Digging Earth

Extractivism and Resistance on Indigenous Lands of the Americas

Edited by

Catherine Bernard

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Contributors

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Antonia Carcelén-Estrada is an activist, translator, and scholar of comparative literature, cultural race studies, oral history, and early-modern and medieval studies. She has worked at the University of

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Carolina Caycedo (London,1978) is a Colombian multidisciplinary artist living in Los Angeles. Her immense geographic photographs, lively artist's books, hanging sculptures, performances, films, and installations are not merely art objects but gateways into larger discussions about how we treat each other and the world around us. Through her studio practice and fieldwork with communities impacted by large-scale infrastructure and other extraction projects, she invites viewers to consider the unsustainable pace of growth under capitalism and how we might embrace resistance and solidarity. Process and participation are central to Caycedo's practice, she contributes to the reconstruction of environmental and historical memory as a fundamental space for climate and social justice. Caycedo is a nominee for the 10 Artes Mundi prize in Wales, a 2023 United States Artists Fellow, and a 2023/24 Artist in Residence at the Getty Research Institute.

Jeffrey De Blois is Associate Curator and Publications Manager at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, where he has organized *Tammy Nguyen*; *Rose B. Simpson: Legacies*; *Napoleon Jones-Henderson: I Am As I Am – A Man*; *Raúl de Nieves: The Treasure House of Memory*; *Eva LeWitt*; *Carolina Caycedo: Cosmotarrayas*; and *Caitlin Keogh: Blank Melody*, among others. He has been a critical contributor to several other projects at the ICA, including *To Begin Again: Artists and Childhood*, *Sterling Ruby*, *Less Is a Bore: Maximalist Art & Design*, *William Forsythe: Choreographic Objects*, and *Art in*

the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today. He has written essays on the work of artists Marlon Forrester, Carolina Caycedo, William Kentridge, Caitlin Keogh, and Sterling Ruby. Before joining the ICA, De Blois was curatorial fellow at MIT List Visual Arts Center. He holds a MA from Boston University in the History of Art & Architecture.

Jeremy Dennis (b. 1990) is a contemporary fine art photographer, an enrolled Tribal Member of the Shinnecock Indian Nation in Southampton, NY, and lead artist and founder of the non-profit Ma's House & BIPOC Art Studio, Inc. In his work, he explores Indigenous identity, culture, and assimilation. Dennis holds an MFA from Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, and a BA in Studio Art from Stony Brook University, NY. He currently lives and works in Southampton, New York on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation.

DesertArtLAB is an interdisciplinary environmental arts collaborative co-directed by April Bojorquez and Matt Garcia. Their work promotes Indigenous/Chicanx perspectives on ecological practice, food sovereignty, self-determination, and climate change. DesertArtLAB's projects activate public space through participatory artworks and support the restoration of desert environments and their foodways through zero irrigation regrowth projects. DesertArtLAB have presented their work nationally and internationally at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France; The Dom Museum, Vienna, Austria; The Museum of Contemporary Native Art, Santa Fe, NM; the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, Galería de la Raza, San Francisco, CA, among many others. April and Matt are recipients of the Creative Capital award and were 2021 Mellon Artists in Residence at the Colorado College Fine Arts Center Museum. Bojorquez and Garcia live in Pueblo, Colorado where they work as artists/educators. Garcia is an Assistant Professor of Creativity + Practice at Colorado State University Pueblo.

Elizabeth "Betsy" S. Hawley is an art historian, writer, and curator specializing in art of the Americas and modern and contemporary art. Her research often focuses on twentieth and twenty-first century Native North American art, and other areas of expertise include feminist/women's art, activist art, ecocritical art, and art of the American West. Her work has been

supported by the Lunder Institute, Wolfsonian-FIU, and Pittsburgh Foundation. Hawley is an assistant professor of art history at the University of South Alabama and an independent curator. Recent exhibitions include *Landscapes of Survivance* at the Santa Clara University Art Gallery and *Borderwaters* at the Alabama Contemporary Art Center.

Lynn Holland teaches US-Latin America Relations at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. Her research is focused on environmental activism and land rights issues related to mining and other forms of extractivism, drug trafficking, immigration policy, and state-society relations in southern Mexico, Central America, and Peru. She has taken students to Chiapas, Mexico to study the impact of large-scale development projects and the sustainable alternatives that are emerging in the region and has served as an expert witness for asylum seekers coming from Mexico and Honduras.

Erin Joyce is a scholar of contemporary art and has organized over 35 solo and group exhibitions including *Between Beauty and Decay* (Artspace New Haven, 2017), *Still Life No. 3: Raven Chacon* (Heard Museum 2019), *Erika Harrsch: Moving in the Borderlands* (Idyllwild Arts Foundation, 2022), and *Crafting Resistance (*Arizona State University Art Museum, 2023). Joyce is a frequent contributor to *Hyperallergic*, and has had writing featured in *Salon, Selvedge Magazine, Canvas Magazine,* and *Native American Art Magazine.* She is a 2023 winner of the Rabkin Prize for arts journalism from The Dorothea and Leo Rabkin Foundation. Joyce's work has garnered attention from publications including *Vogue Magazine, The New York Times, The Economist, The Art Newspaper*, and *Forbes.* She has lectured at venues such as the Yale Center for British Art (New Haven, Connecticut), the School for Advanced Research (Santa Fe, New Mexico), and Fire Station Artist Studios (Dublin, Ireland). Joyce holds a BA in the History of Art from the University of North Texas and MA in Museum Studies from Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Kelsey Leonard holds a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Waters, Climate and Sustainability and is an Assistant Professor in the School of Environment, Resources, and Sustainability in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo, where her research focuses on Indigenous

