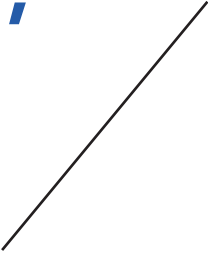


COUNTRY, HOME

CUE

2014/15

COUNTRY, HOME



Golnar Adili
Adela Andea
Michael Borek
chukwumaa
Elnaz Javani
Alejandra Regalado
Jerry Truong
Rodrigo Valenzuela

CURATED BY
Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell

CUE ART FOUNDATION SEPTEMBER 5 – OCTOBER 10, 2015

This exhibition was the winning selection of the 2014 Open Call for Curatorial Projects. This program provides one deserving curator the necessary time and resources to realize an innovative project with the intent of encouraging curatorial research in tandem with exhibition planning. Through the exhibition program, CUE aims to present new and exceptionally strong work by under-recognized and emerging artists based in the United States, and is committed to exhibiting work of all media, genres, and styles from artists of all ages.

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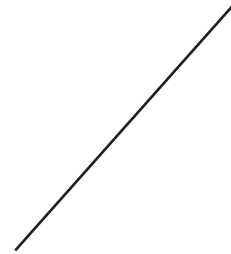
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ESSAYS



COUNTRY, HOME

／ Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell

Immigration is the lifeblood of this nation. And yet the dominant rhetoric in our culture is that of fear, resentment, distrust, and otherness—otherwise alienation. Despite the multitude of multicultural claims—especially in academia and the liberal arts—multicultural people are still very much the Other. Where the American Dream most frequently falls short is the societal damnation of the outsider. In a country home to and defined by immigrants, how can it be that none of the complexities of such lives are welcomed in the mainstream?

There is a gap in this country. It is the original gap—the source of the wage gap, generational gap, gender gap—it is the representational gap. It is a gap so severe that it creates dichotomies from the onset. There are mainstream exhibitions and Other exhibitions, but never both. The Other is rarely given the decency to be contextualized with her mainstream

contemporaries. The gap is so rooted in our expectations that an exhibition eliminating the voice of the mainstream inherently conjures associations of activism and advocacy—and is not simply considered to be completing the story. Culture observes its contents through a singular lens, filtering perceptions and concepts through the normalizing experience, which determines what is good and worthwhile, and what is otherwise foreign and dangerous.¹

The dominant mainstream distorts the extent to which art institutions can represent and reflect the diversity of humanity.² The larger problem begins at the grassroots, community-based, local gallery level. In an early 2015 report, *The Art Newspaper* affirmed that “Almost one third of solo shows in US museums go to artists represented by five galleries.”³ Even at the unveiling of the new Whitney Museum, with the exhibition “America Is Hard to See,” which promised

to present fresh perspectives from the collection, the overwhelming mainstream voice was impossible to miss. The online art newspaper *Hyperallergic* investigated the so-called diversity of perspectives and the results are that 79.5% of the exhibition is comprised of White/European artists.⁴

Country, Home makes us face our double standards. The works in this group show individually express the challenges and complexities of immigrant life in America, occupying the space between our lofty multicultural values and our whitewashed reality.

Through their work artists Golnar Adili, Adela Andea, Michael Borek, chukwumaa, Elnaz Javani, Alejandra Regalado, Jerry Truong, and Rodrigo Valenzuela, designate immigrant groups as the center of discussions on art, practice, American values, socio-economics, and class. The lens of the mainstream distorts its subjects to those in the center and those on the fringes—often causing rampant misunderstanding and forced invisibility of the latter. Coming out of the fringes on their own terms, these artists present their voices, experiences, and concerns through differing art forms.

Elnaz Javani (Iranian born), Rodrigo Valenzuela (Chilean born), and Michael Borek (Czech born) consider issues of outsider isolation in varying ways. Javani's delicate fiber stitching often depicts obscured identities marred by not belonging. Her subjects are either isolated floating figures or concealed individualities suggestive of sequestration. While her materials are trans-national—simple fabrics and sewing thread—her work is distinctive of the

isolating component of individuality, suggestive of the immigrant outsider. Conversely, Valenzuela's photography actively omits the familiar—no figures or trans-national ephemeras occupy the space. These staged scenes are devoid of people and strongly evoke a sense of loss—the viewer can feel the missing presence of the suggested narrator. Valenzuela's crafted stories conjure reflection on the Latino day-laborer with suggested builder's tools and materials. A former illegal alien laborer himself, Valenzuela's work feels equally of the outsider looking out and the insider looking in.

The notion of "out" and "in" is also explored in the photographic works of Borek, though to a vastly different effect. Borek notes that his fascination with urban decay has made him "able to turn the most stunning scenery into drab Eastern Europe." Where Valenzuela's concern is specifically with the position of the Other in America, and Javani's saddened, unidentifiable figures express neither place of origin or emigration, Borek's scenes vigorously bring the viewer out of America and into his place of communist, often bleak, origin. His series of captured fences and the title "And They Make Good Neighbors" considers boundaries, belonging, relationships in a direct engagement with the tension of looking in and looking out. His tightly cropped frames limit the contextualization of the scene depicted so often that the viewer doesn't know if they are looking out or looking in. This dizzying perspective complements Javani's sense of undeclared landscape and Valenzuela's absent narrator, while bringing a different perspective and laden thought process to the idea of the isolated outsider.

Socio-economic issues are a deep concern within Alejandra Regalado's (Mexican born) photography series "In Reference To: Mexican Women of the U.S.," which positions female Mexican immigrants in relation to a significant personal object. The juxtaposition suggests the economic position of the women depicted. While much of the art world's theoretical concerns lie within the project's discussion of beauty, the economic element of the stark juxtaposition is a crucial factor. The women are photographed against a white background, like an official identification card, and the objects are photographed against a white background, like that of an archeological find. The distinct depersonalization of the photographic process and product suggests an unfeeling government census, which strongly highlights economic status amongst differing demographics.

Issues of official identity documentation are explored through abstracted, disembodied imagery in Golnar Adili's (Iranian born) work. She explores personal issues of identity and documentation in photography and hand-drawn markings. She confirms in her artist statement that "as an Iranian growing up in post-1979 Tehran, I have experienced separation, uprooting, and longing in its different manifestations." Her broken imagery in photo collages suggests an alienated, displaced, and aching personhood. The jagged edges of torn photo paper, uneven layering, and stacking system evoke a sense of building and rebuilding – specifically the building and rebuilding of identity as her images exclusively feature intimate depictions of people and bodies. While an elegant sensuality exudes from her *A Thousand Pages of Chest-Curved* collage, a resounding sense of identity crisis remains.

Navigation and transformation of identity are further explored by Adela Andea (Romanian born), chukwumaa (Nigerian born), and Jerry Truong (Vietnamese born). Andea's work with neon light installation seeks transformation, variation, and disregard and reinvention of reality. Her perspective affirms ambiguity, mistranslation, confusion, and discovery. She notes in her artist statement that she believes in the adaptability of people who have lived through multiple transitions. In a similar approach but with a strong social focus, chukwumaa's sound work brings out the awkwardness of interactions with different people. chukwumaa's interest in culturally-charged myths and creating surreal, often uncomfortable, environments reveals patterns of navigation within audience and performer. Very differently, but equally personal and affecting, Truong's photographic series turns to transformation and deception to explore a very personal immigrant journey. The figures in his series force the viewer to question the American Dream, and the role of the self in blended society. The viewer is placated with seemingly ordinary images of unordinary people, only to be dismayed by the underlying cruelty hidden within each scene. These artists demonstrate conflicts of navigating the immigrant experience in America. Collectively they navigate their perspectives as immigrants, as Americans, as both, in varied pathways.

