



6522 Hollywood Boulevard Los Angeles CA 90028  
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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Speculative***

*16 June – 28 August, 2011*

Opening reception  
16 June, 8-10pm



Jeff Cain, *El Camino Real*, 3 channel video installation, 2011

Los Angeles, CA (1 June 2011) – LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) is proud to present *Speculative*, a group exhibition curated by **Christopher O’Leary** and **Zach Blas**. *Speculative* will focus on new modes of art making and of presentation with an emphasis on the experiential, subversive, and tactical potentials for art in the 21st century. The projects included in this exhibition engage wildly diverse mediums from critical software, art-science, social practices, experimental video, wearable architecture, performance works and much more.

Featuring work by **Casey Alt**, **Zach Blas**, **Jeff Cain**, **Micha Cardenas & Elle Mehrmand**, **Xarene Eskandar**, **Michael Kontopoulos**, **Christopher O’Leary**, **Claudia Salamanca**, and **Pinar Yoldas**, the exhibition takes a multiplicity of forms and makes use of a variety of technologies including digital video projection, sound devices, specific lighting and other digital media to address notions of design, science, business, sex, gender, death, politics, environmentalism and, most of all -- the future.

**Christopher O’Leary** speculates about an increasingly dystopic vision of our future, as expressed through popular film, comics and literature. His work, *Blocking the Exits*, is a dynamically-edited, single-channel video project comprised entirely of still photographs that have been animated through morphing algorithms. **Jeff Cain** uses historical, botanical, and geographical research on the invasive mustard plant spread throughout California by Franciscan Monks to mark the El Camino Real to propose a 600 mile native biome restoration of the historic royal road. His installation will use documentation of original research and visualization of an imagined intervention to reveal both an optimistic and fatalistic representation of colonialism and the difficulties of undoing history. **Xarene Eskandar** investigates the idea of ‘the fold’ in origami-based clothing designs that relate the body to an unspoiled landscape. The forms themselves will be installed in conjunction with media documentation depicting their use.



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## RELATED PROGRAMMING

Thursday, 30 June, 2011

7-9pm

Performances by Micha Cardenas, Elle Mehrmand, Christopher O'Leary, Zach Blas, Malcolm Smith & Claudia Salamanca, MAL IDEA (Michelle Lee).

Thursday, 28 July, 2011

7-9PM

Panel Discussion with Christopher O'Leary, Zach Blas, Jack Halberstam, and Jordan Crandall.

For the complete *Thursday Nights at LACE* summer schedule of events go to [welcometolace.org](http://welcometolace.org)

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Casey Alt** is an artist whose work explores how interface mediates power and culture. Central to Alt's practice is his critique of commercial design as the ascendant discipline for engineering social control and the techniques employed towards this end. Though primarily situating this investigation within the realm of computational media, Alt's works often span multiple mediums, including software programming, design, installation, gaming, and performance. As an extension to his arts practice, Alt is also a frequent commentator on the ways computational technologies have transformed various forms of cultural production, writing on media practices as diverse as bioinformatics to architecture, 3D modeling programs to videogames. Currently based in Taipei, Alt has held professorships in the Department of Art, Art history & Visual Studies at Duke University and in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation at Columbia University. See more at [altcasey.com](http://altcasey.com) or [vacillogix.com](http://vacillogix.com)

**Zach Blas** is an artist and writer working at the intersections of networked media, queerness, and the political. His on-going project, *Queer Technologies*, is a collective that produces critical applications, tools, and situations for queer technological agency, interventions, and social formation. Zach has exhibited at the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology in Liverpool, England, Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Fe Arts gallery in Pittsburgh, File Electronic Language International Festival in Brazil, and the 2010 Arse Elektronika Festival in San Francisco, where he was the recipient of a Prixxx Arse Elektronika. He has participated in residencies on "Art and Resistance" at the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, Chiapas, Mexico, "On the Commons; or, Believing-Feeling- Acting Together" at the Banff Centre, Alberta, Canada, and "Devisualize" at the Medialab Prado, Madrid, Spain. [Rhizome.org](http://Rhizome.org) has recently interviewed him, and he has published in *Mínima*, *E-misférica*, *Version*, and *Schlossplatz*<sup>3</sup> and has articles forthcoming in *The Fibreculture Journal*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Reclamations Journal*, and [networkpolitics.org](http://networkpolitics.org). His work has been written about in *Wired*, *Canon Magazine*, and the *South Atlantic Quarterly*. He is one of the founding members of the *Public School Durham* and a PhD student in Literature, Information Science + Information Studies, Visual Studies, and Women's Studies at Duke University. He also holds an MFA from UCLA, a Post-Baccalaureate certificate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a BS from Boston University. Visit [www.zachblas.info](http://www.zachblas.info) or [www.queertechnologies.info](http://www.queertechnologies.info)

