

HECTOR CANONGE

Interdisciplinary Artist

Dossier 2024

Sample Works & Creative Curriculum



Hector Canonge, *CRUCES*, Performance Art, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Santa Cruz, Bolivia. © 2021 All Rights Reserved.

Artist Statement:

In my interdisciplinary work, I explore notions of personal transformation, corporeal endurance, social adaptability, and migratory displacement. As a multidisciplinary artist, I seek to address issues that pertain to gender identity, border crossing, and social constructs about cultural heritage, ethnicity and assimilation. In my installations, public interventions, and socially engaged projects, I derive my inspiration from everyday practices, the urban sphere, and my observations about the human condition. Often times, I employ found objects and materials to reassign a new meaning. Other times, I use technology to create immersive experiences with narratives that encourage reflection and dialogue. In my performance art project, I produce and present projects that align with my approach to somatic expression and corporeal actions framed by my conceptual investigation of body politics, the embodiment of ancestral heritage, and deconstruction of ritualistic processes.

My performances reference my personal history while addressing the (re)construction of cultural memory, the politics of gender, and the (de)colonization of the body. Through somatic expression, dance movement, and the incorporation of traditional materials and elements of Andean South American cultures, I create performative experiences to prompt reflection and better understanding of my origins. My work investigates and addresses the transformation of the Self in diverse urban ethnic communities. Through performance art, public interventions, in-situ installations, and social engagement, I explore the human condition.

Biography:



Hector Canonge, *THE DAY IN BETWEEN*, Performance, Theater Kinematica, Ishinomaki, Japan, © 2023 All Rights Reserved.

Hector Canonge is an American artist of Catalan and indigenous Bolivian descent. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Canonge spent his childhood in Bolivia and grew up in New York City where he studied Comparative Literature, Cinema, and New Media Arts. His work in Performance Art, Dance, Social Practice, Multimedia Production and Installation treats notions of identity, gender roles, and migration politics. Through his investigation of somatic expression, he has developed a corporeal theory for the practice of Performance Art presenting it in workshops and conferences around the world. Challenging the white box settings of a gallery or a museum, or intervening directly in public spaces, his performances mediate movement, endurance, and ritualistic processes. Some of his actions and carefully choreographed performances involve collaborating with other artists and interacting with audiences. His performances, films and media installations have been presented and exhibited in the United States, Latin America, Europe and Asia.

In 2023, Canonge finished the presentation of his performance art project *The Day In Between* featured in the 5th Edition of the International Program Responding hosted in Ishinomaki, Japan. The artist exhibited his work at Smack Mellon in New York City, and to performed in the Furia Festival organized by the Hispanic Arts Federation of New York. The same year, Canonge was selected to attend the KlangKunstBühne 2023 program at Berlin University of the Arts, UDK, and invited to participate in the XII Biennial of Contemporary Art of Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

In 2022, Canonge returned to the U.S. after living one year in Bolivia. Upon his return, the artist was commissioned to present new work at the performance space, JACK Brooklyn, and participated in exhibitions at Bronx River Art Center, and at Dixon Place. The same year, Canonge premiered his new work “AltiBajos” (Ups and Downs) in Amsterdam, and his collaborative performance project

“Ensamblage” working with artists in Venice, Dublin, Berlin and Kassel, Germany as part of Documenta 15. In December of the same year, Canonge participated as a guest artist in the International Program Theertha in Colombo Sri Lanka.

In 2021, while living in Bolivia, Canonge was commissioned to present 2 solo exhibition projects in the city of Santa Cruz: “Escolar,” *Museo de la Ciudad Altillo Beni*, “Mi hogar está donde vos estés” (My Home Is Where You Might Be),” *Museum of Contemporary Art*, and in the city of La Paz, his solo exhibition “(G)ritos Urbanos” (Urban Screams & Rituals) for the *Museo Costumbrista Juan de Vargas*. He also presented his new dance project “Cholo” in the *International Festival Danzenica*, and published his book of poetry “Veinte Jornadas Para Llegar A Vos” presented in the International Book Fairs of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz as a guest artist for the *Fundación Cultural del Banco Central de Bolivia, FCBCB*.

Hector Canonge is the founding director of the performance art festivals: ITINERANT in New York City (2012-2019), LATITUDES in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (2018-present), and AUSTRAL in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2019-present). He is responsible for the international initiatives: ARTERIAL Performance Lab (2013-present), PERFORMEANDO (2014-2017), PERFORMAXIS (2014-present), TALKaCTIVE & LIVEART.US (2015-2018), CONVIVIR at MODULO 715 (2016-2018), NEXUS Miami (2017-present), and IGNITION (2018-2019). In 2020, reflecting on the effects of the Corona pandemic, Canonge launched the online world-wide program, CHRONICLES of CONFINEMENT, featuring artists from Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. In 2023, Canonge initiated the 1er Encuentro Latinoamericano de Performance Berlin, a yearly program taking place in Berlin featuring Latin American performance artists living in Europe.