water justice and its climatic, territorial, and governance underpinnings. As a water scientist and legal scholar, Dr. Leonard seeks to establish Indigenous traditions of water conservation as the foundation for international water policymaking. She represents the Shinnecock Indian Nation on the Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean, which is charged with protecting America's ocean ecosystems and coastlines. She also serves as a member of the Great Lakes Water Quality Board of the International Joint Commission. She is an enrolled citizen of Shinnecock Indian Nation.

Juan Pablo Pacheco Bejarano (Bogotá, 1991) is an artist, writer and educator driven by the interrelations between technology and ecology, seeking to imagine media and mediations beyond extraction. Through texts, collaborative spaces, audiovisual projects and installations, his research dives into the fractal relations between technological infrastructures, fermentation, water and telepathy. Juan Pablo has been a cultural programmer at Plataforma Bogotá, a lab for art, science and technology, and at Espacio Odeón, a contemporary art space. He has also taught at the Javeriana and Andes universities in Bogotá, and at the Royal Academy of Arts The Hague. His work has been disseminated and developed at multiple cultural centers and institutions around the world.

Nicole Sault draws on the perspectives of ethno-ornithology and anthropology in working with peoples of México, Costa Rica, Perú, and the U.S. This work honors the voices of Indigenous elders with traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) who are resisting ongoing neo-colonial land theft and repression. In defending the land and water she calls attention to the role of bird teachers like condors and hummingbirds. Topics she addresses include kinship and godmothers, human rights and torture, and also chiles and the temazcal. This research and writing are in Spanish as well as English, and she has taught at the Universidad de Costa Rica and Santa Clara University in California. She earned a doctorate from the University of California at Los Angeles, and her publications include *Many Mirrors: Body Image and Social Relations,* Rutgers University Press. www.sallyglean.org/sault/

Kaila T. Schedeen, PhD is a curator and art historian based in Austin, TX. She received her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin in 2023 and

her MA from the University of Delaware in 2016. Kaila specializes in contemporary American art with a particular focus on Indigenous artists and artists of the African Diaspora who critically examine the terms of identity, belonging, and nationhood in the United States through photography, performance, and multimedia works. Her writing has been published by University of Delaware Press, Rutgers Art Review, Grove Art Online, and Sightlines Magazine, and she has held positions at The Harry Ransom Center, UT; the Visual Arts Center, UT; Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma; John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, UT; Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library; and Mechanical Hall Gallery at the University of Delaware.

Morten Søndergaard is an internationally acclaimed Curator and Associate Professor of Media Art. With a background as Curator/Deputy Director at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde (1998-2008), he is academic director and co-founder of the Erasmus master's in media arts Cultures program (since 2015). Co-founder of the POM – Politics of Machines Series (with Laura Beloff, Aalto University, since 2017) and co-found of the ISACS – Sound Art Curating Conference Series (w Peter Weibel, ZKM, since 2013). He has published internationally on media art, sound art, curation, and the digital archive experience. He was Contributing Editor at LEA – Leonardo Electronic Almanac (MIT Presse, 2011–14), and Editor of MEDIEKULTUR Journal (2013-15). Guest editor at Leonardo Music Journal (MIT Press, 2019-2021). Morten Søndergaard is the Curator of several international exhibitions, including MAGNET (2007) and The Unheard Avant-gardes (2012) at ZKM, Karlsruhe.

Edward Charles Valandra is Síčáŋǧu Thitȟuŋwaŋ and a citizen of Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Oyáte. He was born and raised in his settler-occupied homeland, the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Oyáte Makȟóčhe. Dr. Valandra has served his people in various capacities: a legislator, and a senior administrator in his nation's K12 chartered school. He is currently a member of the 1894 Sioux Nation Treaty Council. He received his BA Minnesota State University-Mankato, MA from the University of Colorado-Boulder, and PhD from SUNY-Buffalo. His research focuses on the national revitalization and liberation of his nation and of other communities of color. Dr. Valandra's current role is Senior Editor at Living Justice Press. He is the editor of *Colorizing*

Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities and author of *Not Without Our Consent: Lakota Resistance to Termination, 1950-1959*, and it currently the editor of *Colorizing Circle Practices: Naming the Silences* book project.

Will Wilson is a photographer and trans-customary artist who spent his formative years living on the Navajo Nation. His photography practice centers around the continuation and transformation of customary Indigenous cultural practice, countering the 'archival impulse' embedded within the historical imaginaries of white settler colonialism. Through various methods of photography, Wilson combines digital technology, historic photographic processes, performance, and installation around themes of environmental activism, the impacts of cultural and environmental change on Indigenous peoples, and the possibility of cultural survival and renewal. Wilson studied photography, sculpture, and art history at the University of New Mexico where he received his Master's in Fine Arts. Wilson has been honored with the Eiteljorg Native American Fine Art Fellowship, Joan Mitchell Foundation Award for Sculpture, Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for Photography and he was the Doran Artist in Residence at the Yale University Art Gallery. Wilson has held visiting professorships at the Institute of American Indian Arts, Oberlin College, and the University of Arizona. His work is exhibited and collected internationally and he is Associate Professor of Photography at University of Texas, Austin.

