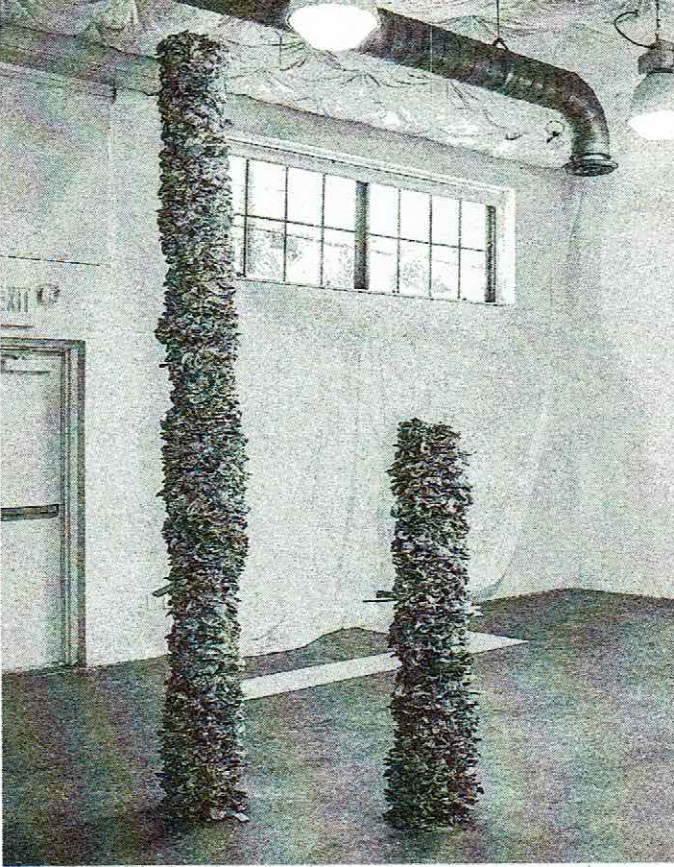
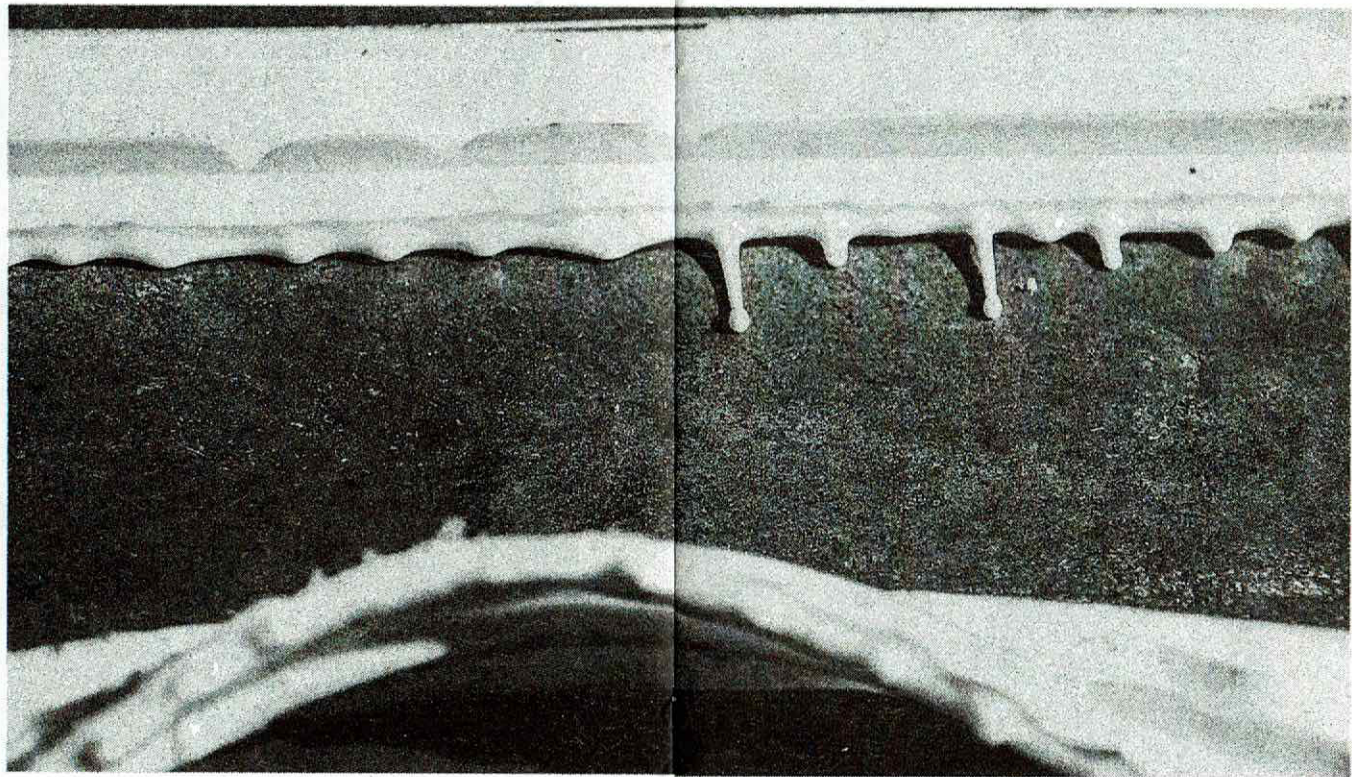


