

THE RETURN OF THE REAL **Robert Lazzarini and Rodrigo Valenzuela**

Curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné

Presented at the USF Contemporary Art Museum, August – December 2019

Organizing Institution

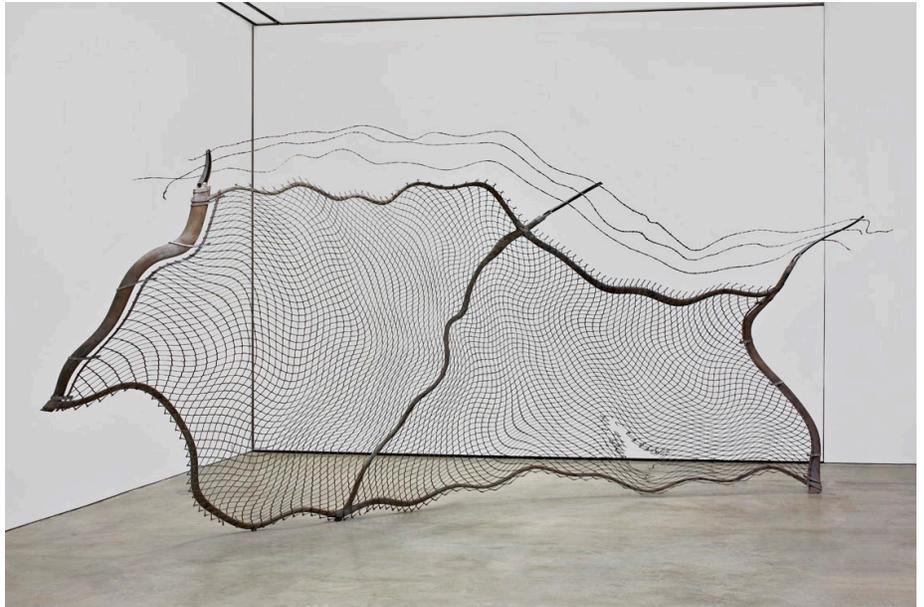
University of South Florida
Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa
<cam.usf.edu>

Contact: Margaret Miller, Director
813-974-5867
<margaretm@usf.edu>

A two-person exhibition, featuring the work of Los Angeles-based artist Rodrigo Valenzuela (b. 1982 Santiago, Chile) and New York-based sculptor Robert Lazzarini (b. 1965, Denville, N.J.), *The Return of the Real* presents the work of two U.S. artists from two different generations who are distinctly committed to re-presentation as a mode of visual experimentation and reasoning. Though both artists rearrange, reconstruct and ultimately distort reality, they do so ultimately to arrive at objects and images that undermine their own truth telling.

Central to contemporary art today is the concept of “re-presentation.” The hyphen is intentionally added to destabilize the normal reading of the word “representation” as a reflection of or transparent record of “reality.” Because all re-presentations are constructions from particular subject positions, no re-presentation can be absolutely objective or universal. This is true of all modes of human thought and expression. It applies equally to the work of the artist, economist, philosopher, scientist and politician.

In the words of critic Hal Foster—from who the title of this exhibition is borrowed—the work of both of these artists is grounded in the materiality of actual bodies, objects and social sites. Their art looks to establish new ways of seeing critically at a time that demands a profoundly flexible and skeptical understanding of seemingly established facts, fabricated fears and “fake news.”



Robert Lazzarini. *chain-link fence (Torn)*, 2012
steel and pigment, 134 x 276 x 75 inches



Rodrigo Valenzuela. *Barricade No. 3*, 2017
archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 55 x 45 inches. edition of 3 plus 1 AP

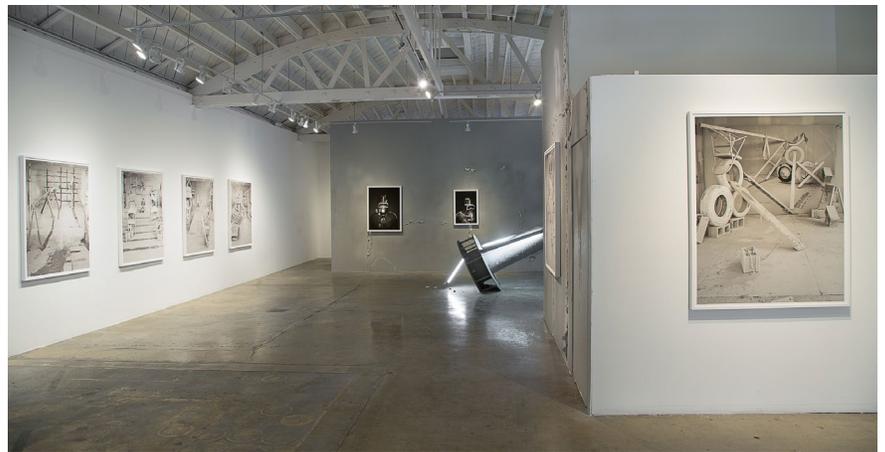
Robert Lazzarini is known for confusing visual and haptic space, or rather complicating the space of pictures and the space of things. Based on appropriated subjects, his sculptures have the effect of interrupting one's standard processes of visual recognition. His work continues the discourse of phenomenology in art, while touching on themes ranging from memory to optics to America's mythology of violence. His work is featured in collections that include the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Newark Museum and the Walker Art Center. He received a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 1990 and lives and works in New York City.



Above: *sawed-off shotgun*, 2011
metal and plastic, 5 x 22 x 5 inches

Left: *motel door (kicked-in)*, 2012
wood, plexiglass and paint, 102 x 70 x 48 inches

Rodrigo Valenzuela constructs narratives, scenes, and stories that point to the tensions found between the individual and communities. He uses tableaux to explore how images are inhabited and the way spaces, people and things are translated into images. *General Song*, his series of photographs titled after Pablo Neruda's epic poem, features ghostly barricades pictured in front of large-scale photographs of the same objects taken from different angles. The effect is of visual doubling, drawing the viewer into questioning the pictures' artistic and political implications. Valenzuela is an assistant professor at the UCLA School of the Arts. He has had recent solo exhibitions at the Frye Art Museum, the Ulrich Museum of Art, the Portland Art Museum, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art and the Orange County Museum of Art.



Above: *General Song* installation view at Klowden Mann Gallery, Los Angeles

Left: *Barricade No. 3*, 2017
archival pigment print mounted on Dibond, 55 x 45 inches. edition of 3 plus 1 AP