



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Adriana Salazar lives and works in Mexico City. Her work as an artist has focused on the question of gestures, the relationship between subjects and objects, and the boundaries between nature and artifice. She received a BFA Honors degree from the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University of Bogota, and a Magna cum Laude MFA degree in Philosophy, from the Javeriana University of Bogota. With her kinetic objects and installations she has participated in art biennales, collective and solo exhibitions, such as Thingworld (Triennial of Media Art) 2014, the California-Pacific Triennial, and the Manif d’art de Québec. She has also participated in several academic and curatorial projects, and has received fellowships from international artistic residencies, such as Akiyoshidai International Art Village, Japan, and Nordik Artists’ Center, Norway. Adriana has worked as a Visiting Lecturer at the Javeriana University of Bogota, and at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University of Bogota. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Art Practice, at UNAM, in Mexico City.

ARTIST’S WEBSITE: [www.adrianasalazar.net](http://www.adrianasalazar.net)



*Adriana Salazar: Perpetuity* is organized by Sweeney Art Gallery at UCR ARTSblock and curated by Tyler Stallings, Artistic Director, Culver Center of the Arts & Director, Sweeney Art Gallery, UCR ARTSblock. Support has been provided by Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, California and Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Harbor, California, venues that presented a selection of works by Salazar for the 2013 California-Pacific Triennial, UC Riverside’s College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS) and the City of Riverside.

RELATED EVENTS

*Adriana Salazar: Perpetuity* is presented in collaboration with UC Riverside’s *The Immortality Project*, a multi-year project to study the science, philosophy, and theology of immortality, exploring questions related to the nature of heaven, civic immortality, and the desirability of living forever.

CONFERENCE | December 12-13, 2014  
**Objects of Devotion/Objetos de Devoción: Latin American Material Religious Cultures**

OPENING RECEPTION | December 12, 2014 | 5:30-7:00 PM | FREE ADMISSION

Salazar will also lecture on her work as part UC Riverside’s conference *Objects of Devotion/Objetos de Devoción: Latin American Material Religious Cultures*. This multidisciplinary conference engages historic and contemporary Latin American and Latino visual, material, and ritual cultural practice, coinciding with an exhibit of the work of Mexican-British artist, Alinka Echeverria, at UCR California Museum of Photography (November 1, 2014–January 24, 2015). Echeverria’s photographs explore the relationship of visual, religious, and material culture in Mexico, considering in particular the power of the Guadalupe icon. Information on conference, <http://ideasandsociety.ucr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/JH-Objects-Conference-December-12-13-FINAL.pdf>

visit us @ [artsblock.ucr.edu](http://artsblock.ucr.edu)