**Jeff Cain** is an artist and designer who works with sculpture, video, sound, photography, and performance. His studio, the *Shed Research Institute*, is an umbrella organization for independent research, public art projects, and site-specific design projects. Cain received his MFA in Studio Art from Cal Arts. His works have been shown at the *Musee d'art Modern de Ville de Paris* and *Kyiv's Center for Contemporary Art*, as well as locally at the *Getty Museum*, *Los Angeles County Museum of Art*, *UCL University Art Gallery*, *Track 16*, and the *18th Street Arts Center*. Cain's work was written about in the *Getty's catalog California Video*, *SOCAS' book The Aesthetics of Risk*, and in *Art in America*. His writing has been published in *Art Journal* and numerous exhibition catalogs and online journals. Cain has made several radio based projects, including, a project that decodes the LAPD digital radio and rebroadcasts it on the LAPD's original AM station, and a broadcast radio technology called *RHZ radio*



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that is a hybrid online and broadcast infrastructure that techno-logically obeys the FCC broadcast law but allows legal neighborhood radio stations without a permit. RHZ radio was nominated for the Prix Ars Electronica in 2005. He has worked as faculty at USC Roski School of Fine Arts, Calarts, Cal State Fullerton, SCI-ARC, and Whittier College. See more at [shedresearch.net](http://shedresearch.net)

**Micha Cárdenas** is an artist/theorist whose transreal work mixes physical and networked spaces in order to explore emerging forms of queer relationality, biopolitics and DiY horizontal knowledge production. She will be starting her PhD at the interdivisional program in Media Arts and Practice (iMap) at University of Southern California in Fall 2011. Micha is the interim Associate Director of Art and Technology for UCSD's sixth college in the Culture, Art and Technology program. She is an artist/researcher with the UCSD School of Medicine, CRCA and the b.a.n.g. lab at Calit2. She was previously a lecturer in the Visual Arts department and critical gender Studies program at UCSD. Her recent publications include *Trans Desire/Affective Cyborgs*, with Barbara Fornssler, from Atropos Press, "I am transreal", in *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation* from Seal press and "Becoming Dragon: a transversal technology Study" in *Code Drift* from CTheory. Her collaboration with Elle Mehrmand, "Mixed relations," was the recipient of the UCIRA Emerging Fields award for 2009. She has exhibited and performed in biennials, museums and galleries in cities around the world including los angeles, San Diego, Tijuana, New York, San Francisco, Montreal, Egypt, Ecuador, Spain, Saas-Fee, Switzerland, Dublin, Ireland and many other places. Her work has been written about in publications including art21, the associated press, the LA Times, CNN, BBC world, Wired and Rolling Stone Italy. <http://transreal.org>

**Xárene Eskandar** is a researcher and designer with a diverse background ranging from fashion and automotive design to architecture and live audio-visuals. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Design from University of Cincinnati, Department of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning, her MFA from Design Media Arts, UCLA, and is currently working on her PhD in Media Arts and Technology, UCSB. Drawing upon cultural anthropology, her research is focused on the evolution of the symbiotic relationship of technology and the human with the aim of creating crossover points into dimensions and ecologies referred to as 'utopia', whether technological, architectural or social. Her interest lies in questions that debunk prescriptions within either of these categories, and to instead offer neolexia for our future hybrid bodies. She is an avid collector of books, sand and cat whiskers. [www.xarene.com](http://www.xarene.com) or [tentativearchitecture.net](http://tentativearchitecture.net)

**Michael Kontopoulos** is a Los Angeles based artist and educator. After studying electronic and time-based art at Carnegie Mellon University, he went on to receive his MFA in Design and Media Arts from UCLA. He has exhibited solo and collaborative projects in galleries, festivals and conferences in the U.S., Asia and Europe, including the Santa Monica Glow Festival, the Sundance Film Festival, and the TED conference. He was the winner of a 2010 Rhizome Commission for Emerging Artists. Currently, Michael teaches electronic media courses at USC and Cal State Long Beach. [www.mkontopoulos.com](http://www.mkontopoulos.com)

