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*Interior Infinite:*  
**Exhibition Guide**

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## LACIE BURNING

*seeing in the dark*, 2021  
Mixed media and video

Premiering in *Interior Infinite*, Lacie Burning's new work *seeing in the dark* expands on their previous *Reflection* series, a suite of photographs showing a figure in a mask of mosaicked mirror shards moving through a winter landscape. The reflection of nature in the subject's face represented a reciprocal relationship to the land. Burning now expands this work, creating a childlike effigy of themselves in contemplation of their own position as a queer Indigenous person, in a world mired in ecological catastrophe.

Lacie Burning (b. 1992, Branford, Ontario) is a Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) multi-disciplinary artist and curator raised on Six Nations of the Grand River located in Southern Ontario. Their work focuses on politics of Indigeneity and identity from a Haudenosaunee perspective through photography, performance and sculpture. They hold a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design with a focus on photography and Indigenous art. In 2019, Burning won the Renee Van Halm + Pietro Widmer Graduation Award for Visual Arts, was first runner-up for the 2020 Philip B. Lind Prize, and was longlisted for the New Generation Photography Award for 2020.

## CLAUDE CAHUN

*Self-portrait*, 1921  
*Self-portrait*, 1928  
*Self-portrait*, 1939  
Gelatin silver prints

Long before the other artists featured in *Interior Infinite* began working, Claude Cahun (b. 1894, Nantes, France, d. 1954, St. Helier, Jersey) was boldly experimenting with self-portraiture to critique the ways in which society constructs and defines gender and sexuality. Shaving her head and changing her birth name —Lucy Schwob—to a gender-ambiguous pseudonym, Cahun embraced the mutability of identity. She presented variously as female, male, and combinations thereof. It is believed that Cahun took her first self-portrait in 1913, embarking on an enduring investigation into the expansive potential of the self, as well as the potential for art to be a transformative social and political force.

Cahun was influenced by, and actively involved in, the avant-garde theatre of 1920s Paris, and would later be affiliated with the Surrealist movement. Far ahead of her time and overlooked by her peers on account of being female, Cahun was largely left out of art historical narratives. Her work was included in a 1985 exhibition of Surrealist photography, and in 1992, François Leperlier wrote Cahun's biography, bringing long overdue attention to her important work as an artist, writer, and activist.

# CHARLES CAMPBELL

*Dogon Time Traveler*, 2017  
Plywood

*Maroonscape 2: Yet Every Child*, 2020  
Sound, 6:05 min. looped

Artist Charles Campbell dons the mask displayed in *Interior Infinite* when stepping into character as Actor Boy, a trickster figure affiliated with the Jamaican festival of Jonkonnu. Known for its vibrant street parades on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, Jonkonnu is traced back to enslaved people of African descent observing holidays around Christmastime, and has grown into a celebration of independence and freedom. In Campbell's series of performances based on Jonkonnu lore, Actor Boy inhabits a parallel timeline, one in which emancipation of Blacks led naturally to racial equality; Actor Boy crosses over our timeline by travelling the vibrations of birdsong, in order to investigate where and how things went wrong for us.

The birdsong heard here has been cut into Morse code, and spells out a verse from Octavia E. Butler's novel *The Parable of the Sower*:

*Yet every child  
Is cast from paradise –  
Into growth and new community,  
Into vast, ongoing  
Change.*

Charles Campbell (b. 1970, Kingston, Jamaica) is a multidisciplinary artist, writer and curator. His work investigates non-linear concepts of time and the future imaginaries possible in the wake of colonisation using painting, performance, sculpture and installation. His work has been exhibited widely including at the Perez Art Museum Miami, Havana Biennial, the Brooklyn Museum, the Santo Domingo Biennial and Alice Yard in Port of Spain. Campbell holds an MA in Fine Art from Goldsmith College and a BFA from Concordia University. He currently lives and works in Victoria, BC.

## NICK CAVE

*Soundsuit*, 2015

Mixed media including vintage beaded flowers, beaded and sequined garments, metal and mannequin

*Blot*, 2012

HD video, sound, 42min.

