

Irene Loughlin



dowsing Irene Loughlin/Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa
2010 photograph
34" X 36" Digital Print

Selected Works
PDF

loughlin.irene@gmail.com

Biography

Irene Loughlin is an artist, writer, and cultural worker. She holds an MVS from the University of Toronto, a BFA from Simon Fraser University, has attended the SVA and NSCAD Studio Programs in New York, and is an alumni of OCAD. Her art practice and research interests centre upon investigations of performativity, colonialism, feminism and resistant, ecological and neurodivergent perspectives within contemporary art. She works with visual imagery that comments upon our contemporary emotive discourse.

Loughlin has participated in various solo and group exhibitions including *Through a Window: Visual Art and SFU 1965-2015* *Audain Gallery*, Vancouver (2015), *Westbeth Gallery*, Transforming Community: Disability, Diversity and Access NY (2015) and *The Month of Performance Art*, Berlin (2014).

She has been awarded the Lynch Staunton Award, Canada Council for the Arts, for mid-career, interdisciplinary practice and a SSHRC Masters Level Scholarship and is the author of numerous essays, articles and conference proceedings. Her presentations include the Disability Culture Symposium (University of Michigan), the UAAC Conference (OCAD University, Toronto) and the Performance Studies International Conference (New York University).

She is the author of numerous articles, essays and conference proceedings, including publications in *Mousse* magazine (Milan) and *Fillip* (Vancouver).



Fluctuation
Photograph 34" X 36" Digital Print
Westbeth Gallery NY 2015
Audain Gallery Vancouver 2015
supported by the Canada Council for the Arts

Based on the feelings of neurologically diverse experience - wanting to be visible but failing to be so. To be simultaneously absent and present. The experience of disassociation communicated through visual metaphor.



Though a Window: Visual Art and SFU 1965-2015
Audain Gallery Vancouver
Curated by Amy Kazymierchuk and Melanie O'Brian



sin ser visto / without being seen

Performance Art

Curated by Shannon Cochrane

Nuit Blanche - Gladstone Hotel, Toronto 2015

supported by Workman Arts and FADO Performance Centre

also presented at Kilometro Cero, the Museum of Modern Art,

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 2015

Curated by Alexei Texeiras

A performance evolving from a workshop with artists from Workman Arts (artists working within the context of neurodiversity ('mental illness')). The performance took place in a hotel which formerly housed low-income Torontonians, and now functions as an art hotel. I lived across the street from this hotel in the 1990's during a period of time when low-income artists/artists with disabilities could still live in Toronto's downtown core. During the performance I stood in a hotel room on a pedestal.

An industrial fan below blew my six foot long eyelashes into the architecture of the room.

The avoidance of seeing by lowering one's eyes, but eyelashes act as filters/curtains still floating and spreading into the space - into the architecture of the room (seeking corners, persons, walls)

They are uncontrollable, inconsolable. They pull at your eyelids forcing you to see.



Owning the Land
digital print, 29" X 39"
Westbeth Gallery, NY
Curated by Petra Kuppers, 2015
supported by the Canada Council for the Arts

Created at the Burren College of Art Residency
Balleyvaughan, Ireland



Neurodiversity Manifesto
Month of Performance Art Berlin
Curated by Rebecca Weeks
digital print, 29" X 39"
2014

supported by the Canada Council for the Arts

Created and presented at an international workshop for artists with disabilities,
I literally 'come to the table' and read a manifesto of neurodiversity in the form of
concrete poetry.



Brock University
Sean O'Sullivan Gallery
2013



7a11d Toronto
Curated by Shannon Cochrane
untitled
2012

A performance exploring social constructs of mental illness in childhood and as a young adult. The performance includes actions which both resist and succumb to the social constructs surrounding 'mental illness'. Through performance art, we can express suppressed realities.

The work gives visual representation to disavowed experiences of anxiety, depression, and disassociation. Performance art allows the artist to dismantle immediate negative associations; in performance art 'shame' is transformed into 'beauty' and vice versa.

Therefore, I undertake performance in order to experience and share its alchemical properties.