Rachel A. Zimmerman is assistant professor of art history at Colorado State University Pueblo. She earned her bachelor's degrees at New Mexico State University and her MA and Ph.D. at the University of Delaware. Her primary area of research is art and material culture in the early modern Portuguese empire, and she held a fellowship at Winterthur for her research on hammocks, ceramics, and textiles in eighteenth-century Brazil. She is an editor for Smarthistory.org and contributed a chapter to their open-access online textbook Reframing Art History. Since 2022, she has served as a Faculty Fellow at CSU Pueblo to help her colleagues with pedagogical opportunities and challenges such as online teaching, alternative grading methods, supporting disabled students, and teaching in the time of generative AI.

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I am grateful to the artists who have authorized the reproduction of their works: Pia Arke and the Pia Arke Foundation, Carolina Caycedo, Jeremy Dennis, DesertArtLAB (Matt Garcia and April Bojorquez), Juan Downey, Courtney Leonard, Emma Robbins, Barbara Santos, Angelica Trimble-Yanu and Will Wilson. Your artworks establish loud and clear the critical impact of visual narratives to understand the histories of Indigenous communities and their homelands.

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The Hopi at First, Second and Third Mesas who let me stay during ceremonial dances and prayers and have welcomed me in their houses to share a meal, sparked my will to learn about Indigenous lands and communities. Janice and Joseph Day at Tsakurshovi on Second Mesa gave me sound advice, warnings and proper behavior etiquette, while marking on a map of the Four Corners trails to places I should go see.

I give my profound gratitude to all of them and to the many individuals I met during my travels who helped me with directions, both physical and intangible.

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Johan Grimonprez and Bruno Ricard for endlessly listening, providing support, suggestions and good humor. Thank you to Thierry Pérémarti for suggesting: Digging Earth, originally as title of a conference paper.

Last to Milo, my son and travel companion and to his generation, I hope this book may provide a small sparkle to pursue and learn from the lessons we have not heeded soon enough.

May the work done in this book benefit the humans, other-than-humans, waters, plants and rocks of the earth.

Catherine Bernard, August 2023

Introduction
Rumbling Lands and Muttering Rivers

Catherine Bernard

Digging Earth: Extractivism and Resistance on Indigenous Lands of the Americas is a collection of essays and artists' contributions that examine resource and epistemic extractivist practices on Indigenous homelands throughout the American continent and the resistance movements led by Indigenous leaders, activists, scholars and artists fighting them. Resource extractivism includes the exploitation of minerals and ores, the use of millions of gallons of water for cleaning and transporting them, the construction of dams to produce hydroelectric power, logging, deforestation, and oil drilling, solely driven by profit. The authors and artists in *Digging Earth* denounce the predatory extractivism of neocolonial corporations and their impact on the environment of local and Indigenous communities; they frame these activities within the settler colonialist ideology that converts the natural environment into a capitalist resource, ready to be plundered; they address topics of Indigenous sovereignty, environmental justice, and land's rights; they write about the power and dissent in the communities who live in regions of extraction.

In addition to resource extraction, the extraction of Indigenous epistemes and ontologies was instrumentalized during the nineteenth century and beyond by anthropology and ethnology, and they became essential tools to legitimize the colonization process. Today, the extraction of Indigenous knowledge systems is practiced by several government agencies and international institutions as they consider traditional Indigenous knowledge for their climate change strategies, ready to be used as models for new environmental ethics, or solutions to the environmental crisis generated by resource extraction. Not only is this assumption problematic

and is at best a form of wishful thinking, but it also avoids asking who would benefit most from the appropriation of this knowledge.

As we, humans and non-humans, hasten toward a foretold collective ecocide, contributors to the volume point to the impacts of the climate crisis being felt by Indigenous nations and countries in the Global South, having been affected by the ecologically destructive consequences of extractivism for many decades and who are first in the line of destruction.[1] Environmental justice can only be understood from the point of view of the south-north divide that has resulted in the forced migrations of millions, increased pollution and climate related disasters, and the systemic destruction of ecosystems throughout the Global South.

The collective works in this volume respond to the dead end of extractive capitalism with stories of dissent and possibilities and by creating artworks that imagine futures and alternative models, new strategies of thinking, and struggles that dismantle the extractivist paradigm as a social and economic template. Generated by artists, activists, writers and cultural producers, these models envision shared spaces of cohabitation and relation between human, other-than-human species, and the natural environment.

How to Speak and Stand in Solidarity?

While researching Indigenous arts and histories for the past two decades and learning about the multiple histories of the Four Corners region, the various issues surrounding mining came to the fore, and it became clear to me that accounting for such complexity was a daunting and complicated task. To speak and stand in solidarity, was it enough for me to document and write about mining and the threats faced by Öngtupqa (the Hopi name for Grand Canyon) and the multiple nations—Hulapai, Havasupai, Diné, Hopi, Mountain Ute, Ute—who live near Öngtupqa, draw water and subsistence from the Colorado River winding in its depths, and whose histories and cultures are woven in its geological time? Or to report the threats on the religious practices embedded in its waters and rocks, for example, those of the Hopi for whom the Place of Emergence of the world

is located at the confluence of the Colorado River and the Little Colorado River, at the mouth of Öngtupqa?

