

OPEN VEINS OF LATIN AMERICA

I sat with the work for about forty-five minutes.

When I was around it, despite being close to a loud festival hub nearby, it made the world feel quiet – provoking contemplation. Viewing it closely, I could see the care taken by Alex with each of the candles that made up the vigil. Viewing it from high above, I could read the message laid out by the candles. It was quietly moving; the attempt to keep all three hundred candles lit gave a quiet sense of hope, but also provided an act of futility as the candles were inevitably blown out by the wind or had ran out of wick.

The work provoked a conversation I had with a friend about the apparent futility of holding onto a transnational familial connection – Is it ever possible?

Alex's father fled Latin America, and if he had not he would never have met Alex's mother. This is a key provocation in the work, which for me seeks to reconnect with a homeland that Alex never experienced. But it provokes more questions: What does it mean to be Australian? What is my home? What is my family history? What do I even know about the mythos of my own family? Why do I feel so comfortable living here? And how do I reconcile my own very comfortable and privileged experiences of history with other Australians whose history is far less fortunate?

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