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SE(A) CROSSINGS: TIME IN THE MIDST OF THE PRESSURES OF CHAOS

Multi-channel video/audio and mixed media installation

MARA JEVERA FULMER

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

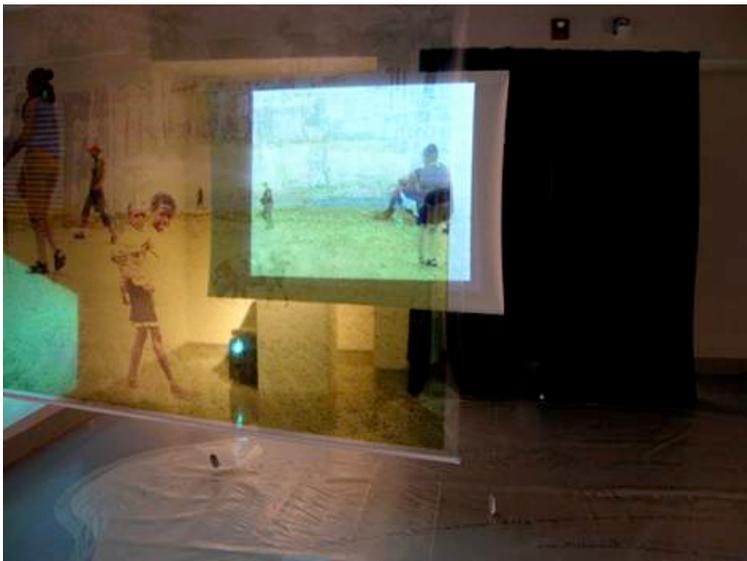
Through the use of video, stills, and audio, I am able to create juxtapositions that distort time and place, culture and identity, in a way that fully consumes the visitor like a sea whose waves build slowly and fade and build again. As we find ourselves at a sea-crossing of humanity in a global village, we may, in this post-September 11th age, experience constant imbalance and re-balance of personal and cultural identity amidst the pressures of a world in perceived chaos. I invite viewers to experience the re-imagining of our humanity, to obscure, disorient, re-orient and otherwise be engaged to new angles of understanding, using art and design as forces for social change.

The images and sound for this work come from a variety of locations but build upon the diverse experiences of people in Flint and in Fiji, thousands of miles apart, each facing the challenges of economic and social development, as their lives exist parallel to each other and as they intersect in this global community creating new waves of understanding their shared humanity.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKS FOR EXHIBIT

This is a multi-channel video and audio installation with at least eight large hanging panels on mylar and satin paper, large sandblasted acrylic dome, hung with monofilament from a metal grid and a large printed floor text. It is being modified from its original installation at Kresge Art Museum held in March 2005.

INSTALLATION AT C.S. MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN CENTER



MAKING THE INSTALLATION

All of the raw video footage used in this installation is original and was gathered either by

the artist, **Mara** Jevera **Fulmer**, or under her direction. This footage mostly originates from two overseas voyages to Fiji that she undertook with groups of her students from Mott Community College, one in July 2001 and another in June 2004. Other footage came from trips “back east” (such as the horseracing from Saratoga, NY). Additional footage was captured in early February 2005 on the north shore of Oahu, Hawai‘i. And finally, raw footage from the city of Flint was also captured in February 2005 with the assistance of two of the participants from the 2001 Fiji Study tour, Walt and James.

All still images used in the video and the hanging panels are original and, besides those photographed by the artist, additional photos have been provided by student participants or, in the case of photos of the coup in Fiji (from May/June 2000), were provided by colleagues at The University of the South Pacific and have been used with their permission. All video was edited by **Mara** using Final Cut Pro 4 HD. All hanging panels were designed and created by the artist in Photoshop CS and the “Time Poem” on the floor of the installation was designed and created in Illustrator CS. The “book” was designed using Photoshop and InDesign CS. Cameras included a Canon GLII and a Sony TRV11 digital video camcorders. Computer work was accomplished on an Apple 1 ghz. PowerBook 17” G4 with 1 gb ram and a dual-processor 2 ghz PowerMac G5 with 2 gb of ram and a 500 gb external LaCie FW800 harddrive.

