

Baratter les sols pierreux Churning the rocky soils

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Qu'est-ce qu'on peut construire sur un sol en mouvance

What can you build on land that keeps moving

2022

Video. 4K with stereo sound.

6m 0s

Handheld camera shots: Hsiao-Chien Chiu

Rythme (Rhythm)

Sacrifices (Sacrifices)

Don de soi (Selflessness)

Capitalisme (Capitalism)

Légitimité (Legitimacy)

Vulnérabilité (Vulnerability)

Lutte (Fight)

Ennemi commun (Common enemy)

Dissensus (Dissensus)

2021-22

Bricks. Raw clay and soil.

Baratter les sols pierreux

Churning the rocky soils

2022

Brick mold inspired from butter churner.

Recycled pine wood.

Butter stamp with logo from the Dairy producers association of Quebec and my grand-mother's village bakery.

Lime wood.

Tu m'as donné ton pot à bines

(lettre à ma grand-mère)

You gave me your beans cooking pot

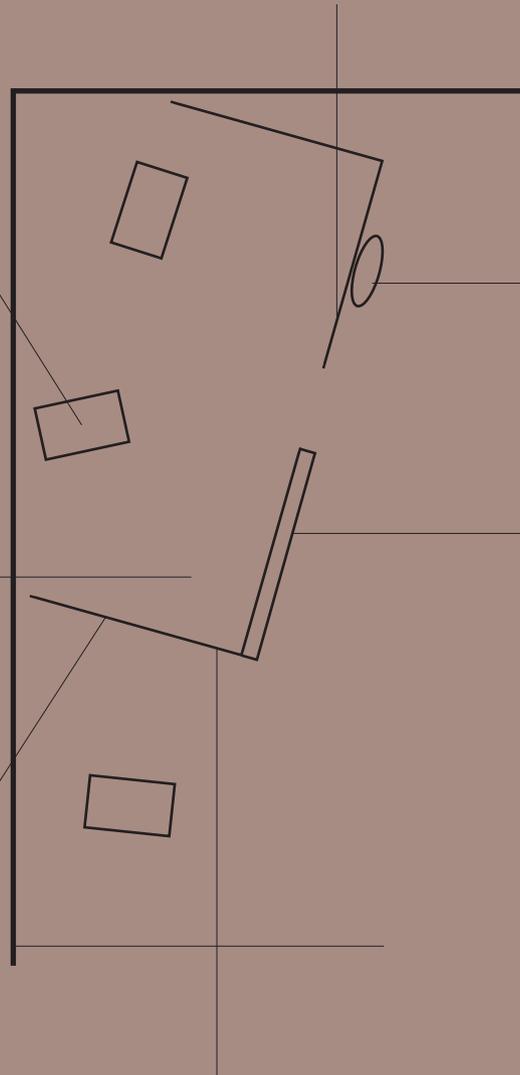
(letter to my grand-mother)

2022

Video. 4K with stereo sound.

8m 51s

Handheld camera shots: Mehdi Moussaoui



Tout ce qui reste à déconstruire (en portant votre deuil)

So much needs to be untied still (we carry your grief)

2022

Cape. Raw clay, cow feed, rubon, thread.

À mes soeurs dans le labeur

To my sisters in labour

2022

Raw clay.

Words engraved on the pots:

I dedicate this little book to the farmer's wives of America, to my sisters in labour, to the tired and overworked women, to those who spend their lives in almost hopeless and unprofitable work, and for whom the care of their dairy cows is like the last burden that bends their already weak and aching backs from the ever-renewed effort.

Translated from

Jones, Eliza Maria (1894) *Laiterie payante ou la vache du pauvre*

Widely circulating at the time, this book could be read as a feminist book today. It is written by a female farmer and addressed to other women farmers to help them turn their butter-making duties into a source of independent revenue.

Reproduction of a part of the Canadian pavilion at the colonial exhibition of 1886 in London

2022

Birch plywood.

This part of the pavilion presented products of Canadian agriculture to the English market. In doing so, it failed to acknowledge women's and indigenous people's significant contributions. French-speaking Canadians deputies also voiced feeling unrepresented at the time.

Qu'est-ce qu'on peut construire sur un sol en mouvance

What can you build on land that keeps moving

2022

Video. 4K with stereo sound.