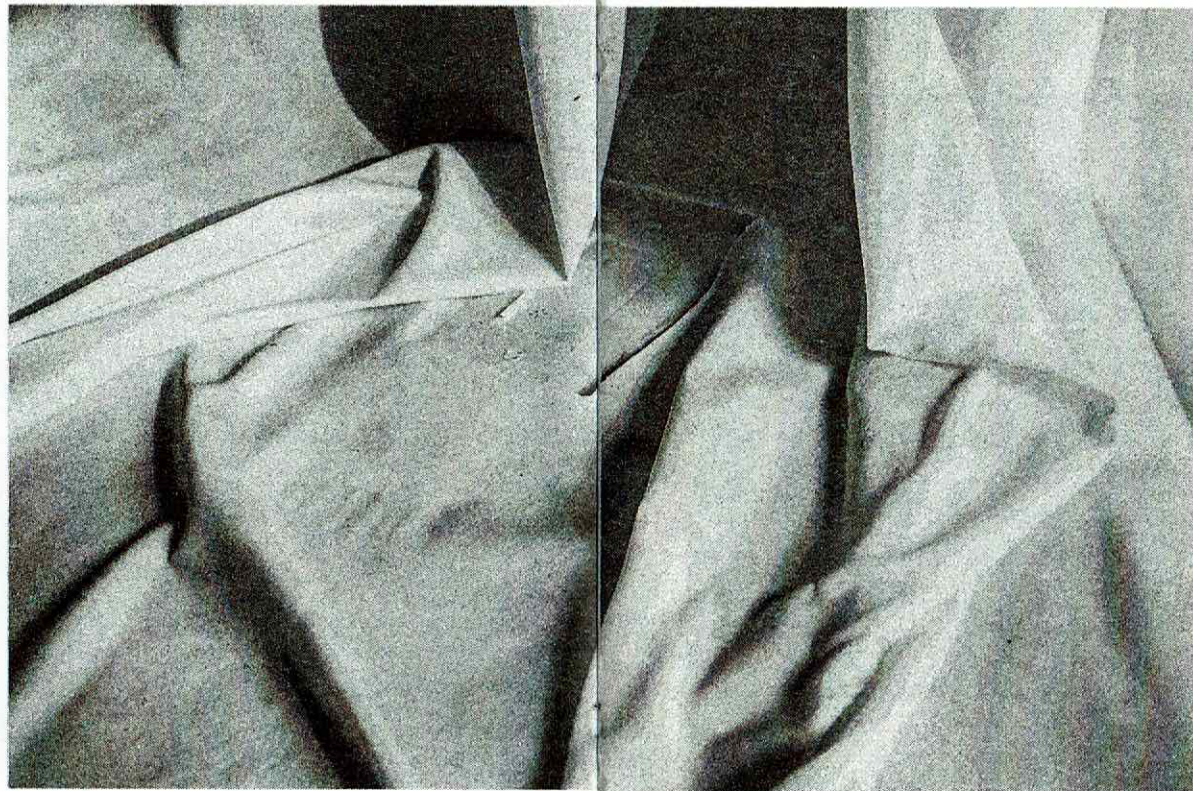
Kristina Estell

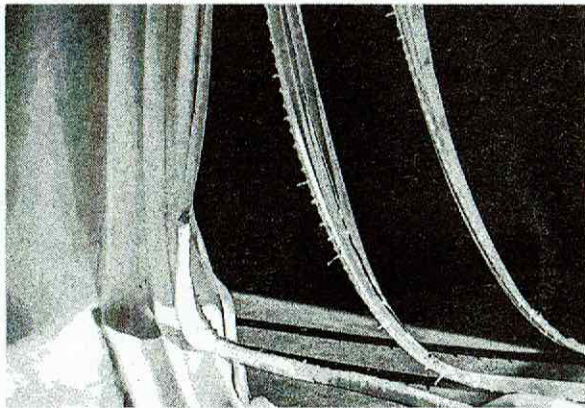
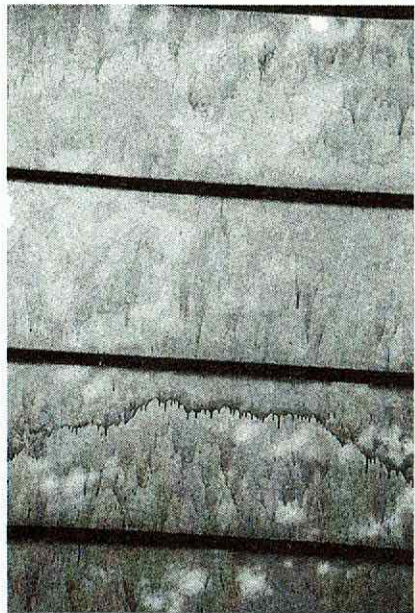