**Elle Mehrmand** is a performance artist and musician who uses the body, electronics, video, sound and installation within her work. She is the singer and trombone player of assembly of Mazes, a music collective who creates dark, electronic, middle eastern, rhythmic jazz rock. Elle is currently an MFA candidate at UCSD, and received her BFA in art photography with a minor in music at CSULB. She is a collective member of the Electronic Disturbance Theatre 2.0 and the b.a.n.g. lab, and is a researcher at CRCA <Center for Research and Computing in the Arts> at UCSD. Her work has been internationally shown at venues such as LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions), the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), Highways Performance Space, Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA), UCLA Freud Playhouse, Cecut, The Nevada Museum of Art, and the Gallery of the Nat'l College of Art and Design. She has been discussed in Artforum, art21, the LA Times, Juxtapoz Magazine, wireD, Networked Performance, the LA & OC Weekly, [Furtherfield.org](http://Furtherfield.org), the cityBeat, and Vice Magazine. Visit [www.elleelleelle.org](http://www.elleelleelle.org) or [www.assemblyofmazes.com](http://www.assemblyofmazes.com)

**Christopher O'Leary** is an artist who works in video, photography and installation while employing a variety of digital and new media processes. He explores conceptions of futurity and superpower as depicted in science fiction, comic book culture and history at large. His projects conflate these genres with the conventions of video art and photography using the human form for its performative and embodied qualities while borrowing from the



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multiverse of archetypes and themes from sci-fi. His research focuses on fictions of human potential and atemporal narratives, using them as critical mirror to the anxieties of civilization. The “super-body” (the hero’s body, the cyborg’s body, the mutant’s body) comes to embody cultural fears and escape fantasies engendered by cycles of innovation, progress and collapse. Christopher has shown his work in Seattle, Los Angeles, Belgrade, Istanbul, Rome and Torun, Poland. In 2009 he held his first solo exhibition in Rome Italy at ALLI gallery. He recently exhibited in the show Spaceship Earth at the center for contemporary art in Torun, Poland. He holds an appointment as Lecturer of Digital photography at UCLA’s Department of Design Media Arts. Christopher received his MFA from UCLA and his BFA from the University of Washington. He lives in Los Angeles, CA. [www.chrisoleary.net](http://www.chrisoleary.net)

**Claudia Salamanca** is an artist and assistant professor at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia. Her art practice and theoretical research explore the relationship between death and the body within the political operations they unfold the visualization of violence. Currently she is a doctoral candidate in the Rhetoric Department at UC Berkeley. She holds an MA in Science, Technology and Culture from the Liberal Studies Department at Rutgers University and a BFA from the Universidad de Los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia. Her work has been shown in Colombia, Brazil, Canada, United States, Germany, and Spain, among others. [www.laclud.com](http://www.laclud.com)

**Pinar Yoldas** is a Turkish artist, designer, neuro-enthusiast. Building on her varied background in art, architecture and science, her work is a series of multi-modal experiments on the human sensorium. Lately, she has been designing synthetic biological systems as a living critique of our society. Pinar has a BArch from METU, MS from ITU, MA from Istanbul Bilgi University and an MFA from UCLA. Her residencies include the MacDowell Colony, Ucross Foundation, VCCA, Duke University and University of Minnesota.

## ABOUT LACE

[LACE](http://www.welcometolace.org) champions and challenges the art of our time by fostering artists who innovate, explore, and risk. We move within and beyond our four walls to provide opportunities for diverse publics to engage deeply with contemporary art. In doing so, we further dialogue and participation between and among artists and those audiences. [www.welcometolace.org](http://www.welcometolace.org).

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6522 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles CA 90028  
Gallery Hours: Wed - Sun 12 - 6pm, and Thu 12 - 9 pm  
Suggested donation \$3, Members free

## SUPPORT

In-kind support for Speculative has been generously provided by the UCLA Department of Design Media Arts and the Center for Research in Computing and the Arts (CRCA) at UCSD.

Additional support for LACE and its programs is provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Getty Foundation, Jerry and Terri Kohl Family Foundation, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, The Mohn Family Foundation, Morris Family Foundation, the Audrey & Sydney Irmas Charitable Foundation, National Performance Network, the C. Christine Nichols Donor Advised Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene, Stone Brewing Co., and the members of LACE.





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