FEBRUARY 3–MARCH 27, 2016

Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere

The Edna S. Tuttleman Gallery and Ramp Space
Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere have been working collaboratively for more than fourteen years, the first seven under the collective name neuroTransmitter. Often incorporating popular music and visual forms, their projects traverse the cultural complications and contradictions at play within public spaces. With an expansive understanding of medium, Nevarez and Tevere have produced work using the electromagnetic spectrum, the Staten Island Ferry, and karaoke systems. Though eclectic in site, their practice remains embedded in sound, drawing heavily on histories of experimental music—such as noise—and more familiar forms like hip-hop and New Wave.

Nevarez and Tevere often address the relationship among politics, sound, and language. Whether through a minimalist approach to classic hip-hop—female MCing stripped bare of beats—in *Parley* (2015) or the sci-fi drama *What we might have heard in the future*. (2010/2014) inspired by a Bertolt Brecht essay on radio,¹ language is stretched and flipped, pulled apart and remade. Their focus moves beyond words and towards enunciation, considering how we say something is as loaded with meaning as what we say (or sing)². Musical scores are equally transmutable. Rearranging Culture Club’s *The War Song* (2010) to a slower tempo and minor key reveals the pathos of seemingly naïve lyrics; Joy Division’s *Transmission* becomes a call for public discourse when performed by a mariachi band in *Touching From A Distance* (2008); while *Blinded by the Sight* (2013) transforms the lyrics of Siouxsie and The Banshees’ *Into the Light* to Morse code signaled across the Charles River in Boston.
This contextual shift—in language or location or tempo or key—is where Nevarez and Tevere expose the political potential of popular music. Their performances reclaim sonic and social space to explore how race, class, gender, and nationality are constantly renegotiated within these structures. For Nevarez and Tevere, the politics is in the performance. In *We need a theory to continue.* (2008) three stylistically diverse Austin-based bands were invited to arrange and perform music for the same set of lyrics (written by Nevarez and Tevere). These projects celebrate the cover, the unlimited potential of making a song your own, of changing it, modifying it, butchering it. Karaoke becomes the ultimate democratic platform in *Another Protest Song: Karaoke with a Message* (2008–ongoing), where audiences choose from a songbook edited and compiled by Nevarez and Tevere. Off-key singing can be a political act—a pithy take on Jacques Attali’s theory of noise—and the artists invite the public to perform in ICA’s lobby on the evening of February 24, 2016, as one iteration of this nomadic project.

Included in this first US survey is Nevarez and Tevere’s most recent work, *Memory of a Time Twice Lived* (2015). Filmed on location in Philadelphia and Mexico, this video reimagines the static visuals, time travel, and ciné-roman rhythm of Chris Marker’s sci-fi film *La Jetée*. Drawn to the “El Santo” t-shirt worn by Marker’s protagonist (El Santo remains Mexico’s most famous lucha libre wrestler), Nevarez and Tevere playfully trace this wardrobe choice to both Museo de El Santo in Tulancingo, México, and Museo del Juguete Antiguo México, Mexico City. Initiated as a
collaborative project with the Wagner Free Institute of Science—Philadelphia’s Victorian natural history museum—the artists navigate the mythic narratives hinged to these institutions and their patriarchal figures, from El Santo’s iconic stature within Mexican culture to “gentleman scientist” William Wagner’s mission to provide free science education to the Philadelphia public. Opening with concert footage of a performance the artists staged at the Wagner in September 2015, the film complicates temporal and geographical space while following a local norteño accordionist and a masked “El Santo” figure as they explore the streets of Philadelphia. In Memory of a Time Twice Lived the diaspora of the accordion—an ongoing research area for the artists—suggests a resonance between Victorian-era migration and current demographic changes as Philadelphia welcomes a new wave of immigration.

— Kate Kraczon, Associate Curator


4. Norteño is a style of music that originated in Northern Mexico and can be increasingly heard throughout the streets of the Italian market in South Philadelphia.
A selection of vinyl, cassettes, and CDs from Nevarez and Tevere’s record label Textual Records will be on view and available for purchase at Brewerytown Beats (2710 W. Girard Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19130) during the month of March.

Angel Nevarez (born 1970, Mexico City; lives New York) and Valerie Tevere (born 1970, Chicago; lives New York) have produced new works for exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Manifesta 8, Spain; Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg; New Museum, New York; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden/Oslo; Museo de Arte Raúl Anguiano, Guadalajara, Mexico; Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York; Creative Time, New York; and the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA, among others. Their recent fellowships and grants include a Creative Capital fellowship, an Art Matters grant, a National Endowment for the Arts project grant, and a Franklin Furnace Performance Art fellowship. Both Nevarez and Tevere were Studio Fellows at The Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program and artists in residence at the International Artists Studio Program in Sweden (IAISPIS), Stockholm. Nevarez is a faculty member in the MFA Fine Arts program at the School of Visual Arts, New York and Tevere is Professor of Media Culture at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York.

This exhibition is organized by ICA Associate Curator Kate Kraczon and will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.
RELATED PROGRAMMING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3  
6:30–9 PM  
Public Opening Celebration: 
Rodney McMillian: 
*The Black Show* 
Angel Nevarez and 
Valerie Tevere

5 PM (MEMBERS ONLY)  
Preview and conversation with artists and curators

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24  
6:30 PM  
Another Protest Song: 
Karaoke with a Message

THURSDAY, MARCH 3  
6:30 PM  
PennDesign Fine Arts Lecture Series: 
Angel Nevarez and 
Valerie Tevere

FRIDAY, MARCH 4  
6–10 PM  
Record Release Party: 
Prelude to a Memory 
Brewerytown Beats,  
2710 W. Girard Ave, 
Philadelphia, PA 19130
WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

*Another Protest Song: Karaoke with a Message*, 2008–ongoing
Multimedia; karaoke system and video monitors
(presented at ICA on February 24, 2016)

*We need a theory to continue*, 2008
Three-channel video, color, sound, and framed lyric sheet
16:34 minutes

*Touching From A Distance*, 2008
Two-channel video, color, sound
6:08 minutes

*What we might have heard in the future*, 2010/2014
Radio drama (radio, FM transmitter, audio, seating)
14:44 minutes

*The War Song*, 2010
HD video, color, sound
8:07 minutes

*Blinded by the Sight*, 2013
HD video, color, sound
5:53 minutes

*Parley*, 2015
Two-channel sound installation
(horn speakers, amplifier, audio, works cited sheet)
8:15 minutes

*Memory of a Time Twice Lived*, 2015
HD video, color, sound
35 minutes

This sound- and video-based exhibition is approximately one hour and 37 minutes in its entirety.
Funding for *Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere* is provided by Christina Weiss Lurie.

ICA is always Free. For All. Free admission is courtesy of Amanda and Glenn Fuhrman.

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Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere

Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere, Memory of a Time Twice Lived, production still, 2015. Courtesy the artists.