exploitation of resources and people from colonized lands and promotes Western ideals of progress and reform. Juxtaposed with the mural is the glowing neon text “Who Owns the Light?” This question refers to enlightenment as the ideological rationale of colonialization while asking “who claims the authority over the production of knowledge?” and “who is allowed to benefit from that knowledge?”

Jefferson Pinder

Elevator Music, 2012

Video, 2:19 mins.

Courtesy the artist

Pinder’s looping and cyclical video depicts Christopher Edwards, building superintendent of Hay Market Lofts, in the freight elevator there. The split frame pictures the front and the back of the elevator simultaneously. The Hay Market Lofts are located in Chicago’s gentrified West Loop and not far from the site of the Haymarket bombing, an iconic event in the history of the labor movement.