The audio used is original and created either from audio recorded direct to tape, or composed by the artist in Apple’s SoundTrack. The “chant” segment is an original composition by musicians at the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture in Fiji recorded during the 2004 study tour and includes Mott students among the accompanying musicians. The two “Time Poems” (one spoken in the “round” video, the other installed on the floor) were written by the artist while traveling to Fiji and back to the USA in 2004. The final project was installed in the Kresge Art Museum as part of a Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition in March 2005 and was later modified for installation at Mott’s Visual Arts & Design Center in February 2006.



FLINT LABOR MURAL ON DECAYING BUILDING

This horizontal (56x39) image hangs along the wall, framing the “pond” that is the dome (see *“Time Poem II”*), and shows an image of a building at the Saginaw/MLK intersection in the beleaguered city of Flint where a huge mural is painted depicting the labor movement in bright colors in stark contrast to the rather bleak decay that surrounds it.

Like the graffiti in the Fiji piece (see *“Pro-Democracy Graffiti On Burnt-Out Building In Fiji”*), the mural presents to the people of Flint a call to action through pride in their ties to the birth of the labor movement and as a metaphor for the hard work ahead that will be necessary to their survival.



PRO-DEMOCRACY GRAFFITI ON BURNT-OUT BUILDING IN FIJI

Ironically, the building was formerly a lighthouse (a building designed to guide ships safely through danger) that had been converted to a restaurant. This horizontal (56x39) panel hangs along the opposite wall from the Flint Labor Mural, framing the “pond” of the hanging dome. Like the labor mural in Flint, it depicts what at first seems like a rather bleak image but then, upon further examination, one sees that it is a call to action to “wake up Fiji” and take responsibility for their future.



TIME POEM II

This video is projected into an upturned dome, as if looking down into a global pond, suggesting an oracle floating above the earth. The actual projection is bounced off a mirror and into the sandblasted dome hung by monofilament line from the suspended ceiling grid. The subject of the sequence is both introspective and contemplative, relating the concept of time and space, place and identity, and alludes to the subjects dealt with more specifically in the last two sequences. The audio comprises music and an ethereal recitation of “Time Poem II” written by the artist. The subtitle of the installation gets its name from a line in the Time Poem. Part I of this video “begins” the conversation with the other two major video sequences. (7:11;00)



FLINT-SIDE SEQUENCE

This video is projected onto the “back” side of one of the hanging art panels of the installation. The front side of the panel has a lightly printed image of graffiti and flowers, both originating in Flint (see *“Big Ups 2 All Flint Writers”*). The subject of this video is a contrasting view of life in Flint, told in part by my hosts, Walt and James, in response to their joining me in Fiji where I shared with them life in another culture, time, and place. Here, they “take **Mara** into the ‘hood” and share their view of home. The music, voices, and other audio and visual tonal qualities are meant to capture the essence of our “conversation” which makes itself more prominent in the middle segment of this video