An example provides some focus into the resistance undertaken by Indigenous Peoples living near Öngtupqa. A 1986 enterprise, Canyon Mine, was recently resurrected and renamed the Pinyon Plain Mine. Energy Fuels Resources, the present owner, was in the process of obtaining permission to renew uranium extraction just miles away from the entrance to the Grand Canyon National Park, targeting a uranium deposit located 1,400 feet below the surface. The intertribal Red Butte Gathering in October 2018, organized by the Havasupai protested the mining project. Following the denial of a 2018 petition filed by the Havasupai to the US Court of Appeals, the Havasupai Tribal Council sent a formal letter of opposition to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality in 2022, reiterating its opposition to the Pinyon Plain Mine, requesting consultation and coordination with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to recognize the value of tribal traditional knowledge, as well as demanding that basic data on the mine's operations and contaminants be shared. A decision regarding the start of mining in Pinyon Plain Mine was pending as of 2022 (Grand Canyon Trust, 2022), until the recent designation of Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni as a National Monument by the Biden administration banned uranium mining within its limits. This decision could not have happened but for the unified opposition of the various nations involved in resisting the project: Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, Paiute, Navajo, Yavapai-Apache, Zuni and Colorado River Indian Tribes.[2] However, the fact that that other similar operations continue to dot the Four Corners regions, the homelands to many Indigenous nations, should not be ignored.

This brief account describes one of many attempts at exploiting the land and threatening the environment and health of the inhabitants of the region. Similar situations of resource exploitation and disregard for the communities they affect are ubiquitous throughout North, Central, and South America. As a result, the question of extractivism became central to my research. Some important issues needed to be examined. How social and political power structures that are fundamentally unequal would frame this research: who retains and distributes the knowledge accumulated through research and publishing? As a European scholar and

curator engaged in academic work, speaking from the United States, where do I stand in relation to the colonial context defining these threats? As part of the institutional academic structure, I needed to examine my situation in relation to the production of knowledge in a settler colonialist context. Additionally, what role did the tropes of the settler imagination fueled through the prism of popular culture (Disney, Hollywood, Netflix) and news media play in my choices? To learn how to speak with and stand with, instead of to speak for and stand for, one must ask these questions. There were a few possible signposts.

Some of my counterparts, Anglo-American and Europeans scholars who write about Indigenous cultures and Indigenous Peoples have adopted the term *ally* to define their position in the ongoing context of settler colonialism. Could this notion help to account for my own relation to the political, social and theoretical frames of my research? I kept coming back to the words of Jaskiran Dhillon from her essay "Notes on Becoming a Comrade: Indigenous Women, Leadership and Movement(s) for Decolonization": "Benign notions of allyship, or solidarity with no teeth, has been rightfully critiqued for reinscribing colonial relations of domination, and doing little to interrupt or dismantle white settler power and broader colonial structures upholding white supremacy" (Dhillon, 2019, p. 43).

Another signpost was offered by historian Nick Estes in *Our History is the Future,* where he casts Indigenous resistance in the historical and generational frame of Indigenous struggles since the arrival of settlers on Turtle Island. In Estes's work and that of other Indigenous scholars such as Edward Valandra (chapter 5 in this volume), being *a good relative* is the foundation of such historical movements: "For the Oceti Sakowin, the affirmation Mni Wiconi, 'water is life,' relates to Wotakuye, or 'being a good relative.' Indigenous resistance to the trespass of settlers, pipelines, and dams is part of being a good relative to the water, land, and animals, not to mention the human world" (Estes, 2019, p. 21). Pollution is entitled with more rights than the lands and the peoples, as it trespasses unhindered through the aquifers, the air, and the soil while Indigenous lands are parcellated and legislated through settlers' politics.[3] Learning to understand the natural world as kin is another aspect of speaking and standing in solidarity.

Furthermore, to speak and stand in solidarity demands being critical of scholarship that represents Indigenous cultures as a general paradigm, describing nonspecific cultural or political groups. This approach is denounced by Indigenous scholars such as Jennifer Nez Denetdale, Winona LaDuke, Simon J. Ortiz, Dana Powell, Melanie Yazzie, and others, as they claim that any research addressing topics of Indigenous political struggles requires that they are understood within specific historical, political, and cultural frames. Melanie Yazzie, in "Decolonizing Development in Diné Bikeyah" (Yazzie, 2018), argues that an analysis of the models of imperialist and colonial capitalist development must be central to discussions of decolonization and Indigenous cultures. She also asserts that it is fundamental to recognize how each situation generates specific struggles and narratives that are inscribed within their own spatial temporalities. Only then can the colonial settler structures be accounted for and deconstructed.

In the present context of settler colonialism, acknowledging my own position as being part of the dominant settler class and examining it in regard to the history of appropriation, exploitation, and genocides linked to colonial destructive powers is unavoidable. To be a political supporter becomes possible only by learning from the work accomplished by Indigenous scholars and artists, from their ongoing experiences, narratives, engagements and political actions. This acknowledgement needs also to be framed with questions about my own social and political history; to examine the working relation between the diverse actors contributing to the project—authors, artists, and editor, and to establish a degree of accountability about who retains power and knowledge. These questions have guided me through this project.

