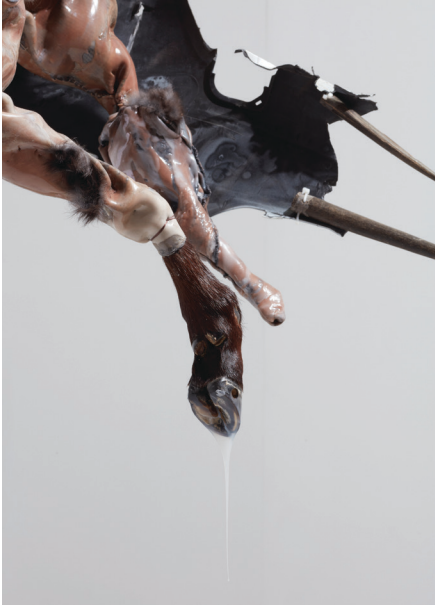


## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Dost thou suck the blood of others, or dost thou wander about at night...Dost thou know how to speak to vipers in such words that they obey thee?"

-Padre Nicolas de Leon, *Camino del Cielo*, fol. 111 (Mexico, 1611)

If there is anything that the sculptures of Ruben Ulises Rodriguez Montoya evoke, it is the feeling of otherworldliness. Debris becomes combined, tied, glued and gutted. Bumpers from car crashes get a second life, horns resuscitated, abandoned golf balls collected. A certain alchemy occurs in which discarded remnants coalesce to form creatures that have mutated and adapted to the demands of late capitalism and the anthropocene. These are the beasts of our current mythology.

Mesoamerican folklore tells us of *nahuales*, shape-shifting beings who had the ability to transform into jaguars, bats, and owls. Montoya's works add to this Aztec mythology. They are descendants of *nahuales*. Yet here, *nahuales* shape-shift into coyotes, a play on words that alludes to both the intelligent and highly-adaptable canine, but also to coyotes, who guide migrants across the perilous border. To transform into a coyote is to *coyotear*. The cousin who borrows a passport to enter the United States. *Coyotear*. The red 1997 Ford Aerostar van used to cross the Juarez border. *Coyotear*. The *abuelita's* house the family hides in after crossing. *Coyotear*.

In this spectral tableau, myths too are combined and reconfigured. Whereas American vampires were said to have the ability to change into wolves, Montoya's blood-thirsty *nahuales* transform into coyotes. The werewolf, in effect, becomes the intermediary of the two cultures. But, the coyote is our modern *nahual*, our guide, our shape-shifter, able to endure on the periphery of the city or in the valleys that surround it. The coyote is our *Tlahuelpuchi*, a being who transformed into animals to suck the blood of humans. It is our vampire, our vengeance after parasitic American corporations appeared in Mexico, where our mothers and *tias* worked. Yet rather than live off the blood of humans, our *Tlahuelpuchi* feeds off capitalism.

Even with these references to Mexico and the United States, the works refuse to be located to a static place. They are nomadic. Birthed by automation and Petro-capitalism. Marked with a sentient quality, as if they are able to heal their lesions with silicone, zip-ties and the remnants of a found goat leg in the Chihuahuan desert. We look at them with the uncanny feeling that they might outlive us. And perhaps also with a recognition of how similar we might already be to them. We might imagine that they emanate from the dark underbelly of technology, a sort of glitch of an algorithm, enchanted by the phantoms of the past, present and future. Perhaps here to warn, forcing us in *ex-situ*.

Written by Christal Pérez