

Artist's Statement

I am a Franco-Ontarian multi-disciplinary artist. This exhibition features sculptural performance work in photo and video. My practice negotiates the relationship between my identity, as a 10th generation settler, and the identity of this "country"; more precisely its extractive mission as economical basis and mode of operation. This negotiation between the living being, the vulnerable being, and the animal being (which we are) attempts to develop a powerful and tangible connection to life, including with more than human beings; such as plants, water, land, animals and minerals.

The body of work presented here is produced and engages the stakes of the territory where I have the privilege of experiencing life. These works are conceptually and physically situated at the headwaters of the West Credit River, in the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, encompassed in Treaty 19, of 1818, in the small town of Hillsburgh.

Half the exhibition features works produced between 2014-2021, these artworks critique extractivism using sculptural performance, such as *Terrestrial Nautica*, which required the fabrication of a functional vehicle, made of an aluminum boat and a snowmobile, or *Rock (2021)*, consisting of a fabricated rock on a trailer base which served as a mobile gallery, and then became the central work to a new work about the rock extraction which threatens the aquifer and water quality.

The exhibition offers an overview of a new body of work, which emerged after a period of research on Franco-Canadian legends, in which I realised that the phenomenology of legends ceased at a certain point in time. My hypothesis for the reason of this phenomenological interruption is that the violence inflicted on land and its beings, through the process and mechanisms of extraction, interrupted the land's ability of even desire to communicate.

This research and the conceptuality of the legend manifest itself in the new body of work, in which this *Leaf Being* (or being leaf in French) was born. *Leaf Being* also comes from three focussed years of cyanotype production, during which plants were delicately wrapped to capture their presence instead of their silhouette. The negative space of the cyanotype signals presence through absence. Thus the white overexposed form of *Leaf Being*.

These pieces focus on the environmental stakes on the territory I occupy, which are solely caused by capitalistic interests. The threats to these vulnerable ecological spaces are caused by the violence of large capital projects, which the land cannot support. One such threat is the new sewage plant which will dump 7000000 liters of effluent per day in the head waters of the West Credit River, where many threatened species still exist, or the deforestation of a large section of the Credit Conservation Authority where 6000 mature trees were cut to make create a shortcut for sewage pipeline, in an isolated large section of forest where endangered species live,

causing the silencing of tree frogs who have been singing here for millennia. I aim to bring attention to the impact of extractive colonial practices, I question the purely capitalistic motive for these forms of violence and underline the absurdity of these conventions.