Culture blooms best where the realities of people's lives meet the discipline of artists' creativity, and builds a conversation that bridges across nationalities, ethnicities, generations and social standing.⁵ While identity issues are far too complex to be neatly summarized in art or an essay, these artists provide

a vital glimpse into the narrative of the “other”—and specifically the under-recognized perspectives of immigrant and 1st generation Americans. It is important that this narrative exists and that it be widely consumed to begin to undo the staggering injustice of mis- and underrepresentation that is the current norm.

No one immigrant/foreign-born artist experience is exactly alike, and thus that reality bleeds into visual narrative forms in differing ways. Seemingly unrelated artists and forms can be juxtaposed to reveal narratives of outsider isolation, economic position, identity, and navigation.

In presenting multiple narratives by differing immigrant and first-generation American artists, *Country, Home* explores not only the particular tensions and challenges of these culturally and socially under-recognized groups but also the ways in which we are accustomed to interacting with presentations of the Other. Void of the voice of the mainstream, these artists finally assert themselves on a platform of their own making. But the rarity of such opportunities equally defines the exhibition as much as their art.

1 Doug Borwick, “Considering Whiteness,” *Arts Journal Blog*, February 20, 2013, <<http://www.artsjournal.com/engage/2013/02/considering-whiteness/>>.

2 Nina Simone, “On White Privilege and Museums,” *Museum2.0*, March 6, 2013, <<http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2013/03/on-white-privilege-and-museums.html>>.

3 Julia Halperin, “Almost one third of solo shows in US museums go to artists represented by five galleries,” *The Art Newspaper*, April 2, 2015, <<http://theartnewspaper.com/news/museums/17199/>>.

4 Hrag Vartanian, “Breaking Down the Demographics of the New Whitney Museum’s Inaugural Exhibition,” *Hyperallergic*, April 14, 2015, <<http://hyperallergic.com/199215/breaking-down-the-demographics-of-the-new-whitney-museums-inaugural-exhibition/>>.

5 Ben Davis, “Diversify or Die: Why the Art World Needs to Keep Up With Our Changing Society,” *Blouin Art Info*, November 16, 2012, <<http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/840695/diversify-or-die-why-the-art-world-needs-to-keep-up-with-our#>>>.

MIGRATIONS

／ Ian Epstein

Migrations create lacunae. They cause erasures. They occur for reasons that are obvious and obfuscated in equal measure. They ensnare people in webs of unfamiliar language and trauma, forcing engagement with unknown rules and routines. They scrub the lived histories off of people on their way from one nationality to another. Migration has a way of twisting specificity from stories, removing the details, like a wet cloth expels a liquid. Yet art is capable of expressing this loss; it can untwist the cloth. It is able to show us what we cannot say in a glance or an extended stare, a breath, a tube of color, a thread, a photograph of light from years ago. It can make present histories that are difficult to manifest. There is, in short, a volubility in art that gives shape to the erasures caused by human migrations.

“Country, Home” is a phrase that can be turned over endlessly, dialogically, in the mind: Does it refer to a place or a structure? Someone’s home country, or their country home? A state of mind or a nation state? There is a difference between country and home, but each shifts what it means to reside in the other. Every country has its idea of home, and each home expresses unspoken attributes of its country.

I think about how the Chilean-born artist Rodrigo Valenzuela in *Here*, a three-minute video piece, starts by showing us a black and white scene of a mottled, lifeless desert, and just as we settle into the splotchy, dry view, we notice seams along the image, and then it slowly begins to move, to slide away, to pan out. A finger ekes into the frame from the lower right

corner, pointing, or appearing to point, first at a rock. The camera continues its slow retraction, gradually pulling back to reveal an endlessly broad desert valley dotted with scrub. Perhaps the finger simply points into the valley? There are ambient sounds, the sounds of straining wood, pockets of silence, then a snapping tree. The finger hangs like a didactic gesture toward an ill-advised, difficult, or unavoidable route, suggesting no alternative. But it is also submissive, like the arrow of a weathervane helplessly acknowledging the direction of the wind as the camera makes its slow shift.

There's a circularity in *Here* that resonates with this exhibition's title, a flickering engagement with one's sense of purpose, danger, tranquility, the past. One drifts into the image and away from it as the creeping movement of the camera elongates time into something contemplative, a meditation. The movement—in a sense, a form of migration?—creates a border, then drains it of its power by pulling away from it. One watches time pass inside this frame on a discontinuous course from the present. This is not Frost's path diverging in a wood, or even Borges's garden of forking paths. The image continues its slow creep, zooming out. Just over a minute into Valenzuela's video, we reach another border, a transition from grayscale into color. What we've seen until now is a photographic image, composed of tiled squares; we now learn that the image is mounted on a structure set in the middle of a lush forest. The site where the camera physically sits is the rain-soaked opposite of the black and white desert. The camera continues to slowly widen its field of view, creating a sensation that the forest is enveloping the photograph

of the desert, reducing it to an image lost in the wilderness, with a man in a black shirt pointing into it, into a superficial, monochromatic version of some other nature, some past time, a harsher climate.

The slow-pan out calls to mind similar shots in everything from Kanye West's *Power* or FKA Twigs's *Two Weeks* music videos to David Attenborough nature documentaries. Its power lies in its focused slowness which feels in some way analogous to staring into a fresco: the slow, constant movement destabilizes geometry through motion, relieving the eye of its need to dart around. The point of view in *Here* is, in a way, like the one seen from the vantage point of Walter Benjamin's angel of history. It focuses, then widens to accompany what literally becomes a "bigger picture" even as it remains the same size, and we remain outside of it.

This work, linking two worlds as seen from a third, colliding media into one another reveals the pervasiveness of borders. The relationship between borders and framing, how they tilt your world and determine your view; how frames determine what gets seen and how we see it; that framing determines kinds of power, and it is always there as a way of leaving people out, selectively forgetting; that borders are limits that structure how we relate to the social and the natural worlds; that we have no real sense of things from inside them.

Marshawn & awn & awn, a sparse, layered, five-minute sound piece by Lagos-born artist chukwumaa, addresses the "negation, refusal and defiance" of NFL player Marshawn Lynch within "spaces that

function to alienate or control”—like post-game press conferences, where Lynch famously shuts down journalists eager for insight by not responding to their questions. Alienation and control figure into spaces where there are interactions and transitions between different powers, as, for example, at an airport. The piece begins with a pulsing sound. There’s a voice that drifts through it. The pulsing repetition and the words put us in a place between speech and music. There are singular notes of indeterminate origin, sounding in silence. “I’m just here so I don’t get fined,” the voice says, reverberating, shifting, sounding so familiar, it repeats. Did it say ‘fined’ or ‘fired?’ What’s the difference? The valence of the phrase, its force, lands differently each time. Apologetic, flippant, confrontational, serene. “I’m just here so I don’t get fined.” The repetition writes and rewrites what’s said. The pulsing in the background, meanwhile, crosses a border and becomes musical. It starts somewhere high and falls lower, manifesting a beat, the pulsation becomes rhythm. My mind drifts to the incantatory quality of Steve Reich’s “It’s gonna rain,” except instead of a preacher’s admonitions, we have a hero’s refusal. Fresh off the battlefield and Marshawn just doesn’t fucking want to talk to you guys, sorry. Our journalists are so hungry for controversy, how can we blame him? Where Reich’s composition becomes generative, chukwumaa’s remains focused like a razor on this refusal. His heart is unquestionably in the game, but he is not here for this circus, not here to be brandished by others as the hero, to be poked and questioned. That he does it coming off as such a savvy navigator of the politics of appearing in contractual spaces reveals how someone’s small slight can become an act of radicality, a rightful claim to agency and self-determination.

