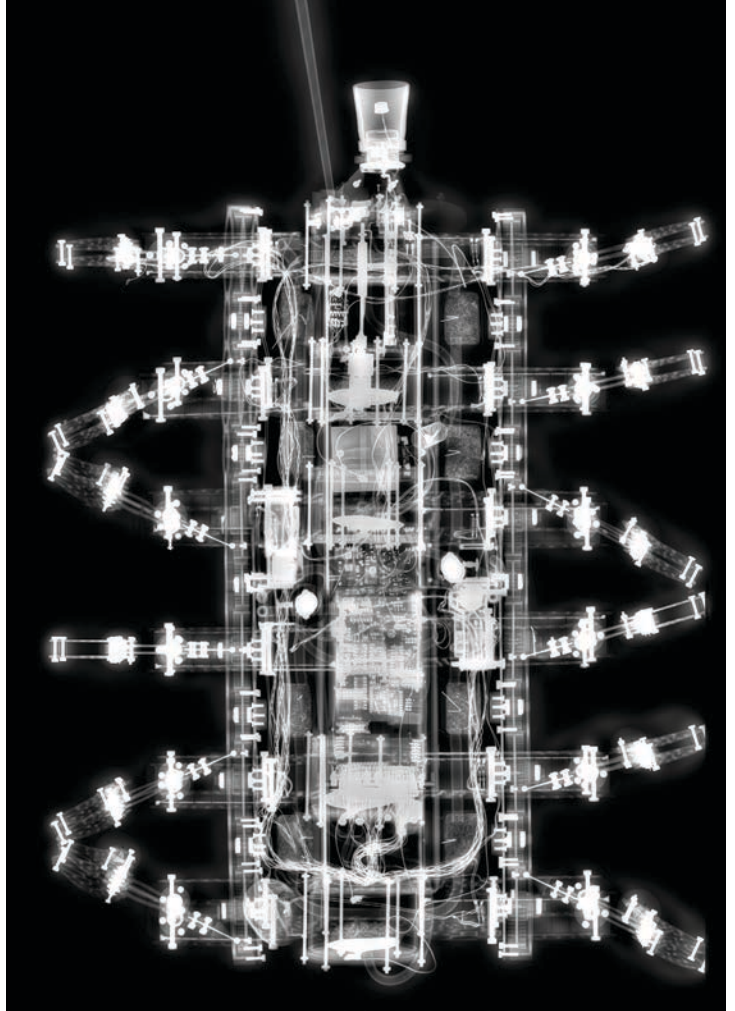


Jaime Bailleres  
Twyla Bloxham  
Gilberto Esparza  
Gonzalo Bautista  
Mitzi Hallmark  
Eric Keig  
David Witherspoon  
Carlo Zinzi

*curated by Reynaldo Thompson and Marilyn Waligore*



Gilberto Esparza , *PLANTAS NÓMADAS RX*, 2015

UT-DALLAS

APRIL 8 - MAY 6

2016

BATHHOUSE  
CULTURAL  
CENTER, DALLAS

MAY 7 - JUNE 4

2016

Carlo Zinzi, *Circus*, 2015 archival  
inkjet print on rag, 28 x 35 inches



**the machine in the garden**



**Jaime Bailleres** *Suicide. Arizona road. Suicidio.*, 2008, color negative digital print, 12 x 35.5 inches

### Dr. Reynaldo Thompson, 2016

The question of environment is at the center of our speculations about the future, one rearing its head in the context of massive climate change and the prospects of a postdiluvian global warming. On a miniscule, but significantly human scale, the problem may have been compounded by industrialization and an almost irretrievable trajectory of carbon emissions. In Latin America, especially within the community of technological artists, there is imagination, but also a craving for a solution to this imminent crisis in terms of a more humane and evocative answer to capitalism's relentless pursuit of wealth, power and corporeal enjoyment. The artists represented in this collection respond to the contemporary crisis in the most modest, organic, enchanting and yet bizarre manner characteristic of Mexico's richly evocative artistic praxis.

