



bosque brofante

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## *bosque* –

*The term is used in northern New Mexico to refer to Rio Grande. When approached near San Agustin, the topography of the river is very much a bosque (or forest) in its literal meaning.*

*Forest or woodland (SpanishDict.com)*

## *brotante* –

*...derivado de una alteración fonética de la palabra Xilxotla, formada por xilotl (jilote o maíz tierno), xochtli (brotante) y tla (abundancia), que en conjunto se traduce como Donde brota mucho jilote o nace abundante mazorca tierna o maíz. (thefreedictionary.com)*

*From the verb brotar meaning to sprout. (SpanishDict.com)*

# Introduction

*bosque brotante* is an art project made up of objects and actions. It is this book. It is also a set of three ceramic sculptures in the form of seeds that were made from personally worn textiles. It is also the conversations with the textiles' owners that are transcribed in these pages. *bosque brotante* is also my travels to the lands and territories on which the conversations took place, to the gallery 516 Arts, where the ceramic objects were part of the exhibition in *Species in Peril Along the Rio Grande* (Josie Lopez and Subhankar Banerjee, curators), and then the travels to return the ceramic seeds and this book back to the contributors who shared their knowledge.

Altogether, these gestures aim to share awareness of the interwoven aspects of place, history, ecology, and people; how relational characteristics of a place are all a part of this natural fabric and can inform our understanding of the plant and animal life occurring in the Bosque/Rio Grande region.

Land and community learning, relating to native flora and fauna, form the basis of this project. This book records the voices of collaborators from Tewa Women United, Cochiti Pueblo, and San Agustín, Chihuahua, who were brought together to discuss ecological relationships that are interlinked in the Rio Grande ecological zone. The emotional and intellectual bonds that link these people and their regions touch on themes of rootedness, human imposed disparities, historical records and traditions, and present actions towards restoration and awareness.

In the pages of *bosque brotante*, **Beata Tsosie-Peña**, a long-time environmental activist from Santa Clara Pueblo and member of Tewa Women United, along with **Marian Naranjo**, a community organizer, founder and director of Honor Our Pueblo Existence (HOPE), bring nuclear safety issues and impacts into focus. **Jonathan Loretto**, a local potter and educator for Cochiti Pueblo, with **Roxanne Swentzell**, a Santa Clara ceramic artist, Indigenous food activist and leader in permaculture education, discuss the history of containment and imposed colonization on the control and management of waters. Finally, **Professor Manuel Robles Flores** from San Agustín, Chihuahua, founder of el Museo Regional del Valle De Juarez—among other community programs and social services—tells of the region's flora and fauna, histories, as well as the way *racismo ambiental* (environmental racism) has impacted the land and its people.

Sharing this knowledge through conversation was the initial step for *bosque brotante*. As a part of the shared conversations, contributors each shared an article of clothing that spoke their regional understanding. Then, using an alternative firing process, I formed the articles of clothing into sculptural seeds, mirroring a native plant from their corresponding region. Shaped into almond-like forms, and fired, they were placed in the earth they came from. This book, these conversations and photos, will be returned to the pueblo, towns and cities where they originated. I am looking forward to delivering copies to libraries, schools and museums, as well as to those who participated so generously in my project.

I dedicate the entire *bosque brotante* project, from word to seed to text, to the communicate and peoples of these regions. To the Native Tribes who have resided and cared for this land, and to those who are ever present continuing the work.

Daisy Quezada Ureña, 2020, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Daisy Quezada Ureña con/with Susana Landeros Moreno, Jonathan Loretto, Marian Naranjo, Oralia Prieto Gomez, Profesor Manuel Robles Flores, Roxanne Swentzell, Beata Tsosie-Peña y/and Lois Klassen (la editora/editor)

# Beata's Skirt

August 29, 2019

This skirt was my daughter's and it was worn for a ceremony called the Gathering of Condolence and Peace that took place in 2012 at the headwaters of the Mississippi. It was brought forth by an Elder from the First Nations Peoples there who had a dream and a vision for a way to heal all the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, North and South, from the five hundred years of genocide that has taken place here.

In his vision everybody was wearing white. He saw lines of people walking by the river, wearing white, in mourning and grieving. There was a hand on his shoulder and a voice that said you have to help them. (In their tradition you don't say their names once they pass on, so I'm not going to say his name.) He took his vision and traveled the four directions of the country, sharing and getting people to commit to bringing people forth from that direction. We were part of the southwest delegation that was to bring that ceremony to life here. A group of us went in 2012 to those headwaters and it was the

first time they shared the ceremony outside of their Longhouse, and the first time that Native Peoples had gathered at the headwaters in over 350 years. It was one of those traditional places where they used to come together to share knowledge and trade information and ceremony. We got to participate in that ceremony –it's a whole long story, a whole other long story.

My daughter wore this skirt for that ceremony. She won't ever wear it again. I still have mine that I wore. I was actually blessed to be a part of that ceremony representing pregnant women—Indigenous pregnant women, and the healing of the hurt that happened to pregnant people of that time. It was a whole beautiful thing. The ripples of that ceremony, I think, are still being felt—they are still being put out there. That energy is still moving and healing the historical violence.

So, that's that skirt!  
Beata Tsosie-Peña



Beata's porcelain seed resting on earth at the Healing Food Oasis.  
Española, NM



## Beata Tsosie-Peña and Marian Naranjo in Conversation

Beata Tsosie-Peña (left) and Marian Naranjo (right)

To begin with, in our prayers we have directions and in those directions are actual mountain peaks that have names. These are always included in our prayers and it is said that they were part of our advice since the beginning of our existence here from our ancestors. Those places, territory-wise, are from the present-day border of New Mexico and Colorado, over to the four corners, down through the Jemez to North Albuquerque, Galisteo Basin and the Sangre de Cristos. This is known as the Tewa World or our Territory. It is our place, where our people were planted by the creator and we were planted here to be the caretakers of creator's gifts of the air, the water, the land and each other. (Marian Naranjo)

## Beata Tsoosie-Peña and Marian Naranjo in Conversation

September 9, 2019

Location: Marian's living room, Santa Clara Pueblo/Kha'p'o Owingeh

### Beata

Part of why I do the work I do, is not just honoring our matriarchal connections and how I've grown up knowing Ko'oo Marian, it is also about being spirit rooted to this place—being grounded as land-based peoples here in the western part of the Tewa Territory on the Jemez Plateau. With our Western Mountain, here in Kha'p'o Owingeh, we understand our roles as nurturers of the harvest; as being caregivers of the land, air, waters, and ecologies that exist here.

I've been doing environmental health and justice work for the last 11 years and it really comes from knowing the importance of passing on that knowledge that was put in our laps from our ancestors to honor those original instructions. Like Marian said, to not only love and take care of each other, but to love, respect and take care of our environment. We know that there's no separation from us and this land; we know that we are this place. We need to remember, reclaim, relearn all of our relations to this land and their Peoples—and that includes non-human relatives as well—so that we can go forward in a sustainable way. In a way that is in harmony. We know this is possible because it's been done before. That's how our ancestors lived. We're not that far removed from that knowledge—to the place

where we hold that, to make our communities strong, healthy and well again. Once we've accomplished that, then we can share that knowledge with the world.

### Marian

It's very interesting doing this work and being a lifetime potter and having a mentor that basically handed over to me many knowledges through symbolism and her storytelling, which actually became my walk. I started realizing, oh my gosh, these aren't just stories, they're real.

It was explained to me that since our creation there been an order to the universe. Our processes of survival and everything that was done was in order, and it was in the order of the universe. One of the proofs, if you may, was our ancestors from Chaco Canyon who documented the sun, the moon, the seasons. It didn't happen overnight. It took at least 200 plus years to build. That is such a vital place for our relearning at this time. We have been such a bold people, from the time others came to our world—our church, this is our church. Our survival was for a long time in that order of the universe.

Looking at some of the first names, the original



City of Española, New Mexico

names of just the villages that are right here in the heart of northern New Mexico, they are all about water. Our earth is our water planet, like Kha'p'o Owingeh, the original name, *Singing Water*. It is called that because you could hear the springs at one time. They would be singing, from our Puye Cliff migration to our present location, Kha'p'o Owingeh. Then the next village over, Po'wo'geh, *Where the Rivers Meet*. Then next village to the east, Po'suege, *Water Drinking Place*. And then Santa Fe, O'gah'oge, *The White Shell Water Place*. All of this, from way way back, is original and is so important to hang on to, now, at this time of relearning our ancestral knowledges. Not just for our own survival but knowing that this is how our ancestors survived for a long long time, and is now, with the way the chaos of the world is structured, really important instructions for how to go forward.

#### Beata

I think a lot of those instructions are around the work that HOPE<sup>1</sup> is doing—HOPE and others who are working to protect our food systems. Why is the river and our watershed so important to us? Because that's how we get our food, as farming people and as people whose spiritual grounding is based on our corn mothers and those teachings. Despite all the colonial violence and those waves of colonization that we're currently living through, including this present day of nuclear colonialism, we're now for the first time looking at the water coming into our fields and asking, what is it that's impacting these waters. What is it that we're ultimately going to have to grow our food in?