Alejandra Regalado’s documentary project, “In Reference To: Mexican Women of the U.S.,” pairs portraits of migrants from Mexico to the U.S. with photos of objects they chose to bring with them on their journeys. It’s the kind of journey that Regalado, a Mexican artist who now lives in New York, made herself. The diptychs are set against a white background, which lends the portraits a taxonomical, clinical and detached feel. The flat background elevates the objects to totems, quietly recalling Sarah Charlesworth’s “Objects of Desire” series, but oriented less around consumer culture and more around the inexpressible experience of leaving one home forever in order to seek out a more welcoming one in a faraway place. “This is the portrait of my father, whom I never met,” explains one woman of her object, a sepia-toned photograph of a man.

Borders suppress our ability to access material aspects of the past. Regalado’s project acts as a bridge to that past, conveying a sense of loss but also of memory by inviting an open-ended connection between the person in the picture and the thing they chose. Regalado’s work references how, in the course of a long trip, we develop relationships with objects that connect very directly to material aspects of a past, often aspects to which we have lost access.

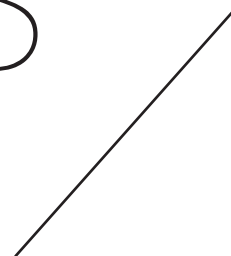
On the other hand, Adela Andea’s sculpture of neon lights and coiled cords, *Biopunk Mnemonics*, picks up a commercial rather than a personal language. Born in Romania, Andea uses neon tubing abstractly, as a kind of reconfiguration of the meaningless flotsam we encounter in every shop window. It’s as though Vladimir Tatlin’s *Monument to the Third International*

had been shattered, shrunk, reassembled blind, inflated with argon, and plugged in. The small coils disentangled from the stick-straight tubes of light comprise miniaturized pieces of Tatlin's tower, but the underlying message seems supranational, pulled from a vocabulary of global consumerism, not assembled as a monument to a kind of progress.

All the pieces in *Country, Home* make me think about how, while the earliest museums grew out of homes, it hardly meant they were welcoming. It means that, like homes or countries, they relied on certain fixed ideas about ownership and land, membership and belonging, participation and process. In many ways, access was restricted; in many ways it remains so. Interaction between people and property is fenced, regulated and structured. We force what we value into view and shove what we do not out of sight through ignorance, neglect, or omission. We instead settle unthinkingly and complacently into a set of conditions that are usually advantageous to the owners over the viewers. Invitation to these places is often exclusive, rippling lightly through affiliations of kinship that largely exclude those who do not know how to knock on the door.

This essay was written as part of the **Young Art Critics Mentoring Program**, a partnership between AICA USA (US section of International Association of Art Critics) and CUE, which pairs emerging writers with AICA mentors to produce original essays on a specific exhibiting artist. Please visit aicausa.org for more information on AICA USA, or cueartfoundation.org to learn how to participate in this program. Any quotes are from interviews with the author unless otherwise specified. No part of this essay may be reproduced without prior consent from the author. Lilly Wei is AICA's Coordinator for the program this season. For additional arts-related writing, please visit on-verge.org.

ARTISTS



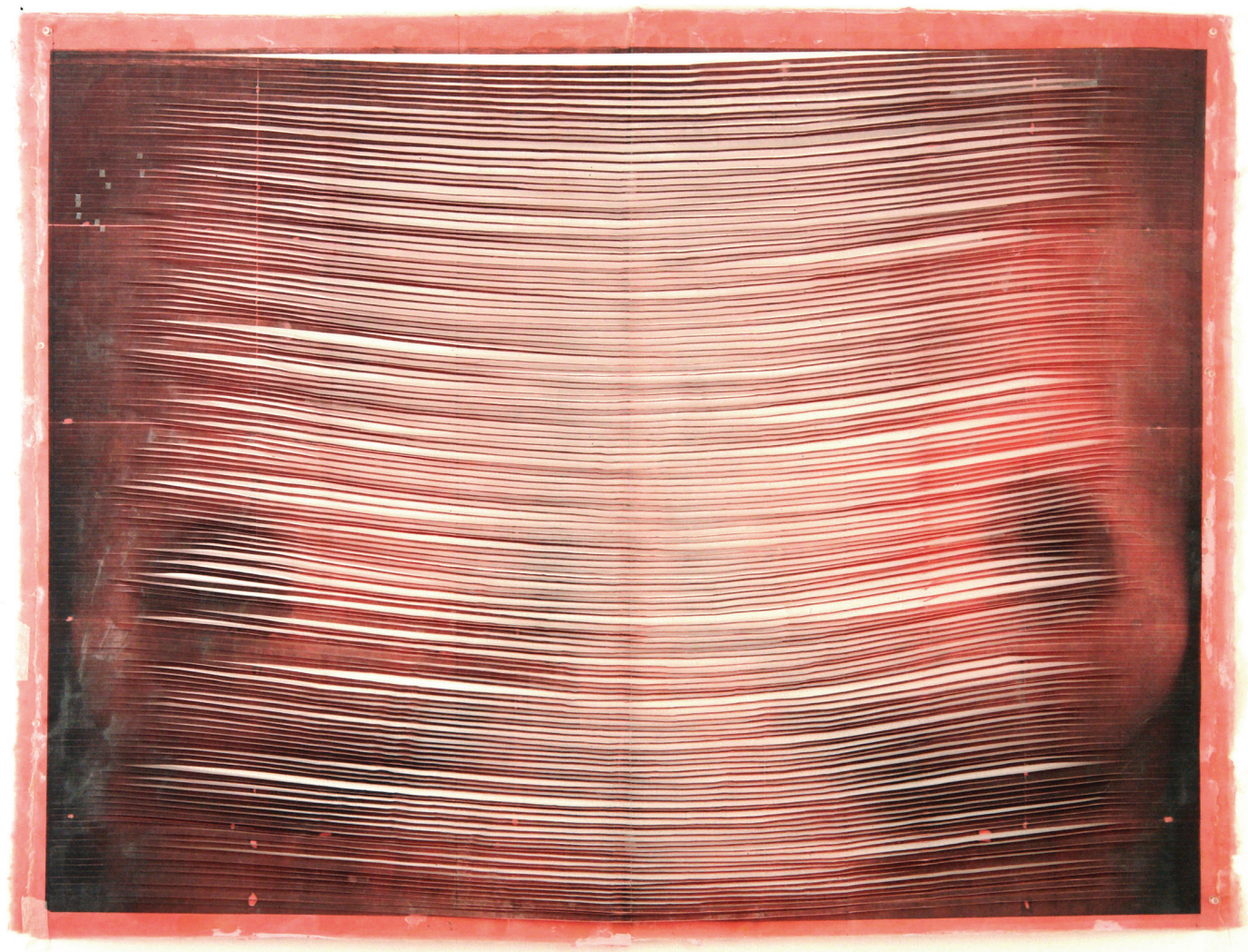
GOLNAR ADILI

Art is my key to understanding the current underlying my identity and the world through fragments, abstraction, and repetition. In doing so, I derive much of my inspiration from my own life.