Nick Cave has achieved wide recognition for his Soundsuits, an ongoing series of wearable sculptures in which the artist often performs. The first Soundsuit was constructed entirely from twigs, intended to armour and hide the Black body from state-sanctioned violence; it was created in 1992 as a reaction to the brutal beating of Black civilian Rodney King by the LAPD. As the series has progressed, the Soundsuits have become festive, glamorous, and unabashed. While they still armour the body and trouble our ability to classify someone based on their race or sex, thereby protecting the wearer from prejudicial judgement, the Soundsuits no longer seek to hide. Their assertion of resistance through visibility was the founding premise for *Interior Infinite*, which features two Soundsuits: one is shown as a sculpture, while another made of black raffia—can be seen and heard in motion in the video *Blot*.

Nick Cave (b. 1959, Fulton, Missouri) is a contemporary African-American artist and dancer. He attended the Cranbrook Academy of Art (MFA, 1989), North Texas State University (1984-86), and the Kansas City Art Institute (BFA, 1982). After finishing school, the artist became the director of the fashion program at the School of the Art Institute Chicago. Through the decades that followed, Cave has continued to address issues of racial inequality in the United States and his heritage. Cave's awards and residencies include the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2008), Artadia Award (2006), Joyce Award (2006), Creative Capital Grant (2004, 2002), and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2001). Cave has had numerous major exhibitions internationally, and lives and works in Chicago, IL, USA.

## DANA CLAXTON

*Headdress (Dana)*, 2018  
LED Firebox with trans-  
mounted chromogenic print

*Hand Tooled (4 Ellen)*, 2020-2021  
C-print

The two self-portraits by Dana Claxton reveal the vibrant role that belongings play in identity formation and representation. Here, heirlooms and personal affects form—or de-form—the silhouette of Claxton's body, literally composing her identities. *Headdress (Dana)* borrows from an inter-tribal collection of beadwork to convey transpersonal narratives spanning different generations and geographies, while *Hand Tooled (4 Ellen)* is both intimate and idiosyncratic, drawing from the artist's personal collection of handbags made by Indigenous Mexican artisans. In both works, Claxton becomes a cultural carrier, embodying the knowledge contained within these storied objects.

Dana Claxton (b. 1959, Yorkton, Saskatchewan) is a critically acclaimed international exhibiting artist. She works in film, video, photography, single- and multi-channel video installation, and performance art, investigating Indigenous beauty, the body, the socio-political and the spiritual. Her work has been shown globally in exhibitions and film festivals, and she has received numerous awards including the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts (2020), the Scotiabank Photography Award (2020), the VIVA Award, the Eiteljorg Fellowship, the Hnatyshyn Award, and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award. In 2018, she had a solo survey exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Her new body of work premiered at the inaugural edition of the Toronto Biennial of Art, Toronto ON. Claxton is Head and a Professor in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory with the University of British Columbia. She is a member of Wood Mountain Lakota First Nations located in SW Saskatchewan and she resides in Vancouver, Canada.

# MARTINE GUTIERREZ

*Demons, Chin 'Demon of Lust,' p93 from Indigenous Woman, 2018*  
*Demons, Yemaya 'Goddess of the Living Ocean,' p94 from*  
*Indigenous Woman, 2018*

C-prints mounted on Sintra, hand-painted artist frames

*Queer Rage, Swimming Lessons, p75 from Indigenous Woman, 2018*  
C-print mounted on Sintra

For Martine Gutierrez, every self-portrait is a transformative performance, as she questions what it means to be “genuine”. She documents her own inhabiting of various roles, acting as artist and muse as she controls the staging, lighting, make-up, and costuming herself. For the series *Indigenous Woman*, exhibited at the 58th Venice Biennale, Gutierrez created an entire 124-page glossy magazine in the style of Warhol’s *Interview Magazine*, with every ad and editorial executed by the artist. Here, “Indigenous Woman” refers not only to Gutierrez’s ancestry but also is taken to mean something inherent or intrinsic – a tribute to her experience as a transwoman. The artist describes this body of work as “the celebration of Mayan Indian heritage, the navigation of contemporary indigeneity and the ever-evolving self-image.”