Schloss Solitude
Stuttgart, Germany
2011

Using the architecture of Schloss and its environment, I use standard objects of performance such as candles. I wrap my body in plastic wrap and 'smoke' the candles. I back out of the space, and walk with the viewers through the grounds of Schloss Solitude. In my 'evening attire' we pass a man loading many mercedes benz onto a long transport vehicle, and persons elegantly dining and watching the performance from a patio. I lie down in the grass of Schloss Solitude while a man removes tablecloths from





Miami International Performance Festival
Miami Gardens
encarnando a san francisco de asís -
embodying St Francis
Curated by Charo Oquet
2011

An invented ritual in Miami Gardens as part of the Miami International Performance Festival. Using a repurposed plastic flamingo lawn ornament from the Miami Target as a ritual urn, which I drink from and blow through in order to 'call' to the trees. The viewers were invited to drink from the 'urn' on this hot summer day, as a means of sharing and participating in this invented ritual.



EPI International Performance
Curated by Alperoa
Lota, Chile
2012

I am buried by the earth
and work materials of Lota - coal - with its references as both an industrial
material related to the mines, and as a domestic material for heating homes.
I asked the viewers to build a sculpture using this material and my body.
This work, taking place in the gazebo dedicated to Isadora Goyenchea, also
referred to the life of the woman herself in relation to her community and
Lota's history. Goyenchea was both aristocratic in her life situation, and
'socialist' in her ideology. The piece also reflects the aesthetics of my own
life in the industrial city of Hamilton ON with its heavy steel production.



University of Toronto Arts Centre
By Grand Central Station
2009

A woman's lack of stability and her minimal economic resources further emphasize the qualities of love and empathy emptied from a culture degraded by the uneven distribution of wealth. The woman's actions in the video signals her internal distress in relation to her circumstances. She sits on a bed that takes up most of the space in a small, worn hotel room, and pulls clothing from her suitcase in a careless, distressed manner. The clothing is later tied together and strewn in a circular motion around the bed. This self-pacifying nest of clothing forms an inner, circular frame within the bed to contain, protect and soothe the body. The self-imposed drowning of the woman's head in the profile of the oval sink in *by Grand Central Station*, however, is a submerged abject image counter to the cameo.

At times, the videographer's seating next to the bed is reminiscent of a Gestalt arrangement of objects and bodies, or the Freudian couch of psychoanalysis. The body flips on the bed, turning away from the psychiatric role, where the client/patient assumes the passive-aggressive posture of the depressive, visually asserting "I just want to sleep" and thus rejecting the position of the videographer cum therapist.

Neither overtly mentally ill nor mentally well (according to societal standards), the single woman in the hotel room is abandoned to an environment to which she cannot ultimately adapt, and from which she must find some method of escape. The woman ties her sheets and clothing together, an action that often leads to an escape through a window, but the SRO window seems impenetrable. The culture both configures and surveys the woman's collapse from afar, eschewing any responsibility or connection to her state. The video camera is a substitute for this disembodied surveying. The body in the work occupies a place of ambiguity that is experienced as intolerable.

"A woman engages in a series of seemingly futile or random actions as an apparently hand-held camera, with its constantly shifting views, holds her in our unflinching, somewhat Swiftean gaze of vague disgust. There's an inescapable feeling of entrapment-in-the-body, a restlessness of mind, as her mute anxiety becomes our acute discomfort, and – tellingly – a rejection of her failure." Ian Carr-Harris



kiss
 with Jorge de Leon
 paired in an evening with Carolee Schneemann
 for two generations of feminist performance artists
 Bone 11, Curated by Andrea Saemann
 2008 Bern, Switzerland
supported by the Canada Council for the Arts

“Okay, I think we can stop this now. This is democracy.”

People turn around, astonished, irritated. The woman is a member of the audience. Or is she really a performer? She is standing in the audience. People turn around, irritation, faint giggles, whispering, astonishment, uneasiness. The naked, kissing couple in the spotlight now forgotten, unimportant, beside the point.

“What are they doing there?” The woman again. More turning around. “Look, then you can see what they are doing.” Reaction. The woman is upset, shocked, angry, irritated. “...2008...”, “...consumers...”, “...go...”. She goes. Uneasiness. Many people leave.

“Bewilderment”, the word used in Schneemann’s performance, comes to mind. A woman opens her umbrella. Union-Jack pattern. Turns away, leaves.

We are sitting on the stage. Close to the action. A spotlight positioned in the centre and a black curtain in the background against the white wall, a white cloth on the floor – the stage. On the left a woman. On the right a man. Both naked. Both tattooed. Approach each other. Take the cloth, wind it about their heads.