In honor of those same lifeways that were practiced, it's kind of hard now to think that our land based agricultural communities are having to also be advocates, environmentalists and

activists for protecting our waters. I know a lot has changed with our relationship to our river. A lot has been commodified and we've lost a lot of access to our sacred places and our sites to maintain that healthy caregiving that we were able to do, to make sure that these things were pristine.

You know we see that with the US colonialism, where you know now our forest is managed by the government. The public lands which were once our lands are managed by the BLM (Bureau of Land Management), and these lands are being mismanaged and auctioned off to fracking and oil and gas extraction. Our river has become—like us—collateral damage for the nuclear weapons industry. You have Los Alamos National Laboratories at one end and Sandia National Laboratories at the other end of our river *Posongeh*. I know there's a lot of observations, I'm sure, that the farmers have. The natural systems that we exist in have a lot of teachings that we need to go back to. I think about them when you're talking about Chaco and these other ancestral sites that we have connections to—not only Chaco but Bears Ears and all the mountain peaks—our trade routes with southern Indigenous Peoples. I think about all of these—these large, vast territories that made up our existence and our networks of existence.

At Chaco we learned the importance of maintaining dry land farming and ways of harvesting rain water because that was part of that shift that was at a time of long-term drought. We are looking at that now with climate change. You know, when the Spanish came, they were very interested in our agricultural practices. We did have ditch irrigation systems, but we also had a lot of dry land systems. We had already learned not to put all of our eggs in one basket, so to

speaking, when it comes to ways of growing food and harvesting food, gathering wild foods. We depended on a lot of different modalities of food harvesting. Now we're pretty much solely irrigation farming. I think, it's important now more than ever to use these old Indigenous ways of engineering and dry land farming as a way to produce our food. And, to look at what plants that we do have, that are adaptable and resilient in these kinds of changing climates.

#### Marian

One of the challenges is the attitude and mannerisms of people today. How do we include or be inclusive of all the attitudes and mannerisms that are residing within our church, our territory, at this time? How to be on the same page of what does not belong here at this time? How did we get so far from pristine? Again, it takes my mind back to one of our old prayers, how the advice since the beginning was to love, to respect, care and help one another so that things will go well. It's so simple, yet we are living in a time when there are people that don't even know what love is. There are people that do not know how to earn respect or how to give respect. What does that mean? What do we care for? How do we help? These are questions that are very important questions for young people to know how to answer, and for others to know the answers to, in order for us to go forward as the human race.

Getting into our work, it is so important to ground ourselves as Indigenous people, or as those in this church, residing here. To be grounded, in acknowledgement of what the creator planted here; to invite in those spirits from that time to guide us and to help us; to learn attitude and mannerism with each other—we have condoned war for a long time, and that language of war has entered our rhetoric. Just being mindful of those words is very, very helpful in making relationships and actually going forward with getting work done with war entities, such as the Los Alamos National

Laboratory and governmental agencies.

Entering Tewa Territory means a different way of speaking with one another in a way that is positive. You are for something, and not fighting against something or not liking something. That negativity eats us up and spins our wheels and makes us go back 10 years, 20 years, in accomplishing things. We've witnessed this in our lifetime over and over and over again.

We need to look at those teachings and be very, very mindful of our attitudes, our mannerisms, how we speak from our hearts in a caring, loving way and find those positive things to move the energy forward. Not to stay stuck with that war mentality, fighting for things. And you know it's a hard one—it's a hard one to be mindful. In our education system it's always for honoring the veterans—this and that or the other. What has come here is war. There was a permission to come and kill people, to rape people, all of these things. Our people did not know how to even retaliate. It took a long, long time for them to even figure out how to retaliate against it. Before that, our whole way of dealing with our human mistakes were done through humiliation. Fronting out those human mistakes—and once they were fronted you let it go down stream.

You can't bring a life back. You can't undo these things that were done to the women. We still carry these things, we weren't there when it all happened, and yet we are forced to carry it in our cultures, these cultural mannerisms of privileged whites. And I have to say, you know, here in northern New Mexico, with the Hispanic population, you know we were forced to survive together, and it didn't happen overnight, but it was through our food. We had to learn how to share water. There were stories that cows—we didn't have cows—would get into the corn and then our people would starve because there would be no harvest. That ownership that came here played a very big role in how our divisions first began.

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<sup>1</sup>HOPE (Honor Our Pueblo Existence) is a non-profit organization based at Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico. HOPE focuses on sustainable environmental and health issues, as well as cultural preservation and reclamation projects. <https://honorourpuebloexistence.com/>

**Beata**

Not only war, but I think Christianity. That had a big role, I see it now today especially, in how much our birthing practices, our marriage practices and our funeral practices have shifted. So much of that division and change of those traditional practices weren't tied with our waters and our natural springs, and relationship to place.

**Marian**

Our whole belief was about life. Life giving. To have a child was a big deal because women

didn't make it through childbirth sometimes or the child didn't make it through. It was a really big deal. You had to be careful of who was even to have the babies. Those things were very serious at one point.

When you're talking about these divisions, nothing so divisive as when the atomic age, 75 years ago, planted itself in our West Wall, our sacred place. The division of one atom that destroys everything. It is the total opposite of our whole belief system.

We are being forced to believe and support that divisive manner. It's a system that is born to destroy its own self. How far, how much more are we going to be part of that destruction of our own selves? This is a question I ponder daily. It's a motivating thought that makes me continue learning whatever ancestral knowledge is needed to be learned and practiced. Not just learning, but also practicing on a daily basis. To know how to walk that walk is very hard because of how we are forced to live at this time.

**Beata**

When you talk about mannerisms, I think, it has the word *man* in it [laughter]. I think about toxic patriarchy and how it is a societal norm that is needed to uphold a war economy in a militaristic society. And that's how they have forced us to be out of imbalance in the male, female and non-binary energies in our communities, to where we're excluding people. We're excluding different roles of leadership that could come forward. People, our own children in our community, are not being embraced fully.



This western kind of mad science of toxic patriarchy, where they want to co-opt the creative abilities of women to where there is all this language that they are co-opting around how they even created the atomic age of birthing the bomb, or *this is the birthplace of the bomb*. I'm really pushing people to get away from using that language. They developed it, they researched it, they forced it upon us because it wasn't with any kind of consent from Indigenous Peoples of this place. It was forced. It was in secret.

Again, it's so death affirming and not life affirming that now we are looking at these reproductive impacts in our community, where we are hearing now of people having multiple miscarriages and fertility issues.

**Marian**

Diseases that we're finding new names for, because we've never seen them before.

**Beata**

We see the harm and the cancers and the disharmony that exists in our environment and again, a lot of that is because of that original violence of the labs that the military occupation on our ancestral lands ...

**Marian**

Yeah, and that use of rhetoric, where the laboratory has contaminated it all so badly. How do you even really clean it up? And they have the nerve, the gall, to call their environmental program *Environmental Stewardship*. How ironic is that? We have an environmental protection agency whose sole job it is to give permits to pollute. It should be called *Environmental Permitting Agency*. That's the truth of what they do.

Learning through these processes when we add our ancestral ways, knowledge of learning and thinking, it's very *in our face*. Well you have to ask, where are they coming from with that? It's almost as if they lie to your face. And

it puts us in this position to ask these questions. It's to a point where they have to be addressed because you can't lie back. It's about the truth.

**Beata**

We need to be at the forefront of how to heal and restore these contaminated sites. Right now we don't have access to them, it's even difficult to get access just to offer prayers and offerings at these places, and that's not our way to abandon our elders to illness and being alone in that healing.

**Marian**

Yeah, it was a big deal, when I was growing up and my dad would take us through the West Mountains, through Los Alamos and we would stop at this one place where there was an *Awanyu*—a water serpent on the rocks. We would throw our cornmeal. I would take my children there when they were small. Now there's a gate where you need a pass. There's no access to it.

**Beata**

You need Tribal Liaison permissions.

**Marian**

Yeah. You need permission to get there, and it's where some of the worst toxic waste is stored—Area G. One of the largest kivas, an underground kiva, is on that mesa and it's filled with toxic waste. How disrespectful of our own government to Native People. Those issues have been addressed but what is being done about it?

**Beata**

We are still waiting for justice. Restorative justice.

**Mariana**

Restorative justice. These things have been addressed with upper management, at Department of Energy headquarters in Washington, DC They come back with a government to government relationship,

but still it's, *Oh, we'll fund your environment department, but this is how we are going to do it*. Instead of, *Shut it down*. We don't need any more nuclear weapons. Let's make this the environmental cleanup of the world that can create jobs forever; for the next how many hundreds of years.

**Beata**

The decommissioning of nuclear sites would create jobs for hundreds of years.

**Marian**

We don't need any more of these weapons of mass destruction. We already know what that does. It's just insane, our time.

**Beata**

It puts our entire wellbeing and security at risk because of the probability of accidents, given the track record at these labs. There's been numerous accidents, exposures, exceedances and environmental disasters—and this is just one piece of the nuclear chain, you know. We are in the production part of this environmental racism and violence, but there's also our other Indigenous relatives in the mining communities and waste dump communities down in southern New Mexico. The whole planet has been impacted by just the years of nuclear tests on this planet. There have been close to 3,000 nuclear explosions above ground, in the oceans, and purposely on Indigenous grounds to test the impacts. And because of those tests we have naturally occurring radiation levels in our environment where they are saying 30-40% of the population will develop cancer from that alone. Then add on all these other exposures, from not just radiation because Indigenous women are not protected. Indigenous pregnant people are not protected. Who is protected is an adult white male who is western European in habit and custom. That's how they determine radiation exposures. That's how they determine some clean-up standards, water quality standards, air quality standards, and how much workers get exposed to.

