

# RUBÉN GARCÍA MARRUFO







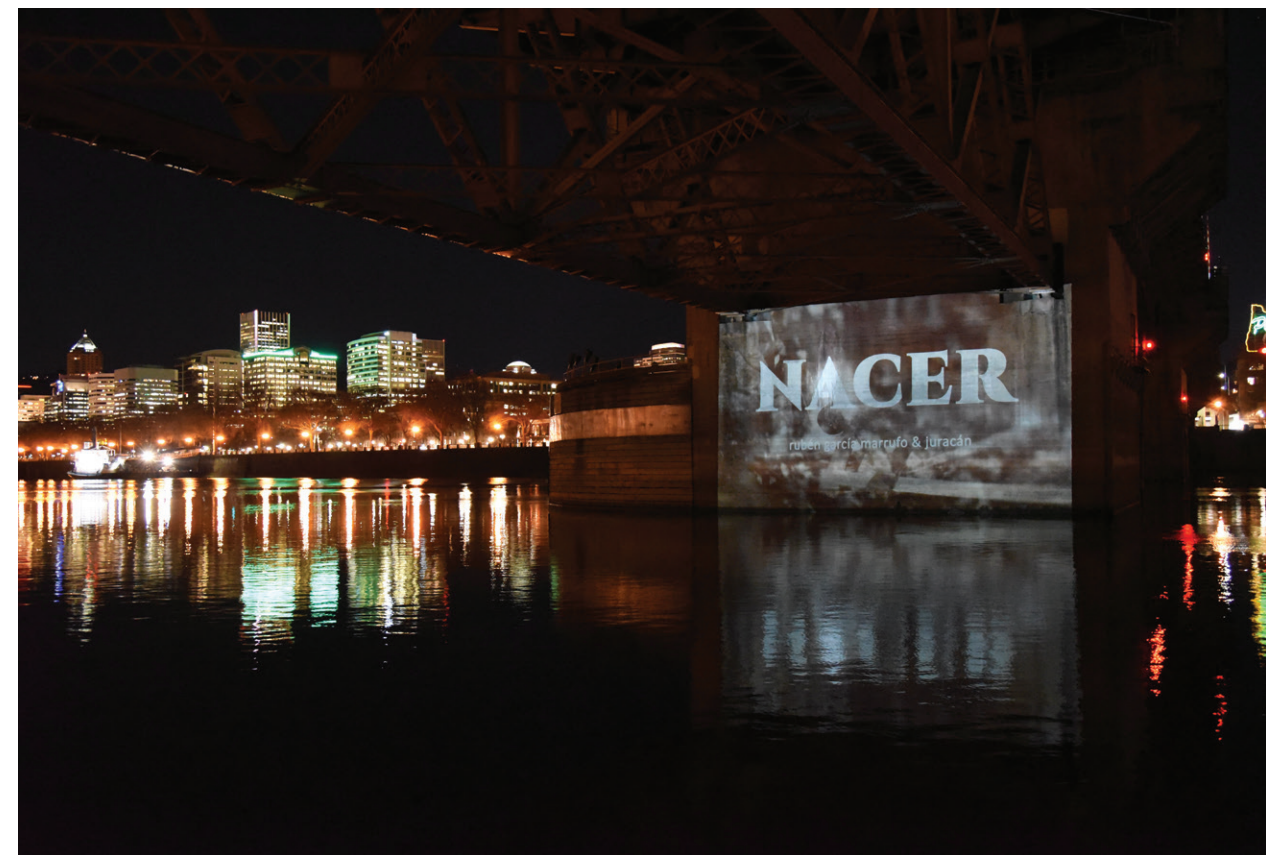
*rise x fall* (rubén garcía marrufo, maximiliano, Jaleesa Johnston)  
*AT THE END OF EMPIRE*, 2021  
 Site specific performance, digital video, 35 min  
 Video still

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*mas si osare*, 2017  
 Site specific performance  
 Dimensions variable  
 Photo: Paztisal Zamudio



*el cielo más hermoso*, 2019  
 Digital HD video projection, 22 min  
 Video still  
 Photo: Mario Galluci



*NACER*, 2020  
 Site specific performance, live music,  
 digital video projection, 55 min  
 Dimensions variable  
 Installation view  
 Photo: Sarah Turner