The contributors in *Digging Earth* critically deconstruct the extractive paradigm. Each of them, Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers and artists acknowledge their own position and unique perspective and underline the critical agency of specific cultural and political webs, intertwined with the voices of distinct Indigenous communities. Their work contributes to a scholarship that aims at speaking and standing with Indigenous Peoples in their resistance movements.

Extraction and Settler Colonialism on Indigenous Homelands

Extractivism must be understood within the history of settler colonialism. It started as soon as the first occupation of the land was achieved after the first cross Atlantic European expedition. As Alberto Acosta states: "Extractivism is a mode of accumulation that started to be established on a massive scale five hundred years ago. The world economy—the capitalist system—began to be structured with the conquest and colonisation of the Americas, Africa and Asia" (Acosta, 2013, p. 62). The histories, cultures and economies of the American continent were radically altered by the appropriation of Indigenous lands by European colonizers. The ensuing invasion was driven by territorial expansion, the exploitation of resources, and the elimination of Indigenous Peoples who stood in the way of the settlers. This process continues today via the extractivist politics of the neocolonial corporations that have replaced the old colonial nation-states while using similar tactics.

The name *America* first appeared on a 1507 map titled: *Universalis Cosmographia* based on travel accounts by an Italian merchant named Amerigo Vespucci, who worked for the republic of Florence and traveled across the Atlantic in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It is speculated that the first of his travels took him to the Gulf of Mexico. The next time he sailed across the Atlantic, he went as far as the Amazon and on his return sailed through the Caribbean. These expeditions were financed by Spain. Soon, Spain was the largest of the colonial empires in the American continent, followed by Portugal, and at the dawn of the seventeenth century, by France, England, and the Netherlands**.** The full-scale takeover and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and their homelands on the continent had started.

In 1540, after traveling with his army through what is now the state of Arizona, Francisco Vazquez de Coronado's expedition arrived in what is now New Mexico. The expedition was based on the rumored existence of the seven cities of Cibola, a legend connected to that of El Dorado, the fabled land sought after by Spanish armies during the sixteenth century throughout the northern part of South America (today's Colombia, Venezuela, and the Amazonia). In spite of high hopes, Coronado only found the adobe towns of the ancient Puebloans, such as the villages of

Zuni and Tiwa peoples who organized wars of resistance against the advance of the Spaniards yet couldn't stop them. In lieu of gold, Coronado discovered rich turquoise and copper reserves and soon after, the Spaniards and their missionaries occupied the land of the Puebloans, mining and attempting the subjugation and conversion of the inhabitants, while bringing cattle and their agricultural techniques with them.

This short account clearly contextualizes the arrival of the first Europeans on Turtle Island with the search for minerals and the takeover of the lands of the Puebloans. On the Acoma homeland in 1599, strong resistance was led by Zutapacan and the Acoma people who fought against the conversion to Catholicism, religious persecution, and the rule of *encomiendas*, the right conferred by the Spanish crown to its colonies and used by Juan de Onate and his army to impose forced labor on Indigenous Peoples. Onate was accompanied by five hundred settlers and thousands of heads of livestock in his attempt to gain control of the region. The battle ended with a Spanish victory and the massacre of Acoma people. Other resistance movements continued to be fought by the people in the southwest. The Pueblo uprising of 1680 unified the Puebloans under the leadership of Po'pay of Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo). Puebloans and their Diné, Hopi, and Apache allies captured Santa Fe, overthrew the Spanish rulers, and established their sovereignty for twelve years. The Franciscan missions were destroyed, and the colonists fled south to what is now Mexico. Pueblo historians call the insurrection the first American revolution, challenging historical erasure and claiming agency through an Indigenous lens.

Art as Part of the Colonial Apparatus

In addition to essays by scholars, *Digging Earth: Extractivism and Resistance on Indigenous Lands of the Americas* includes the contributions of four artists who share portfolios of their work accompanied by critical essays. The works by Carolina Caycedo, Jeremy Dennis, the collective DesertArtLAB, and Will Wilson propose a visual epistemological critique of the appropriation of Indigenous lands, and expose the blatant imperialism of resource exploitation. Through sculpture, performance, video, and photography, these artists claim aesthetics as an instrument of transformation in the sociopolitical spaces of Indigenous homelands and

remind the viewer of the fundamental ontological role that water, mountains, and plants play in the histories and lives of their communities.

It seems pertinent here to take a look at the role played by cultural and aesthetic systems in the history of the colonization of the Americas and the ideologies that commanded settlers to take over whatever and whomever stood in their trajectory, including the elimination of Indigenous Peoples. White settlement could only succeed that way. One major tool at the disposal of the settlers was the Doctrine of Discovery, issued in May 1493 by Pope Alexander VI, the foundational religious and cultural document sustaining colonization on a global scale. It supported Spain and other colonial forces, justifying the European takeover of Indigenous lands and Peoples. Any land unoccupied by Christians was considered *Terra Nullius* and could be claimed as discovered, invalidating any Indigenous preexisting governments, structures, or land sovereignty.