And we don't fit that description. As land-based peoples, our way of life puts us up for exposures if we are not careful.

**Marian**

It just blows my mind. Common sense, you know. This geography from right here, one of the largest volcanoes on the face of this earth during its time, right here. From the Jemez Mountains the Vallez Caldera was left with finger-like mesas coming off, from the lava flows. I mean when the first space shuttle that went up and sent back some of the first pictures of the United States, you could distinctively see the Vallez Caldera and the Great Lakes. It's beyond my reasoning. Why? It's at the tail-end of the Rocky Mountains, a seismic area. I mean this place is moving. It's so alive. It's moving all the time. Seismic activity is being measured all the time. They clearly picked up the shifting in Colorado where they have the earthquake measuring places. Yet, they continue to go to Congress to get millions of dollars to build a plutonium facility to make more pits, in a place where it is known, right on site, that there are three major faults. That was a big cover up that we researched. We found maps that were done in the 1970s where clearly, distinctively, those faults were shown. The faults were taken out to go to Congress to get the money for the plutonium facility in that area. The faults had disappeared! It went in front of the Defense Nuclear Safety Board as an issue, and the Department of Energy, or the NNSA (National Nuclear Security Administration) or whoever it was whose job it is to do oversight on them, tried to do away with the oversight of the Defense Nuclear Safety Report. So, it just blows my mind watching this political—I don't know what you'd call it.

**Beata**

*Imperialism*

**Marian**

It's just, it's just—*Evil*. It's evil. This money thing, it's not about safety.

**Beata**  
No.

**Marian**  
It's not about love, it's not about caring. Oh, but it creates jobs [mockingly]. You know, that takes me back to my youngest son, where he says, *Ma, how come you have to go to school and get a degree, to get a job, to buy a car, to go to the grocery store to eat. Why can't we just eat?* That stays with me and has stayed with me for a long time. It is also a motivator in the present work that we're doing.

**Beata**  
So, I think our relationship with our river is very important. We still have our ceremonial practices in relation to our waters. We still water our foods, or crops, from our waters. We're very conscious of seasonal patterns and moon cycles and snowfalls and rainfalls. Times to plant, times to harvest. Times for teaching, times for stories. All in relation to what's around us. Even just going to these places on a daily, weekly basis. And when I say being in relationship, it's going and physically being in relation, in interaction, in communication with our waters. Offering those gratitude's and blessings as a source of life. As a desert eco-system, water is everything. Like, Marian, you said earlier, all our place names are around water.

With the current day, it's legal. It's part of law that they remain clean enough for us to immerse ourselves—that they remain clean enough for a lot of reasons. And now I don't see people fishing from that area, unless you go way up north, upstream, you know. There's a lot of foods that no longer exist in our river. Because of the labs, there's now contaminated radioactive sediment at the bottom of the storage tanks that are providing drinking water to the city of Santa Fe. This is all because of storm water coming downstream from these toxic industries in our homelands.

You know there's that popular saying now, *violence on our lands is violence on our*

*bodies*, and thinking about Indigenous pregnant people as being the first environment. Thinking of how our first environment is water, you know, it's very concerning. This degradation of the quality of the water is very concerning. How come colonial powers have the say on how much it should be cleaned up, and when it should be pristine? The labs already have toxic plumes in our ground water, in our aquifer. There's already a perchlorate, RDX, and hexavalent chromium plume that is in our Sole Source Aquifer. Which means that more than half of the population of New Mexico depends on that aquifer for drinking and all their water needs.

**Marian**  
Our *Rio Grande*—present name—is the life blood of all of New Mexico. It has dwindled down a lot. Just down the road it used to go on both sides of what we call Black Mesa. It doesn't do that anymore. There used to be ferns, almost like tropical ones, that grew down there that don't exist anymore. The climate change has really changed that a lot. Texas had filed a lawsuit against Colorado and New Mexico some time back because water didn't reach the ocean so fish—the silvery minnow—were going extinct. A lot of taking out of cottonwoods and Russian olives happened just right below, a few blocks away from here at the river. It kind of changed a life-way. Where once it was an adventure, going to the river—almost like a little forest. There were once a lot of creatures, critters, skunks, squirrels, frogs, and cranes there. It is where the geese sleep twice a year. That still happens. You get to see them wake up in the morning and make their V. They're going south or north, just right over the house. It's pretty amazing.

**Beata**  
Do you remember anybody getting eel from the river? Ever remember hearing stories about that?

**Marian**  
Eel? Yeah! I even remember talk about the Awanyu. The Awanyu was seen at that site



Española youth planting at the Healing Food Oasis as a part of Bounce Back Regeneration Fest (September 2019).

there. We were always told never to go down there during the spring run off because of the undercurrent—it would just take you. It's kind of interesting because during our times right up stream a mile, maybe not even a mile, is where Espanola put their sewage system. It's not even a mile away from where our ceremonial things happen in the river—our dances and things, including submergence which you mentioned. It's so bothersome, to think about what goes into the sewage system from the Espanola township.

**Beata**  
They're already finding really high amounts of pharmaceuticals.

**Marian**  
Pharmaceuticals get flushed down the toilet. What else goes down the toilet?

**Beata**  
There's the Superfund site (Chevron Quest Mine, Taos), a mile away from the sewer plant that is going towards our river.

**Marian**  
We're living in a very, very hard time, but also knowing that water is a very strong living entity in its own right, in that, if it's treated well it

can really heal itself. Looking at that ancestral knowledge is what we really need to start looking at. And, in which areas can we just leave it alone? We can go down there and sing, or pray, or just be with love and good energy because that is what makes water heal itself. And it's scientifically proven—it's a scientific proof; it's not just Marian talking or a story that she heard—these stories are true, and they were lived by. And then they became considered part ownership where others said, *Oh, I discovered it so now I own it, and you can't use it. Or, if you do, you have to pay for it.* You know that whole shift of mentality? No, with knowledge, the mentality is that it belongs to everybody. It's our human right to know how to live right on this planet.

**Beata**  
It's our human right to water.

**Marian**  
It's our human right to water.

**Beata**  
Clean water.

**Marian**  
It's our life. Water is life.

# Jonathan's Bandana

September 12, 2019

I chose this bandana because it's more of a historical reference to garment—whether it's for a man or woman. I was looking through articles at the Palace of the Governors archives and photos of every village back to the 1800s—way back. I found this photo of a governor from Jemez, and he wore the bandana the same way as I do. I didn't know I was keeping that tradition until I saw that photo. It was fashionable back then, and it's still very common. It's been around for thousands and thousands of years. Back then, they probably used more leather from animals to keep hair in place. For me, I like to wear it because of the colors and the patterns. It goes with all my outfits on a daily basis. Some days I'll wear a pink bandana; some days I'll wear blue or purple. Some days I'll wear patterns with native colors. It's very versatile when it comes to matching your garments. That's why I like it so much. I've been wearing bandanas since I was a kid. I used to have long hair, and I mostly wore it to keep the hair out of my eyes.

But nowadays I wear it just because I like I like the colors and patterns. And, like I said, it goes well with my attire. You can even wear a business suit with a bandana and get away with it. You'll see farmers in the land farming, and they're wearing bandanas because it helps keep the heat off their head. You'll see them wearing their bandanas and tilling the land; or picking the fruit or land vegetables like chilies. It has its purpose. If you look at old photos, most of the time you'll see people out there who are wearing bandanas to keep the heat of their heads. Not a lot of people could afford fancy farming hats. Whether it is historical times or nowadays, it's been streamlined into fashion. You'll see women wearing their bandanas in posters. It's part of our society. I don't think I'm going to stop wearing them anytime soon.

Jonathan Loretto



Jonathan Loretto placing his porcelain seed in soil at Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument



## Jonathan Loretto and Roxanne Swentzell in conversation

Jonathan Loretto (left) and Roxanne Swentzell (right)

It is an interesting journey to pull back culture—to take back what was ours. We’ve lost enormous amounts of it, and we are bringing it back in today’s time. People don’t want to do something they think is hard or old-fashioned—things that have been labeled not modern enough or silly in ways. But there is so much richness in the old ways around the world, from before the big industrial mindset took over everything.

I think that even the whole thing you’re talking about here, it makes me think that you’re asking questions about the connection between people and their place: What is place-based? What is their home? And I’ve been thinking about that a lot lately. What is it, what makes it so vital in today’s time, as we’re on the edge of global catastrophe of the sort we’ve never faced before in our human time? How are we going to survive our environmental crises? I think it’s place-based things that we have to find again, and of these things the plants are things we have to find again for reconnecting to place. (Roxanne Swentzell)

## Jonathan Loretto and Roxanne Swentzell in Conversation

Date: September 19, 2019

Location: Roxanne's House, Santa Clara Pueblo/Kha'p'o Owingeh

### Jonathan

Remember the impact of industry and development around the village—like the dam?