Martine Gutierrez (b. 1989 Berkeley, California) is an artist, performer, and musician who produces elaborate narrative scenes that employ pop culture tropes in order to explore the complexity, fluidity and nuances of both personal and collective identity in terms of race, gender, class, indigeneity, and culture. Her work has been featured in several solo and group exhibitions internationally. Gutierrez received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2012. She is also a published musician and has produced several commercial videos, and her music has been featured by numerous fashion houses, including Saint Laurent Paris, Christian Dior and Acne Studios. Gutierrez lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.



## KRIS LEMSALU

*Baubo Dance*, 2021

Porcelain, textile, metal, leather

In Greek mythology, Baubo is an obscure goddess who is depicted as an old crone, and yet is sexually liberated and promiscuous. Her flouting of social restraint and normative beauty has been compared to carnivalesque folk celebrations by modern commentators, including Mikhail Bakhtin. Baubo was traditionally depicted with an exaggerated vulva; here, Estonian artist Kris Lemsalu—known for her intricately costumed sculptural and performance works—updates Baubo’s iconography with an androgynous twist for the twenty-first century. The figures’ dancing further references the pagan, pre-Christian traditions of the artist’s homeland, such as leaping over an open fire at midsummer.

Kris Lemsalu (b. 1985, Tallinn, Estonia) is an artist based in Berlin and Tallinn. She studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn; Danmarks Designskole, Copenhagen; and Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Having studied ceramics, Lemsalu often experiments with traditional techniques to create multilayered works. Her staged installations combine delicate porcelain sculptures cast as animal and human body parts or objects of clothing with found natural materials like fur, leather or wool. These can act as self-sufficient narratives, or alternatively as a stage for Lemsalu’s performances, the sculptures sometimes becoming a part of her costumes and props. For her recent works, the artist collaborated with musicians adding a further element to her performances (“Going, going”, with Kyp Malone, curated by Esa Nickle and Maaike Gouwenberg, Performa 17 Biennial, New York; and a performance with Glasser, DRAF performance night, KOKO, London, both 2017).

# URSULA MAYER

*Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality*, 2020  
LED screen, HD video, ash

In conceiving of digital identities, Ursula Mayer pushes the idea of the online avatar to new limits. Mayer engages the concept of the cyborg, a being whose existence is a blend of organic and synthetic matter, arguing that human identities are necessarily cyborg: they depend upon other beings and materials—whether animals, plants, or technology—in order to survive. This school of thought, known as posthumanism, de-centres the importance human beings to honour the many other systems, life forms, and substances on which their lives are contingent. In *Eternal Vomit Ground of Reality*, Mayer collaborates with trans model Valentijn de Hingh to visualise the malleable and fluid potential of the posthuman subject. Inspired by the idling animations of avatars in videogames, de Hingh's ethereal, larger-than-life presence is suspended somewhere between purely physical or virtual worlds.

Ursula Mayer (b. 1970, Ried im Innkreis, Austria) is an artist based in London and Vienna whose works have been exhibited worldwide. Her single and multi-channel film installations are crystalline circuits of images, composed of signs borrowed from architecture, literature, politics, mythology and science. These references cross multiple temporalities, locations and personae. Using the grammar of cinematography and montage, Mayer strives to indicate how spatial composition, human choreography and narrative construction inform and contribute to one another. She is the 2014 recipient of the Film London Jarman Award for experimental film and the Otto Mauer Prize in 2007. She graduated in 1996 at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and completed her MFA at Goldsmiths University London in 2005.

# MERYL McMASTER

*Dream Catcher*, 2015  
Archival pigment print on  
watercolour paper

*What Will I Say to the Sky and the  
Earth II*, 2015  
Digital C-print

*Wind Play*, 2015  
Chromogenic print

Working predominantly in self-portraiture, Meryl McMaster’s process encompasses both photography as well as the meticulous labour of constructing her elaborate garments and props in her studio. These guises are deeply informed by the ancestral sites on which McMaster poses, and the stories passed down about these places. Interpreting and re-staging legends and histories learned from her father, other relatives, and Knowledge Keepers, the artist embraces the landscape and seasons as a vital framework for her cultural understanding. Her journeys to these locations, and performances upon them, weave together history, lived reality, and imagination to counteract the erasure enacted by colonialism against the natural environment and the people who have resided there.