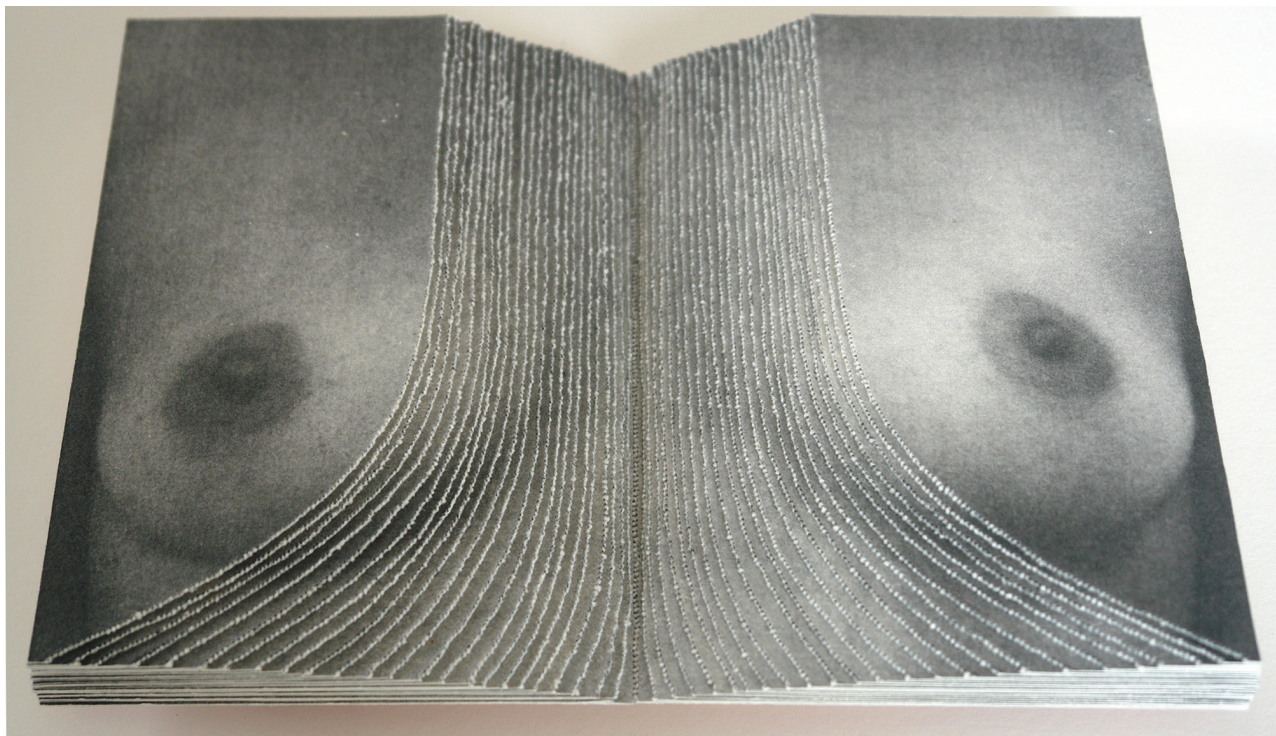
As an Iranian growing up in post-1979 Tehran, I have experienced separation and uprooting. I am compelled to decode the ways in which these events have marked me through poetry, craft, and the body. I work in different mediums and my process at times involves deconstructing and reconstructing an image. The works presented here are inspired by Persian poetry and biographical text investigating a landscape of longing.

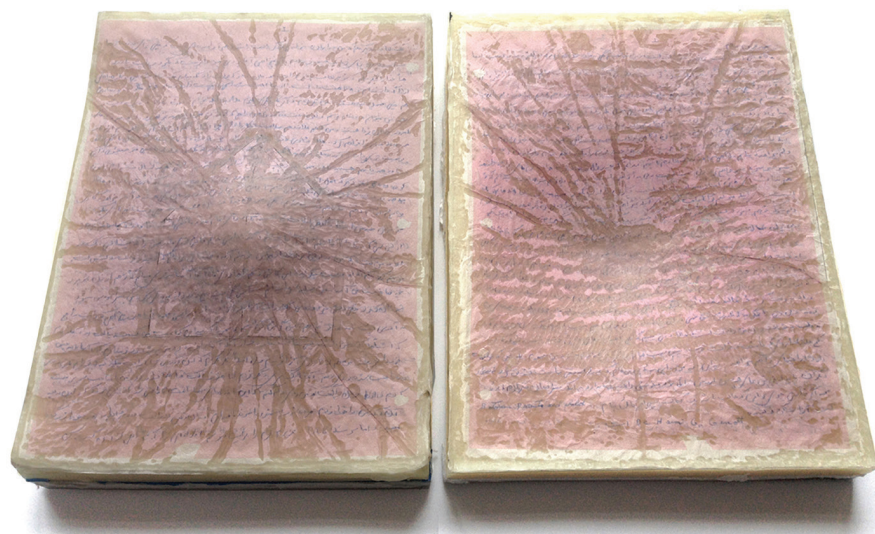
The different iterations of the chest image presented in this collection are inspired by the first line of a short poem by the contemporary Persian poet, Yadollah Royaei: "A Thousand Pages of Chest in A Thousand Pages of Mirror." The chest as the site of emotion is highly infused with multiple metaphors in classical Persian poetry as well. In this small collection, the chest serving as a self-portrait is set side by side with works created from personal documents such as letters sent from my mother to my father in their first years of separation due to political turmoil following the revolution in Iran. A prolific intellectual and an avid archivist, my late father has left a large collection that I will be mining for years to come as a part of my art practice.

I am very interested in exploring the language of the material I use. This craft-intense way of making mimics digital processes at times, creating juxtaposition in exploring new distortions and blurring the lines between design, craft, and fine art.



**A Thousand Pages of Chest In A
Thousand Pages of Mirror-Pink, 2011**
Transfer on paper, beeswax, medical tape
50" x 37"



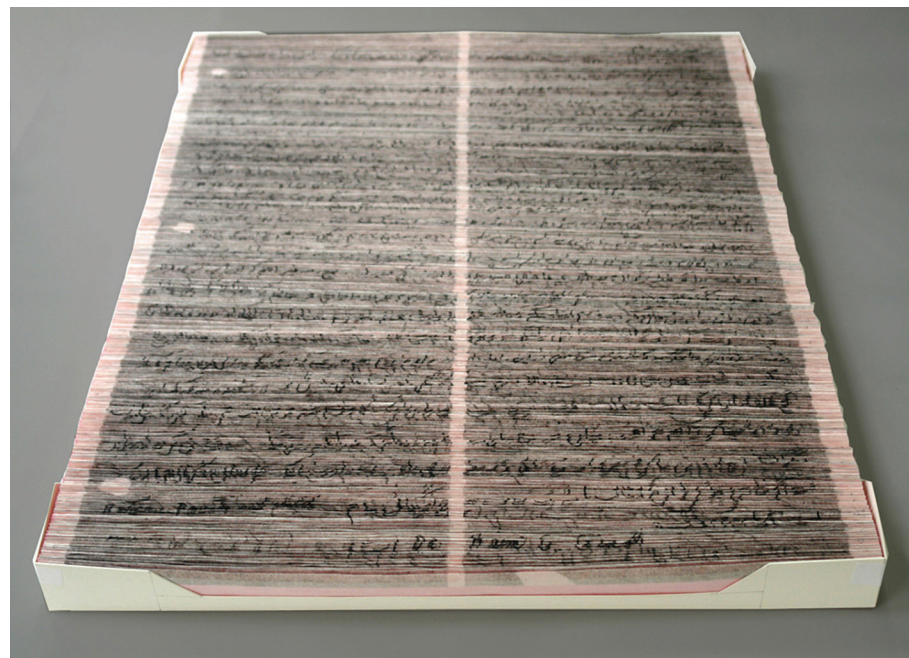


OPPOSITE, TOP
**A Thousand Pages of Chest
 In A Thousand Pages of
 Mirror-Curved**, 2011

Transfer on paper
 8" x 10" x 2.5"

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
Pillow Chest, 2014
 Digital print on Japanese paper,
 batting, thread
 20" x 30" x 6"

