JUDY ANDERSON
SHEILA NOURSE
LORETTA PAOLI

THE
SOLE
PROJECT
OCTOBER 19 –
NOVEMBER 19, 2016

ART GALLERY OF REGINA
Loretta Paoli, Angeline, oil on etched plexi and video projection, (text by Angeline Chia), 40 x 56 inches, 2016

Sheila Nourse, Aganetha, mixed media, bees wax, resin, photographs, 16 x 24 inches, 2016

Sheila Nourse, Monica, mixed media, corn husks, dirt, wood, photographs, 16 x 27 inches, 2016

Loretta Paoli, Regina, oil on etched plexi and video projection, (text by Regina Akok), 40 x 56 inches, 2016

Judy Anderson, This one brings me the most pride (installation detail), beads, goalie helmet, plexi, otter pelt, 18 x 12 x 15 inches, 2016

Judy Anderson, And from her parts of me emerged (installation detail), beads, material, coyote pelt, rocks, plexi, handmade paper, 12 x 7 3/8 x 5 inches, 2016
words and meanings
When spoken aloud, the word “sole” generates multiple senses. Its etymological threads can be traced to a space (bottom of the foot), a species (flatfish) and a human condition (alone, single, unassisted). Then there’s the word’s homophonous sister: “soul.” In Western hierarchies the sole of the foot is considered lowly, nearest to the ground. It is vulnerable and rarely seen – unless one is a reflexologist, conversant with all regions of the body via their corollaries in the sole. Soles – and the feet and shoes attached to them – tell a lot about the lives of those who possess them. One lives on a shoestring budget. One performs fancy footwork, gets a foot in the door. One sidesteps issues or digs in their heels and takes a stand. For the artists in The Sole Project – Loretta Paoli, Sheila Nourse and Judy Anderson – matters of the sole open pathways for honouring women who have been central to their lives and art practices.

matter and gesture
Approaching the gallery entrance one overhears faint voices, footsteps. Upon entering, one is struck by arrays of colourful material and light. Transparent panels seem to hover in mid-air, inviting close reading. They pair drawings of feet – larger-than-life and oriented upwards – with textual inscriptions. Phrases such as: “uprooted and unbound,” “naming them,” “I find my feet again,” and “stand tall, walk on” catch one’s eye. These texts have been written – at Loretta’s invitation – by each of the women she has chosen to honour. Through repeatedly incising their words, and caressingly outlining their feet, she demonstrates a commitment to them. Washes of paint seep into the lines. While her gestures are guided by the orthographic tracks of the letters, they also offer a mode of witness: I feel your words.1

These lines, letters, words cast shadows beyond the panel surfaces. Their actions of scratching through, exceeding borders evoke the careful work of interpreting and translating spaces between.2 One sees through Loretta’s work in multiple ways: optic and haptic perspectives lead to considerations of how one navigates, occupies and shares physical and geographical space with others. Via video capture and projection, viewers are offered immersive windows through which to consider Meg, Gëa, Angeline and Regina, while speculating upon their own footholds.3

While Loretta’s thinking is articulated through gestures of inscription, Sheila’s emerges through those of gathering and assemblage. If they initially appear as quietly glowing beacons, closer

The Sole Project: (s)paces between

gestures invite consideration of the ways in which hidden worlds support visible ones. Through a tactile aesthetics and ethics of care, Sheila’s reversals illuminate beauties befitting their subjects.

Judy reinvents the materials and structures of parfleche forms to hold and behold those she chooses to honour. She adapts Indigenous parfleche bags, envelopes or boxes – traditionally produced from rawhide – to approximate scales and shapes of shoe boxes. Manifesting the parfleche in Plexiglas evokes a space of emotional transparency, and reflects her desire to share materializations of her own work in response to the practices and teachings of those she honours. Judy’s interpretive practices of assembling and stitching in She is Worth Celebrating make clear her appreciation of the methods and knowledge of the woman addressed in this work.

As in the works of Loretta and Sheila, Judy’s use of words and materials animate the surfaces and interiors of forms. The detailed beadwork of And from her parts of me emerged brilliantly transforms the familiar cover of a book authored by one of her honorees. This, paired with the gesture of the coyote body coming forth from within the book, suggests something of the character of this influence. The beaded name and recorded conversation of I Thank Her for Every Lesson embody resonant “shout-outs.” In This one brings me the most pride, the fine details of the helmet’s beaded portraiture, flower arrays and rainbow cage impart a vibrant sense of celebration and love.

women
While these works generously articulate how it matters to stand alongside, or follow in the footsteps of other women, they are also informed by migrations of method and material between the artists, which have occurred over the three year period of the project. This comes across in the works individually created, but also in the collectively produced audio work which ambiently meanders the gallery space alongside them. In this recording walking rhythms are punctuated with concerned voices, laughter, bird song. Together, these works speculate upon and materialize languages and pathways of support, inspiration and ceremony between women. The Sole Project makes a space where the acknowledgement of influential others distributes authority, sharpens responsibility and regenerates spirit: one word, caress, stitch, bead, step at a time.

Joanne Bristol

1 The concept of haptic reading brings to mind Sharron Proule-Turner’s book of dedication poems, she is reading her blanket with her hands (Calgary: Frontenac House, 2008).
2 The structuring of this text in terms ‘spaces between’ has been informed by Loretta’s practice.
The Sole Project
October 19 – November 19, 2016
Judy Anderson / Sheila Nourse / Loretta Paoli

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