Meryl McMaster (b. 1988, Ottawa, Ontario) is a Canadian artist with nêhiyaw (Plains Cree), British and Dutch ancestry. Her work is predominantly photography based, incorporating the production of props, sculptural garments and performance forming a synergy that transports the viewer out of the ordinary and into a space of contemplation and introspection. She explores the self in relation to land, lineage, history, culture and the more-than-human world. McMaster is the recipient of the Scotiabank New Generation Photography Award, the REVEAL Indigenous Art Award, Charles Pachter Prize for Emerging Artists, the Canon Canada Prize, the Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship, the OCAD U Medal and was long listed for the 2016 Sobey Art Award. Her work has been exhibited widely, including her solo exhibition *Confluence* which travelled to nine cities across Canada from 2016-2020. She lives and works in Ottawa.

# ZANELE MUHOLI

*Cwazimula II, Paris France, 2019*  
*Bester IX, Philadelphia, 2018*  
*Olunye, The Sails, Durban, 2019*  
Site-specific photographic murals on vinyl

Zanele Muholi has photographed their ongoing series *Somnyama Ngon-yama: Hail the Dark Lioness* all over the world. In each self-portrait, Muholi clads themselves in found materials and objects, forming makeshift garments that consider the history of Black life, labour, and migration. Muholi, who refers to themselves not as an artist but a “visual activist”, remixes the visual languages of fashion, classical painting, and ethnographic exoticism, calling out the cultural and sexual violence inherent in such images. Centring their own queer, Black South African body, Muholi ensures that their dark complexion is the focus of each photograph, set among complex visual symbols that allude to history, ancestry, gender, and social justice.

Zanele Muholi (b. 1972, Umlazi, South Africa) is one of the most acclaimed photographers working today. They studied Advanced Photography at the Market Photo Workshop in Newtown, Johannesburg, and in 2009 completed an MFA: Documentary Media at Ryerson University, Toronto. Muholi has won numerous awards including the ICP Infinity Award for Documentary and Photojournalism (2016); Africa’Sout! Courage and Creativity Award (2016); the Outstanding International Alumni Award from Ryerson University (2016); the Fine Prize for an emerging artist at the 2013 Carnegie International; and a Prince Claus Award (2013), among others. Muholi’s work has been exhibited at Documenta 13; the South African Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale; and the 29th São Paulo Biennale. Muholi was shortlisted for the 2015 Deutsche Börse Photography Prize for their publication *Faces and Phases 2006-14* (Steidl/The Walther Collection). They are an Honorary Professor at the University of the Arts/Hochschule für Künste Bremen.

## AÏDA MULUNEH

*The Departure*  
*Morning Bride*  
*All in One*  
2016  
Archival digital prints

The works by Aïda Muluneh are drawn from her series *The World Is 9* (2016), named after a piece of wisdom handed down from the artist's grandmother: that the world will never be a perfect 10. The body paint worn by the subjects in these photographs is traditional among many ethnic groups across the African continent, while the bold garments appear futuristic. Reflecting on life, love, and history, Muluneh's subjects inhabit a vision of her native Ethiopia that foregrounds beauty and power.

Aïda Muluneh (b.1974, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) is an artist, former photojournalist, and a leading expert on photography in Africa. Muluneh is the 2007 recipient of the European Union Prize in the Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie, in Bamako, Mali, the 2010 winner of the CRAF International Award of Photography in Spilimbergo, Italy, winner of 2020 The Royal Photographic Society Curatorship award, a 2018 CatchLight Fellow in San Francisco, USA. In 2019, she also became the first black woman to co-curator of the Nobel Peace Prize exhibition while serving as a Canon Europe Ambassador. She is the founder and director of the Addis Foto Fest (AFF), the first international photography festival in East Africa hosted since 2010 in the city of Addis Ababa.

