

## Vibrations/Vibraciones

**"The earth is alive. She and I are the same."**

- Vicki Noble, *Shakti Women: Feeling Our Fire, Healing Our World: The New Female Shamanism*

*Vibrations, rainbows, temporal dislocations, second skins. Invigorating hues and vital energies that suffuse the material universe ebb and flow in Elisa Garcia de la Huerta's trans-disciplinary artwork. Treating her work like a second skin, her videos, photographs, interactive installations, interventions in urban public space and rigorous textile paintings traverse the language of mark making, shamanism, visual ethics, queer and post-colonial discourse. Situating her dynamic practice at the dichotomous border of "inner and outer worlds," her work softly filters the myriad realities of daily living through symbolic prisms of images, gestures, juxtapositions and actions.*

*Garcia is living and breathing Chaos, Territory, Art. She is "a complete artist." Her work reminds us that "colors, postures, and sounds...sketch out a total work of art" and that, "art is continually haunted by the animal."<sup>i</sup> Unyoking genres and destabilizing binaries, her work supplants the old garde of fine art for the cosmic consciousness of earth-based wisdom, "She and I are the Same." The work is certainly, Alive. Enlightened. Envisioned. It is living nature: folding, sewing, framing, wrapping, ripping, garnishing, looking, being. Garcia's works redress reality in the glowing ribbons of light and color seen through shamanic divination and mystical communion.*

*Grounded in the wisdom of indigenous folklore, myth and ritual, women's crafts, multifarious art lineages, ancestral legends and the revolutionary tradition of Latin American muralism, her work holds fast to meditative visioning and loosens its grip on the oppressive density of the real. Garcia's long-term engagement with fabric alludes to multiple lineages of "women's work," harkening back to shamanic traditions of women weavers who bridged art and spirituality. In times past a truly expert weaver accessed the spirit world in order to create new designs and was revered as a shaman for her visionary crafts.<sup>ii</sup>*

*Central to Vibrations/Vibraciones is a teepee fort, a handmade towering cavern of ornate fabric sewn freely, crudely even as an act of abstract expressionism, its silky contours drape down over a bundle of sticks like scales of a primal serpent. Figments of Garcia's personal life surf the walls of her fort and the exhibition as a whole in fragments. The exotic, bursting foliage of her fabric assemblages bleeds into lush moments of photography and video. Abstract imagery of a reclining lover or sensual vignettes juicing a plump grapefruit at the kitchen counter paint the backdrop of her cavern, with a subtle sonic soundscape adding yet another lilting layer.*

*Seamlessly juxtaposed with organic environments, prismatic "interior" views are set against footage of women skinny-dipping at a desolate Chilean waterfall and stills of Garcia decorating an empty lot with ribbons of neon. Her recent foray into colorful interventions in urban public space exemplifies her commitment to the Earth continuously mapped out in simple diagrams, yearning gestures and third eye constellations.*

*Naming her works in strange, broken English metaphors such as "Winding Ground" and "Molting Haven," her pieces melt the old paradigm of living down into cryptic and flowery visual totems, talismans for the future-perfect. Says Garcia, "Fierce talismans and totems speak to the rituals of everyday living...the ecstatic bliss of an earth-based living...my deep underlying purpose to heal and do art as one big Alma Matter."*

*Interventions in undeveloped plots of land that could be a park or a garden – what Garcia embellishes with bright green ribbon in zigzag and festive draping - appear as large scale photographs beside the characteristically meandering, aura scrying, energetically charged metaphysical tapestries she hangs flush to the wall like sacred murals. As of late, Garcia has also moved sewing into her installations. Christening her sculptural fabrications with the true blood mark of a painter - of women's painting - her gestural hand is magnified in loose, bold stitching more characteristic of drawing and abstraction than sewing proper. Imperfection still feels at home in her recent work, following a long trajectory of the artist's formal training in abstract painting in Chile, now boldly fanning out into an integrated, interdisciplinary practice which sings in many tongues.*

*Gestural freedom, fluidity and a truly comprehensive vision marks Vibrations/Vibraciones. Defined against her older work, it indicates Garcia's departure from an idiom once charged with the violence, secrecy and anger she channeled experientially before speaking the truth about her childhood molestation and coming out fully as a queer, women loving woman. Tracing the lay lines she set forth in earlier works, Garcia stays true to the shamanic impulse embedded in her practice and, certainly, to art as a healing path.*

*Come inside, drop in, be present, relax, l e t g o and really see, seems to be the subtle refrain of this work, surely it indicates a meditative process. In primal cultures, divination appears in related forms such as gazing into water, clouds or crystals; reading of natural omens and even the interpretation of dreams.<sup>iii</sup> Handmade pillows in the tent stuffed with foraged herbs incorporate aromatherapy into Garcia's holistic frame. Recycled, reused remnants assure the viewer nothing is precious, nothing static. Ephemerality is an apt qualifier and certainly the work avoids grandiosity, drawing us past the slick spectacles of a consumerist times into the peaceful immediacy of the now. The sacredness of the everyday - each fleeting moment - is the enchantress at work.*

- Katie Cercone, 2014

<sup>i</sup> Deleuze and Guattari "What is Philosophy?" quoted in Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art* New York: Columbia University Press, 2008

<sup>ii</sup> Barbara Tedlock

<sup>iii</sup> Barbara Tedlock, PHd. *The Woman in the Shaman's Body* New York: Bantam Books, 2005