

# A THREAD, —EXTENDED

—ODETTE ENGLAND—JUSTIN LEVESQUE—

—ALLISON MARIA RODRIGUEZ—

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-EXTENDED

Gallery 360, June 16 - October 2, 2021



## Line. n.s. [ *linea*, Latin. ]

*A thread extended to direct any operations — The string that sustains an angler's hook — Lineaments, or marks — Extension; limit — Family, ascending or descending*

From geographical surveying to GPS, visual and navigational technologies increasingly delineate our relationships with the natural environment. Freighted with commercial imperatives and colonial histories, such technologies also fail to register the textures of lived experience: memory, sensation, serendipity, loss, desire. In *A Thread, Extended*, Odette England, Justin Levesque, and Allison Maria Rodriguez explore embodied forms of wayfinding, drawing on familial labor, somatic experience, oral histories, and ecological research to surface the marks we make on the landscape, and how it marks and makes us in return.



## ODETTE ENGLAND—

Odette England's photo-sculptures begin with family archives and oral histories: letters, snapshots, and conversations with her parents about their former dairy farm in southern Australia. Yet her artistic interventions into autobiographical surfaces invite broader conversation about land, gender, and labor.

With *In the Black, in the Red*, England bends photographic negatives of former farmlands to match property boundaries. The negatives crease and crack; two dimensions open to three. The artist sends the troubled negatives to her mother, who sutures them with her old sewing machine, a locus of unpaid reproductive labor. As a final gesture in this female-led choreography, England resews the prints she makes from the returned negatives, leaving the red threads hanging. England also renders some of the sewn negatives as direct contact prints in the color darkroom, which turn the red threads blue.

For *This is How I Hold You*, the artist combines images of rural family graves with old negative carriers salvaged from defunct photographic studios. Used to grip the film negative at its edges during the enlargement process, here, each carrier conceals more than it exposes.

*Red #8* (detail), from the series *In the Black, In the Red*, 2020, unique gelatin silver prints from sewn negative, over-sewn with red thread



## JUSTIN LEVESQUE—

Since 2012, when Icelandic shipping company Eimskip moved their North American headquarters to Portland, Maine, the city has gained increasing prominence in Arctic trade and geopolitics. Portland artist Justin Levesque examines the commercial and visual production and consumption of the Arctic, tracking circuits of exchange, extraction, and mediation, from masculine archetypes in heroic exploration myths, to Instagram's #glacierporn, and Arctic memory foam as a surface for projection.

Levesque's embodied relationship to the region – forged during multiple seaborne artist residencies to the North Atlantic and Arctic Circle – is inflected by his somatic experience living with the bleeding disorder hemophilia. For Levesque, the Arctic presents a double site of precarity: subject to the impact of climate change, and, in its extreme conditions and isolation, potentially treacherous to his own wellbeing.

Exploring this dual precarity, Levesque's *Vital Signs*, named for Per Espen Stoknes' articulation of the five psychological barriers to taking climate action (Distance, Doom, Dissonance, Denial, and Identity), protrude from the wall like emergency-room wayfinding signs. In *Proxy*, Levesque films himself trudging backwards through the snow, pulling a fluorescent red mooring buoy that marks the traces of his labored movement. Constantly monitoring his vital signs and logging GPS coordinates every ten seconds, in his *Anchor Point* data drawings, Levesque traces the movements of his ship when anchored in Svalbard's fjords. Body, hull, and transmitter merge to form a large-scale dowsing pendulum, revealing the ocean's relentless push and pull.

Video still from *Proxy*, 2017, iPhone-captured video, infinite loop

## ALLISON MARIA RODRIGUEZ—

An immersive multi-channel video installation, *all that moves* emerges from the artist's residency in Churchill, Manitoba during an Earthworks Fellowship at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre. This small town at the Arctic's edge, where the artist spent a summer on an Earthwatch Fellowship, is extremely vulnerable to climate change, and is a beacon for related scientific research. Through one component of the installation – a series of videos shot and installed at ground level – Rodriguez invites us to slow down, to pay attention; to become close observers in turn.

Yet alongside the town's environmental acclaim (it is also a popular destination for eco-tourism), Rodriguez surfaces the specter of the forced removal of members of the Sayisi Dene First Nation to Churchill in the 1950s. Relocated on the false environmental pretext that they were overhunting Caribou in the Little Duck Lake region, the Dene were later moved to the (failed) federal-government-designed "Dene Village" seen in the installation's central projection.

Rodriguez also draws attention to the area's history as a research and military testing site for launching rockets and missiles in Arctic conditions: though the Churchill Rocket Range closed in the 1980s, uncleared shrapnel still litters the landscape. Throughout the installation, the artist combines original footage with composite animations of an auroral sky. The phenomenon invokes deep indigenous knowledge and histories of geophysical inquiry, becoming a plane of interconnection and imagination: a space for holding all that Churchill harbors; *all that moves*.

Video still from *all that moves*, video installation, 2021



Above: Odette England, *Life Still 7* from the series *This is How I Hold You*, 2020, unique photo sculpture with gelatin silver print and vintage negative carrier, archival filament

Gate fold: Curator Amy Halliday and Gallery Co-op Megan Lam check that Justin Levesque's *Anchor Point* (2018) series of data drawings is perfectly aligned during installation. Photo by Ruby Wallau/Northeastern University.

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