Curator and organizer, *PAUSA, Performance Art USA, Public Interventions*, Inwood Park, NYC, November, 2022.

SELECTED EXHIBITION PROJECTS:



Hector Canonge, *REVERBERACIONES INÉDITAS*, Solo Exhibition, XII Bienal de Arte Santa Cruz, Bolivia. © 2023 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

REVERBERACIONES INÉDITAS (Unedited Reverberations) was commissioned for the *XXII Bienal Internacional de Arte de Santa Cruz de la Sierra*. Presented at the gallery of the *Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, AECID*, in Bolivia, the project reacts and reflects about the echoes of individual and collective memory rooted in the materiality and form of everyday objects. The project repurposes materials to question the value of memory and the manner in which utilitarian objects can gain or lose their psycho-physical connection based on our human experience.



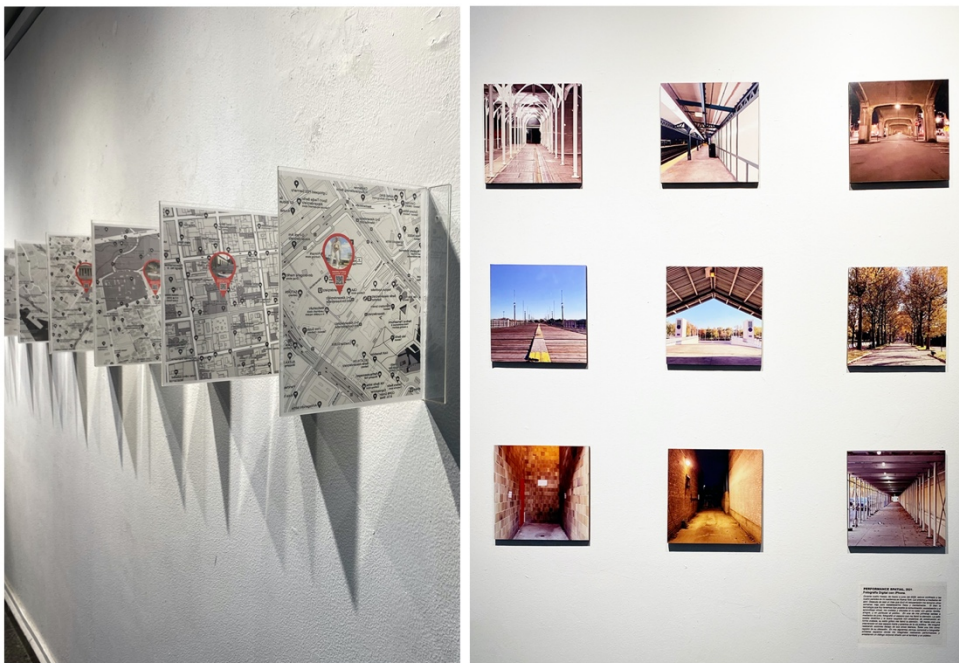
A MATTER OF WHOLENESS, *Homorientalism Exhibition, Smack Mellon, New York City, 2023.*

The exhibition consists of an installation generated, in part by the remnants of the performance that accompanies the work. The project represents the constant struggle with one's origins and ancestral heritage. For the exhibition at Smack Mellon, the installation consists of the following: A wall piece made from discarded, old iron wires which are mounted in the shape of the roots of a plant, an animated text video projection of a poem written by the artist, and the ephemera generated by Canonge's performance. As a performance, A MATTER OF WHOLENESS represents the "uprooting" of a plant from its base evoking the tearing of BIPOC individuals from their land, their gender, and their own cultures.



TERRANAUTA, *Centro Cultural Gascón, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2022.*

Interdisciplinary project that references the exploration of a known world turned inhospitable and invites reflection about confinement and human connectedness. The project was realized during the months following the 2020 quarantine in New York City, and while the entire planet was still dealing with the bio-safety measures, before the protocols of massive vaccination were implemented. TERRANAUTA evokes a possible encounter with an alarming dystopic reality where fragments of past memory are retained. The videos that comprise the exhibition reference the hypohetic exploration of a traveler, “the terranauta”, who finds an inert planet subdued to the experience of pandemic isolation, and despair in the second decade of the 21st Century.



Hector Canonge, *(G)RITOS URBANOS*, Solo Exhibition, Museo Costumbrista Juan de Vargas, La Paz, Bolivia. © 2021 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

(G)RITOS URBANOS, Museo Costumbrista Juan de Vargas, La Paz, Bolivia, 2021.