## ZAK OVÉ

*Fancy Sailor on Invader's Bay*, 2006  
*Moko Jumbies*, 2005  
*Psychedelic Sailor*, 2006  
*Jab Jab Devils*, 2004  
Inkjet prints

Zak Ové is renowned for his elaborate sculptures, based on the archetypal characters that appear in Trinidadian Carnival. These rarely shown photographs are from his series *Transfigura* (2000-2006) for which the artist travelled to Port of Spain, Trinidad every Carnival season for six years with a 35mm Nikon camera, documenting the festivities at their peak. Ové, who is of Trinidadian descent, sought to immerse himself in Carnival, and cinematically portray the complex mythical figures and archetypes embodied by the performers. Originally intended for a book, these images have informed the sculptural oeuvre for which the artist is well-known.

Zak Ové (b. 1966, London, UK) is a London based multi-disciplinary artist working in film, sculpture and photography to reclaim old world mythologies in new world source materials and technologies. His fascination with the interplay between antiquity and the future is inspired by masking rituals and traditions of Trinidadian carnival that is itself rooted in a struggle for emancipation. Ové's work is in celebration of the power of play, the juxtaposition of parody and sacred ritual and the blurring of edges between reality and fantasy, flesh, and spirit. His use of non-traditional materials—copper, wood, Victoriana and other found materials—situates the work in the metropolises of Europe and the Americas where they merge and mutate into endless possibilities and unexpected identities.

# SKEENA REECE

*Victimprincessmother and child*, 2015  
Inkjet print

*My child*, 2021  
Mixed media

Skeena Reece's performance-based works engage ideas of representation, autonomy, and selfhood. For this recent project, developed specifically for *Interior Infinite*, Reece adopts a doll of Baby Yoda as her child, as many Indigenous commentators on social media have identified with the character's status as a quiet observer, removed from his culture and detached from his language yet possessing vast wisdom and spiritual power. Reece provocatively questions the implications of indigenising a non-Indigenous cultural icon, and what this means for actual Indigenous representation. Her new performance series, *Victimprincessmother*, calls out assumptions, expectations, and stereotypes surrounding Indigenous women, and will unfold over TikTok during the run of the exhibition.

Skeena Reece (b. 1974, Prince Rupert, British Columbia) is a Tsimshian/Gitksan and Cree artist based on the West Coast of British Columbia. She has garnered national and international attention most notably for *Raven: On the Colonial Fleet* (2010), her bold installation and performance work presented as part of the celebrated group exhibition *Beat Nation*. Her multidisciplinary practice includes performance art, spoken word, humor, "sacred clowning," writing, singing, songwriting, video, and visual art. She studied media arts at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, and was the recipient of the British Columbia award for Excellence in the Arts (2012) and the Viva Award (2014). For her work on *Savage* (2010) by Lisa Jackson, Reece won a Leo Award for Best Actress. Reece participated in the 17th Sydney Biennale, Australia, and recent exhibitions include Comox Valley Art Gallery (2018) and Oboro Gallery, Montréal (2017).



# YINKA SHONIBARE CBE

*Un Ballo In Maschera*, 2004  
HD digital video, colour, sound, 32 min.

*Un Ballo In Maschera* shares its name and subject – the assassination of King Gustav III of Sweden at a masquerade ball – with the 1859 opera by Giuseppe Verdi. Yinka Shonibare's version is fully choreographed, though not set to music, and the costumes vividly express hybrid cultural identities that refuse easy, essentialist categorisation: the fabric is often identified with West Africa, and yet is sourced and purchased in Europe, where it was originally imported by the Dutch who copied it from wax-dyed Javanese textiles. Other elements of Shonibare's adaptation refuse a straightforward interpretation, with Gustav being played by a woman in drag. In the film, the king is constantly resurrected, only to be slain all over again: a wry comment on the politics of violence that remain prevalent today, despite their dysfunction.