The title of our exhibition, *The Machine in the Garden*, a namesake of Leo Marx's text of 1964, revisits half a century later the same idea of exploitation of nature. *The Machine in the Garden* acts also as a trope for a new theme. Would it be possible for human civilization to revise the metaphor of the garden? Can machines be part of God's new Garden? Is a post-human literacy of art a feasible question? Or does the garden offer simple insights about the ontology of simple objects, like a broken carpet, for instance or a bug, or a phantasmal monster? What are their intrinsic meanings in the scheme of contemporary society and art? A series of artworks from Mexico explores the relationship between man and nature, the causes of that relationship, and their effects and implications. The never ending idea of progress by means of science and technology has been criticized in a human and unerring manner.

The works selected for the exhibition may represent something as humble as the leftovers of a consumerist culture that once presumably altered the natural landscape. It doesn't matter from what corner of the planet we observe the damage; it looks unfortunately as if that the more the progress made, the more damage is done to the planet. Jaime BAILLERES's photographs deal not only with the polarization of culture-nature and develop-undeveloped worlds but also with the idea of division and separation, poor and rich; all are produced by an economic system that may have reached its limits. The work of Gonzalo BAUTISTA paradoxically seems to encapsulate a dream of a natural environment in the physical remains of a mattress: his work called *Sueños de Zaranda* (Zaranda Dreams), perhaps unconsciously warns us of the danger that lies ahead by selecting between the big and the small, the good and the bad elements of experience. *Plantas Nómadas* (Nomadic Plants), a robotic project of Gilberto ESPARZA, on the other hand is a bizarre healing



Twyla Bloxham, *A0934, from the series Specimen*, 2015, Lambda print, 25 x 25 inches

robot capable of recycling chemical as well as organic wastes to replenish the arteries of life in our planet, namely the rivers. Gilberto uses highly specialized technology to promote social consciousness on environmental issues, and to make a serious-comic art object by having the arachnid robot feed on industrial materials and effluents.

These artists investigate the natural and the artificial polarities at the very end of what Leo Marx believed was the matrix of our life-style: namely the invincible process of productivity, wealth and power. *The Machine in the Garden* keeps raising such seeds of thought around nature.

Gonzalo Bautista,  
*The nature is coming*, 2015,  
archival pigment print,  
13.5 x 24 inches



## Marilyn Waligore, 2016

In *The Machine in the Garden* literary critic Leo Marx describes the experience of Europeans in the New World; they encountered what he calls an “unspoiled hemisphere,” which affirmed the possibility of the “site of a new beginning for Western society” (Marx 3). Here was a chance to start over. Marx notes, “The garden image brings together a universal Edenic myth and a particular set of American goals and aspirations. So with the machine” (Marx 164). We can update Marx’s text by adding the post-industrial impact of electronic technology into the mix. However, the only remaining unspoiled “gardens” awaiting exploration require travel beyond our planet. Our awareness of our dependence upon technology in order to survive beyond earth’s boundaries remains clear. Do earth’s citizens welcome another new virgin world or do we acknowledge our own inability to care for the place we now inhabit? Do we attempt to locate a balance between civilization and the natural world? These artists from Texas affirm that our 21st century experience of nature has become forever transformed by the impact of science and technology, and in that regard continue Marx’s investigation.

Twyla BLOXHAM’s experiments underscore the viewer’s inclination to believe scientific imagery recorded by the camera lens, despite limited understanding of the phenomena presented. She inverts her pseudo-biological images to reveal pronounced textures and saturated colors; her framed “specimens” mimic the conventions we associate with images of bacteria seen under a microscope, of cell-cultures growing in a Petri dish. She embraces irony by generating a simulation of the natural world. In Carlo ZINZI’s gardens, vibrant process colors scream artifice; silk lilies and living plants are intertwined, confusing the natural and the fabricated. A hotdog dripping with ketchup hovers in the center of the frame, literally waiting to explode—echoing the experience of the consumer who has overindulged. Zinzi upends the familiar seductiveness of idealized imagery found in commercial advertising through his disruptions of a coherent constructed scene.

In his videos, David WITHERSPOON records the gradual disintegration of a pig’s head painted in patriotic red, white, and blue, which is rendered finally as dust and bone. He comments on society’s trust in

David Witherspoon, *Decay (F)*, December 2015,  
Time-lapse photography, video (loop 14:53), video still





RECEPTION  
and  
PANEL  
DISCUSSION

APRIL 8, 2016

6:30 p.m.

