

rubén garcía marrufo: *Being Here*.

— *Alejandro Espinoza Galindo*

The works of rubén garcía marrufo are an audiovisual fabulation of the awe-inducing instant, gathering phantasmagorical narratives, silences, and rituals which expand the ways we embrace the concept of *border*, going beyond its social, historical, and political meaning, to manifest *border* as the site for a vital existence. With video, film, and sound experimentation as their principal mediums, they project their pieces onto public spaces or edit them into fragmented montages that alter our perception of the moving image in an exercise that fuses poetic fiction with documentary chronicles. garcía marrufo invites us to transcend the veil of lost moments that occur when we sense the pulse of our surroundings through sequences and scenarios that present human life as a fluid passage from one place to the next, a translation of languages and symbols, oral testimonies that tell stories of loss and communion. This work is a place where we launch into a sensorial adventure of discovery, that intimate encounter with the pondering image and its ability to connect with us, residual moments where we witness something both fulminating and captivating, summoning us to reunite with the primal wonder of being-in-the-world.

garcía marrufo is a restless creator, full of curiosity and critical insight regarding the effects that natural and urban surroundings have on

our senses, as well as the singularity of being human and the manner in which we make sense of what we see, hear, or touch, from near and from afar. At a very young age, they developed an omnivorous attitude toward all forms of artistic expression, engaging everything they found in their path without prejudice, driven by a permanent state of inquisitive imagination. Their early forays into the visual arts stemmed from exchanges with the art communities of Mexicali and Calexico, a multidisciplinary creative sector animated by a spirit of collaborative experimentation. This awareness of a perpetual game regarding art, its meanings and possibilities, led them to produce a series of documentary pieces, video collages, and sound designs, using different archival sources, rearticulating the sensory experience of the spectator before an audiovisual work. This attentive wandering forged a loving relationship with the moving image and with voices that flow like a whirlwind of memories stolen from reality.

A deep concern that garcía marrufo finds in the audiovisual medium is the ability to record a present that isn't there anymore, to see a fleeting moment that transcends its simplicity. We can see in their early pieces the configuration of a work guided by both documentation and by making the audiovisual experience a confrontation with the realm of the senses:

rise x fall
(rubén garcía marrufo,
maximiliano, Jaleesa
Johnston), *AT THE END
OF EMPIRE*, 2021.
Three channel video
installation, perfor-
mance. Courtesy
Portland Institute for
Contemporary
Art (Photo: Tojo
Andrianarivo)



dreamlike whispers that flow alongside noise and distortion, the earth's trembling mixed with the agitated voices that witness a mountain evaporating in midair, an experience not unlike discerning the sound of the wind caressing leaves, sunrays hiding behind the ruins of a wall while we listen to a man singing *norteñas*.

As their work evolves, *garcía marrufo* passes through a series of intersections between memory and presence, moving image and performance, allegorical installation and public space, which lead them to redefine the threshold between the audiovisual experience and its manner of operation where the Black Box migrates toward the White Cube and where the act of being in front of a projection will no longer be a still encounter with images on a wall, but rather an ecstatic experience, which lets the spectator meander through the surroundings of a given projection so to feel ourselves part of the ritual.

To live inside the works of *garcía marrufo* is to inhabit a place where playing children assault the camera with their screams and gestures while we listen to a tale of migration from the man that stops in his tracks to marvel at the “shiny constellations” when crossing a field bedeviled by coyotes (*El Cielo más Hermoso*), or to place us in between an opera singer and a captive audience on another screen (*Don Quixote a Dulcinea*), bodies covered in red cloaks that wander a city in ruins through the entrails of a crashed plane (*AT THE END OF EMPIRE*), bodies absent and oracular, a meditative dance of a silent nature. The camera lens approaches these sites, these voices, these pilgrimages in the middle of nowhere, to define a metaphysics of presence, the time and intimate tale of migration, placing us at the center of a state of transition, where subject and nature interweave

their poetic performance. In this manner, *garcía marrufo* articulates that sense of awe and epiphany behind those everyday discoveries that bring an all-too-human quality to existence, a voice of the subaltern that says, “I am Here. Always.”

Alejandro Espinoza Galindo is a writer, curator, and art historian. Professor of Art History and Theory at the School of Arts of the Autonomous University of Baja California, Mexico. This essay was originally commissioned by The Ford Family Foundation and included in an artist monograph, 2022.

rubén garcía
marrufo, *delineation
of breaths ii*, 2020.
Performative lecture,
Zoom play, 80 min.
Dimensions variable

Following spread:
rubén garcía marrufo,
el cielo más hermoso,
2019. Documentary
video, installation,
single channel video,
22 min. Bench from
the former ICE facility
located at 511 NW
Broadway, Dimensions
Variable. Courtesy
Oregon Contemporary
(Photo: Mario Gallucci)







Figure 1. Name, Title, 202X, etc.
123 x 123 in.

rise x fall
(rubén garcía marrufo,
maximiliano), *AT THE
END OF EMPIRE*, 2021.
Site specific perfor-
mance, digital video,
35 min.



rise x fall
(rubén garcía marrufo,
maximiliano), *AT THE
END OF EMPIRE*, 2021.
Site specific perfor-
mance, digital video,
35 min.