### Roxanne

Yeah, you guys got hit hard with the Cochiti Dam, and then Tent Rocks National Monument. They were both sort of presented like a gift. Like they were supposed to be a good thing. And yet the federal government isn't seeing how it's affecting a cultural people.

### Jonathan

They charge for people to go in—every vehicle, every person. I don't know if the tribe gets a cut from camping or even from the dam itself. I know that for the golf course they get some kind of cut, but I'm not too aware of the other stuff because I just really don't feel like being a part of it. So much has been taken away that it's almost like... I don't know. It just doesn't feel right.

The dam is where they had all the shrines. That's where we had that white clay. That white clay will never be seen again. It was a slip and a clay—both. You could use it as the same thing.

### Roxanne

Wow.

### Jonathan

Yeah. Plus, all the orchards they had there—a whole bunch of orchards. Yeah, so that was probably one of the major impacts, as far as something being taken away and replaced.

And now they have the same thing happening over at the lake, where you guys have your home, in—

### Roxanne

Abiquiu Lake.

### Jonathan

You know how it has that green algae,

### Roxanne

Yeah

### Jonathan

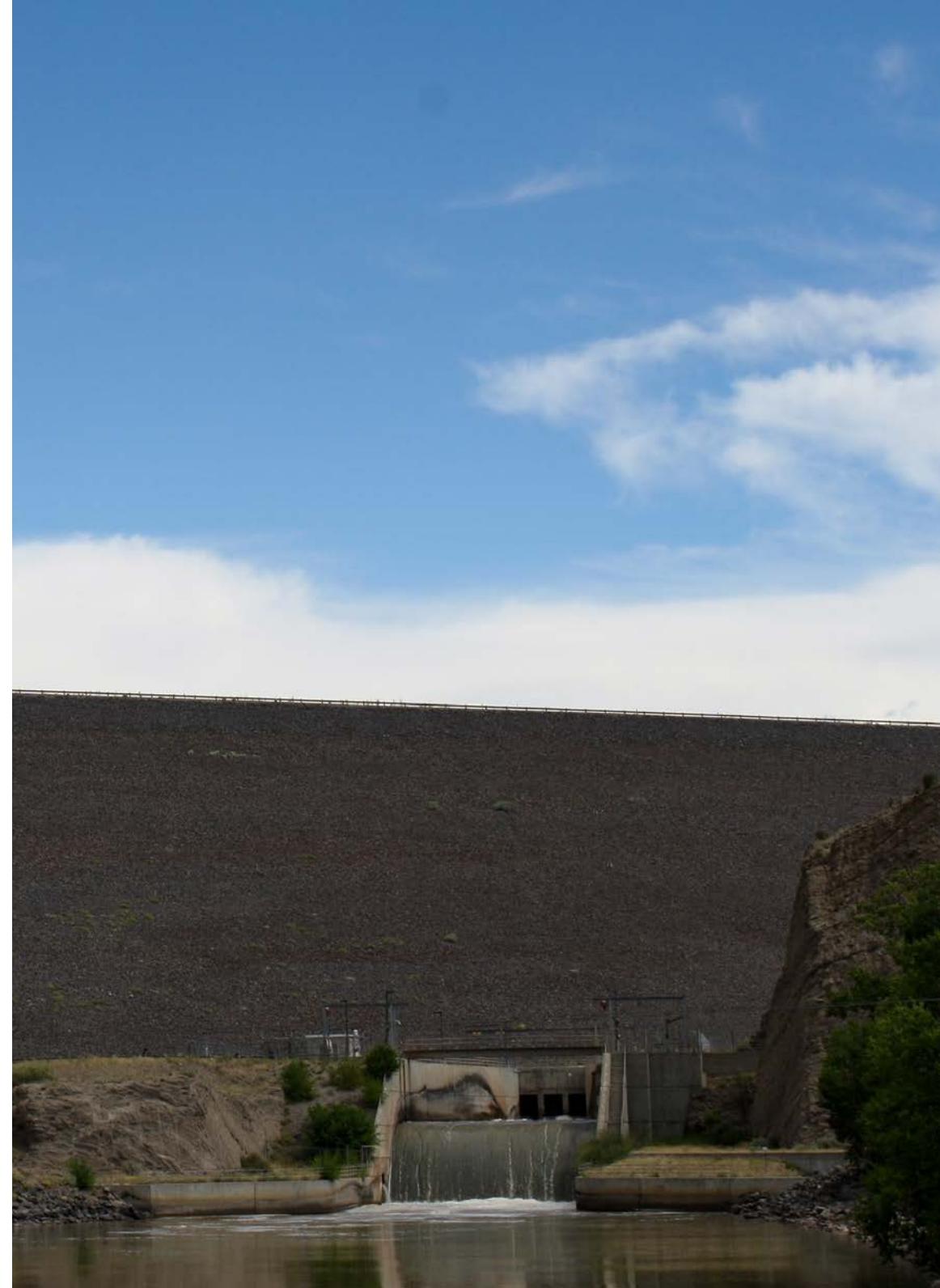
Cochiti got that same thing.

### Roxanne

I think it's also because the weather is all goofy, too. It's hotter than it should be at this time of year.

### Jonathan

So, what's happening now is algae build-up in the lake, and people aren't able to use the lake. And then, it's probably being sucked in underneath and going into the river, too.



Cochiti Dam outlet to the Rio Grande

**Roxanne**

I'm sure it's going down the Rio Chama. Going down the Rio Grande Gorge. Going into Cochiti Lake.

**Jonathan**

So it's probably going to be affecting the fields then soon.

**Roxanne**

Yeah, I wonder what it does. They drained so much water out of Abiquiu Lake because Texas won their fight for water. I heard they're just letting it all go down to Elephant Butte. It's so weird to control water that way.

[Tea kettle starts to boil. Roxanne gets up and serves both a cup of Hawaiian tea.]

**Jonathan**

The reality is the Spaniards knew all the tactics way before these lands were taken. They had fought so many wars prior to coming here. They knew how to instigate and create certain division, and then how to make those divisions work for them. Because of all the war tactics they had been through prior to coming here—Rome, Egypt—they had practice.

**Roxanne**

They had a lot of practice in how to take over people. That colonizing mind.

**Jonathan**

Even with the water—even with the division of people—all that stuff was already in play before they even got here, and they saw us as an opportunity. And then, it just took time for them to implement the action. It's old history, but in a new world.

**Roxanne**

Cochiti Dam was in our lifetime. I remember it going up and thinking, *What is that? Who does this?* It was so bizarre. And then there are the

stories of what it was doing to the farmland, and that's devastating. Up here, at Santa Clara, we have our canyon here, which is like yours—your people's canyon is a very sacred place. We had little fishing ponds and there were little reservoirs but when we had the fire that came through from Los Alamos it burnt up the whole canyon and the old growth. Huge trees came down. It burned so hot that it burnt the ground. Nothing has been able to grow in all of the burned areas because now it's fired clay.

**Jonathan**

It crystalized the ground.

**Roxanne**

Yeah. So, it's going to take a while for that to heal and return. I'm very aware because I'm a farmer, and I've been farming for a long time [laughs]. With what's going on with the plants—the weather's definitely going coo-coo. The plants are trying to figure it out. Twenty years ago, I was seeing it already with the fruit trees. They were trying to survive drastic fluctuations, which were more than they could handle. I was impressed because I saw at that time in my yard that the fruit trees were blooming differently. They used to bloom, freeze from late frost, and then make no fruit. Suddenly one year I noticed one branch bloomed, and then two weeks later another branch bloomed, then two weeks after that another branch bloomed. I thought, *Oh my gosh, that's genius for the tree to figure that out!* The plants are trying to survive this climate change.

I grow a lot of the traditional crops of the Native Peoples from this region—from all the way out to Hopi and some of southern Arizona. Indigenous crops. What I find interesting is that there is a lot that has been lost by way of the traditional crops. And of course, along with that loss goes the knowledge of what they were to us—a

relationship. All those things, including how to prepare them, go culturally together with the plant. One of the ones I've been bringing back to this area for the last thirty years is the amaranth. Because the native amaranth was one of our main crops in all of the southwestern area. They find it in all the middens, or the ruin remains. It was one of the main crops being grown across all over this region. When I grew up, I had never heard of amaranth—it was that far gone. It was even gone from conversation and memory. In my early twenties I started a seed bank. One of the seeds that I had was actually an amaranth that the Hopi had managed to keep growing. So, I started to learn about it and grow it out here. I've been growing it ever since and it's definitely become adapted to this location again. So in a way, it's back. Back in the community.

One of the stories about amaranth was how it was made illegal when the Spanish had come through, colonizing. They brought horses, and cattle, and pigs, and chickens, and stuff that was foreign to us, but they realized that our corn was pretty good for feeding to these animals. They wanted us to grow wheat for them, because wheat was the crop they knew. They actually made it illegal for us to grow amaranth, so that we would grow their wheat for them. It became an outlawed plant. That's why it went extinct in the area, or almost extinct. That was fascinating to me—that a plant could be lost like that. Outlawed. It's not marijuana—it's not even a drug, it's a food—and it was outlawed in order to force people to grow something else for them.

For the last seven-to-eight years, I've been doing a lot of work around the native foods and diet—their health effects on

the people. Like the amaranth, which was our original food, I'm finding out through a lot of testing our original food crops. Jonathan, you were a part of the first research group.

