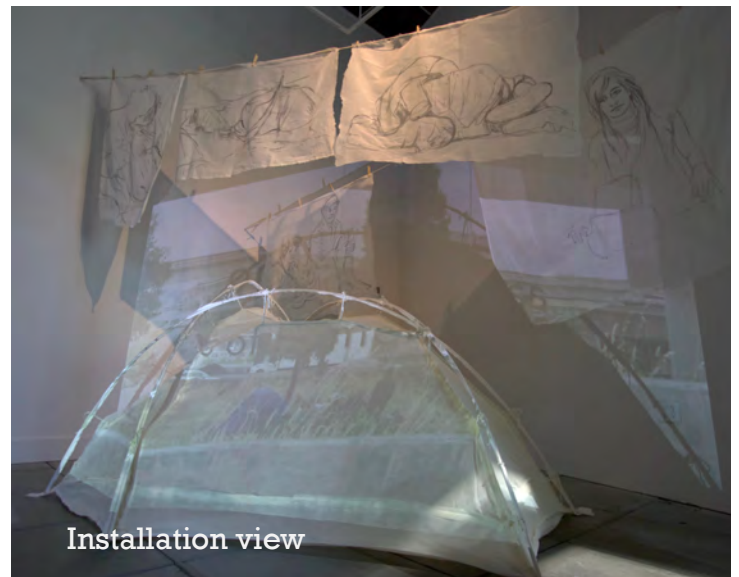


TATIANA GARMENDIA

No Hiding Place Down Here

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture

Seattle Presents Gallery
August 19 - October 13, 2017



ARTIST'S PUBLIC RECORD

**100% completion of Installation, Public Presentation,
De-Installation, Public Record In Binder, Including
Sketches, Reviews, Written Documentation, CD with
Photographic Documentation and Digital Film**



Dialogues on Homelessness

Learning More Than I Ever Imagined

When I first applied for this opportunity, it was as a direct concern for the visibly growing population of unsheltered homeless in Seattle.

The rising cost of living in Seattle forced my partner and me to move to Snohomish County. Every day we commute into the city for work. We seen the number of encampments along the freeways and at our city exit grow. We worried.

I had lived through the uncertainties of homelessness as a child when my family first fell in disfavor with the Cuban government, and again when we fled as political refugees. I had a visceral sense of the insecurity that comes from not knowing where you will lay your head to sleep at night.

Seeing the squalor of many encampments and the suffering of untreated heroin addicts on a

daily basis deeply alarmed me as an artist. I did not realize just how much apprehension similarly filled the hearts of everyone else in our communities.

One of the things this project has brought to light is that the city of Seattle is profoundly committed to helping our growing homeless population to find shelter and housing.

Through the countless conversations I had with people who either serve the homeless population directly through community services or indirectly, through programs such as *Dialogues in Art: Exhibitions on Homelessness* I came to realize we all share a common human empathy for the suffering of others.

It was not a Pollyannaish conclusion.

No Hiding Place Down Here was well received and well reviewed

When my husband and creative partner Scott Story and I arrived at the Seattle Presents Gallery early on Saturday, August 19th, we discovered Elisheba Johnson was already there, busily prepping the space. How this petite woman had managed to carry a huge heavy ladder by herself confounded me!

During our installation, Elisheba ran back and forth between the Seattle ARTS offices and the gallery to exchange equipment, and also dash off to nearby stores to purchase missing cables.

She was always ready with a constructive comment, an easy smile, and helpful hand. I felt my work as an artist fully supported.

Just days before installing *No Hiding Place Down Here*, I received an inquiry from Christy

Carley, Arts Culture reporter from the Seattle Weekly. I met with Ms. Carley on August 14th, and again on August 19th, after the installation was complete. The reporter spent a good three hours interviewing and photographing the installation.

Carley's review, titled **In Search of Shelter**, beautifully wove the story of my creative efforts with the crisis in homelessness Seattle is facing. The article appeared on page 20 of the publication's August 23-29, 2017 issue, Volume 42, Number 34. A copy of the article is included in this Public Record Binder, and an online copy can be read at this URL:

<http://www.seattleweekly.com/arts/no-hiding-place-down-here-explores-issues-of-exposure-privacy-for-seattles-homeless/>

Elisheba indicated her office was pursuing coverage of the dialogues with Real Change. I was thrilled to meet with Lisa Edge, culture, art, and equity reporter for the publication at the Seattle Presents Gallery on August 23, 2017. Erika Lindsay graciously opened the gallery space so that we could conduct the interview in situ.