- 8:30 p.m.

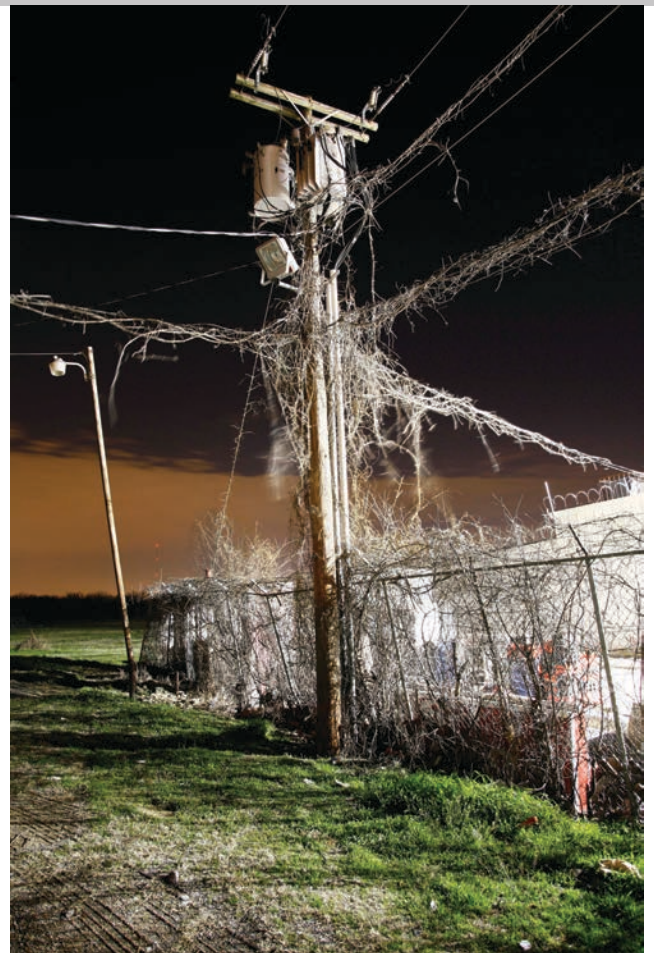
Mitzi Hallmark,  
*West Texas: Feast and  
Famine, 2016*,  
archival pigment print,  
installation detail

and dependence upon processed food products, which can undermine awareness of the cycles of the growing season and the connection between nutrition and diet. The industrialization of agriculture and meat production, with the reliance on a bevy of chemicals, may bring the factory to the garden with long-term implications. Mitzi HALLMARK reflects on the tension between the generations of ranchers and farmers in West Texas who work the land above ground, and the oil and gas industries that mine below the surface. Her photographic composite alternates between these two arenas, and between positive and negative imagery, to underscore that uneasy co-existence. Through constructions of mesquite branches and deer antlers, accompanied by sounds of irrigation and oil pump machinery, Hallmark recreates a human-altered landscape with traces of flora and fauna. The overgrowth illuminated by green and orange lamps appears haunting in Eric KEIG's photographs, reminding the viewer of the aftermath, after the trucks and workers pull away, and the factories have moved out. Nocturnal lighting transforms the isolated urban areas near freeways and highway interchanges. These images recall overlooked swaths of industrial devastation, sullied by pollution, and suggest the length of time required for their regeneration; nature slowly reclaims them.

These artists consider nature through a lens informed by science, technology, and industrialization, and collectively provide a cautionary tale.

Work Cited

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, 2000. Print.



Eric Keig,  
*apparatus 2, 2010*, inkjet pigment print, 23 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches

**Gallery Hours: Mon. - Sat, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.**  
Patrons should access the Visual Arts Building via Synergy Park Blvd. and Rutford Ave. Visit [utdallas.edu/maps](http://utdallas.edu/maps). For more information, [ah.utdallas.edu](http://ah.utdallas.edu) or call 972-UTD-ARTS. For assistance call 972-883-2982 or Texas Relay Operator 1-800 RELAYTX. UT Dallas is an equal opportunity/affirmative action university.