Yinka Shonibare CBE RA (b. 1962, London, UK) studied Fine Art at Byam Shaw School of Art, London and Goldsmiths College, London, where he received his Master's in Fine Art. Over the past decades, Shonibare has become well known for his exploration of colonialism within the contemporary context of globalisation. Working in painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation, Shonibare's work examines race, class and the construction of cultural identity through a sharp political commentary of the tangled interrelationship between Africa and Europe and their respective economic and political histories. Shonibare uses wry citations of Western art history and literature to question the validity of contemporary cultural and national identities. In 2004, he was nominated for the Turner Prize and was awarded the decoration of Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. In 2019 Shonibare was made Commander of the same order, amending his professional name to include CBE.



## SIN WAI KIN

*Tell me everything you saw, and what you think it means, 2018*  
Velour, HD digital video, sound,  
5:38 min.

*Illocutionary Utterances, 2018*  
Velour, HD digital video, sound,  
5:54 min.

Behind the red curtains are the two video components of Sin Wai Kin's multimedia performance *A View From Elsewhere*, which draws from personal history, scientific research, behavioural psychology, and the societal pathologisation of queerness to illustrate how social constructions of gender are imposed on physical bodies. In the first video, Sin dissects the contrivances of "feminine" attributes considered desirable to men; meanwhile, the artist poses as a drag queen, rendering their sex ambiguous despite their hyper-feminised features. In the second video, Sin narrates how the assignment of gender at birth polices – and often distorts – how a person will be viewed and related to for the rest of their life. The artist's calm narration is at odds with their emotive lip-syncing to "Marcia Baila" by Les Rita Mitsuoko, reflecting the tension between their feminine upbringing and nonbinary identity. Through these two videos, Sin provocatively questions who gets to define and own gender expression.

Sin Wai Kin (b. 1991, Toronto, Ontario) is an interdisciplinary artist based in London, UK. the solo exhibition *Narrative Reflections on Looking* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2020. In 2021, the artist will be included in the touring exhibition *British Art Show 9*. Their work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, and Sin has performed at Frac Lorraine, Metz, France; Serpentine Galleries, Whitechapel Gallery, Hayward Gallery, and ICA, London, UK; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; and as part of the 58th Venice Biennial, Venice, Italy. Their 2016-2019 project *Dream Babes* explored science and speculative fiction as a productive strategy of queer resistance, which included multiple publications as well as a range of live programming and events across several UK venues.

# CARRIE MAE WEEMS

*Missing Link, Happiness*  
*Missing Link, Justice*  
*Missing Link, Liberty*  
2003  
Iris prints on paper

The *Missing Link* triptych was created in 2003 as part of the Louisiana Project, a series of photographs by Carrie Mae Weems commemorating the bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase. Tracing the history of race relations from plantation slavery, through the exclusively white festivities of the Rex Parade, Weems deftly embodies the infractions of social order that took place during Mardi Gras in New Orleans: her self-portraits touch on the imitating of slaves by slaveowners and vice-versa in the antebellum South, and the forbidden interracial liaisons that were known to happen during the Rex Ball, among other events. Weems disguises herself entirely behind masks and tuxedos, inscribing these complex histories through costume.

Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953, Portland, Oregon) is a renowned artist whose work has been featured at museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville, Spain. She has won numerous awards, grants, and fellowships, including a MacArthur “Genius” grant, the U.S. State Department’s Medal of Arts, the Joseph Hazen Rome Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome, NEA grants, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award, among others. Recent projects include directing *The Baptism*, a film written by Carl Hancock Rux honoring civil rights leaders John Lewis and C.T. Vivian, commissioned by Lincoln Center; and *Resist COVID/Take 6!*, a public art campaign responding to the impact of COVID-19 on Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities.

## ZADIE XA

*Child of Magohalmi and the Echoes of Creation*, 2020  
HD digital video, sound, 55 min.