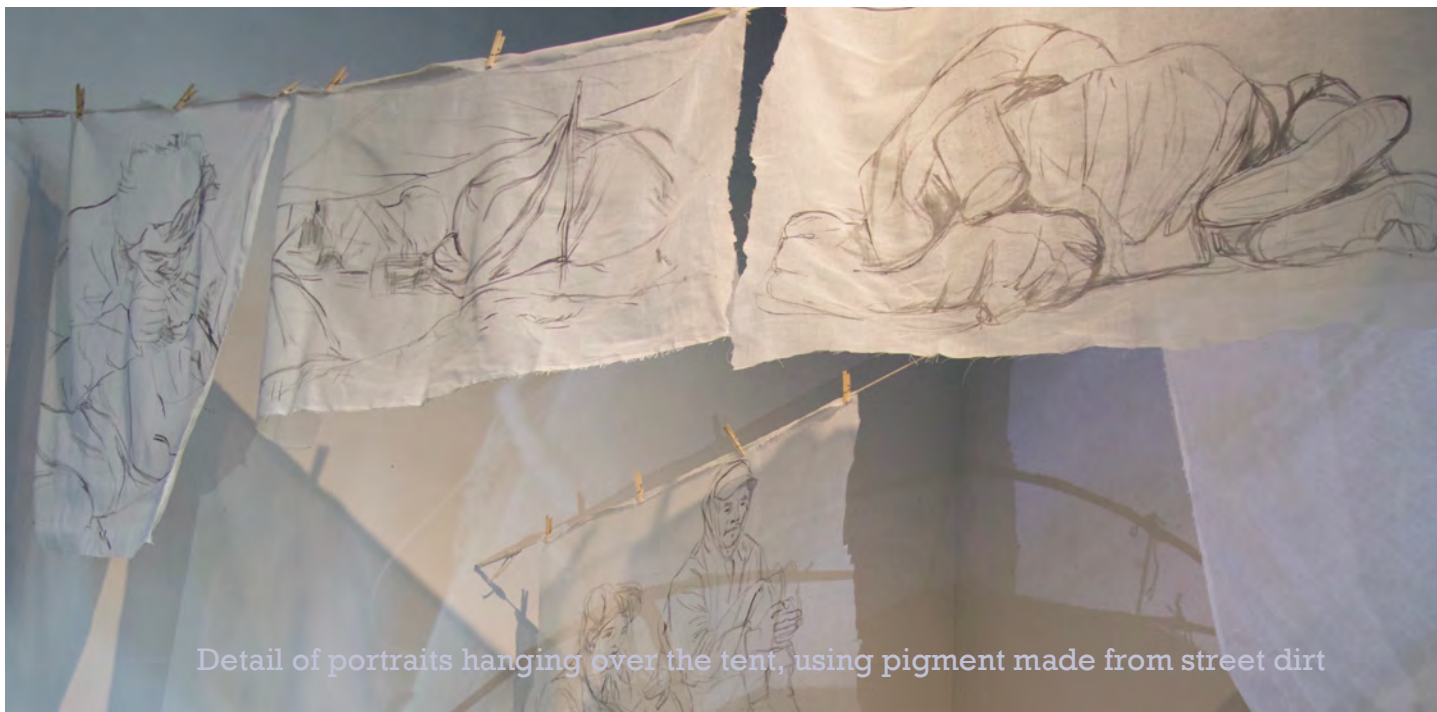
Lisa Edge's lengthy review was published on August 30th, 2017. The report placed *No Hiding Place Down Here* in several contexts— as part of a series of dialogues on homelessness, as part of the city's comprehensive response to homelessness, and as part of my creative practice. A pdf copy of the coverage is included in this Public Record Binder and an online copy may be read at this URL:

<http://www.realchangenews.org/2017/08/30/exile-artist-tatiana-garmendia-s-city-gallery-installation-centers-displaced>

Casey Martin of KUOW also covered the exhibition and interviewed me at the gallery on September 8, 2017.

Aired on Public Radio September 12th, the report eloquently covered all the pertinent issues as well as the installation. Although I was not able to record the interview itself, a pdf of the station's coverage is included in this report and can be read online at this URL:

<http://kuow.org/post/art-installation-addresses-seattles-homeless-crisis>



Detail of portraits hanging over the tent, using pigment made from street dirt

A Collaborative Experience

Working with my partner and with the city

I am not a stranger to working within groups, with stakeholders, or with committees. I have been a teaching artist since 1985, and tenured faculty at Seattle Central College for over 20 years. These practices are commonplace in academia.

Creative teamwork as part of my visual arts practice is a different matter. Most of my creative life is spent in solitary introspection, in the studio or at the easel. Whenever the opportunity to engage with community, with curators, or with other artists arises I embrace it with open arms.