That research proved, without a doubt, that our original food—pre-European contact—was really, really good for us. We learned that if we ate our original crop foods—hunted and gathered, too—we were much healthier. So, plants of those times become more and more vital to the health of our communities. And, it's not like you can tell someone, *you should do this because it's good for you*. Instead we're trying to prove it in ways that convince them that it's an important thing to do. Because no, *it really is good for you!*

...

What scares me is that people don't know how to do anything anymore. Young people, they can't feed themselves. Granted, they can fix my computer and figure out how to upgrade my computer but, *Try and eat your computer, guys*. They can't do basic things, like shelter and food.

**Jonathan**

It's not that hard, and it's so much fun to plant. It's not a job if you enjoy it.

**Roxanne**

And you can choose to enjoy it. That's the one thing that people say, *It's too hard*. Well, you made it hard. That's a choice. You can make it really wonderful.

**Jonathan**

The thing that probably sours it the most, is the hybrid stuff. The seeds that they make, nowadays.

**Roxanne**

All the GMO Monsanto seeds—monsters.

**Jonathan**

Yeah, it's just stuff that—it doesn't make sense. It's for the corporates.

**Roxanne**

It's all about money.

**Jonathan**

It's so crops don't get eaten—by bugs and animals. But they've got to eat, too.

**Roxanne**

Yeah, there is a whole ecosystem that worked beautifully, in harmony.

**Jonathan**

All that stuff gets thrown back into the earth at the end of the season, and then it revitalizes in spring. It's a cycle.

**Roxanne**

And I'm worried, because of the toxins that are everywhere now. And whether it's in the soils, or water...

**Jonathan**

It's in the rain.

**Roxanne**

The rain, or in the air. I mean Los Alamos has done so much damage, both underground and through the air. We can follow a plume. Like, you guys are downstream, but we get the air problem. You guys get the water quality problem.

**Jonathan**

Our water. I was talking to one of our cousins about that. He works at the visitor center, and he had a sign up there that says, *No Swimming, Green Algae*. And I said, *Oh dang—green algae*. So I walked in and said, *I want a green algae slushy*. We were joking about it, right? But, I thought we're lucky we don't take water from the Rio Grande—we

have our wells up in the hills. It comes from a different source. But you never know—Los Alamos still could have contaminated it through the mountains.

**Roxanne**

They were dumping stuff in all kinds of canyons—and those are all our sacred canyons.

I'm thinking of other plants that have left—that we're trying to bring back.

**Jonathan**

What about the beans? Have you tried growing any beans?

**Roxanne**

Yeah. I got a crop of beans this year. Got a good crop of tobacco and corn. Oh my god, the corn is huge! We're doing a white corn. And we did amaranth. And we got chilies. Gourds. What else did we grow? I got a little bit of cotton growing over here, but cotton has been hard for me. I tried last year and couldn't get the cotton to come up.

**Jonathan**

It probably needs a more hotter environment, because it grows in Louisiana...

**Roxanne**

But it's our native cotton. That's why I'm trying to get it to keep growing—but last year we tried and tried in three different locations, and nothing. We couldn't get it to go. But then I planted it this year—and I wasn't even hoping, I just had a little empty spot and I thought, *I'm going to stick some cotton in*. It came out! That's another one that is on the brink of barely existing—our native cotton. It's not the big cotton they grow down south.

**Jonathan**

It's little.

**Roxanne**

Little pueblo cotton. It's our short season cotton.



Cochiti Dam Crest Length viewed from Cochiti Pueblo

**Jonathan**

It takes forever to loom too. Sitting there with grandma. [long laughter]

**Roxanne**

Look at how that one's doing. I'm going to make a shirt by Christmas. (laughter)

What other crops? I have a hard time with the squash beetles—we got plagues. Because of the drastic changes in environmental climate, we are getting extremes of all kinds. So, cotton doesn't grow no matter what, and the insects are coming in plagues. Speaking of beans, boy, do they get munched out...

**Jonathan**

Did the leaves get eaten out?

**Roxanne**

Yeah, that bean beetle. And before that—the year before—oh my gosh, two bad, bad years of grasshoppers. So many grasshoppers, you could hardly grow anything. It was a constant battle, so I just started eating grasshoppers.

**Jonathan**

Yeah. For real, you made me eat them, too! [laughing]

*Here, have a grasshopper!* [laughter]

*Seriously?*

*Yes, eat one!*

*Okay.*

I couldn't say no.

**Roxanne**

We had a lot of grasshopper-fries.

Grasshopper barbecues. Turned a bunch into flour. I guess it wasn't a bad year for grasshoppers. Bad year for all the plants, though.

**Jonathan**

They call that the protein year. The protein crop.

**Roxanne**

But things are more drastic. Before, it felt like there was more—

**Jonathan**

Balance.

**Roxanne**

You would have little grasshopper years, or whatever, but it was always kind of like *small*. Now, it's way more drastic. Up on the mesa here, the year before, I had never seen it look the way it does. That past year we got more rain and there was more grass—but actually it is now turning into just sand. I was thinking, *Wow. In my lifetime I'm watching my home turn into a desert sand because it's been so, so dry.* Pretty scary, in those ways.

**Jonathan**

Cochiti is mostly hay. They grow a lot of alfalfa, because it's a money crop.

**Roxanne**

It's a money crop. People are money oriented instead of—

**Jonathan**

Yeah, people prefer money over the traditional stuff.

**Roxanne**

Yeah. That disturbs me too, because money is an abstraction and it's not about place.

**Jonathan**

It's not like we can eat alfalfa. It's for the horses and animals right?

**Roxanne**

It's actually good for you.

**Jonathan**

Is it?

**Roxanne**

But I don't like the way it tastes.

**Jonathan**

Well, they should make alfalfa wine.

**Roxanne**

Alfalfa wine—yuck.

But your story—I'm thinking about being a kid and walking up the canyon to go hunting, or having that freedom to go up your guys' canyon... That's your home. And thinking about place and things that are connected to place like when I first started growing out crops. One of the things that I was collecting—the seeds, and the corn was always an important crop in a particular way. They would always talk about it in the same way as the people.

They refer to the corn as our mothers. She needs to be taken care of in this way—or she has needs. It's a relationship thing. As a mother she takes care of us. You treat her with respect and care because she will take care of you too. And that, I think, is a beautiful example of our cultural connection to these crops—they are not just some genetic plant. They are beings that evolved with us over a very long time, to the point where they are relatives. They are a part of us—so much so that they are talked to like another relative and person. That's very different than western thinking.

I was at a concert last night, and I thought of you, Jonathan. Because we are having Hawaiian tea, and me and Lani went to go see a Hawaiian slap-key guitarist.

**Jonathan**

Where at?

**Roxanne**

The GiG Performance Space in Santa Fe. Rose and Tim had gotten tickets and they couldn't go.

And so I say, *Lani, you want to go?* And she says, *Who is this performer?* I go, *I don't know.* Well we went and it was so amazing!

But the cool thing was that he was a Hawaiian guy. And, you know, me and Lani were the only brown people in the whole audience. It was all these old white couples in the Santa Fe crowd. And it was like, *Wow.* But we were sitting there, enjoying it so much.

At some point he stopped playing and he started talking about Native Hawaii—how they're fighting for their mountain. He was saying,

*You know, all these Haoles always want to come and live in Hawaii. They think, Oh, I'm going to live in Hawaii. They want to be in Hawaii—and it's a beautiful place. But they come and they bring their way of being, there—and what Hawaii is about, they change it because of who they are. And they don't come with respect for the culture and place there.*

He was saying,

*We don't think you can own land; we don't own land. We don't even think you are the caretaker of land. Hawaiians think they are the land. There is no difference between you and the land. You don't own it. It's so close to you, it is you.*

And I thought, *That's cool. That's beautiful, because that fits.*

For Indigenous people here who have been on their homeland for so long, they see place in a very similar way. Those places. Those canyons—everything. The creek. They're your family. They're your places, that are so close to you.

**Jonathan**

Your solitude. Your escape.

**Roxanne**

Yeah. It's not a place of—well, *I think that I'll save this piece of property and sell it in a couple of years to the highest bidder.* You don't sell your children! You don't genetically modify your children into plants that can't reproduce

or can't interact with insects or birds. What kind of mindset turns their own family into monsters? Or something of a commodity to sell. That's the big difference.

**Jonathan**

It's a lot—a lot to take in. Because it's happening. Even right now as technology gets more and more extreme, they're creating meat from plant proteins—*chicken and beef*—when actually it just grows, and you can eat it. They did a whole series on that on television the other day. I was thinking, *Fuck. They're creating meat in labs without animals, like chickens.*

Well, we could create enough meat and we won't have to have all the cows—we could get rid of the cows and won't have greenhouse gasses.

**Roxanne**

It's because they feed them all this grain they're not supposed to eat.

**Jonathan**

Yeah. So that way, we won't be contaminating the ozone. It's too late for that. What kind of excuse is that to create meat in a box? It's pretty weird. So the next jerky meat might not be from an animal. It might just be grown in a lab. That's pretty crazy.

**Roxanne**

That's scary.

**Jonathan**

But yeah, everything's changed. Environmentally—and we do still have our traditions, with dance, you know—we still pray, we still sing, we still honor our ancestors the best we can—but it's not easy to hold onto it in today's society.