ADRIANA SALAZAR | *Perpetuity*

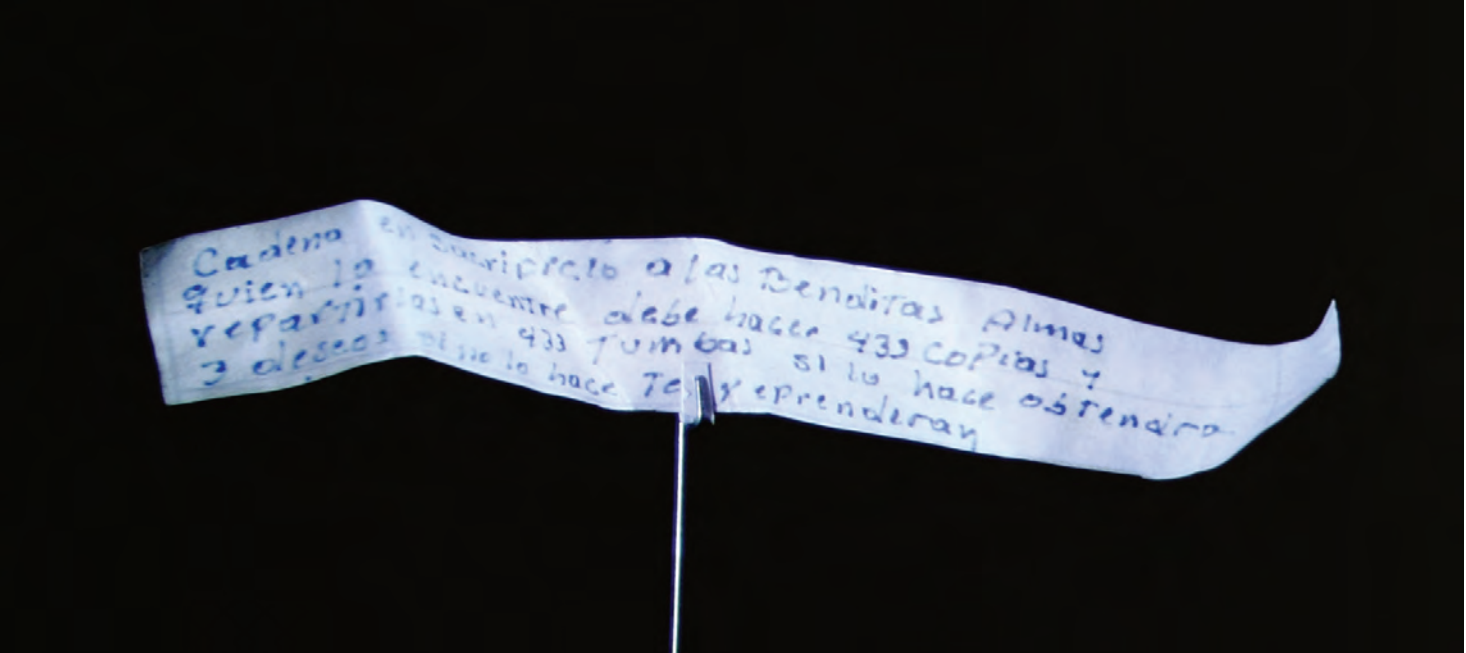
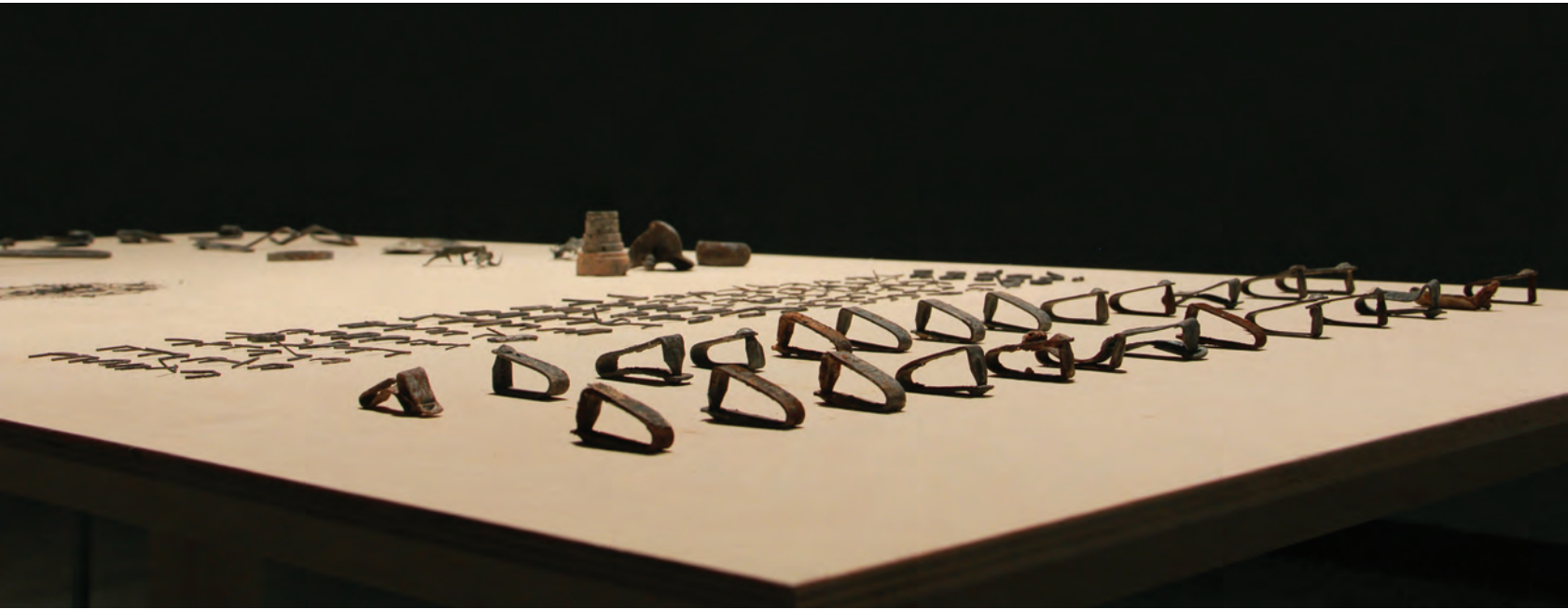
December 6, 2014 - March 21, 2015





