



***Knockdown Center Presents
Guadalupe Maravilla: Disease Thrower***

***Saturday, March 14
Doors: 5:00 PM
Performance: 6:00 PM***



Image courtesy Chris Carter

January 21, 2019 (Maspeth, NY) -- Knockdown Center is pleased to present *Disease Thrower*, a newly commissioned performance by Guadalupe Maravilla, presented in partnership with The Chocolate Factory Theater. Maravilla's practice, which spans sculpture, drawing, and performance, draws heavily on autobiography to address the larger context of the immigrant experience within increasingly repressive and abusive systems. *Disease Thrower* lives between an immersive mini-opera and an invented healing ritual, and draws from the artist's experience as an unaccompanied child immigrant escaping El Salvador to the United States, the subsequent intestinal cancer he endured, and his healing methods. For this performance, new mythologies will be created as the artist transforms Knockdown Center into a space for storytelling, choreographed rituals, and healing. ***Disease Thrower takes place on Saturday, March 14, 2020, at 6 p.m.***

Under the embrace of a purple cloud, Knockdown Center's expansive Main Space will be populated by totemic objects, a suite of gongs, a revving motorcycle, and a cast of otherworldly characters. The performance will incorporate one of Maravilla's signature *Disease Thrower* shrine sculptures that operate simultaneously as an artwork, an instrument, and, for the first time as part of this performance, as a headdress worn by the artist. A mix of returning and new characters conceived by Maravilla — from metaphysical snail border crossers and an operatic singer named La Momia to a troupe of masked, mourning quinceañerxs — will fill the Main Space. *Disease Thrower* is accompanied by a live score by the Mexico City-based electro-drama band La Rubia te Besa, composed in collaboration with Maravilla. Following the performance, the audience will have an opportunity to commune and dance to a concert-style show by La Rubia te Besa.

Disease Thrower is the third and final work of a performance trilogy based on Maravilla's autobiography. The first chapter, titled *The OG of Undocumented Children*, performed at the Whitney Museum, NY, in 2018, relayed the story of how Maravilla became an undocumented and unaccompanied child immigrant. The second chapter, *Walk on Water*, performed at the Queens Museum, NY, in 2019, focused on Maravilla's past as an undocumented immigrant, the deportations his family endured, and his methods for healing.

The personal experience Maravilla details in *Disease Thrower* echoes that of many immigrants, and highlights the lingering and internalized effects of this kind of journey and lived reality, calling attention to the body as a site where systemic abuse manifests. Sonic elements will envelop the audience within a resonant environment of collective ritual intended to help cleanse the body of phobias and create a space for healing. Knockdown Center will vibrate with the sounds of gongs and motorcycle engines, reverberations intended to shake free the audience members' bodies of their own invisible, deep-seated traumas.

Disease Thrower marks the inaugural commission in the Knockdown Center Propeller series, which supports artists in the production of ambitious new works made specifically for Knockdown Center's unique spatial context.

About Guadalupe Maravilla

Guadalupe Maravilla was part of the first wave of undocumented children to come to the US from Central America. The artist immigrated from El Salvador alone at age eight to escape the Salvadorian Civil War, and became a US citizen at twenty-seven. In 2016, as a gesture of solidarity with his undocumented father, who uses Maravilla as a last

name in his fake identity, Maravilla changed his birth name Irvin Morazan to Guadalupe Maravilla.

Maravilla creates fictionalized performances, videos, sculptures and drawings that incorporate his pre-colonial Central American ancestry, personal mythology, and autobiography. Through a multidisciplinary studio practice, Maravilla traces the history of his own displacement, interrogates the parallels between pre-Columbian cultures and our border politics.

Maravilla has performed and presented work extensively in venues such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Queens Museum, Bronx Museum, El Museo Del Barrio, MARTE (El Salvador), Central America Biennial X (Costa Rica), XI Nicaragua Biennial, Performa 11 & 13, Fuse-Box Festival, Exit Art, Smack Mellon, Rubin Foundation, the Drawing Center and the ICA/VCU in Richmond, Virginia. Maravilla has upcoming projects at the 2020 Guatemala Biennial, Site Santa Fe, Phoenix Art Museum, and São Paulo Museum of Art (Brazil). Maravilla has been awarded the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship 2019, Soros Fellowship: Art Migration and Public Space 2019, Map fund 2019, Creative Capital Grant 2016, Franklin Furnace 2018, Joan Mitchell Emerging Artist Grant 2016, among many others. Maravilla has been featured in the NY Times, Brooklyn Rail, the Guardian, Art Forum and many other publications. Maravilla's work has been collected privately and by the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Deutsche Bank, MoMA, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

About La Rubia te Besa

La Rubia te Besa is a multifaceted music project proclaimed as 'electrodrama', where keyboards, guitar, bass, percussion and digital sound processors propose a pastiche of prominent references to instrumental pop culture (soundtracks, hymns, popular melodies, ringtones, etc.). The band, formed in 2013 (Mexico City) by members of different creative profiles (not formally trained musicians), bases its name on an imaginary aphorism that comes from an inescapable unconscious voice, an eternal submission to the canonical seduction.

About Knockdown Center Propeller Series

Guadalupe Maravilla: Disease Thrower is the inaugural commission of the Knockdown Center Propeller series, a commissioning program designed to support artists in the production and presentation of ambitious new works in our expansive Main Space. Responding to Knockdown Center's unique architectural context and programmatic mission, the series is designed to support new site-specific work by artists who have not yet had the opportunity to extend their practice by significantly scaling up, and

further Knockdown Center's mission to present innovative new projects by artists making ambitious, risk-taking, and boundary-crossing work.

About Knockdown Center

Featuring programming of diverse formats and media, Knockdown Center aims to create a radically cross-disciplinary environment. The particularity of our architectural environment and history leads us to gravitate toward projects that demonstrate a sensitive reactivity to site and environment.

This 50,000 square-foot building has seen continuous use for more than 100 years: first as the Gleason-Tiebout glass factory, then as Manhattan Door factory. It is named for the Knock-Down door frame that was invented here in 1956 by Samuel Sklar and remains an industry standard to this day. The frame could be shipped in pieces — or “knocked down” — and installed into existing walls, revolutionizing the speed and efficiency of building construction. Having undergone a renovation that is equal parts preservationist and state of the art, Knockdown Center now produces and hosts immersive cultural events and exhibitions that respond to its unique architecture and dimensions.

About The Chocolate Factory Theater

Since its first season in 2005, The Chocolate Factory Theater has supported the development and presentation of new work by a community of local, national and international artists working in dance, theater, and interdisciplinary performance. The Chocolate Factory's programs have drawn many thousands of new visitors to its 5,000 square foot industrial facility in Long Island City, Queens. The organization recently purchased a permanent facility in the neighborhood.

Disease Thrower is commissioned by Knockdown Center and presented in partnership with The Chocolate Factory Theater. Commissioning support also provided by The MAP Fund. Support also provided by the Franklin Furnace Fund supported by Jerome Foundation, The SHS Foundation, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

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