LEFT, TOP
**I Wish One Could Measure the
 Emotions of Others**, 2014
 Digital print on Japanese paper fused
 to a block of beeswax, carved
 8" x 10" each



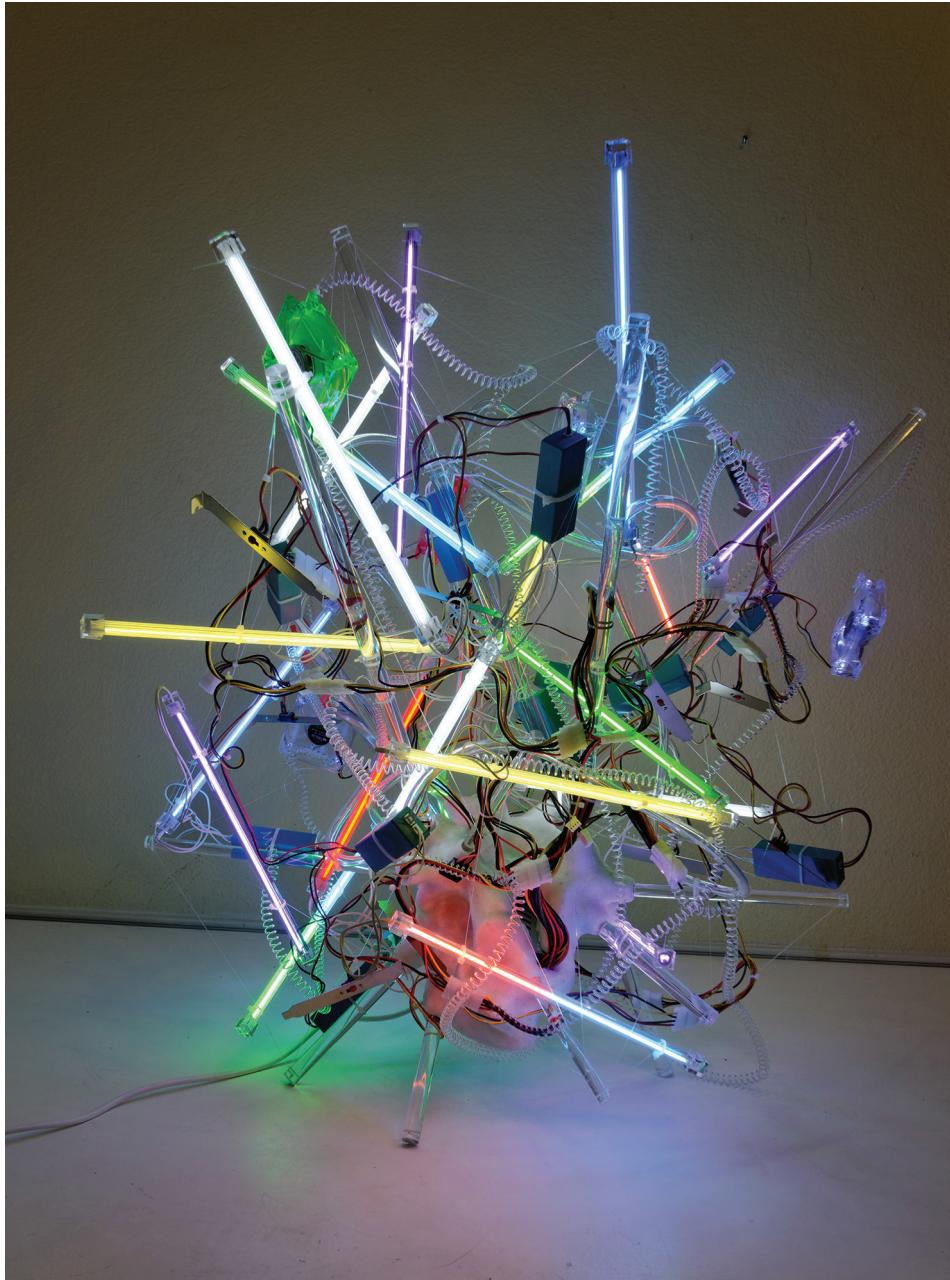
LEFT, BOTTOM
Pink Letter, 2011
 23 enlarged and transferred
 reproductions of a letter on paper,
 medical tape, museum board
 18" x 24" x 1.5"

ADELA ANDEA

The title of the piece comes from a series of works developed from my large installation, *The Green Cyberweb*. This particular artwork was generated in response to the biopunk movement, the open source initiative in biotechnology. In the center of the artwork there is an organic mechanized mnemonic device that powers and interacts with several components. My creative process started with the idea of an organic computer; a pulsating membrane that suggests memory can take a visual shape and become a device for new forms of inorganic intelligence. The forms are a visual interpretation of possible future technologies, with focus on changing the esthetic experience from cyber and bio forms. My intention is to create a dialogue about the interaction between people and new technologies, about socio-political issues raised through these dynamic developments.

Most of my work consists of installations that create the experience of being emerged in the artwork, surrounded by it, with the extra visual over-stimulation provided by the medium of light and mass-produced objects. At the same time I am attempting to contain the viewer's experience within the physical reality of consumer electronics and the aesthetic of mass-produced materials.

I believe in the fabrication of concepts as well as materials and in the processes to bring new interpretation to cultural norms. The changing meaning of nature through the promising optimism of innovation and technological progress is a source of inspiration for my art. The formal aspect of my work is subversive to the actual message; the transformation of inorganic material into visual organic forms participates aesthetically in the antithetic perception of the real vs. artificial, where real is naturally occurring and artificial requires human intervention.



Biopunk Mnemonics, 2012
CCF Lights, Plexiglas, LED
Computer fans, Power supply
34" x 34" x 34"
Courtesy the artist and Anya Tish
Gallery, Houston, TX.

MICHAEL BOREK

For years, I have been taking pictures of chain-link fences. Many times, I was not even aware they were my subjects. They just happened to be part of the scenery that attracted me, or they were “supporting actors.” But after editing these photographs, I realized that these fences serve as both supporting and leading actors, not unlike the Rubin Vase (that familiar drawing that can be perceived either as a vase or as two faces), and that the photos have something in common. Apart from the obvious—the utilitarian diamond-shaped pattern of the wire—they dominate and separate those of us who are “here” (in the world accessible to us) from what is “there” (in the other world, where we are not allowed). The division is not necessarily only a physical one. It may also symbolize a barrier that separates us from what we seek.

Many times, the erectors of chain-link fences cover them with a translucent material, presumably to make them blend in better with their surroundings or to prevent the overly curious from peering into what is going on behind them. That is the case with the photo entitled *And They Make Good Neighbors #6712*. An engineering mind would correctly tell us that this is a photo of a construction site separated from the street by a fence covered with a magenta-colored sheet, and that there is a similar sheet attached to the scaffolding. But without that engineering mind, without knowing the context, or without wanting to know the context, one has more options. The viewer can enjoy simultaneously seeing both these protective veils and their backgrounds, and these sheets



**And They Make Good
Neighbours #6712, 2013**

Pigment print

12" x 18"

Courtesy the artist

can transform an otherwise boring view into a multilayered scene, in which the “there” becomes confusing and even mysterious. Can I get “there?” And do I even want to get “there?” It might be complicated. If I make it over or through the first layer, it will be necessary to climb the ladder to get further. But won’t I then encounter a second layer anyway? And who knows what lies behind that. There might even be something that can’t be seen or fathomed from here. But it must be something worthwhile, otherwise no one would have made the effort to protect it. But wait, it seems there is already somebody “there.” I can see a hand in the bottom-left corner. Or is it a hand? Maybe I am just imaging things. But I don’t want to be on this side. Can I make it “there?” And is it really worth it?