## RUBÉN GARCÍA MARRUFO: BEING HERE.

by Alejandro Espinoza Galindo

The works of rubén garcía marrufo are an audiovisual fabulation of the awe-inducing instant, gathering phantasmagorical narratives, silences, and rituals which expand the ways we embrace the concept of *border*, going beyond its social, historical and political meaning, to manifest *border* as the site for a vital existence. With video, film, and sound experimentation as their principal mediums, they project their pieces onto public spaces or edit them into fragmented montages that alter our perception of the moving image in an exercise that fuses poetic fiction with documentary chronicles. garcía marrufo invites us to transcend the veil of lost moments that occur when we sense the pulse of our surroundings through sequences and scenarios that present human life as a fluid passage from one place to the next, a translation of languages and symbols, oral testimonies that tell stories of loss and communion. This work is a place where we launch into a sensorial adventure of discovery, that intimate encounter with the pondering image and its ability to connect with us, residual moments where we witness something both fulminating and captivating, summoning us to reunite with the primal wonder of being-in-the-world.

garcía marrufo is a restless creator, full of curiosity and critical insight regarding the effects that natural and urban surroundings have on our senses, as well as the singularity of being human and the manner in which we make sense of what we see, hear, or touch, from near and from afar. At a very young age, they developed an omnivorous attitude toward all forms of artistic expression, engaging everything they found in their path without prejudice, driven by a permanent state of inquisitive imagination. Their early forays into the visual arts stemmed from exchanges with the art communities of Mexicali and Calexico, a multidisciplinary creative sector animated by a spirit of collaborative experimentation. This awareness of a perpetual game regarding art, its meanings and possibilities, led them to produce a series of documentary pieces, video collages, and sound designs, using different archival sources, rearticulating the sensory experience of the spectator before an audiovisual work. This attentive wandering forged a loving relationship with the moving image and with voices that flow like a whirlwind of memories stolen from reality.

A deep concern that garcía marrufo finds in the audiovisual medium is the ability to record a present that isn't there anymore, to see a fleeting moment that transcends its simplicity. We can see in their early pieces the

configuration of a work guided by both documentation and by making the audiovisual experience a confrontation with the realm of the senses: dreamlike whispers that flow alongside noise and distortion, the earth's trembling mixed with the agitated voices that witness a mountain evaporating in midair, an experience not unlike discerning the sound of the wind caressing leaves, sunrays hiding behind the ruins of a wall while we listen to a man singing *norteñas*.

As their work evolves, garcía marrufo passes through a series of intersections between memory and presence, moving image and performance, allegorical installation and public space, which lead them to redefine the threshold between the audiovisual experience and its manner of operation where the Black Box migrates toward the White Cube and where the act of being in front of a projection will no longer be a still encounter with images on a wall, but rather an ecstatic experience, which lets the spectator meander through the surroundings of a given projection so to feel ourselves part of the ritual.

To live inside the works of garcía marrufo is to inhabit a place where playing children assault the camera with their screams and gestures while we listen to a tale of migration from the man that stops in his tracks to marvel at the "shiny constellations" when crossing a field bedeviled by coyotes (*El Cielo más Hermoso*), or to place us in between an opera singer and a captive audience on another screen (*Don Quixote a Dulcinea*), bodies covered in red cloaks that wander a city in ruins through the entrails of a crashed plane (*AT THE END OF EMPIRE*), bodies absent and oracular, a meditative dance of a silent nature. The camera lens approaches these sites, these voices, these pilgrimages in the middle of nowhere, to define a metaphysics of presence, the time and intimate tale of migration, placing us at the center of a state of transition, where subject and nature interweave their poetic performance. In this manner, garcía marrufo articulates that sense of awe and epiphany behind those everyday discoveries that bring an all-too-human quality to existence, a voice of the subaltern that says, "I am Here. Always."

Alejandro Espinoza Galindo is a writer, curator, and art historian. Professor of Art History and Theory at the School of Arts of the Autonomous University of Baja California, Mexico.