Working with the city and interfacing with a part of the community usually excluded from art representation helped me gain a more focused understanding of the human condition while

creating a safe space to try new things, such as video projections on sculptural elements.

I was able to partner with photographer Scott Story who took the documentary images later converted into a digital movie. Valuable conversations about the privacy of our subjects and the creative rights of the artist expanded my definition of the responsibilities embedded in social practice.

This rare opportunity to create an installation is one that I will always cherish. I am so grateful to the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture for funding my first temporary public art piece! This partnership pushed me to stretch outside my comfort zones and artistic habits, to engage community in a deeper way.



My narrative for the digital film

Connecting Seattle's homeless to my past



I was a displaced refugee as a child. When my family fell in disfavor, we were forcibly evicted from our home and placed first in one shelter, and finally, a camp for political dissidents. It was a brutal place.

I was six years old when I lost the house I was born in. I was eight when I lost my homeland.

We left my homeland of Cuba, We left with the clothes on our backs. Nothing else. We came from a tropical island and were unprepared for cold weather. I still remember that chill to my bones. We found winter clothing reserved for the indigent in church basements. A coat and sweaters for me. But there weren't any sizes to fit my brother, and my mother had to cut up and sew adult clothes to fit his ten-year old frame.

We were placed in an apartment as temporary shelter.



Three months after leaving my homeland, the International Rescue Committee paid for our passage to the USA so we could join the millions of fellow refugees displaced by politics. We were scared, but we were together and we were free.

This shelter, this cocoon of gossamer scrim that I stitched together weaves my story of homelessness, of displacement, with the wider story of everyone who has lost their home.

Everyone who peers with fear and apprehension at an uncertain landscape devoid of a safe space.

My grandparents were old; tired of struggling, and resentful of needing to help a disabled son they were estranged from, a foreign daughter in law they didn't like, and two grandchildren they didn't really know.

We lived with them on and off— never wanted,



Maybe you too made your way to someone's couch or spare room, but couldn't stay too long. They couldn't afford to keep you. Or maybe you weren't really welcomed. Neither were we. It's okay. There's no hiding place down here. Here we can just be. And everything that aches in you and in me can rest for a pace.

My father found work in his profession. But he never really recovered from his torture. Despite being a brilliant doctor he couldn't keep a hospital post for long. Whenever my father lost a post, we lost a home.

Did you lose a job like my father did? Maybe you tried your best like him but the PTSD doesn't let up. My father died young. Just 36 years old. I have a picture of him, before he was tortured, he's laughing, standing up straight, my mother a shiny penny at his side.

No Hiding Place Down Here represents a liminal space

“The exhibit, like the poem, isn’t about making people feel guilty. It’s about honoring those who struggle, and waking people up.” – Christy Carley, Seattle Weekly



For over ten years my partner and I lived on Capitol Hill. We fully participated in the cultural life of the city. We couldn’t imagine life elsewhere. But the costs of living in Seattle steadily rose until we were forced to move.

We just couldn’t afford it. We found affordable housing in Snohomish County. We were very blessed. We had just enough savings for the move.

Not everyone is so lucky. This shelter is for them.



During our commute to work in Seattle, we have seen the numbers of unsheltered homeless grow. So many blanket encampments and tents precariously clinging to the slope on an underpass along I-5!

We’ve seen the wretchedness of untreated heroin addicts shooting up, surrounded by cardboard enclosures at the Pike Street Express Lane exit.

There is so much need, so much humanity. This cocoon is for them too.



I built the tent one stitch at a time to bring a sense of grace to this desperate crisis. Thoughtful and careful construction was the key.

Many times I had to start over. My patterns were inaccurate, my cutting was short, or my piecing flawed. I know this.

I don’t have any perfection to give. All I can give is this space, this time, this share of my story. There is no hiding now.

“You’re walking along and there’s homeless people and they may be begging for money or for food or for help and you’re on your way to work and you see them and you don’t see them. Or you’re rushing home to pick up the kids or to make dinner or to go to classes at night. You see them and you don’t see them. Maybe you stop, maybe you don’t. But they’re our neighbors,” Garmendia says.

- Casey Martin reporting for KUOW Public Radio, September 12. 2017



Pigment made from dirt



Eviction notice



A homeless community in the midst of urban traffic

“I will give you no hiding place down here.

You, created only a little lower than the angels, have crouched too long in

The bruising darkness....”

-Maya Angelou: On The Pulse of Morning

Encountering a family with children among the city's unsheltered





Answering questions about the installation





A young visitor tried out the tent