# ADRIANA SALAZAR | *Perpetuity*

December 6, 2014 - March 21, 2015



Adriana Salazar: *Perpetuity* presents two large-scale, kinetic installations and four single-channel videos.

The artist creates sculptures and installations in which formerly alive creatures are mechanically re-animated: garments, fallen plants, taxidermy animals, and objects that are in the verge of becoming debris, have been transformed into new beings that are able to linger in the realm of artificiality. Through the construction of these hybrid objects, Salazar blurs the definitions of a machine, of what is natural, and of what is alive.

Is there an end to our existence? Can we be separated from our bodies and be transformed into something else? Salazar’s work has continued to revolve around these questions in different ways. This is why the realm of mortuary customs appeals to her: it presents numerous ways to approach the ultimate unknown. Salazar further explains her work in an interview with Tyler Stallings, Artistic Director, Culver Center of the Arts & Director, Sweeney Art Gallery, UCR ARTSblock.

TS: Do you feel that you use your work as a means to explore the meaning of life and death, that is, exploring whether or not we may transform into something else when our bodies stop working?

AS: I try to blur the boundaries between life and death through my work, showing that things can have a lifespan of their own, exceeding the definitions of life that common sense dictates. Also, I am interested in showing human life as something that is not alien to the process of decay and transformation that all matter undergoes.

TS: In the two main installations in this show, *Nothing Else Left* and *Moving Plant #30*, you use objects from cemeteries, like dried, dead flowers left by loved ones at gravesites, or crematoriums, like the artificial metal parts from surgeries that did not burn. Could you discuss more your interest in familial rituals around death and the funeral industry?

AS: The first objects belonging to the realm of human mortuary customs I found were some fragments of graves from a Mexican cemetery. These fragments were part of mortuary debris that is commonly found in Latin America. I found the fragments very interesting in the sense that they exposed human death as something that detonates other “deaths” and other processes of life around the death of humans. These fragments awoke an interest that took me to the crematorium, and then to other forms of mortuary debris such as the pieces that are part of both installations you

just mentioned. Both projects, *Nothing Else Left*, and *Moving Plant #30*, imply a certain process of “archaeology of the disposed fragment,” or a quest for what is overlooked in certain rituals around death.

TS: The videos depict dead animals and dead plants moving by means of a filament connected to a mechanical gear. For me, or perhaps any viewer, I have to reconcile seeing a dead bird move, not seeing the string at first, and then the mechanical device. What I enjoy, is that despite seeing the machine, I still believe in the magic of the bird being alive again, at least for a moment. Can you describe how other people have reacted to your works?

