

VERS

Francisco-Fernando Granados & Jonathan VanDyke

June 6 – July 14

Doran Gallery

MassArt

460C Harrison Ave Suite C-08

Boston, MA

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Given:

- 1. We each bring what can fit in a single suitcase, plus anything we scavenge after we arrive.*
- 2. Only one of us in the gallery at a time.*
- 3. We grant each other consent to alter each other's work, as we see fit.*
- 4. The exhibition will constantly change. It is never complete.*
- 5. Anyone can visit at any time.*

Vers manifests a decade of conversation and collaboration between artists Jonathan VanDyke (NYC) and Francisco-Fernando Granados (Toronto). An evolving and site-specific improvisation at the Doran Gallery, the artists work with raw materials gathered from their respective studios and found around the MassArt campus on alternate days. The two never coincide physically in the gallery but continuously engage with one another through the material traces of their actions. They build and rebuild ephemeral assemblages together, yet at a distance, freely adding and taking away from the other's work: a non-verbal dialogue of compositions, forms, signs, and symbols. *Vers* is a living artwork, a correspondence, a negotiation, a power play, a flirtation, a relationship.

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Schedule:

F-FG:

Tuesday, June 7

Thursday, June 9

Saturday, June 11

Wednesday, July 29

Saturday, July 2

JVD:

Monday, June 6

Wednesday, June 8

Friday, June 10

Friday, July 1
Sunday, July 3

Artist Talk, moderated by Amy Giese
Thursday, June 30th, 4:30-6 pm

Followed by a reception in the gallery from 6-8 pm

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VanDyke and Granados work at the intersection of performance and painterly practice, with the former especially focused on gestural mark-making, and the latter on geometric abstraction. Through *Vers*, they enact a queering of patriarchal notions of individual authorship and push against the idea of the artwork as fixed and complete. Their work reframes strategies from avant-garde movements that have sought to counter the mainstream art market's logic of consumption. Here, the artwork is not an imposition on the audience or the sum of its materials: rather, it provides a model for creative play, making something within and out of what is already in place. As a studio-based methodology, *Vers* takes its cues from queer forms of embodiment that reject fixed hierarchies and stable roles. The installation unfolds through a slippery process in which each artist has the opportunity to be both submissive and dominating, or both or neither, to code switch and “find” each other without ever being physically present at the same time.

In their respective interdisciplinary practices, both artists' have focused upon abstraction as a means of communication that is preverbal, in which a story has not been set in words, or an explanation has not yet been articulated. Listening through the body and reacting sensorially act as methodologies for uncovering stories and traumas that are deeply felt and remain unclear and unresolved. This method carries special resonance for those communicating across languages and across differences of age, ability, racial identity, and ancestry, manifesting as an installation that carries the spirit of queer liberation and asks for more equitable access to cultural space.

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Artists' Bios:

The artists met when Granados performed VanDyke's score for the 2011 performance installation *Obstructed View*, a commission at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto.

Based in New York City since 2001, Jonathan VanDyke's art practice emphasizes the performativity of everyday life, utilizes surfaces and materials rich with subtext, and enfolds diverse audiences in making meaning through abstraction. He frequently collaborates with queer dancers and performers, from youth to older adults. His painting process often begins with movement-based choreographies that mark clothes and canvases laid upon the floor. He cuts up these canvases and the performers' stained clothes, and pieces and sews them back together. Patterns are often drawn from Pennsylvania German and Amish domestic crafts, part

of the visual landscape of his childhood in rural Pennsylvania. His paintings are displayed with both their fronts and backs visible, so that viewership is re-oriented and the labor of sewing – evidenced by seams – is on display. He brings his own body into live performances: in one durational piece he stood and stared at a Jackson Pollock painting for 40-hours, an act of stillness in front of a macho action painting, bracketed by the American workweek. In other performances, the community is invited to silently study works of art with him, such as in a major 2018 project in which he viewed 16 historic quilts – made primarily by anonymous women in the 19th century, and most of which has never been on public view – for three hours each.

After a serious accident in 2017 and long period of recovery, in his paintings VanDyke began utilizing more complex patterning and creating more elaborate surface marks – built up over many months on a range of fabrics. He conceives these works as tools for slow looking, for visual discovery and direct experience, a purposeful counterweight to distraction and mediation.

VanDyke serves on the graduate faculty at Mass Art.

Francisco-Fernando Granados was born in Guatemala and lives in Toronto, the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. Since 2005, his practice has traced his movement from convention refugee to critical citizen, using abstraction performatively, site-specifically, and relationally to create projects that challenge the stability of practices of recognition. His work has developed from the intersection of formal painterly training, working in performance through artist-run spaces, studies in queer and feminist theory, and early activism as a peer support worker with immigrant and refugee communities. This layering of experiences has trained his intuitions to seek site-responsive approaches, alternative forms of distribution, and the weaving of lyrical and critical propositions.

Recent projects include *foreward//letters*, a year-long solo exhibition consisting of drawings, site specific installations, and community-based interventions in dialogue with the permanent collection at The MacLaren Art Centre, *duet*, a traveling two-person exhibition alongside Canadian modernist painter Jack Bush in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Peterborough and The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, and *co-respond-dance Version II*, an artist book published with Centre des arts actuels Skol in Montreal. Other exhibition highlights include a performance installation in partnership with Third Space Gallery and the YMCA Newcomer Connections Centre in St. John New Brunswick, public art installations for Mercer Union and Nuit Blanche in Toronto, and participation in international group shows on contemporary queer aesthetics at the Hessel Museum and Ramapo College in the United States and Malmö Konstmuseum in Sweden.