

Actions LIVE

Regina José Galindo

6 - 7 March 2018

As part of Kettle's Yard's exhibition *Actions. The image of the world can be different* the artist **Regina José Galindo** is in residence in Cambridge. Over two days in the city, Galindo has organised two performances, *Hide and Seek*, which takes place in the house at Kettle's Yard and *Monument to the Invisibles* for the Front Court of King's College.

Galindo was born in Guatemala City, where she grew up during the country's civil war. Galindo's work has responded to this context, creating new and evocative ways to remember the violence of this conflict. In *Who Can Erase the Traces* (2003) she walked barefoot, her feet covered in blood, to the Palacio Nacional in Guatemala City. Her bloody footprints marked a trail commemorating victims of violence in Guatemala. Galindo's work has also intervened in other settings and histories. She has also made site specific performances internationally. For her two performances in Cambridge, Galindo engages with two very different spaces in the city. First the house at Kettle's Yard, an intimate, domestic space, which was described as a sanctuary in a chaotic world by its founder Jim Ede. Second, the Front Court at King's College, one of the most famous colleges in the city, with some of the most iconic architecture. While these spaces are both famous institutions, and open to the public, access to them is restricted. In this way, Galindo's performances might be thought of as interventions into these spaces.

This intervention develops differently across the two works. In *Monument to the Invisibles*, a number of elevated figures will occupy Front Court. The monuments are draped in fabric that erases the identities of the people beneath, which in turn disrupts our usual encounter with public monuments and statuary. *Monument to the Invisibles* is not dedicated to anyone in particular, but perhaps commemorates those who are forgotten and who do not have access to public voice. This performance creates a monument for the viewer to invest their own histories.

In this way, *Monument to the Invisibles* parallels recent debates, worldwide, around the ethics of public and private statuary and memorials. It prompts us to ask who and what should we commemorate in our streets and institutions.

Monument to the Invisibles is also an act of duration for the performers. The performance requires their concentration, prompting a state of contemplation. It also raises them up, to stand tall in a space that is otherwise off-limits. Galindo has described this performance as a counter to 'feeling small'. In the experience of perhaps feeling undermined or out of place, by standing on King's College Front Court, the performers are literally elevated, but also invite us all to stand taller.

As well as making a number of site specific performances, Galindo often, also, makes her body the focus of her work. In the video documentation of her work *Tierra* (2013), currently on display at Kettle's Yard, the artist stands naked on a patch of earth while a machine excavates the land around her. The patch of grass she stands on diminishes as the digger moves perilously close to her body, and the ground around her yawns ominously, a reference to the mass burials of citizens during Guatemalan president José Efraín Ríos Montt's regime. In this work, and many others, Galindo makes herself vulnerable. This vulnerability communicates beyond language, suggesting a sense of threat, terror or even boredom. Galindo invites us to relate, because in our feelings of shock, surprise or concern we may find a way to empathise with the situation the artist evokes through performance. Across her work Galindo has evoked bodily experiences of imprisonment, slavery, childbirth, and plastic surgery. Often her work engages with the ways in which bodies are valued differently, or how violence and bodily threat often accompany bodies marked by race, gender or class.

For her performance *Hide and Seek*, Galindo's body is hidden from the viewer. For the duration of the three-hour performance she occupies a little visited space in the House at Kettle's Yard. The only trace of her presence, a shaft of the artist's hair falling from the ceiling. *Hide and Seek*, with its fairy-tale allusions and childhood-game title, suggest the close proximity of innocence and threat.

Perhaps the performance is an oblique reference to Anne Frank and her family hiding in Amsterdam in World War II? Or perhaps it speaks to a more contemporary experience of concealing oneself during migration? Or of only ever occupying the peripheries of architectures? This is often shaped by race, gender, and class identity – all information which could be extracted from a strand of hair. Alongside these more sinister readings, *Hide and Seek* also responds to Jim Ede's refrain that Kettle's Yard is only alive, when it is used. Here Galindo's body becomes part of the architecture, makes the building come alive differently, but also invites us to join her in stillness and contemplation.

**'Hide and Seek', 6 March 2018,
2.15–5.30pm, Kettle's Yard**

**'Monument to the Invisibles',
7 March 2018, 1.30–2.30pm,
Front Court, King's College**

Monument to the Invisibles

the forgotten
those that do not matter
those that do not count.
Those who despite their greatness they are still
small
in the eyes of the giants.

- Regina José Galindo

With thanks to:

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**Actions LIVE
17 March 2018**

Join us on Saturday, 17 March for more *Actions LIVE* events. From 12 - 4pm artist **Emma Smith** will perform live consultations with visitors in the House.

At 1.30pm, **Issam Kourbaj** makes a live work marking the seventh year of the Syrian conflict. These events are free and drop in, no booking required.

That evening we will have live performances across the spaces by **Candoco Dance Company** in collaboration with **Laila Diallo** and by artists **Harold Offeh** and **Anna Brownsted**. The evenings performances are free but booking is recommended. The series of performances will be repeated at 5.30pm and at 7.30pm. Please book for entry at 5pm or 7pm. A Q&A with the artists will follow the second series.

Find out more and book online kettlesyard.co.uk or call 01223 748100.