The drugs, and the alcohol, and the casino. Everything that distracts everybody from being who they really are—holding onto their traditions, and their ways—their ancestral ways. It's all thinning out. Even the land.

**Roxanne**

It's giving out. Well, I think we're going to see some major things happen in our lifetime. And I don't know if we're going to survive it. And when I think of growing crops—if the environment gets too wacky, I wonder, are we still going to be able to grow crops?

Well, the whole idea that you can just grow food in greenhouses makes me think of this long conversation I had with a farmer from here. He is one of the spiritual leaders here in the village, too—but he's a farmer. I do a lot of work with him. We were talking about it. Should we make a greenhouse? We found ourselves hesitant. On one hand, we thought, *Well, then we can grow all kinds of things all year round.* And people think that way—but the conversation quickly went to, *What are we doing to the plants when we make them grow at a time of year when they're not supposed to be growing?*

I was really grateful for that conversation, because he's right up my alley. What are you doing when you force a plant to do something it doesn't naturally do? There are times of the year when things are to rest. What if you don't let them rest? All the things around them rest. The songs rest. Those dances rest. If you're forcing them to grow year around, what are you doing?

**Jonathan**

Yeah, I wouldn't want a greenhouse. We'll have winter songs in the summer. Everything has a placement everything has a rhythm to it.

**Roxanne**

On one hand, it's a technology that could help us. It's just like all the technologies we get used to having. We think they are helping us, and yet all they seem to be about is removing us from place. Removing us from the context of the natural world. Whether a greenhouse takes away the time of year for the plants, or lights take away the time of day for us. Cars take away distance for us. It's taking away pieces from our connection to place—and I think we all need to look at that closely, because it's a long walk home. 'Cause we've gotten really, really far from home in our technological advances.

But all the plants and animals are still living in and around it all. We are kind of removed from them, because we're going to our air-conditioned places and turning on our lights and stuff. We think we can pretend everything is okay, but all those plants, they're still out there. Day in and day out. They're affected by it—and they know.

**Jonathan**

The animals, the birds, the plants, the fish.

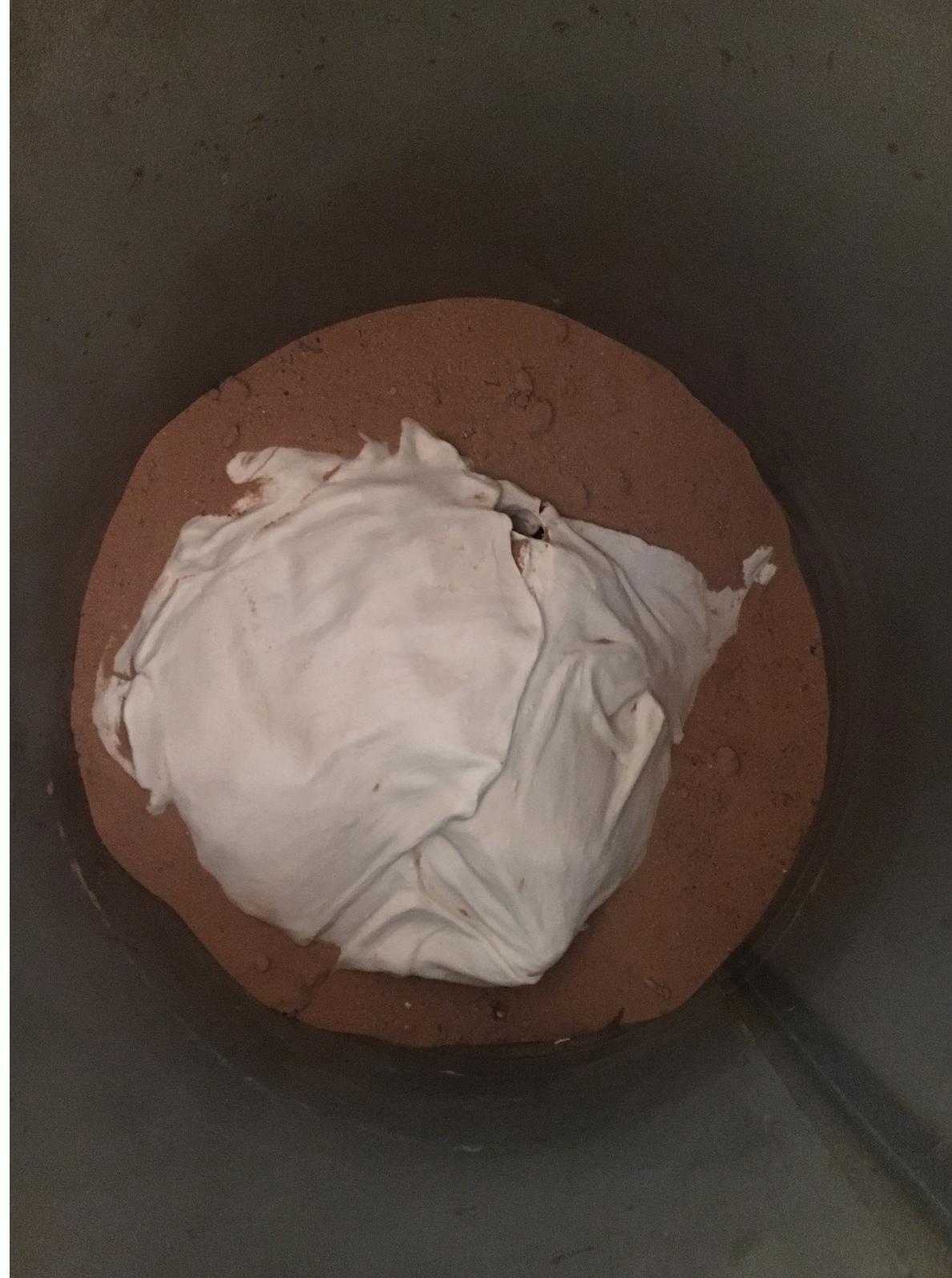
**Roxanne**

Yeah, it's all connected. Everything is connected to the earth, one way or another.

# La camiseta del Professor Manuel Robles Flores

Septiembre 17, 2019

Éste es Viva Pancho de el Villa de Zacatecas. Es importante,  
pues es mi tierra y bueno ahí está mi ombligo.





## Comparte Profesor Manuel Robles Flores con Susana Landeros Moreno y Oralia Prieto Gomez

Oralia Prieta Gomez (izquierda), Professor Manuel Robles Flores (media), Susana Landeros Moreno (derecha), Ana Jazmin Rodriguez (inferior derecha)

A un imperialismo, el más grande del mundo, que pretendían instalar un vertedero de basura a unos metros de distancia de la frontera con México; pero después de ese iban a venir más, iban a venir otros nueve o diez proyectos, todos en la frontera con México, ninguno en la frontera con Canadá, era lo que nosotros llamábamos el racismo ambiental; que significaba que ninguno estaba proyectado para Canadá, porque eran blancos y todos eran con México porque somos morenos. Logramos la victoria, a pesar de que se nos decía que no, que ya estaba ganado, y nosotros logramos que se cancelará el proyecto porque después de ese proyecto iban a venir otros más proyectos.

Era un proyecto que iba a contaminar toda el área: cielo, tierra, agua; que lo compartimos con Estados

Unidos; ¿Por qué en México? Porque ese tipo de proyectos los hacen donde la gente no está informada, son gentes pobres, no tienen académicamente ninguna preparación, y de esa manera es más fácil para ellos tener ese tipo de proyectos.

Entonces nosotros definitivamente no estuvimos de acuerdo, de la misma manera que las compañeras no me dejaron mentir, que nadie estaba de acuerdo, todos nos opusimos, hicimos marchas, hicimos caminatas, cadenas humanas, cientos, miles de niños se unieron de un puente al otro en repudio a ese proyecto y logramos que se cancelara... nos nos decían: - Esto ya está acordado con Zedillo, que estaba de presidente y aquí estaba de gobernador en Texas, el que está ahora de presidente, pues total, nosotros no queríamos que se haga y no se va a hacer, aunque así este acordado que se va hacer.



Mural de la artista Cristina Gardea sobre las especies nativas de San Agustín, Chihuahua. (2002)



Muro fronterizo en el lado de los Estados Unidos mirando hace San Agustín, Chihuahua. 2019



Muro fronterizo en el lado de los Estados Unidos mirando hace San Agustín, Chihuahua. 2019

## Comparte Profesor Manuel Robles Flores con Susana Landeros Moreno y Oralia Prieto Gomez

Septiembre 17, 2019

Ubicación: Museo Regional del Valle de Juárez

### Oralia

¿Cómo es que usted se involucró en eso?

### Robles

Pues como nos metemos en otros asuntos, por ejemplo, ahorita nosotros estamos metidos con los braceros, fue un grupo de trabajadores que se embarcó a Estados Unidos después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en el 42 para acá y nunca les han pagado sus fondos de ahorro, lo que nosotros consideramos injusto y por eso estamos en esto también, hasta que no se logre que se les retribuya; ya hubo jueces y magistrados que votaron a favor de que se pague el porcentaje que se les quitó.

### Oralia

Y luego profe, ¿Como fundó usted aquí el museo?