The exhibition treats the relation and exploration of urban spaces, the body and time. The exhibition consists of a selection of videos and photographic documentation of public interventions in various cities around the world, interactive maps, garments and objects used in public performances, photographs of places where a performance never took place during the pandemic and an in-situ installation -the result of a public intervention for the opening day of the exhibition.



Hector Canonge, (G)RITOS URBANOS, Public Performance & Installation, Plaza Riosinho, La Paz, Bolivia. © 2021 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

ALTAR CONVEXO, *Public Installation and Performance part of the exhibition (G)RITOS URBANOS*. Responding to my walks in and around the city of La Paz, I found materials and objects in the *ferias* (street markets) that are traditionally used in this part of Bolivia: *caña hueca* (hollow cane) for the local festivities of *Todos Santos* (All Saints Day), colorful sheep wool used in knitting baby's clothes and the *Aguayo* (typical garment) used by women in particular to carry their loads or their babies. With this performance, I reference the diversity of peoples living in Bolivia. I become part of the totem that I built becoming wrapped in the wools and the *Aguayo*. I am the product of that rich mix of peoples. It's my scream, it's my ritual, and one part of my identity.



Hector Canonge, *ESCOLAR*, Solo Exhibition, Museo de la Ciudad Alto Beni, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. © 2021 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

ESCOLAR, Museo de la Ciudad Alto Beni, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, 2021.

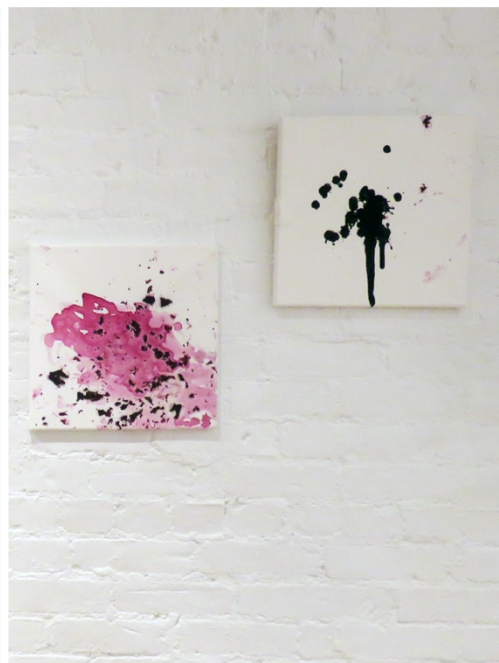
Exhibition project that treats the socio-political-economic disparities of education in Bolivia. Using discarded materials, objects, and elements from various schools in the industrial city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the project constructs a visual narrative of the history of education in the emerging city while questioning the realities of cultural inequality and access to centers of learning. The artist worked several months with public school districts, and museum staff to build one of the tallest installations – made of children seats- ever produced in the building.



Hector Canonge, *MI HOGAR ESTÁ DONDE VOS ESTÉS*, Solo Exhibition, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santa Cruz, Bolivia. © 2021 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

MI HOGAR ESTÁ DONDE VOS ESTÉS, *Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2021.*

Treats the theme of memory and the exploration of space using the Spanish roof tiles of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The project employs repurposed materials, colonial roof tiles, and gives them a new meaning far from their original use. The discarded tiles were found in front of a colonial house in the downtown city area. They serve as the conductive thread to create an intimate immersive space that prompts reflection as it invites audiences to interact with its elements while reading projected narratives and interpreting the type of pseudo-archeological experience presented by the artist.



Hector Canonge, *LATINEAMERICANES*, Exhibition and Performance, Taller Boricua, New York, USA. © 2019 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

***LATINEAMERICANES*, Taller Boricua Gallery, Latin American Triennial, NYC, 2019.**

Explores the demarcations of language and gender in Spanish speaking countries. The present attempt to challenge normative binomial constructions and their effects on communication and the efforts to fight patriarchal norms, yet – and in contradictory praxis – still accept to be colonized by thoughts and approaches to social revolutions framed by states in power and neo-imperial control. *LATINEAMERICANES* was presented through performances as a generative exploration of power and control.

Selected Screen Performances:



Hector Canonge, *LIMINAL FATIGUE*, New Media Performance, Online Performance Art Festival, Screen Capture Images, 2020.

LIMINAL FATIGUE

After having recovered from COVID19 in the first wave of the pandemic in early 2020, I started to experiment and explore with streaming video for the presentation of my performance art projects. Though it took me a while to accept the fact that I couldn't be in front of a live audience, I came to terms with the new reality, and immersed myself in tele-performances or zoom-performances. The experience allowed me to forge a theory about corporeal energy transformed into bits of data, streamed and reordered again on the screen of the audience. *LIMINAL FATIGUE* was the last online performance of 2020.



Hector Canonge, *MANIATADO (Captive)*, Performance Art Online, Diversa Festival, Buenos Aires, Argentina 2020.