Embrace, kiss, press their bodies together.

Uncertainty. Caution. Tenderness.

They kiss, sit down, kiss, confer with one another. Take a thread, a red one, a needle, stitch the thread through their breasts.

Uncertain. Cautious. In pain.

Pull it out again and sit back down, confer with one another.

Then the woman. The leaving, the not-knowing-what-now, the uncertainty in the audience. At some point then the performers stand up and move through the audience to the exit. *Lisa Bauer*



Ayles Ice Shelf
 Htmiles, Studio XX
 Montreal, QC
 2005

supported by the Ontario Arts Council

A work based on the recent separation of the Ayles Ice Shelf, which separated from an island near the North Pole in 2005. The work relays some of the frustration and futility felt by the individual body when facing the fact of global warming and its consequences. Throughout the world, the effects of violence, economic disparity and globalization have caused massive migration and the forced movement of populations. Similarly, movements of tectonic plates and unusual weather ruminations have been initiated by global warming. In this performance art work the individual body interacts with materials and objects related to the separation and migration of the Ayles Ice Shelf.



Nadia
Vancouver Performance Art Biennial
Vancouver, BC 2005
supported by the Canada Council for the Arts

The performance work combines video and performance, largely inspired by my childhood. As a girl from the age of about 9 to 12, I was greatly influenced by the media images of the Olympics as they occurred in Montreal in 1976. At that time there was a phenomena of young girls studying gymnastics in southern Ontario, aspiring to be Nadia Comaneci. I joined this group, but my time on the balance beam or parallel bars found me frozen in space with the terrible fear of falling and dying. Nadia Comaneci was represented during these games as a figure of perfection, and the larger than life video representations of her image were of the first that I remember seeing. Similarly around that time, my father had bought early versions of the video camera, which held a large portapack battery that had to be constantly recharged. My fascination with the image was combined with the complication of technology, which seemed outside of my age and inherently, my my gender. The fact that the footage is Olympic is appropriate. When I mounted this work in Vancouver it was just prior to the 2010 games. This accomplishment was largely publicly celebrated, whereas the public fallout from such an event resulted in the extreme gentrification of Vancouver, a housing crisis and pressure on the low-income areas of Vancouver where I had lived. Through a text bar and audioscape, this work predicted some of the same results of the Montreal Olympics which left the city in a financial crisis. The work was executed by a gymnastics team of young girls from a local community centre.





Synthetic Happiness
 Vancouver, BC
 Pendulum Gallery
 The Society for Disability Art and Culture
 Curated by Persimmon Blackbridge and Elizabeth Shefrin
 2003

This installation/performance was created in collaboration with Naufus Ramirez- Figueroa. Synthetic Happiness depicts a world in which nothing is quite real. A clear vinyl tent, useless for privacy, warmth or protection, an Astroturf campsite, electric blankets without electricity, exercise equipment replacing the Great Outdoors, and anti-depressants sewn into the sides of the tent, provide an environment through which we moved dissociated from our actions. In today's world of psychiatry, more and more emotions that were once seen as part of the spectrum of human experience are now being classified as illnesses. At what point does diagnosis and its accompanying drugs create a cyborg quest for perfect human happiness?



light as a feather heavy as lead
 Klaus Steinmetz Gallery
 San Jose, Costa Rica
 2002

supported by the Canada Council for the Arts

I alternately sinks and floats in an uncovered plexi-glass tank full of water for forty five minutes. The work references incidences of female persecution in European and North American history, and specifically the practices of identifying and murdering women accused of witchcraft from the early 13th century to the late 17th century. The water tank was created to emulate the picture plane of painting and holds the performance within elements of a tableau vivant, and emulates the West Coast Canadian practice of the backlit photography of the photo conceptualists in a three dimensional context. An oral element to the work was developed at Video In Studios and features a loop of a group of young girls reciting the childhood levitation chant "She's as light as a feather, she's as heavy as lead..." The oral element also locates the piece within its historical roots and contains the work of the Chilean artist Violeta Parra, commentary on the writer Virginia Woolf, and the work of British Columbian poet Pat Lowther and her daughter, Beth Lowther. The audio work was produced in both English and Spanish. The performance was produced with the assistance of Costa Rican artist Victor Vega.