During the Renaissance period, colonial ideology was developed in parallel with a particular visual system enabling the rationalization of the pictorial space. Linear perspective (*De Pictura* by Alberti, 1435) allowed artists to quantify space and propose a "scientific" vision of the world. It became used by the most important painters of the era who were supported by the wealthy merchants and the political powers funding the colonial expeditions. Linear perspective provided a mathematical system to organize the surface, starting with defining a point on the surface: the vanishing point. Aptly named, the vanishing point became the place on a geometric grid where lines converged, allowing space to be measured and infinity visualized. Soon, it dominated European art, and the few artists who rebelled against this system were persecuted by the tribunals of the Inquisition (Lepenies, 2013).

It seems fitting, therefore, that the logic of mastering—conquering—the pictorial space and making it a mimicry of reality, would find an echo in the development of faraway expeditions, accompanying the ideology of conquest. The Western imaginary was ready and armed with the potential for exploring the infinite and eventually conquer and dominate it.

Peoples of Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas living in vast lands had developed their own specific spaces of representation, that rest on

depictions relating to specific meanings, beliefs, and cultural, political, and social narratives, at time sacred narratives. These models rejected the rationalization of space and the hierarchy it implies in terms of scale or depth. The arts of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, African peoples, and many others showed no interest in reproducing reality as Europeans did; rather, they understood art as envisioning and transforming reality rather than copying it. These aesthetic systems became the key to renewing an exhausted Realism in Western art at the end of the nineteenth century when the Modernist era appropriated the canons of representation of artists in Africa, Asia, and other lands to sustain their quest for renewal. The complexity of these cultural dynamics is entrenched in the ideologies of colonization and the extraction of land and knowledge that have dominated the West since the fifteenth century.

Another example of the entanglement of colonization with artistic practices can be found in nineteenth century landscape paintings in the United States. The development of what is generally considered in North America as the first iteration of a "true" American art (notwithstanding the millennia of artistic productions of Indigenous arts), is known as the Hudson River School, since most of the painters started their careers in the region of what is now New York State. The Hudson River School became closely related to the expansion of settler colonialism. Large landscape paintings, representing vistas of yet uncolonized lands, decorated the Northeastern mansions of rich landowners, for whom the paintings, along with richly decorated furniture, stood as a testimony asserting their status and power. The ruling elite commissioned paintings from the artists of the Hudson River School, works that supported Manifest Destiny and the 'God-given right' to settler expansion into Western territories. Magnificent idealized landscapes, dotted with golden sunsets and light, achieved with the technique known as Luminism, created idyllic representations of wilderness, ready for plunder for those who would dare venture there.

Some of these paintings (Bierstadt's *Lander's Peak* for example) included the depiction of peaceful Indigenous ways of life, at a time when Indigenous populations were decimated by the settlers and the military. The nostalgic take on the actual situation, subsumed its reality, while the construction of railroads and the progression of settlers were destroying the lands, villages

and lives of the Indigenous communities standing in their way. It was thus better to represent them as remnants of an idyllic past, better suited to museums and dioramas—yet another way to extract Indigenous Peoples out of history.

These examples highlight the role of cultural tropes in the manifestation and achievement of settler colonialism and its expansionist ideology and should not be underestimated when discussing the politics and economics of extractivism. After all, the Doctrine of Discovery, first supporting the colonizers' claim to Indigenous homelands, was only rescinded by Pope Francis in March 2023, while this book was taking shape.

The Violence of Extraction: Minerals, Water, Bodies, Ontologies

Resource Extraction

Extractivism is commonly understood as resource extractivism in the context of a global-scale exploitation of minerals mostly benefiting the economies of the Northern hemisphere as well as some of the "emerging markets" of the ancient European colonies. Some of these minerals are used to power new green technologies, also dependent on the extractive process. Extractivism mostly benefits the service industries and new technologies, improving the living conditions in the Global North, and resting on cheap labor and raw materials extracted in the Global South. This hegemonic capitalist mode of production is achieved through the exploitation, mainly by transnational corporations, of Indigenous lands and resources, forcing the displacement of entire communities, destroying the environment, and fostering social divisions and cultural erasure. Indigenous Peoples agree to work for mining companies in spite of low salaries and the attendant risks to their health (which are seldom disclosed), in large part because the current occupation of Indigenous homelands include few other economic alternatives besides tourism (another exploitative economy) and because mining profits thrive on the continuity of a capitalist logic of class inequality.

The US government and the mining companies operating in Diné Bikeyah, the Diné homeland, didn't disclose the health risks associated with

uranium to the thousands Diné miners who worked for minimal wages in the uranium mines on their homeland from the 1940s to the 1980s, the results of which are still visible today, as the health of Diné people continues to be affected by the proximity of uranium deposits and leaks in the water from the more than five hundred abandoned mines that still have to be closed (see chapters 2 , 6, and 9 in this volume).

Similarly, the construction of enormous dams throughout the Americas affects a large number of populations, yet are planned and executed without consultation with riverine communities. An estimated 5.7 million people in South America are negatively affected by these projects. Villages and lands are flooded, and people are forcibly displaced. Energy and construction corporations, invested in the building of dams, offer low wage jobs to those who lose their entire way of life, their livelihood, and do not hesitate to resort to violence if any of the communities affected by the destruction brought by these projects bring attempt to resist (Grassroots International, 2017).

