



For Immediate Release

Brognon-Rollin: Maybe Some of Us Will Change This

Artist-in-Residence, Exhibition, Talk
FLAX Project

March 17–May 12, 2019

FLAX artist-in-residents Brognon-Rollin build a bridge between the indigenous whistled language of Mazatec, ICA LA, Metropolitan High School, and ice cream trucks to affirm that language, culture, and hopeful messages transcend borders and walls.

Los Angeles, CA – March 11, 2018, *Maybe Some of Us Will Change This* is a multi-site sound-based project by David Brognon and Stéphanie Rollin, aka Brognon-Rollin, presented by France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) at both ICA LA and Metropolitan High School in Downtown LA. Inspired by “maybe some of us will change this”—a phrase from a student essay about justice—Brognon-Rollin worked with high school students during their month-long residency with France Los Angeles Exchange (FLAX) to reimagine the sounds and constructs of the school day. Metropolitan provides an alternative study program to help youth complete their high school diploma. *Maybe some of us will change this*, expresses hope and ambition with a dash of realistic uncertainty.

Experience the project as an immersive sound installation at ICA LA; through the speakers of ice cream trucks as they circulate the neighborhood and through the PA system at Metropolitan High School.

Their time at Metropolitan High School allowed Brognon-Rollin to make work based on their practice of embedding themselves in a community. Their process involved a journey to the Mexican border and a joint collaboration with a sound engineer, educators, and the students themselves. The phrase, *maybe some of us will change this*, reflects a desire to address current tensions around migration, the “Border Wall,” and intolerance.

The Oaxacan whistling language of Mazatec is an indigenous form of communication from the agricultural region of Oaxaca. Whistled language is designed to travel beyond the average distance of the spoken word. It moves melodically across valleys and through thick mountain fog from farmer to farmer. This method of communication struck Brognon-Rollin as the perfect way to transmit the student’s hopeful message through sound—unstoppable by a border or a wall.

Maybe some of us will change this was translated into Spanish, then into spoken Mazatec, and finally into whistled Mazatec by linguist and educator Eloy Garcia who is dedicated to protecting this indigenous language. Garcia traveled from his village of Huautla de Jimenez to Tijuana to whistle the phrase at the seaside border fence that separates Mexico and the United States. The sound of the phrase was received and recorded by Brognon-Rollin on the US side of the fence and brought back to Los Angeles.

Metropolitan High School students learned to whistle the phrase and were recorded by the artists. The recordings of the students’ whistled phrases will be presented in three ways: through the Metropolitan High School’s PA system; through an immersive sound installation at ICA LA; and through soundtracks on ice cream trucks as they drive around local neighborhoods.

Mazatec is one of the oldest remaining whistled languages in the world. It is in jeopardy of being lost to modern communication technology. *Maybe some of us will change this*.

To learn more about Mazatec, see this [video](#).



FRANCE LOS ANGELES EXCHANGE

Institute of Contemporary Art LA, 1717 E 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021

Opening March 17, 4-6pm

On View March 17 – May 12, 2019

Open Wed-Fri, 11-7pm, Sat-Sun, 11-6pm

Artist Talk, March 20, 7-9pm

**“Whistles, Borders, and Ice Cream Trucks: An artist talk with Brognon-Rollin” moderated by Asuka Hisa, Director of Learning and Engagement, ICA LA and Anna Milone, Program Director and Curator, FLAX
March 20, 7-9pm**

The exhibition is made possible by generous support from ICA LA.

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