AS: I have known about different reactions, for example, to the bird pieces. Some viewers are shocked by the sight of the taxidermy bird itself, focusing more on the ethical debate that implies the use of animals in a work of art. Other viewers find this piece to be uncanny and at the same time beautiful in its mechanical simplicity. Other viewers have pointed out the fact that the bird seems to be “tortured” by the tensions on the threads that make it move. I have also received comments on the way the bird moves, as it is constantly agonizing, an thus, dying over and over again.

TS: The lay out of the artificial body parts after cremation appear like textbook anthropological images depicting the layout of ancient human skeletons. Could you discuss your aesthetic choices behind the carefully arranged parts on the wood tables?

AS: I realized that my knowledge of these pieces was a very limited one, so I opted for a display in the manner of ancient relics from an unknown culture, with unknown uses and purposes. I approached the installation process of the implants as if they were strange objects. This is why I decided to organize them according to their size and shape, from the largest one to the tiniest one, in a way that would allow all of them to be visible, side by side, without the hierarchy of usage mediating. In each table, I also decided to place an accumulation of moving particles that would “come alive,” suggesting that life is present in all metal parts around it as well.

TS: When I see all these metal body parts all at once, it makes me realize just how much we are cyborgs already, that is, a combination of human and machine. We are not pure. What is the symbolic role of your machines?

AS: The machines in the installation point out the becoming-machine of our bodies, both symbolically and physically. They also resemble the way the implants looked when they were new, thus working as a point of contrast: on one hand we have the shiny metal parts of the machines, and on the other

hand we have the implants as objects that have been transformed through time and human interaction. These implants have been imprinted by our bodies, as much as our bodies have imprinted these objects.

TS: One of the inspirations for presenting your work at UCR came from having a conversation with UCR professor John Fischer in the Philosophy Department. He received a \$5M award from The Templeton Foundation to re-grant to other researchers around the country who are studying immortality, whether empirically, such as with hydras, or culturally, such as with concepts of uploading consciousness to machines. Or, in the difference between immortality and the afterlife, that is, immortality is about living forever now, while the afterlife is about immortality after one’s death. What are your thoughts about consciousness and immortality versus the afterlife?

AS: I think the problem of differentiating both concepts, that is *Afterlife* and *Immortality*, begins when trying to define life. It seems to me that the border between that which is alive and that which is not alive, is a blurry one from every point of view. Even in Biology, this definition is something that is constantly debated and put to the test. Is a rock something that is alive? Is the process of death the same as the process of decay? Are we dying from the moment we are born? If all of the previous questions had a positive answer, then, we would be experiencing our afterlife throughout our lives. Immortality, on the other hand, suggests to me the idea of resisting to change and transformation, which is a strictly human idea.

TS: Recently, you moved to Mexico City to pursue a Ph.D. Could you describe what you hope to be your eventual thesis and/or dissertation, and how you may think that it will affect your future work?

AS: This Ph.D. program I am undertaking is proposing a double challenge: the dissertation has to refer to my own art practice. I am exploring the possibilities of animism, that is, the possibility of life in the inanimate. I hope this to be both a process of finding new projects and ways to explore this subject aesthetically, and I also hope this can allow me to bind all projects and aesthetic findings together into a larger body of work, connecting this body of work with other disciplines.



IMAGES (Front cover) Detail of *Plant #30*, 2013. Dried plants and motor. (Insert, clockwise from top left) Detail of *Nothing Else Left*, 2013. Metal, medical implants. Video still of *Cadena de Sacrificio (Chain of Sacrifice)*, 2013. Detail of *Nothing Else Left*, 2013. Metal, medical implant. Video still of *Birds #2 (Pajaro #2)*, 2011. (Back cover from top) Installation view of *Plant #30* at UCR/Sweeney Art Gallery. Installation view of *Nothing Else Left* at UCR/Sweeney Art Gallery. All videos courtesy of the artist. *Nothing Else Left* and *Plant #30* are from the Permanent Collection, Sweeney Art Gallery at UCR ARTSblock, University of California, Riverside.