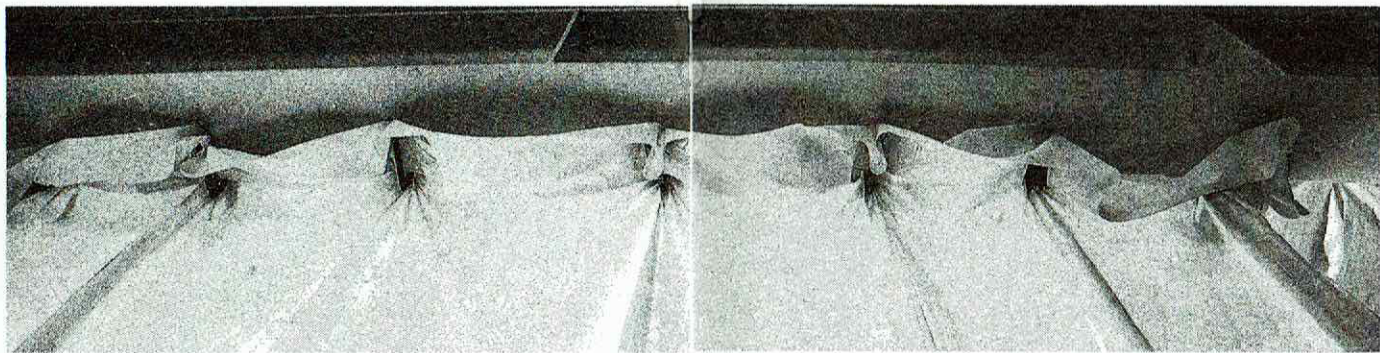


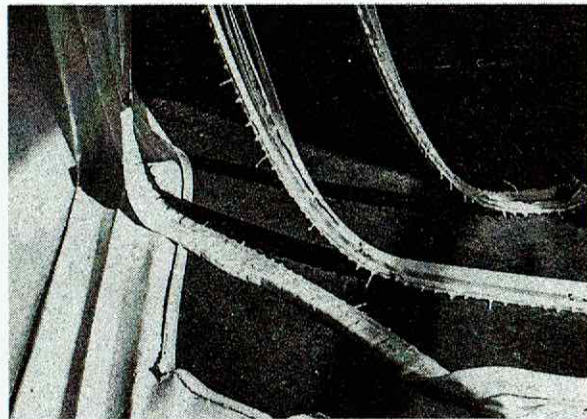
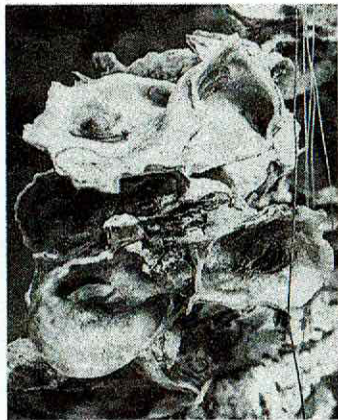


