

## Adriana Lara

AIR DE PARIS

The antic force behind Adriana Lara's work is essentially linguistic in nature. The artist makes hay of ideas and concepts, exploiting their capacity to promiscuously inhabit a form, only to migrate to another.

Adriana Lara, *Live*  
(*Wild, Animal, Disco,*  
*Deviant*), 2016, digital  
projection on curved  
screen, color, sound,  
4 minutes 47 seconds.  
Song by Emilio  
Acevedo, montage  
by Martin Bautista.  
Installation view.  
Photo: Marc Damage.



In her recent exhibition “Eggsplosion,” resonances and resemblances ricocheted from work to work, leaving the viewer to unpack their arch logic. The titular neologism connotes contradictory possibilities: creative origins, culinary consumption, and destructive expenditures of energy—but also the premeditation of a plot.

Visible from outside the gallery in its storefront vitrine were the paintings *Eggsplosion #1–4*, 2016, four canvases of unprimed linen each occupying its own wall or the ceiling. The sparse marks, gobs of yellow oil paint with dabs of white, suggested that the work was the result of an explosion of embryonic material, with a wry wink to tempera as a yolk-based medium for binding painterly pigments. Among the other post-combustion offerings was a collaboration with a Parisian *cave à manger*, auspiciously named *Sauvage: Dinner for 1 (cuisine d’auteur)*, 2016, is a ridiculously well-charred sandwich sitting on a plate decorated with a cosmic swirl pattern.

With the production agency Perros Negros, of which she is a founding member, Lara publishes an occasional zine, *Pazmaker*. Its latest issue, devoted to concrete poetry, was available at the gallery. Ferdinand de Saussure’s demonstration of the arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified is wickedly evoked on the cover, where the slogan CONCRETE POETRY FOREVER has its second word realized as the letters POE abutting a pictograph of a tree, recalling the one familiar from Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics*. *Pazmaker* also includes Esteban Valdés’s concrete poem “*hambre/hombre*” (Hunger/Man), originally published in 1977, adapted to English to give the title of Lara’s series “Hanger (Hunger) Sculptures,” 2016. With orthographic resemblance but semantic distinctness operating across and within each language, the slipperiness of these signs seemed to generate the sculptures themselves, whose form evidently derived from the approximate English translation: Composed of dozens of wire hangers radiating from agglomerated foam resembling, well, concrete, the four sculptures recall bricolaged atomic or astronomical models.

These sculptures bear an obvious resemblance to four Formica “pictures” from Lara’s “Interesting Theory” series, 2010–. These works are derived from a serial logic that provides a mechanism and reserve of intersecting irregular geometric shapes to be endlessly recontextualized and recycled; the resultant combinations evoke diagrams but are vexingly devoid of clues to their significance. Previously, the abstract designs of the “Interesting Theories” have been woven into carpets and wall hangings, simultaneously suggesting handwrought and digital techniques; here they were translated to plastic-laminate marquetry. The manifold synthetic simulacra of “natural” or “traditional” material used by Lara are part of her point.

Stacked blocks, looping lines, and cyclical forms echoed throughout the exhibition, implying an underlying formal logic of layering and

repetition that was explicit in the digital projection *Live (Wild, Animal, Disco, Deviant)*, 2016. Throughout the video, in which an audio-production software interface reveals the collaged construction of an electropop song by Emilio Acevedo playing in real time, visualization widgets pop up to translate the song into a pictorial form. The visualizations have a motivated relation to the sound, but they lose the trace of distinct elements and materials, smoothing disjunction into continuous surface.

Lara's recent contribution to "The Eccentrics" at SculptureCenter in New York obliquely nods to Brazilian poet and critic Ferreira Gullar's 1959 "Theory of the Non-object," a seminal text for the Neo-concrete movement. An animatronically respiring frog on the threshold of death, branded with the name of a Yucatán beach resort town, *The Non-object (frog)*, 2016, suggests the relays between exoticized otherness, the history of abstraction, and the labor of artmaking, also operative in the Paris exhibition. "Eggsplotion"—I kept reading it as "Eggsploitation"—extracted an overabundance of meaning through conceptual devices that automate the artist's production. Smuggled within Lara's humor is the simmering violence of some of her encrypted references, leaving the implication of their political and historical analogues buried in strategic equivocation.

—Phil Taylor