### Robles

Yo soy de una ciudad que se llama Zacatecas, que es la capital del Estado de Zacatecas, entonces allá ha sido declarada Ciudad Museo, porque tiene más de 10 u 11 museos; entonces nosotros dijimos pues aquí podría funcionar un museo y empezamos, tuvimos un benefactor que desgraciadamente ya murió, el Sr. Federico de la Vega, que nos ayudó a ampliar todo esto, a hacerlo más grande, y un fideicomiso que nos ayudó a poner un domo y finalmente estamos aquí como museo; ¿Qué no estamos satisfechos? Desde luego porque aún nos faltan algunas cosas.

### Oralia

¿Pero cómo es que comenzó el Museo?

### Robles

Como una necesidad, porque la mayoría de las piezas que se tenían aquí, iban a dar a Estados Unidos de contrabando, sobre todo las de paleontología, los fósiles y todo eso... entonces nosotros decidimos cortar eso, para que no estuviera sucediendo y esas cosas se quedaran aquí como una muestra de lo que teníamos.

### Susana

¿Me puede platicar un poco del río? ¿Está aquí cerca el río?

### Robles

Sí, aquí está cerca. El río está muy contaminado, porque las aguas ya vienen enfermas de acá de Estados Unidos, está muy contaminado. Y hay mucha gente que se baña ahí y se divierte sin saber que eso les puede hacer daño, entonces lo que tratamos de hacer, es informales y orientarles que eso no suceda.

Son cosas que tenemos en mente siempre, y nunca nos vamos a permitir que suceda eso, nos oponemos terminantemente, entonces seguimos en esto, seguimos luchando porque esto no suceda y no va a haber fuerza que nos detenga, como le digo, hemos hecho caminatas, marchas, muchas cosas... caminamos desde la Ciudad hasta Sierra Blanca y del otro lado había otro compañero, que por cierto, me gustaría que entrevistaran, que organizaba también una caminata y nos juntábamos en Sierra Blanca, y no permitimos y no vamos a permitir de ninguna manera.

### Susana

¿Cómo se llama su compañero?

### Robles

Se llama Juan Carlos Gallinal, también él se opuso, y siempre nos vamos a oponer a este tipo de proyectos, nosotros estamos abiertos a otro tipo de proyectos que nos beneficien y que no nos hagan daño, pero proyectos como esos, no definitivamente.

### Oralia

¿Tiene conocimiento de la flora y la fauna del río?

### Robles

El problema de la contaminación desde luego, es que daña a flora y fauna, entonces nosotros nos oponemos y siempre nos vamos a oponer a ese tipo de proyectos, no vamos a permitir que se instalen ese tipo de vertederos y el río

desde luego aquí contamina flora y fauna.

Nosotros dependemos de los animales, no ellos de nosotros. Hay una mala interpretación ahí, es más, podríamos hacer una propuesta... nosotros no somos nada, finalmente la vida seguiría sin nosotros, los animales seguirían viviendo de una manera armónica, no somos nosotros más que los animales, es al contrario, nosotros somos menos, dependemos de ellos; haciendo esa conjetura... nosotros no somos nada sin los animales, los hemos perjudicado completamente, por eso Einstein dice que el día que se acaben las abejas va a ser el principio del fin, por todo lo que implica la abeja, y ya se están acabando por todas las fumigaciones y venenos que tiran al fumigar la tierra, las matan; yo lo que son las abejas



Professor Robles, Coordinador de la Coalición Binacional Contra Vertederos Tóxicos, reconociendo Sara Salazar por el trabajo de su familia en venciendo el vertedero de desechos nucleares, Texas, cerca de la frontera con México. Octubre. 1998.

Fotógrafo: Richardo Boreno

y las hormigas digo. ¡Un momento, no me las dañen! Porque son necesarias... ¿La hormiga qué hace? - Limpiar completamente el terreno y no dejan nada que hace daño, y no le temen a ningún animal. Ellas, son muy fuertes en ese sentido. Hemos tenido el problema de la famosa violinista, una araña más peligrosa que la viuda negra; el año pasado, en Chihuahua, una maestra fue mordida por un animalito de esos y duró hospitalizada un año, y estuvo a punto de morir, la famosa violinista que es más peligrosa que la viuda negra, pero todo lo que daña, precisamente es por la falta de interés de los gobiernos. Y ¿qué es lo que pasa con esto? Que prolifera la fauna mala y se acaba la benéfica, porque tenemos fauna benéfica y maligna, y es todo lo que podemos agregar ahí.

**Oralia**

¿Me puede platicar de los fósiles que tiene?  
 ¿De qué son?

**Robles**

Los fósiles son anteriores a la vida del hombre, si el hombre hubiera existido antes que los fósiles, ya hubiera desaparecido el planeta, así de fácil. Tenemos ahí restos de mamut, restos

de animales que son más cercanos a nosotros, que vienen siendo los grandes mamíferos, como el mamut, es un mamífero que es más cercano a nosotros, de la era cuarta, pero los que aparecieron primero... muchos de ellos ya desaparecieron, ahí tenemos por ejemplo trilobites muy poco, nautilus, existe todavía ese animal vivo, y si, se nos dificulta muchas veces mantener todo eso vivo, que se siga manteniendo. Lo que tratamos es de conservar, porque el mamut ya desapareció; allá está la mariposa monarca. En ese mural la maestra que lo pintó, que es originaria de aquí de Chihuahua, trata de hacer creer por medio de las imágenes, la madre tierra, que está al centro de todo, todo lo demás son animalitos que han habitado aquí y que algunos ya han desaparecido; como el que tiene ahí al centro del pecho, ese ya desapareció, el caracol... ya desapareció.

**Susana**

¿Todos estos animales eran de esta región?

**Robles**

Si, todos de la región, por ejemplo tenemos la que viene volando ahí es albatros, la mariposa monarca, el mamut, que ya



El contingente Mexicano cruzando el Río Grande desde el Valle de Juárez para unirse a los manifestantes del lado estadounidense.

Fotógrafo: Richardo Boreno

desapareció; el caracol, que ya desapareció también, el pavorreal... si seguimos así, nomás que hubiera aparecido el hombre antes, hubiera desaparecido ya.

**Oralia**

¿Como fundó todo esto usted?

**Robles**

Increíblemente empezamos de la nada; con tres salitas nada más, ahorita ya somos cinco y el domo, gracias al apoyo de un benefactor que tuvimos; porque veíamos que esas piezas se estaban perdiendo, se las estaban llevando a Estados Unidos para venderlas, y no lo íbamos a permitir tampoco, son propiedad de aquí, del universo, todo esto es propiedad de toda la gente que quiera venir a estudiar; estamos abiertos a toda manifestación de cultura, de estudio.

Tenemos guardería en esta parte posterior, está una biblioteca en la otra calle, que me gustaría que conocieran, a dos calles a la derecha esta la biblioteca, soñada esa biblioteca; teníamos una salita nada más de biblioteca, y prácticamente aquí está otra biblioteca.

Yo fui el fundador, ya muchos compañeros ya se han ido, se nos han adelantado, unos bien, otros violentamente como Los Reyes en Guadalupe, pero aquí estamos... los que quedamos, vamos a seguir luchando.

**Susana**

¿Cómo recaudó todos esos fósiles que tiene, es todo de aquí?

**Robles**

Todo es de aquí, imagínense lo que habrá abajo de la tierra... nosotros no tenemos recursos para escarbar, esos los hemos encontrado sobre la tierra; y aprendieron las gentes aquí del pueblo a traernos las cosas que tienen en sus casas, por ahí hay un metate que lo tenían usando para que tomaran agua las gallinas, y nos lo trajeron aquí; eso es muy importante, que la gente sienta la pertenencia de lo que tienen aquí.



Más de mil estudiantes Mexicanos bloquean cinco puentes internacionales en Juárez y el Valle de Juárez para protestar contra el vertedero de Sierra Blanca.

Fotógrafo: Richardo Boreno

# Afterword

The three conversations of *bosque brotante*, along with descriptions of Daisy Quezada's art-gesture of ceramic seed pods made from personal and politicized textiles, end with Prof. Robles linking environmental devastation to racism. The proof is, Robles asserts, that it would be unimaginable to situate US nuclear waste sites adjacent to Canada, whereas Mexicans like him have been protesting numerous installations near their border. Robles is describing the way US policies that affect Mexicans are racially determined, but inside of Canada government policies make similar discriminatory demands on Indigenous people and their territories.

In Canada the racialization of environmental destruction is made as hidden as the racisms Marian Naranjo describe using the term, *cultural mannerisms*. El Jones, a poet, professor and activist living in Halifax, called out Canadians for not understanding environmental racism. Reflecting on recent high-profile and overt displays of racism in Canada, Jones declared,

"Do we not think that environmental racism affects Black and Indigenous communities more than other communities? Is a conversation about climate change not also about race? Criminal justice is a conversation about race. Poverty is a conversation about race. Pipelines are a conversation about race. Race is involved in all of those bigger issues, it's just that we pretend it's not. We pretend it's this neutral conversation that we are having that's just about borders, or just about the law, or just about the economy of Alberta. We always pretend that race is absent and that the only people that are bringing up race are us [Black, anti-racist activists] when we say that blackface is racist..."<sup>1</sup>

Jones was responding to incidents that surfaced during the recent federal election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appearing in blackface at public events, followed by a defiantly anti-immigrant rant by Don Cherry, a popular hockey commentator for National Hockey League broadcasts.