The hegemony of development models based on extractivism proposed by the West has succeeded in extending capitalist social and political relations globally, so they come to govern the lives of millions. Characterized by exploitation, and domination of the lands, people, and other species inhabiting them, Western corporations refuse to acknowledge world views that highlight interspecies and ecological interdependencies and co-responsibilities. If such recognition were to happen, it would necessarily also mean dismantling models that rest on class separation, racial and ethnic exploitation, and the division between humans and other species.

Extracting Bodies—Gendered Violence

Extractivism rests on violence against the natural environment, humans, and other-than-human beings. Exerted against Indigenous bodies, such violence is inseparable from the history of settler colonialism. Between 1819 and 1969, the US Federal Indian Boarding School system forcibly removed hundreds of thousands of children (this number is only an estimation) from their families and placed them in Indian boarding schools (407 in the US alone). Forced assimilation subjected children to abuse, mistreatment, child labor, health hazards, and death (Newland, 2022). In Canada, for more than

150 years, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis nations children were subjected to similar treatments. The staggering generational trauma that resulted has just started to be accounted for and acknowledged by the US and Canadian governments. In Central and South America, policies of forced removal, violence, and assimilation that coerced Indigenous children in mostly Christian missions' residential schools from the 1800s until 1970 are seldom acknowledged by politicians and governments.

In today's settler colonial lands, a particularly vicious aspect of this violence is found in the extraction of the bodies of Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit peoples. Feminicide against Indigenous women in their role of caretakers of the land, resources, and animals and as community organizers has been rampant since the beginning of colonization centuries ago (see chapter 6 and 7 in this volume). They are central voices that drive resistance in the fight against the appropriation of water and resources in many Indigenous homelands: Water Defenders in Peru; women of African descent and Indigenous women in the Ecuadorian and Colombian Chocó; Mujeres Amazonicas; Diné women in the Southwestern United States; Women of the Oceti Sakowin against the Dakota pipeline and many others, are formidable presences in the struggles against resource extractivism.

As Melanie Yazzie explains: "These Indigenous women land defenders also point out that the violence of resource extraction affects not only the lands that are plundered and pillaged during resources raids . . . but also the bodies of Indigenous people—and women, youth, and LGBTQ relatives in particular. This land/body relationality is bound by and through an intergenerational toxicity caused by industrial pollution, often as a result of resource extraction" (Yazzie, 2018, p. 33).

In spite and because of their powerful stances against exploitation near mines, pipelines and endangered water resources, Indigenous women and girls are attacked and murdered at a high rate. Sexual violence against them occurs in alarming numbers near communities where extractive industries are located. The community based grassroot movement MMWIG2—Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit people (and their red hand symbol), raises awareness of the violence against Indigenous women and LGBTQ people in North America. In the United States and Canada, abuse, rape, and murder statistics are staggering:

Indigenous women are murdered at a rate ten times higher than the national average and murder is a leading cause of death among young Indigenous women (Urban Indian Health Institute, 2018). The lack of media coverage in these cases helps conceal the gravity of the issue. Extractive industries of mining, logging, and oil and coal industries are heavily implicated in the violence against Indigenous women. They bring an influx of transient male workers to rural areas, often near or on Indigenous homelands. The violence rate near the "men camps" is much higher than any other places in states that have extractive industries (Stern, 2021). In extractive regions throughout North America Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people are viewed as commodities. This violence exerted against them is spread throughout the continent. Women of African descent in Ecuador and Colombia, and particularly those living in the Esmeraldas are murdered in great numbers in regions where mining, industrial farming, and deforestation are the rule (see chapter 8 in this volume). The violence against women exists wherever they stand on the frontline of the struggle for Indigenous rights and sovereignty.

Extracting Knowledge

The concept of Relationality as a central concept in Indigenous ontologies has been articulated by several Indigenous scholars, such as Nick Estes, Winona LaDuke, Lauren Rynan, Edward Valandra, and Melanie Yazzie, and non-Indigenous ones (Donna Haraway, Ana Tsing). It posits that the interactions between humans and other-than-human beings are within a lateral scale model where they coexist side by side, rather than privileging a vertical hierarchy. In many Indigenous societies, the land, water, humans, animals, and plants are all interdependent and relate to one another as kin. I believe it is important here to highlight the oeuvre of Caribbean writer and cultural theorist Edouard Glissant who published *Poétique de la Relation* in 1990. A foundational book in the theory of relation, it envisioned the future of global geopolitics (geopoetics) as orchestrated by *creolization*, a process repositioning cultures and histories within intertwined networks of political, social, and aesthetic relations, resting on improvisational dynamics which are key to their creative renewal. Glissant theorized that in creolized cultures, the right to opacity and to withhold transparency were forms of resistance against the dominant structures (see chapter 8 in this volume for a discussion

of epistemic untranslatability as critical to the fight against the structural violence and dispossession in the Esmeraldas).