*Child of Magohalmi and the Echoes of Creation* intertwines the folklore of Grandmother Mago, a creator goddess from ancient shamanist traditions in what is today Korea, and “Granny” or “J2”, the real-life matriarch of the J pod, a family of Southern Resident orcas off the west coast of British Columbia. Performing in the video as Grandmother Mago, and wearing handmade quilted textiles that allude to the layering of identities, Xa positions herself as a shaman mediating between two worlds: her experience growing up in British Columbia, where the J pod was sighted, and the abstract idea of South Korea as a “homeland”, where Grandmother Mago originated. The conflation of the grandmother figures Mago and J2 speak to both the vitality and erasure of matrilineal knowledge: the loss of stories centring women as Confucianism took hold in Korea, and the death of J2 in 2016, who had guided and taught her pod for generations. Through this work, Xa commemorates – and revives – both matriarchs.

Zadie Xa (b. 1983, Vancouver, British Columbia) currently lives and works in London. She received an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art, London, in 2014 and her BFA at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver, in 2007. Recent solo exhibitions include *Soju Sipping on a Sojourn to Saturn*, Galería Agustina Ferreyra, Mexico (2018), *HOMEBOY 3030: Return the Tiger 2 the Mountain*, Union Pacific, London (2018), and *The Conch, Sea Urchin and Brass Bell*, Pump House Gallery, curated by Mette Kjærgaard Præst, London (2017). Selected group shows include *Body Armor*, curated by Jocelyn Miller, MoMA PS1, New York (2018). She has also staged performances at international galleries and festivals including Palais de Tokyo, Hayward Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, Block Universe and the Korean Cultural Centre UK.



# CITATIONS

*“The **interior infinite** could not have been found in a closed and finished world, with its distinct fixed boundaries dividing all phenomena and values.”*

p. 44 in Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and His World*, published 1984, Indiana University Press, Bloomington (translated by Helene Iswolsky from *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable*, originally published 1965, Khudozhestvennaya literatura, Moscow)

*“...[We] have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress.”*

p. 207 of “Ecstasy,” in bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, published 1994, Routledge, New York and London

*“...[Definitions] belonged to the definers, not to the defined.”*

p. 190 in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, published 1988, Penguin, New York (originally published 1987, Alfred A. Knopf, New York)

*"[My grandmother] filled us up with legends of flying women who inhabited the billowing darkness. As if letting out the day, rearranging the world, she in her nightly cadences would set the events, the real meanings of the world, right."*

p. 97 of "This Body for Itself", in Dionne Brand's *Bread Out of Stone*, published 1998, Vintage Canada, Toronto

*"Beauty is not a luxury; rather it is a way of creating possibility in the space of enclosure, a radical art of subsistence... a transfiguration of the given. It is a will to adorn, a proclivity for the baroque, and the love of too much."*

p. 33 in Saidiya Hartman's *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals*, published 2020, W.W. Norton & Company, New York

*"The exercise of imagination is dangerous to those who profit from the way things are because it has the power to show that the way things are is not permanent, not universal, not necessary."*

p. 219 of "A War Without End", in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Wave in the Mind: Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader, and the Imagination*, published 2004, Shambhala Publications, Boulder

*"...I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet."*

p. 81 of "La Consciencia de la Mestiza/Toward a New Consciousness" in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, published 1987, Aunt Lute Book Company, San Francisco

*"I am who I am, doing what I came to do, acting upon you like a drug or a chisel to remind you of your me-ness, as I discover you in myself."*

p. 146-147 of "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger", in Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, published 2007, Crossing Press, Berkeley

*"What if you were to challenge yourself every time you feel afraid of me – and all of us who are pushing against gendered expectations and restrictions? [...] What if you were to surrender to sublime possibility – yours and mine?"*

p. 85 in Vivek Shraya's *I'm Afraid of Men*, published 2018, Penguin Random House Canada, Toronto

*"I seek out a beauty that isn't subject to interruption, a beauty free from contestation... Beauty as a troubling of normality. Beauty as an indictment of the status quo. Beauty as what it is to exist in the register of futurity."*

p. 133 of "Please Keep Loving: Reflections on Unlivability", in Billy-Ray Belcourt's *A History of My Brief Body*, published 2020, Hamish Hamilton Canada, Toronto

## AUDIO GUIDE:

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