MANIATADO is one of my first zoom-performances where I explored the challenges of being separated from loved ones and the impossibility to find a suitable romantic partner in the days of the pandemic. The work references self-captivity and the effects that social confinement had on the Queer community. Through the layering of fabric, the performance unravels the longing for human contact while evoking moments of joy and angst as multicolored pieces seemed to erupt from my inner body.

Performance Art Projects:



Hector Canonge, *PENA (Sorrow)*, Performance Art & Exhibition, Museo Casa Melchor Pinto, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2019.

PENA (Sorrow) presented in the opening day of my solo exhibition “Futuros Bifurcantes” (Forked Futures), **PENA** is the awakening from a dream to confront an imminent moment of departure. The sorrow is evoked through actions using typical elements of Bolivian culture: the yute fabric, the *colchón de paja* (straw mattress), the aluminum framed mirrors found in peasants’ homes, and a *cuchillo de palo* (wood handle knife) that my grandmother used to keep in her kitchen. Every element serves as an instrument of transformation: dyeing the fabric, tearing the mattress with the knife, pulling the straw until there are only remnants on the floor symbolizing my own state of mind at that moment.



Hector Canonge, ATLAS, Performance Art, Grace Exhibition Space, New York City, USA.. © 2018. Hector Canonge. All rights reserved.

ATLAS, Performance Art, New York City, 2018.

As a man, I carried the norms and impositions of a society that has not alleviated their constructed attitudes that scream “boys don’t cry.” I am expected to be strong, courageous, potent, noble, and never to show any weakness... Can there be a masculine revolution? So, I can cry, feel not so strong, and be also cared for?



Hector Canonge, *TEMPTATIONS*, Centre Culturel les Étoiles de Sidi Moumen, Casablanca, Morocco, 2018.

TEMPTATIONS is a performance art project that was initiated based on the experience of working with youth and children at the Centre Culturel Les Étoiles de Sidi Moumen in Casablanca, Morocco. The performance takes inspiration on the cultural shifts and turns of Moroccan history, its colonial ancestry, and native's peoples struggle to gain independence and autonomy. For the project, Canonge spent time working at the center, and walking around the city in the company of artists and creatives. As a project, *TEMPTATIONS* marked Canonge's incursion in the exploration of history through performance art by using sounds, text and the participation of the public.



Hector Canonge, *A MATTER OF WHOLENESS*, Performance & Installation, The George Washington University, USA, 2018.

A MATTER OF WHOLENESS represents the constant struggle with one's origins and ancestral heritage. I wearing a typical garment of the *Guarayo* peoples from the oriental region in Bolivia, I interact with a small tree that eventually is taken from the pot and cleaned living its roots exposed in the open. The tearing of the leaves, the cleaning of the soil, and the revelation of its roots symbolize our constant attempt to affirm one's identity as one struggles to define one's Self in contemporary society.



Hector Canonge, *INCONNUE (Unknown)*, Performance Art & Intervention, Schoelcher Library, FIAP, Fort de France, Martinique, 2017.

INCONNUE

I am not a colonized body. I am not a conquered body. I am Unknown –
 I am a body that is the result of colonization, conquest, confrontation, and love. I accept that I am the product of two: two worlds coming together, two bodies that came together, two blood types, two sets of chromosomes, two languages, two cultures, two ideologies, two worlds.
 How can I decolonize IT (my body) if it is as the air –oxygen, O₂- that keeps me alive?...
 I don't struggle with who I am. I struggle with what people think I am...



Hector Canonge, *CORPOGRAFIAS*, Performance Art & Installation, ARCIS, Hemispheric Encuentro, Santiago, Chile, 2016.

CORPOGRAFIA

Since childhood I've been fascinated with the objects, materials, and supplies that are used in schools. I found myself in Chile during the early confrontations of students and government for the privatization of education. One of the most important Art Colleges, the ARCI, was at the point of closure; its classrooms abandoned, its seats piled in forgotten dusty pavilions, the legacy of its mentors in the mind of the few remaining students. I intervened one of the pavilions of abandoned school materials and built an in-situ installation with the last graduating class of the university.

BOOK PUBLICATION



Hector Canonge, VEINTE JORNADAS PARA LLEGAR A VOS, Book of Poetry, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. © 2021 Canonge. All Rights Reserved.

Veinte Jornadas Para Llegar A Vos (Twenty Journeys To Get To You)
Published by Complot Editorial while Canonge lived in Bolivia in 2021. The twenty poems that make the book were written in New York City as he waited to travel to South America just before the social and political upheavals that swept the Southern Hemisphere in 2019. Due to the pandemic, and after the country regain its democratic government, I was able to publish the book and participated in Book Fairs in Bolivia and Latin America throughout 2021.



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