Relationality is sometimes used as an antonym to the extractivist ideology and pits Western profit-led extractivist societies against non-extractive Indigenous societies. This critical tool to examine the ontological relations between various actors coexisting in Indigenous communities has been used at times in cultural and environmental discourses to support a misguided romantic vision of how Indigenous knowledge systems perform. As Nick Estes argues, the concept of relationality needs to be anchored in a living reality, uniquely experienced in various contexts, historically determined, and not viewed as an overarching configuration:

> This is a huge word in Indigenous studies right now—relationality—that I think has become mystified. We're not the Na'vi of *Avatar* running around plugging our brains into trees trying to download data. I go back to the buffalo, because buffalo relations really represent the form of relationality that we had with animals. It wasn't just this mystical kind of thing where we were communing with them outside of history. They represented a source of life for us in the sense that without the buffalo, we wouldn't be the Lakota people, by mere fact that we wouldn't have a food source. (Serpe, Estes, 2019)

A truncated and ultimately false interpretation of Indigenous ontologies fuels some environmental positions that look at Indigenous ontologies as extractable resources, fragments of which become part of discussions about the environmental crisis and integrated into institutional projects. Often contrasted with Western "scientific" knowledge systems, this process is found in some strategic initiatives in governmental and international agencies.[4] Indigenous knowledge viewed as a trope to be exploited in the interest of global recovery from an environment crisis largely shaped by the extractive industries, conceives Indigenous knowledge as a commodity: colonization is also a cultural enterprise. This position participates in a profound misunderstanding of the far reaching macroscosmic vision of the world encompassed in Indigenous ontologies and powering resistance movements. Indigenous ontologies cannot be part of another appropriation

process that is oblivious to the epistemological frameworks in which these ontologies exist and are rooted.

In sum, the success of extractivist ideologies depends on a logic of exploitation, violence and subjectification to establish relations of domination, erasing anything that could hinder the global expansion of capitalist and neoliberal systems, using armed violence against resisting Indigenous populations, peasants, and Black communities in the Americas, a violence that the #NoDapl movement made visible globally.

Organization of the Book

Digging Earth: Extractivism and Resistance on the Indigenous Lands of the Americas is organized in three thematic parts, each bringing a different, complementary dimension to the various Indigenous resistance movements against resource and knowledge extractivism. In the first part, Mining Indigenous lands and Knowledge, essays and artists' portfolios focus on extractivist processes. The volume opens with Shinnecock photographer Jeremy Dennis' work and an essay by Erin Joyce, both about the exploitation and erasure of Indigenous histories and cultures on Long Island. Dennis's "On This Site: Indigenous Long Island," is a photography project that traces the origins of culturally and historically significant places on Paumanok (Long Island) and records the Indigenous knowledge handed down through oral histories and archeological research. Paumanok is the homeland of the Unkechaug, Setauket, Shinnecock, Corchaug, and Montaukett peoples and Dennis's photographs provide powerful testimonies of their presence over thousands of years. In her essay, Erin Joyce demonstrates how Dennis documents the Shinnecock resistance against the appropriation of their homeland, objects, and sacred sites since 1640 while it examines the role played by museums and cultural institutions in the colonial extraction of Indigenous knowledge.

The extraction of minerals on Diné and San Carlos Apache homelands is the subject of "Mining Indigenous Land: Decisions and Opinions. Uranium and Copper in the American West." Susanne Berthier-Folgar addresses the notion of "sacrifice zones" presented by the US federal government as inevitable collateral damage from mining to support the twentieth and

twenty-first centuries' industrial and nuclear development in the United States. The chapter underlines the consequences of past uranium mining on Diné Bikéyah and studies the copper mining project on the sacred site Chi'chil Biłdagoteel (Oak Flat) of the San Carlos Apache homeland. Organizations such as Apache Stronghold, the Black Mesa Water Coalition and To Nizhoni Ani "Sacred Water Speaks" continue to challenge the agreements between the federal government and the mining industries.

The relation between mineral extraction, the history of settler colonialism in Chiapas, and the resistance movements in the region, are the themes of Lynn Holland's "Mining in Mexico and the Land Defenders in Chiapas." Land Defenders, the People's Front for the Defense of Soconusco, and the Zapatistas offer alternatives to the extractive-exploitative model in the region. Holland underlines how the consolidation of the nation-state and modernization theory contributed to the implementation of an extractive economy and strategies such as the partition of the lands, the displacement of Indigenous communities and violent actions against communities who stood in the way.

The protection of water organized by Water Defenders in several struggles throughout the Americas is a recurring theme in this volume. The artist Carolina Caycedo works with riverine communities in Colombia. Using handmade fishing nets, atarrayas, Caycedo creates large hanging sculptures, *Cosmotarrayas*, that weave visual narratives emphasizing the relation between these communities and the Yuma river. In the accompanying essay, "The River as a Common Good," Carolina Caycedo and Jeffrey De Blois demonstrate how Caycedo's artistic practices and interventions expose the destructive practices of the hydroelectric companies, while highlighting the cultural and ontological role of the various bodies of water in the region. Caycedo's work recognizes water as a living entity, a topic addressed in Valandra's chapter, "Mni Wiconi, Water Is Water [is more than] Life," and in Carcelen-Estrada's and Sault's contributions.

Indigenous voices in resistance movements rising against the exploitation of the lands and waters resound loud enough to echo throughout the American continent. The second part of the volume**:** Resisting Extractivism: the Centrality of Indigenous Voices, affirms the defining role of women activists, grassroots organizers, and Water Defenders. Edward Valandra, in "Mni