The visual premise of the photo *And They Make Good Neighbors #0045* is seemingly simpler, but a closer look reveals the complexities it offers up. It is night, and there is a bench in a park in front of a lamppost. It makes sense so far. But there is a fence erected just in front of the bench. Why? Perhaps someone wanted to prevent those from “here” from sitting on a bench that belongs to “there?” But why on earth would one erect a fence just in front of the bench so that nobody could sit on that bench, regardless whether they are from “here” or from “there”? What’s the point of having the bench “there” in the first place?



**And They Make Good
Neighbours #0045, 2012**

Pigment print
12" x 18"

Courtesy the artist

chukwumaa

The hinge point for *Marshawn & awn & awn* is the extended deep performance of NFL player Marshawn Lynch. Lynch's performance in the context of the NFL media circuit has been one of negation, refusal and defiance. He exerts a sort of control over his literal and symbolic voice by choosing to be present but not participate in the post-game interviews: "I'm just here so I won't get fined." In *Marshawn & awn & awn*, I explore this presence and absence through Lynch's disembodied voice. I'm interested in the way figures like Marshawn Lynch navigate spaces that function to alienate or control them. This concern connects to my own experiences navigating different sociopolitical spaces in the United States as a second generation Nigerian immigrant.

Marshawn & awn & awn, 2015
Two-channel .WAV file
5'00" minutes

***IM JUST HERE
SO I WONT
GET FINED***

-MARSHAWN LYNCH

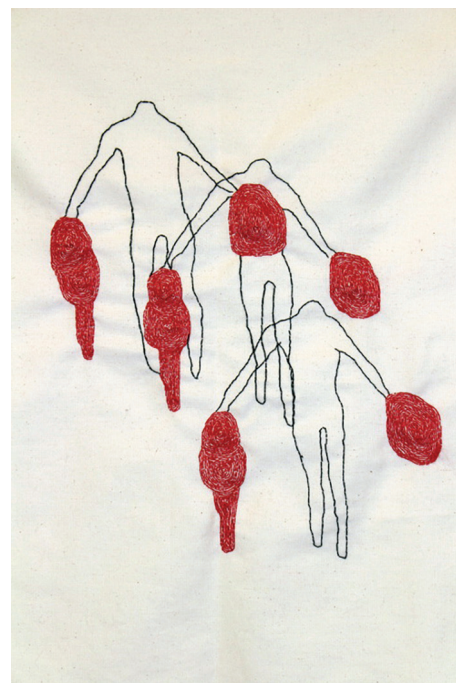
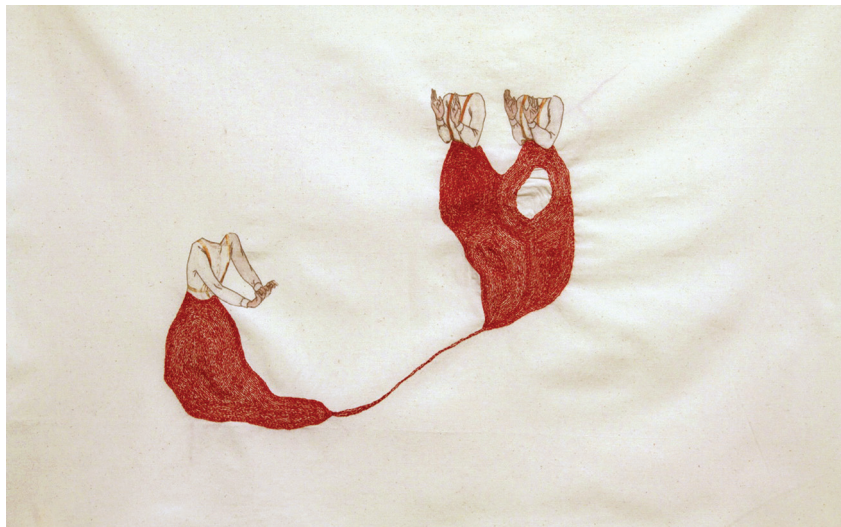
ELNAZ JAVANI

I turn what takes place around me into a metaphorical quest; the main theme of the quest is based on my concerns: violence, vulnerability, loss and identity. I am experimenting with objects and materials such as fabric, cloth, thread, image and sound that are tied to my memory, experiences, body, and sense of touch. I'm interested in the constant conflict between process and materials and the way that they relate to images and spaces. In my work, I'm trying to approach the things that I don't understand in the world and the things that offend me.

It is important to me that the viewer becomes immersed in the works, that they become part of the environment and be able to experience it on their own terms. This immersion is a collision of my intimate world with the viewer's visceral experience. My world is my experience and what I experience comes back into my work. This relationship enables me to express and fight against perceived borders and beliefs.

Belief, 2013
transfer print and hand
sewn on fabric
12" x 12"





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE

Follow Me, 2014

Transfer print and hand sewn on fabric
20" x 28"

Red Holes, 2014

Transfer print and hand sewn on fabric
16" x 24"

Fun to be Stone, 2014

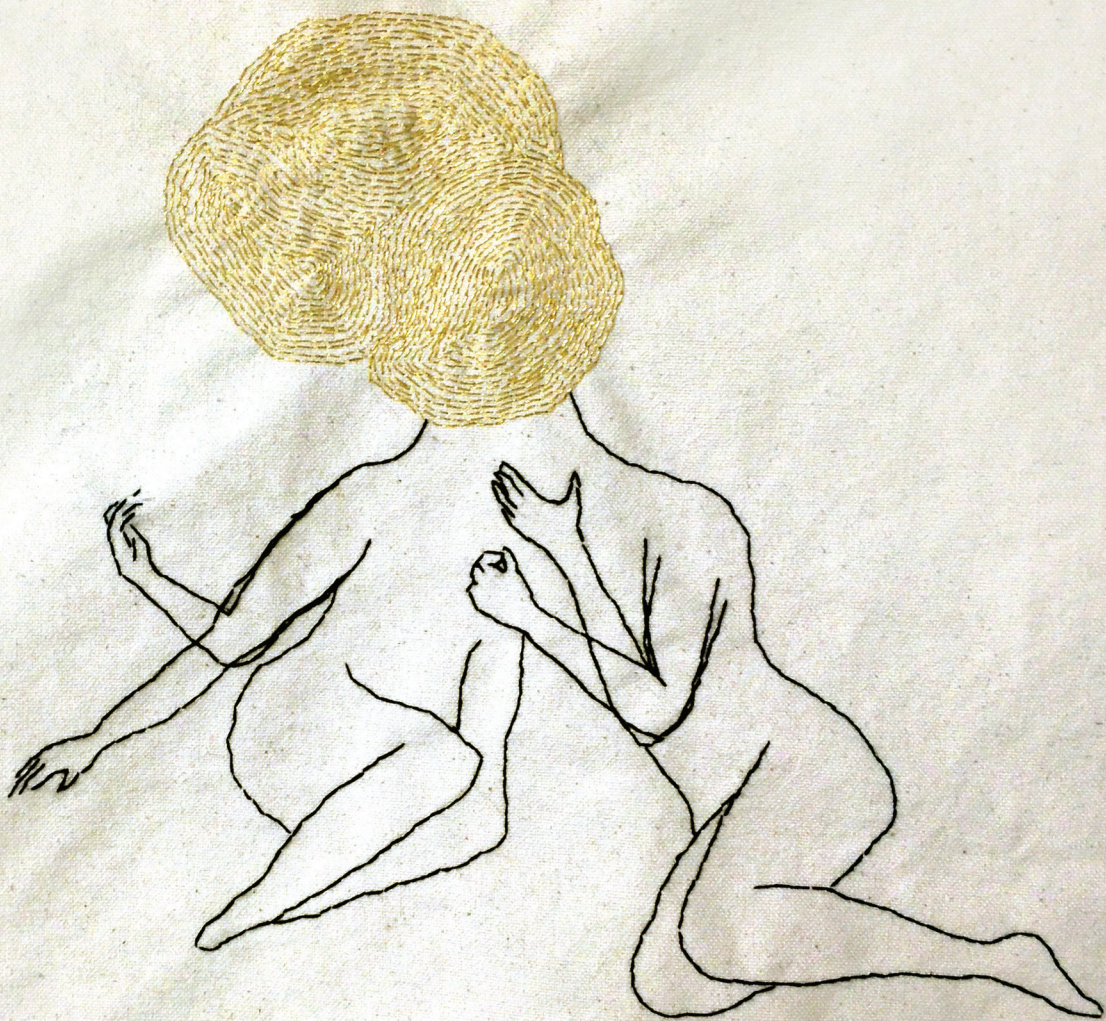
Installation, transfer print and hand sewn
on fabric
Size variable