*Don Quixote a Dulcinea*, 2016  
Two channel video, 12 min  
Dimensions variable  
Installation view  
Photo: Lucas Argento



*Don Quixote a Dulcinea*, 2016  
Two channel video, 12 min  
Video still  
Photo: Lucas Argento



*delineation of breaths ii*, 2020  
Performative lecture, Zoom play, 80 min  
Dimensions variable  
Video still



*rise x fall* (rubén garcía marrufo, maximiliano, Jaleesa Johnston)  
*AT THE END OF EMPIRE*, 2021  
Three channel video installation, performance  
Performance still  
Photo: Tojo Andrianarivo

## RUBÉN GARCÍA MARRUFO

*b. 1986. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon*

*2021 Hallie Ford Fellow*

rubén garcía marrufo describes themselves simply as “a border artist.” They were born in ██████████ on a Thursday and returned to ██████████ ██████████ on a Sunday. marrufo has a poet’s interest in language and translation. Translation enters their imagination as one might expect of a bilingual creative, but also as a tactic in artmaking, as they explain, “smuggling concepts through different mediums.” Film, video and sound are often central to this process, as collaborative jumping-off points, as the building blocks of installations, as pure moving image.

marrufo received a Master of Fine Arts from Pacific Northwest College of Arts. Their work has been exhibited by Mexicali Rose Centro de Arte/Medios, Mexicali, Mexico; Kunstverein, Munich, Germany; MexiCali Biennial, San Bernardino, California; LACE, Los Angeles, California; MoMA and artist space, New York, New York, and in Oregon at the Portland2019 Biennial, Oregon Contemporary (formerly Disjecta Contemporary Art Center), Portland; Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, and UNA Gallery, Portland. They are a 2020 Oregon Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship recipient.

**Hallie Brown** was born in 1905, outside of Tulsa, in Indian Territory that would become the state of Oklahoma. She supported herself as she earned a bachelor's degree at East Central University and taught in Oklahoma before her parents moved their family to rural Oregon. In 1935 Hallie married Kenneth W. Ford and together they established Roseburg Lumber Company in the midst of the Great Depression.

Hallie Ford was drawn to art all her life, specifically the accessibility of artmaking. She took classes with the painter Carl Hall at Willamette University in Salem, and painting became a central part of her life. Her philanthropy established and supported key Oregon visual art museums and universities.

After Hallie's death in 2007, The Ford Family Foundation's Board of Directors honored our co-founder by establishing a Visual Arts Program. The first element of this program was the Hallie Ford Fellowships in the Visual Arts, awarded since 2010. Through these unrestricted fellowships, we seek to make significant awards to visual artists who have worked to establish their voice and craft.

Another of our goals is to help support the ecology that builds connections and capacity in the visual arts community of our state. As the Fellows become the focus of exhibitions throughout the world, they bring more attention and support to their Oregon peers. We are certain that Hallie Ford would be pleased to see how both individual artists and the visual arts community in Oregon have flourished since the establishment of this program in her honor.

We could not be more excited each year to bring new Hallie Ford Fellows into this family, and to share their work with you.

*Anne C. Kubisch*  
*President, The Ford Family Foundation*

The Hallie Ford Fellowships are the flagship element of The Ford Family Foundation Visual Arts Program. The Foundation commits to an ongoing relationship with our Fellows through exhibition support, convenings, and professional development opportunities. In addition, the Visual Arts Program offers grants to visual artists for unanticipated career opportunities; supports artists-in-residence programs in Oregon and nationally; brings curators and arts writers from outside the region to Oregon for studio visits and community dialogue; commissions arts writing and publication; supports exhibitions, catalogues and other forms of documentation for Oregon artists; and awards grants to enhance exhibition spaces.

The Foundation is pleased to partner with the Oregon Arts Commission, University of Oregon, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA), Portland State University, Reed College, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), Creative Capital, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, United States Artists, and the artists and visual arts organizations of our state.

The Ford Family Foundation was established in 1957 by Kenneth W. and Hallie E. Ford. Its mission is "successful citizens and vital rural communities" in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The Foundation is located in Roseburg, Oregon, with a Scholarship office in Eugene. For more information about the Foundation and its Visual Arts Program, visit [www.tfff.org](http://www.tfff.org).



VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

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*mas si osare*: Courtesy *Escritorio de  
Procesos, Mexicali Baja California, Mexicali,  
B.C., Mexico*

*Don Quixote a Dulcinea*: Courtesy Pacific  
Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR

*NACER*: Courtesy Mobile Projection Unit,  
Portland, OR

*AT THE END OF EMPIRE* (Performance  
still): Courtesy PICA, Portland, OR

*AT THE END OF EMPIRE; el cielo más  
hermoso, delineation of breaths ii*: Courtesy  
the artist