6m 0s

TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO NARRATION

What are we building

What have we built

Have we built

We built on ground that keeps moving

On land that is not ours

We carry your grief

Maybe you

Maybe you've built

Maybe you is more comfortable than we

But we need

We need we

What can you build on land that keeps moving

Exhaust our bodies

Purge your humiliations from our muscles

Share exhaustion

Connect sufferings

Feel dizzy

So much needs to be untied still

The grief of what we thought we had built

Throw heavy things

Carry heavy

Compress

Replace narratives by muscle memory

Reach exhaustion

Feel lighter

We can care

for our exhausted bodies

Learn to care

Learn to heal

Care for other exhausted bodies

Heal humiliations

Heal narratives

Try to heal

Exhaust and then maybe grieve

Exhaust and then maybe heal

Qu'est-ce qu'on construit

Qu'est-ce qu'on a construit

Est-ce qu'on construit

On a construit sur un sol en mouvance

Sur un territoire qui n'est pas le nôtre

En portant votre deuil

Peut-être vous

Peut-être que vous avez construit

Peut-être que vous est plus confortable que nous

Mais on a besoin

On a besoin de nous

Qu'est-ce qu'on peut construire sur un sol en mouvance

Épuiser nos corps

Purger vos humiliations de nos muscles

Partager l'épuisement

Relier les souffrances

Se prendre de vertige

Tout ce qui reste à déconstruire

Le deuil de ce qu'on pensait avoir bâti

Lancer des trucs lourds

Porter des trucs lourds

Densifier Compresser

Remplacer les discours par la mémoire musculaire

S'épuiser

Se sentir plus légères

On peut prendre soin

de nos corps épuisés

Apprendre le soin

Essayer d'apaiser

Prendre soin d'autres corps épuisés

Apaiser les humiliations

Apaiser les discours

Essayer de guérir

Épuiser et peut-être faire son deuil

Épuiser et peut-être guérir

*Tu m'as donné ton pot à bines
(lettre à ma grand-mère)*

*You gave me your beans cooking pot
(letter to my grand-mother)*

2022

Video. 4K with stereo sound.

8m 51s

TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO NARRATION

You gave me your hundred-year-old bean cooking pot. I had never seen it before, but you knew I was attached to these traditions I've never known because they died before I was born. Maybe because these gestures made me feel closer to you. I still cook the pig's feet stew every Christmas.

You told me how as a child you used to bring this pot to the baker, filled with your mother's beans recipe, and how he would take everybody's beans cooking pot in his bread oven overnight. He had to keep the fire going anyway to make the oven hot enough to cook the bread at sunrise. In the morning, your mother put you in charge of going to buy bread and bring the beans home.

Your generation put an end to these collective gestures. You were ecstatic to have enough money to each have your own. You took land for granted because you owned land. My generation will never own as much land. Still I understand. You were raised in survival. Farming to feed your own family. So you took the jobs and each bought your own oven.

When I showed up in this town, an hour south of where I was born, two hours from your village, I told your bean story. They talked to me about butter. How butter used to be made at home by the women on each farm.

The woman was responsible to take care of cows, milk them, harvest the cream, churn it, wash the butter, mould it, and stamp it with her own stamp. She would feed her family and sell the surplus butter and keep the money. Creameries were being set up all over. Farmers would bring their milk to these small factories so that it was transformed in butter.

A law was voted that would prevent anyone without an agronomist qualification to open or even run a creamery. Women were not allowed to study in any of the schools granting these qualifications.

These butter factories were presented as a means for French-Canadians to regroup and finally gain the revenues that we deserved. That's how your generation used to tell this story; as a tale of empowerment. But I cannot un-see now how this has been built on an oppression of women's knowledge and of women's independence. And how it's a game played within a colonial framework.

Reading these archives, I was thinking about how you chose to marry the only son of farmers from the village who was determined to get out of there at all costs. To never milk a cow ever again. How marrying him was your way to escape this legacy of having to sell the product of your farming at the lowest price for your family to survive, even though this meant you would never be able to study at university and work like you wanted to.

I cannot ask you about all this. I can only wonder about your answers. You grew up in that village, left for the city, but moved back there as soon as you could. Still I grew up hearing all of you repeating how glad you were not to rely on a community anymore. Because, to you, doing something collectively always ended up being about who was talking behind whose back. About who grabbed more power to impose its own way to others. I absorbed that somehow and ended up being scared of people doing stuff together for so long.

Now I think I know that these collective gestures had a different meaning for your generation than for ours. Baking beans in the community oven was a failure to provide your family with the right level of comfort. It was a testament to being poor. For us, baking in a community oven is a victory against an economic system that divides, oppresses, and isolates us. A system that you unknowingly contributed to strengthening because you saw the generation before you exhaust itself through physical labour.