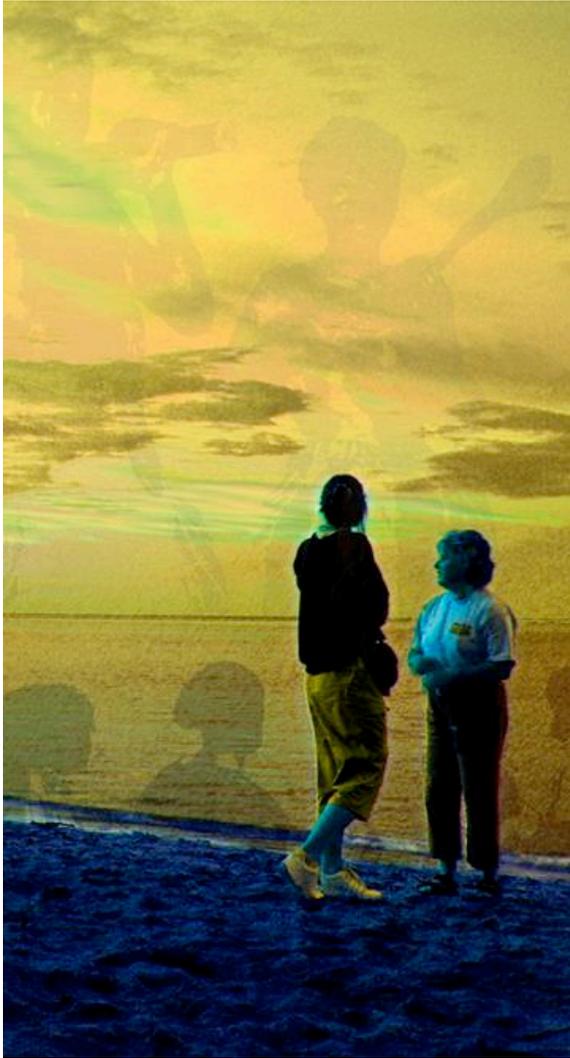
which serves as Part II of the conversation between the three videos. (7:11;00)

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

FIJI-SIDE SEQUENCE

This video is projected onto the “back” side of a hanging panel which has on the front the lightly “Walt’s Stone Toss” (see *“Wake Up Fiji” & Walt’s Stone Toss*). The last third of this video takes its turn as Part III in the “conversation” when the pace moves from contemplative to energetic. The connection between Walt and James (and therefore Flint) becomes more evident. This video also creates connections between past and present, traditional and contemporary expression. The “dance” in the last part of this video is a vehicle tying together traditional vs contemporary life, illustrating that Fiji moves forward, that art is also an integral part of their modern and traditional culture and society, providing a method of healing and growth, and a vehicle for both change and stability, lessons that we might consider more seriously here in the United States.

(7:11;00)



WOMEN AT SUNRISE ON BEACH

In this vertical transparent layout (38x72), light overlays of images Fiji warriors act as ghostly sentries of their cultural preservation in this composition of two Flint-area women at sunrise on a Fiji shoreline. The colors and contents have been manipulated so to create a surreal suggestion of a familiar scene that is “not-quite” paradise.



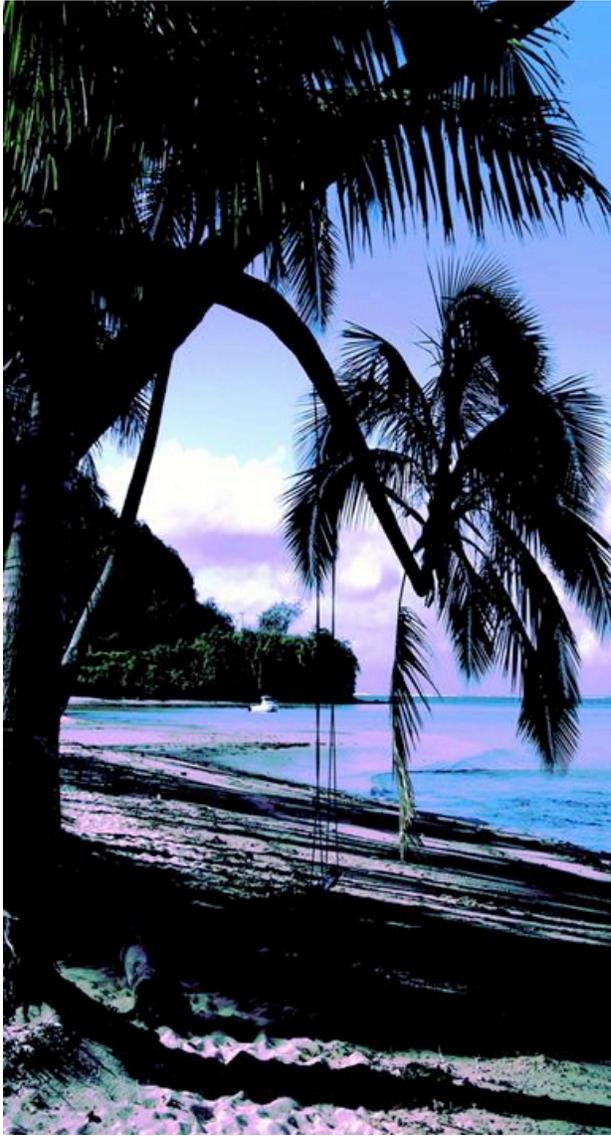
“BIG UPS 2 ALL FLINT WRITERS”