OPPOSITE

Soot, 2013

Transfer print and hand sewn on fabric
16" x 18"





ALEJANDRA REGALADO

A Mexican in New York

by Valerie Mejer

Alejandra Regalado is a Mexican immigrant. This condition, of being someone that has left her country and knows she won't return precedes her condition as a photographer. In New York, talisman of all immigrants, being from abroad can be worn with the same transparency as seeing both sides of the island from a corner in Manhattan; this is the place where Alejandra Regalado has made her home. It is here, here in New York, where she has often been told that she does not seem Mexican, and something from her political background and something from her scientific attitude, her willingness to gather "cases" will make her wonder what that is. The bicentennial of Mexico's independence is coming and she knows she will not celebrate it in her country; she will stay in New York. These two numbers of the bicentennial, one hundred plus one hundred, give her the key, that one hundred women will be photographed and each asked to bring an object that was meaningful in her migration from Mexico to the United States. The impulse has arrived to build a country that does not exist, making an impossible archeology, a visual museum of objects where she will realize the life she left behind, each one of them left behind, and which together account for who they are, in what they decided to keep with the same pride that they could not erase as if a scar from war. When you look at this community of portrayed women, they appear to you like an identity card, in the universal language yet cryptic characteristic of a passport photograph, which is present only in the most basic record of who you are, you can almost hear their thoughts while facing the camera of Alejandra Regalado "In an *itacate*, a lump, a suitcase, I got an object: it was as heavy as a *molcajete* or as light as a chain. It didn't matter that it weighed so much because other things were heavier. Its weight

Vianey C./Leather Mexican Folk Dance Shoe, 2011

Digital C-Print, facemounted on Plexiglas, mouted on sintra, aluminum brace
15.75" x 15.175"

Loreto A./Powder Box with Scapular, Garlic, and Coral, 2011

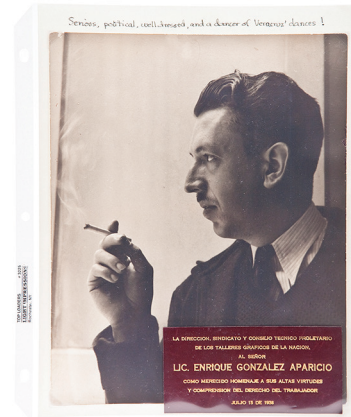
Digital C-Print, facemounted on Plexiglas, mouted on sintra, aluminum brace
15.75" x 15.175"



actually made everything else lighter. You cannot go anywhere without your name, and this thing that I have brought with me on the trip north, excited about a better life, it has made everything more bearable for me, because when you call yourself, the object answers you." Alejandra Regalado knows this because she herself brought on this trip her red pillow, her bright scarlet-red satin comfortable pillow that made everything else bearable. This photographer not only understands what this object means for a journey like this, what it is to be a Mexican woman who has gone north, but knows well the role played in the invention of her own destiny, and that is visible in how carefully she revisits the remarkable object that the Mexican immigrants bring to the photo session, in an unfamiliar angle which helps both the viewer and the owner of this talisman to see what she has brought. It is important that she not impose on "this record," so that the portrait will have a context empty of theory. Alejandra does not want to impose her own personal ideas on these women. Therefore it is important to know that these Mexican women who live and survive in New York must themselves tell what they have brought and why. This minimal story is another portrait, is a part of the object. She knows to count herself in this. This photographer who knows as one only can in New York "I am one of them, we are many, we are so diverse" and in that democratic impulse they all want to be there, together, as if they represent an amazing community of women who once said "It's time to pack, tomorrow I'm going, I do not know what will happen, I cannot leave without this thing, precisely this one thing, this virgin, this necklace, this letter or this graduation dress—I'll put you here, and you will come with me." These Mexican women look straight into the camera, saying in a very simple way "this is me and this is what I brought with me." The art of Alejandra Regalado has known this and captures the entire narrative burden involved in this gesture, in the light of her camera, with a democratic and cheerful spirit, offering one woman framed by a hundred of her moderate fellow women who in chorus say: I am a Mexican Woman in New York.

Annabella G./Father's Portrait; Mexican Politician and Intellectual, 2011

Digital C-Print, facemounted on Plexiglas,
mouted on sintra, aluminum brace
15.75" x 15.175"



JERRY TRUONG

Captured over the course of five consecutive days in December of 2013, this project is the follow-up to *Một Ngày Nào Đó* (*One of These Days*) and *Cha Và Con* (*Father and Son*), two photographic series originally shot in 2003; it is a visual peek into the lives of the original subjects exactly ten years later.

With a documentary approach, the artist followed the members of his immediate family for twelve hours each. *Rối* (*Tangled*) reveals the entwined nature of their lives and the loose ends still left hanging.

Each subject was asked to reflect on the past decade. Hung puffs on his cigarette as he looks back with regret on his two failed restaurant ventures. Mai has no time to dwell on the past, as she worries constantly about the family's future. Alone with his video games, Daniel sees each day blurring into the next. April, lost in the moment, fights back tears after confronting her boyfriend about his inappropriate behavior at a party. Angie considers the next step as she sits and organizes her possessions, having moved back home after recently breaking up with her fiancée. The story is "to be continued."



Rối (Tangled), 2014

Inkjet print

11" x 16.5"

Courtesy the artist





Rối (Tangled), 2014
Inkjet prints
Each 11" x 16.5"
Courtesy the artist

RODRIGO VALENZUELA

I construct narratives, scenes, and stories that point to the tensions found between the individual and communities. I utilize autobiographical threads to inform larger universal fields of experience. Gestures of alienation and displacement are both the aesthetic and subject of much of my work. Often using landscapes and tableaux with day laborers or myself, I explore the way an image is inhabited, and the way that spaces, objects and people are translated into images. My work serves as an expressive and intimate point of contact between the broader realms of subjectivity and political contingency. Through my videos and photographs, I make images that feel at the same time familiar yet distant. I engage the viewer in questions concerning the ways in which the formation and experience of each work is situated—how they exist in and out of place.



Here, 2013
HD digital video
3'11" minutes
Courtesy of Upfor gallery



The Builder, 2012
archival pigment print mounted on
Dibond with artist frame
30" x 40"
Courtesy of Upfor gallery

BIOGRAPHIES

Artists

Golnar Adili was born in Virginia and moved to Iran when she was four years old. She holds a Master's Degree in architecture from the University of Michigan where she received the Thesis Award and the Booth Traveling Fellowship to Tehran, Iran in 2006. She has participated in residencies at the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Italy; Smack Mellon in Brooklyn, NY; the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA; the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH; the Ucross Foundation in Clearmont, WY; the Lower East Side Printshop in New York, NY; and the Women's Studio Workshop in Kingston, NY. Additionally, Adili has exhibited with the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles, CA; International Print Center in New York, NY; and the Brooklyn Arts Council in Brooklyn, NY. She has received grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts for the Fellowship in Printmaking/Drawing/Artists Books, the Puffin Foundation, and the Urban Artist Initiative. Golnar is currently based in Brooklyn, NY.

