

20 JANUARY 2026

**Ford Foundation Gallery presents
*Humid Traces***



Zishaan A Latif. *The Edge*, 2023. Courtesy of the Artist.

Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice | 320 E 43rd Street, New York

On View: February 19 - June 20, 2026

Opening Event: Thursday, February 19th, 2026 | 5-7pm

Gallery Hours: Monday - Friday 11am-6pm, Saturday 10am-4pm

New York, NY - The [Ford Foundation Gallery](#) is pleased to present ***Humid Traces***, an exhibition exploring the ways in which bodies of water are turned into borders in the context of rising temperatures and extreme weather events. Curated by **Federico Pérez Villoro**, the show brings together a group of artists from around the globe whose work addresses the tactical use of water to reinforce artificial divisions of space. In doing so, they produce evidence on the violent effects of technologies used to control migration.

Humid Traces features work by **Dele Adeyemo**, **Archivo Familiar del Río Colorado**, **Natalia Lassalle-Morillo**, **Zishaan A Latif**, **Caio Reisewitz**, **Susan Schuppli**, **Marisa Srijunpleang**, **Studio Folder**, and **Leonel Vásquez**. Through immersive installation, sound, photography, video, and data visualization, their practices offer multidisciplinary engagements with water's material memory as a living record. They reorganize sensitive geographies of geological and human experiences, resourcing to our most intimate connections to water as an indivisible, shared mesh.

Historically, water has been treated as a tool for organizing territory. Rivers divide nations, while hydropower projects have displaced communities. Given their continuous redirection and evolution, rivers would not appear to make efficient boundaries. However, their turbulent courses are exploited to discourage the movement of people, while at the same time to conceal the engineering that shapes borders. Furthermore, rivers' fluidity becomes a reason to militarize them—as water pushes soil in an ongoing process of erosion, borders also shift, requiring forceful means to contain them. Such an illusion of stability is further stressed by climate change, which both provokes migration and directly affects the transformation of waterways at large. *Humid Traces* looks into real examples of how water and society mutually shape each other.

The exhibition reveals bodies of water as contested sites where climate crisis and border policies collide. A commissioned installation by **Archivo Familiar del Río Colorado** combines historical materials, found objects, and cartographic ephemera to document vanishing water bodies and the residual histories inscribed in the Colorado River Delta, at the border between the United States and Mexico. **Zishaan A Latif's** photography documents the Miyas of Assam, a Bengali-speaking Muslim community that has migrated for generations to North Eastern India. In *The Edge* (2023), photographs of the Miya People along the transnational Brahmaputra River show their use of traditional technologies to resist nationalist policies, which require people to demonstrate they live in a fixed place for citizenship, even as erosion continually changes the landmass and blurs boundaries. Further bearing witness to displacement caused by environmental destruction, selected photographs from *ALTAMIRA* (2017) by **Caio Reisewitz** meditate on the impacts of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam on the Amazonian rainforest and Indigenous communities living along the Xingu River. The series' subtle red-infused shadows record traces of colonial erasure.

The works exhibited challenge the lines inscribed in dominant maps by centering the testimonies, data, and archives carried by water and ice. An installation, *Italian Limes* (2014–2019) by Italy-based **Studio Folder**, tracked the accelerating drift of Alpine borders due

to global warming through GPS sensors positioned on glaciers. The project reframes national boundaries as fragile, mutable constructs. Encounters with water in its many changing forms in the show aim to entangle our relationship to it, unsettling familiar understandings of its liquid state as primary or static. Through this, it seeks to destabilize categories of classification and conceptual separation. The video work *Moving Ice* (2024) by researcher and artist **Susan Schuppli** documents the extractive commoditization of temperature. It follows the history of water transported and traded as commercial ice to cool the tropics and serve global elites.

The show explores the traces imprinted on land and water to unearth hidden or suppressed histories. **Marisa Srijunpleang's** deeply moving work focuses on the Thai-Cambodian borderlands. Her travels in search of her grandparents' former house recover experiences of her relatives during the Cambodian genocide of the 1970s, as well as the tradition of the Phka Bayben flower, used in honoring ancestors. A sculpture made from a flower's seeds becomes an elegiac metaphor for her family's stories. In *Wey Dey Move: A Dance of the Mangroves* (2023), **Dele Adeyemo** incorporates sand, projected video, and spatial installation in an enveloping meditation on what can be learned from the liminal environments of mangrove ecosystems surrounding the megacity of Lagos, Nigeria. In **Leonel Vásquez's** featured work *Water Flute* (2023), water set into motion by a hydraulic system creates resonant chanting, a breath-like exchange between the air within and external to water, inviting visitors to attune to it as a medium of profound contact with the environment. Also stirring intimacy through engagements with land and water, *Retiro* (2019), a multi-channel video installation by **Natalia Lassalle-Morillo**, offers a cinematic portrait through the lens of the artist's mother, Gloria. Blending reenactments with behind-the-scenes footage in Puerto Rico, the work gestures toward the entwined fluidities of transgenerational memory, identity, and the geography of the islands around and within us. Collectively, the works in *Humid Traces* consider water not as a resource at the service of human needs, but as a moving pulse—a fundamental force that reconfigures temporal and spatial metrics.

About the Curator

Federico Pérez Villoro is an artist and researcher based in Mexico City exploring the relationship between technology and political ecologies. His recent work investigates the ever-evolving morphology of the Rio Grande / Bravo and the shifting border between Mexico and the United States. His work has been exhibited at institutions such as Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Espacio Odeón, Centre A: Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Palm Springs Art Museum, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Museo de Arte de Zapopan, and Museo de Filatelia de Oaxaca. He is the founder of *Materia Abierta*, a

program on theory, art, and technology in Mexico City developed with Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Museo Tamayo, and Casa del Lago UNAM. He is a research resident at TBA21-Academy where he investigates access to fresh water in the Caribbean. In 2023, he received the Jumex Grant Program Award from the Jumex Arte Contemporáneo Foundation and the C/Change Fellowship from the Goethe-Institut and Gray Area in the United States. He has been a resident at Pivô Pesquisa and Capacete in Brazil and at OCAT in China. His writing has been published by *NACLA Report on the Americas*, *Luna Córnea*, *ADOCS*, *DELUS*, *The Serving Library*, *Printed Matter*, *C Magazine*, *Gato Negro Ediciones*, *diSONARE*, Walker Art Center, and Quinto Elemento Lab. Federico has taught at the Rhode Island School of Design and California College of the Arts and lectured at UC Berkeley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University, ETH Zurich, Rutgers University, CalArts, The New School, and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

About the Ford Foundation Gallery

Opened in March 2019 at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York City, [the Ford Foundation Gallery](#) spotlights artwork that wrestles with difficult questions, calls out injustice, and points the way toward a fair and just future. The gallery functions as a responsive and adaptive space and one that serves the public in its openness to experimentation, contemplation, and conversation. Located near the United Nations, it draws visitors from around the world, addresses questions that cross borders, and speaks to the universal struggle for human dignity.

The gallery is accessible to the public through the Ford Foundation building entrance on 43rd Street, east of Second Avenue.

About the Ford Foundation

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