In this “lightly” printed horizontal semi-translucent layout (56x39), the viewer is presented with the contrasts of Flint itself, flowers from the prized gardens of the C.S. Mott Estate next to the community college of the same name, and graffiti that indicates a rivalry between writers and gangs in Flint and the surrounding area. This panel has the “Flint-side sequence” video projected onto the back.



SAND DUNES EXPLORERS & VILLAGE FOLKS WITH PIG

This horizontal transparent layout (56x39) presents the viewer with an odd juxtaposition of tourists hiking over the archaeologically important sand dunes, where they find fragments of historic pottery. The overlays are images of life in a contemporary Fijian village, with its tin shacks, laundry lines, and wandering pigs. The images challenge our notions of time and place, ancient and contemporary, native and foreign.



PALM TREES ON THE BEACH

As with the first vertical panel, this layout (38x72) also creates a surrealistic and unsettling treatment of the cliché of paradise.



“WAKE UP FIJI” & WALT’S STONE TOSS

This “lightly” printed horizontal semi-translucent layout (56x39) presents the viewer with the contrasting images of Fiji’s own graffiti (barely visible “Wake Up Fiji” pro-democracy response to an overthrow of the government based on greed) and the young Flint student standing on the Fiji shoreline tossing a stone across the ocean, a metaphor that proves to be more apt with time.



THE “GUYS” WITH COCONUT DRINKS & FLINT’S “CHEVY-IN-THE-HOLE”

This horizontal transparent layout (56x39) presents the viewer with the odd juxtaposition of the “tourists” Walt and James, and the half-demolished factory in Flint (called by locals “Chevy-in-the-hole”) where they come from. The two worlds collide, seemingly separated only by the layer of barbed wire fence as Walt looks back upon the scene.



TIME POEM I - FLOOR TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGN

Building on the theme of “Time”, the floor of this installation is a second “time poem”, this one presented in rhyme (the video projected into the dome contains Time Poem II). But in order to find the verse, one must follow and walk back and forth throughout the installation. The type has been designed to suggest the wave patterns left in the sands as the tide ebbs and flows.

(Shown here is the version presented at the Kresge Art Museum.)



“SE(A) CROSSINGS... AN OPEN BOOK”

As a means of giving the viewer one last piece to contemplate, I've created an “open” book which is simply an oval stand with a manipulated image of waves and water on its surface and a spring mounted upon it to hold small envelopes each holding a fragment of the images and poems presented in the installation. A special stamp has been made to look like a postal cancellation to suggest the idea of sending “letters home” from afar. Another stamp was designed with the artist's name, wave symbol, and website address. The visitor to this installation is invited to take one of the loose image & poetry fragments home with them.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

WATER SEQUENCE

This video segment is designed to be projected as a “splash” across the floor or walls of the installation and is purely ambient with the shimmery movement of the surface of water that has been visually manipulated. The audio is sounds of water but modified to sound almost as if one is underwater. (This video was left out of the Kresge Museum version of the installation.) (7:11;00)



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