Environmental racism is inscribed onto the landscape for as far as one can see. Lands well beyond the US/Canada border were visible to me today as I walked along the dyke containing the City of Richmond, a Vancouver suburb in the centre of the Fraser River Delta. The dyke protects Richmond's Lulu Island from swells and surges of the river and the Pacific Ocean. This morning I watched a tugboat pulling two large barges laden with wood chips heading to a paper mill. Further away, a bulk freighter was visible heading out from Vancouver Harbour onto the shipping route that will take it through the Salish Sea to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, then to the high seas, and eventually to Asian or southern ports. The Cascadia Mountains in Washington State form hazy blue layers reaching above the shipping routes. From rain-free ocean walks like this one, within my city's limits, I can easily make out US territories.

But to imagine the vista as only a border zone for two nations is itself an act of racial disappearance. Between the saltwater marsh along Richmond's West Dyke Trail and the San Juan Islands outlined in the distance, Coast Salish Nations have held these lands and waters in close relation since time immemorial. As I look out toward the border. I can pick out the coastal stretch of the Tsawwassen First Nation by the cranes of the rail terminus and ferry terminal that flank its current boundaries. In her 2007 address to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia on the occasion of signing the province's first

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<sup>2</sup>El Jones interviewed by Pia Chattopadhyay, "Two Views on the Lasting Personal and Political Effects of Trudeau's Blackface Scandal," CBC Out in the Open, December 13, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/outintheopen/see-ya-2019-1.5391150/two-views-on-the-lasting-personal-and-political-effects-of-trudeau-s-blackface-scandal-1.5391186>

urban treaty with a First Nation, Tsawwassen Chief Kim Baird described the conditions of her peoples' current territory. Baird said,

... today we have a tiny postage stamp of a reserve, a small fraction of a percentage of our traditional territory fronting a dead body of water, trapped between two massive industrial operations. Our land and aquatic ecosystems have been fouled beyond human comprehension. The ferry causeway, with its millions of cars and trucks, dissects our reserve to the south. And, Deltaport with its 24/7 coal and container traffic coats our houses with diesel particulate; trucks and trains keep us awake at night.

Consider too, the bulldozing of a Tsawwassen longhouse for the construction of the ferry terminal causeway. No consultation, no compensation.

These industrial operations that include a man-made island terminal and a causeway linking them to the mainland — have virtually destroyed our beaches, at least our ability to use them as we had traditionally."<sup>3</sup>

The Semiahmoo First Nation is also nearby, situated on land adjacent the Peace Arch Provincial Park, which offers a green space for visitors as they wait in line to cross the border from the US into Canada, or the other way around. Though adjacent to the Vancouver suburb of South Surrey, where ocean-front homes sit tightly packed for Canada's wealthier landowners, Semiahmoo residents in 2019 were finally able to announce an anticipated end to 20 or 30 years of boil water advisories, caused by badly managed infrastructure within the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada.

Josie Lopez, in a preview video for the exhibition, *Species in Peril*, describes how storytelling and art are vital in battles for the river's ecological survival,

"Issues are often presented to us in the form of scientific studies. Until we can actually turn those studies into stories we're not really going to engage with the larger public in a way in which they feel empowered to speak out against some of what's happening in the environment. I think artists have a very unique approach to tell those stories and so that's what we're hoping to incorporate into this exhibition."<sup>4</sup>

The conversations about the Bosque/Rio Grande region in this book describe unspeakable environmental destruction in lands held by Indigenous and Mexican peoples. They tell us that racism is inscribed onto geographies that have been burned by nuclear waste and contaminated by toxic effluent. Ready to offer prayers to the river, the land and water keepers whose voices are recorded here offer no assurance of reprieve. Instead, they talk of their defiant gardening, archiving and community development.

Writing this from near the Salish Sea in the Pacific Northwest, I am grateful to Daisy Quezada Ureña for gathering these voices from the people in the southwest heart of Turtle Island. May your stories and conversations about the everyday lives you live on the river and the lands it feeds empower all of us who have been housed and sheltered along its banks to demand the *survance* of its relations, human and non-human.<sup>5</sup>

Lois Klassen, 2019, Coast Salish Territory (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

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<sup>3</sup>Chief Kim Baird, "Making History: Tsawwassen First Nation First Urban Treaty in Modern-Day British Columbia," address to B.C. Legislature on October 15, 2017. [http://tsawwassenfirstnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/071015\\_Chief\\_Baird\\_Speech.pdf](http://tsawwassenfirstnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/071015_Chief_Baird_Speech.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Melinda Frame, Director, *Species in Peril*, Rio Grande, 2019. <https://vimeo.com/343053223>

<sup>5</sup>Gerald Vizenor writes, "Survance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry". Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, Lincoln: Nebraska, 1999, p. vii.

# Biographies

## Susana Landeros Moreno

was born March 6th of 1973, in Durango, Mexico. In 1990 she moved San Agustin where she attended both middle and high school in the neighboring city, San Isidro. Moreno has been working at the Museo Regional del Valle de Juárez since 2000. She is the mother of two daughters.

## Jonathan Loretto

is a registered member of Cochiti Pueblo and Jemez (Walatowa). Over the last thirty years he has been creating traditional pottery. Notably known for his bobble head, Loretto's forms combine figurative tradition of his pueblo with pop art. Inspired by his mother Snowflake Flower (Stephanie Rhoades), he spent time during her last years creating alongside of her.

## Marian Naranjo

is founder and director of Honor Our Pueblo Existence (HOPE). A community-based organization in Santa Clara Pueblo with a history spanning more than twenty years, HOPE has brought awareness, education and information about nuclear safety issues from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Besides her social work Naranjo has helped raise a family and comes from a line of Naranjo Santa Clara potters.

## Oralia Prieta Gomez

was born on February 27, 1984 in Ciudad Juárez. In January 2000 she and her family moved to San Agustin. There she has been assisting the Professor Robles since 2014.

## Manuel Robles Flores

formó en 1982 El Museo Regional del Valle de Juárez. Entonces el director, Professor Robles, de la Escuela Primaria Estatal de San Agustín, al ver que diversas piezas importantes por su valor histórico estaban siendo llevadas a los Estados Unidos o vendidas al mejor postor, organizó a los niños para iniciar la tarea de rescatar todas las piezas de valor histórico o arqueológico que se localizaran en la region. El Museo se localiza en un edificio que sirvió de escuela durante 50 años y que actualmente se encuentra restaurado y acondicionado para poder exhibir las piezas

## Roxanne Swentzell

is a Santa Clara Tewa Native American sculptor, Indigenous food activist, gallerist, and mother. Her work addresses personal and social community issues. It reflects respect for family, cultural heritage, and the earth. In addition, Swentzell is the co-founder and president of Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute, an organization based on the theory of ecological design to build sustainable human life practices and agriculture. In May, 2019 Swentzell was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## Beata Tsosie-Peña

is from Santa Clara Pueblo and El Rito, NM. She works for Tewa Women United's Environmental Health and Justice program. She is a poet, musician, wife and mother of two. Tsosie-Peña is passionate about community gardens. She is certified in Permaculture Design, Infant Massage, Early Childhood and Elementary Education.

## Daisy Quezada Ureña

is a visual artist and educator based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Within her visual practice, she centers clay and social engagement as a process of resistance; where experiences of the visible and invisible are formed. At the Institute of American Indian Arts Quezada Ureña is a faculty member of the Studio Arts Department.

## Lois Klassen

is a settler artist and researcher whose writing concerns artworks that respond to or intervene in border zone struggles and migration conflicts. Klassen operates Light Factory Publications as a way to circulate small edition artistic works which are urgent in their need to meet a public.

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The Present Cartographers series promotes art and writing practices in resistance to dominant political frameworks and oppressions. It begins from the understanding that, in the words of Rosi Braidotti, “not one single strategy of resistance is possible.” Present Cartographers makes a wider consideration of art and writing in the midst of crises of borders and territorial claims—locally, nationally, and internationally. Present Cartographers publications are freely available in digital format at lightfactorypublications.ca.

**In the Present Cartographers series,**

**Terreno: Borderland Linguistics**, 2017, Sylvia Arthur, Lois Klassen and Daisy Quezada, editors; with Alice Leora Briggs, Julián Cardona, Tings Chak, Kemely Gomez, Israel F. Haros Lopez, Sheena Hozko, Gelare Khoshgozaran, Osvaldo Ramirez Castillo, Carolina Rubio Macwright and Tara Evonne Trudell.

**bosque brotante**, 2020, Daisy Quezada Ureña con/with Susana Landeros Moreno, Jonathan Loretto, Marian Naranjo, Oralia Prieto Gomez, Profesor Manuel Robles Flores, Roxanne Swentzell, Beata Tsosie-Peña y/and Lois Klassen (la editora/editor).

Artist: Daisy Quezada Ureña

Other Contributors: Susana Landeros Moreno, Jonathan Loretto, Marian Naranjo, Oralia Prieto Gomez, Profesor Manuel Robles Flores, Roxanne Swentzell, Beata Tsosie-Peña

Editor: Lois Klassen

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