Adela Andea was born in Romania in September 1976 and moved to the United States in 1999. She graduated valedictorian and summa cum laude from the University of Houston's School of Art and received her MFA in new media with a minor in sculpture from the University of North Texas. Her work has been shown at various institutions throughout Texas, including The McKinney Avenue Contemporary, The Grace Museum, and the Art Museum of Southeast Texas. Additionally, her work has been shown in several major art fairs, such as SCOPE, Art Miami, Houston Fine Art Fair, Dallas Art Fair, and the 2013 Texas Biennale. This February she presented a large installation in the International Kinetic Art Exhibit and Symposium in Boynton Beach, Florida. Andea is currently an adjunct professor at Lone Star College and Houston Community College.

Michael Borek is originally from Prague, Czech Republic. In 2006, he became a member of the Multiple Exposures Gallery at the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, VA where he began exhibiting his photography. His series of photographs from an abandoned lace factory in Scranton, PA have shown at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and the Phillips Collection. In 2011, photography critic Louis Jacobson ranked Borek's solo exhibition featuring work from his series "And They Make Good Neighbors" as one of the 10 best photography exhibitions in Washington, DC. In 2012, the Maryland State Arts Council awarded Borek an Individual Artist Award. In 2013, the US Embassy in the Czech Republic presented a solo retrospective exhibition of his photography at the American Center in Prague.

Born in Lagos, Nigeria and raised in the Washington, DC Metro Area, **chukwumaa** makes work concerning liminal characters, trickster myths, and non-linear narratives. His work takes the form of sound, found and soft sculptures, surreal performances, and other media experiments. chukwumaa has exhibited work at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC; Various Small Fires gallery in Los Angeles, CA; The Kitchen in New York, NY; and in public art venues around the DC area. He has participated in residencies at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, FL under Coco Fusco; Transformer in Washington, DC under Kathryn Cornelius; and in an assistantship in Chicago, IL under mentor, Jefferson Pinder. chukwumaa received a BA in studio art from the University of Maryland, College Park and is currently a candidate for a Master of Fine Arts from the PennDesign Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

Elnaz Javani is an Iranian artist who creates sculptures, drawings, and installations that explore themes of vulnerability, violence, loss, and identity. She received her BFA from the Tehran University of Art and is currently an MFA candidate on a full merit scholarship at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been shown internationally in various exhibitions and festivals including CAC Ses Voltes International Residency in Spain, Luminarts and the Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal USA Presidential Award Exhibitions in Chicago, Mottahedan Projects in Dubai, and "Le Commun," Bâtiment d'Art Contemporain in Geneva.

Alejandra Regalado was born in Mexico City and currently lives and works in New York. She has been awarded the Individual Artist Grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and taken the title of First Place Professional Photographer at the Festival Internacional de la Imagen in Mexico. She has held residencies at the Galería de la Raza in San Francisco, the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago, and the Latin American Arts Festival at Boise

State University. Her series “In Reference To, Mexican Women of the U.S.” is comprised of 500 portraits of Mexican immigrants—living in California, Idaho, Oregon, Illinois, New York, and Texas—and the objects that represent each woman’s connection with their homeland. She is also collaborating with a group of artists and intellectuals to create an intervention at the Lacandon Jungle in Chiapas, Mexico in February 2016 to raise awareness around the importance of the preservation of the jungle and support programs for sustainability in the area.

Jerry Truong is a Washington, DC Area-based interdisciplinary artist whose work deals with issues of history and memory as they relate to the exercise of power and the residuals of trauma. Truong received his BA in studio art from the University of California, Irvine in 2006 and his MFA in Visual Arts from the University of California, San Diego in 2011 where he was the recipient of the San Diego Fellowship and Russell Foundation Grant. In 2014, he was awarded a Grant for Individual Artists and Scholars by the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County, MD. He has had solo exhibitions at Hood College in Frederick, MD; Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA; and a two-person show at Hamiltonian Gallery in Washington, DC. His work has also been shown at the Vietnamese Arts & Letters Association Cultural Center in Santa Ana, CA; the BlackRock Center for the Arts in Germantown, MD; American University Museum in Washington, DC; Coohaus Art in New York, NY; and the District of Columbia Arts Center in Washington, DC. He recently completed a two-year fellowship program at Hamiltonian Artists in Washington D.C. and is currently a member of Sparkplug 4.0 at the District of Columbia Arts Center.

Rodrigo Valenzuela was born in 1982 in Santiago, Chile. He completed an art history degree in Chile, and worked in construction while making art over his first decade in the United States. He completed his MFA at University of Washington in 2012 and is currently a Core Fellow at Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include the Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA in 2015; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Santiago, Chile in 2015; Upfor Gallery, Portland, OR in 2015; Archer Gallery, Vancouver, WA in 2014; and Bryan Ohno Gallery, Seattle, WA in 2013. Valenzuela has participated in residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ME; Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, NE; Center for Photography at Woodstock, NY; and the Vermont Studio Center. Valenzuela is recipient of the Artist Trust’s Arts Innovator Award, the Texas Contemporary Award, and the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts grant.

Curator

Kayleigh Bryant-Greenwell is a Washington, DC-based curator, writer, and art advocate. She specializes in connecting emerging artists with the public towards advancing their careers. In 2014 she curated one of the last guest-curated exhibits with former gallery Project 4 in Washington, DC. *Play by Play* was a multi-collaborative partnership with FLEX curatorial group, Project 4 gallery, and the curator. She is curating several upcoming contemporary art exhibits including *Invasive Presence* with Peephole Cinema, San Francisco, CA; *These Mirrors are not Boxes* with VisArts in Rockville, MD; *Country, Home* with CUE Art Foundation in NYC; the 2015 Apprentice Curator project with The DC Arts Center; and *Recoil: An Exhibition on the Semicentennial of Spiral*. She continues to explore curatorial practices through the residency programs of the DC Arts Center and VisArts in Rockville, MD throughout 2015. Her writing has been featured with *The Washington Times*, *Examiner*, CBS, and *Brightest Young Things*, among others. In focusing on advancing the careers of local artists, she has developed professional development seminars as well as a residency program for local emerging artists in the Greater Washington DC Metro Area. Additionally, she has worked with many cultural institutions over the years including the Smithsonian Institution, the Walters Art Museum, the National Archives and the David C. Driskell Center. In addition to curating and writing, she serves as the DC Regional Programs Chair of ArtTable, Inc. in Washington, DC. She earned her bachelor of arts in art history from the University of Maryland, College Park and her master of arts in museum studies from the George Washington University.

Writers

(*Young Art Critic writer*) **Ian Epstein** is currently a reporter for *New York* magazine, where his writing about art and books has appeared in print, online, and in the limited-run Vulture.com art blog, *SEEN*. He is also an online art editor for *n+1*. In the past, he has also worked for *Hyperallergic*, *The Nation*, *Newcity*, *American Suburb X*, and the dual-language photography publication *Album*, *Magazin für Fotografie*.

(*Young Art Critic mentor*) **Leigh Anne Miller** is the associate editor and picture editor at *Art in America*. She interviews artists (including Eric Fischl, Marilyn Minter and Keith Edmier) for the magazine's monthly "Backstory" column, and writes for A.i.A.'s website. She studied art history and Italian at Washington University in St. Louis.

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