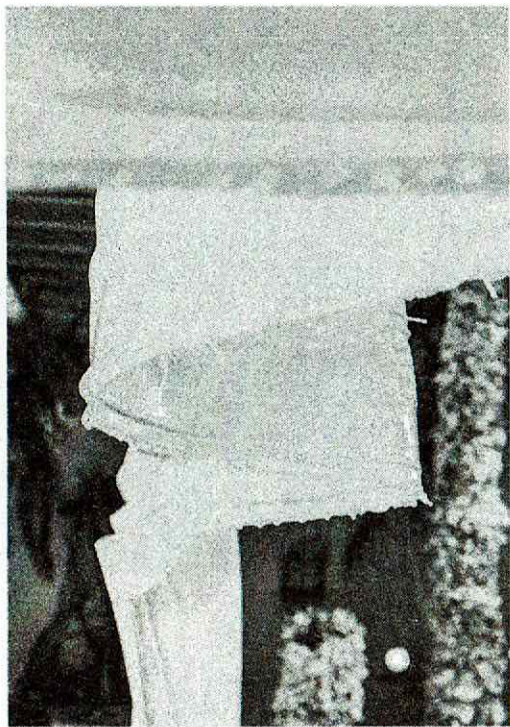


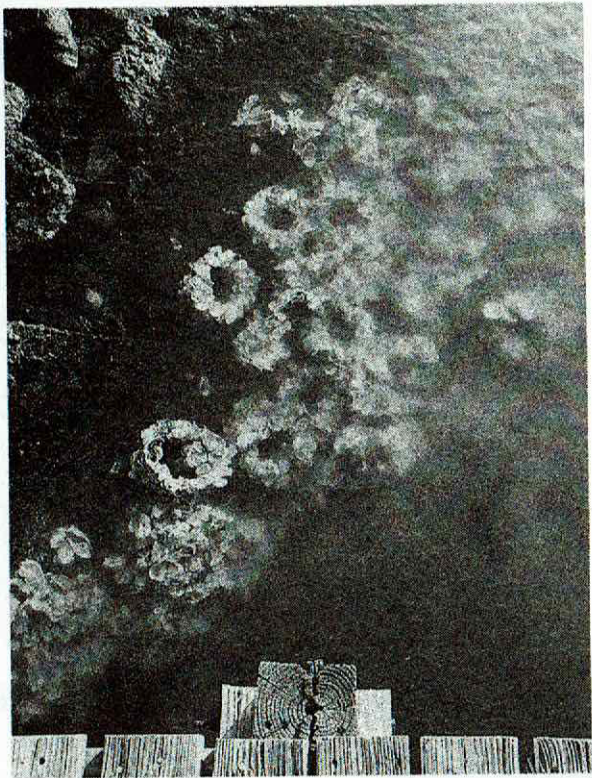












**GALVESTON
ARTIST
RESIDENCY**

*Work proof
1/1
2018*

Choreographing Reactivity

Leslie Moody Castro

Any residency is always a nerve-racking thing to embark upon. Imagine packing your bags, taking only as many possessions that fit in a suitcase, and moving to another location you've probably never visited before. The life of an artist can be a transient one, at times, and in the case of the Galveston Artist Residency (GAR), artists are offered the luxury of both time and space to focus on creating without the normal pressures of life.

When Kristina Estell and Justin Raphael Roykovich arrived on the island of Galveston for their one year artist residency at GAR, they had no idea their visual language would translate so well between them. One year later, in their final collaborative exhibition, the two split the space evenly and created an exhibition experience that is visually disparate, thematically harmonious, and poetically empathetic.

Galveston island is an endearingly eccentric place. Sitting 50 miles southeast of the city of Houston, the land mass that is Galveston is a barrier island meant to protect the coast from deadly storms and water surges. It is a sand bar, the collateral damage of ocean tides and natural sedimentary build up. It was never meant to be a permanent place, and if you dig even two feet below the sand you hit the saltwater of ocean. Galveston is the antithesis of permanence, and it has attracted characters who gravitate to the seduction of temporality and histories.

It is in this place that Justin and Kristina came to live and work, over the course of one year. Inevitably, place becomes a quiet protagonist when one is thrown into a new situation or reality, and the case with Kristina and Justin was no different. However, rather than site-specificity, both allowed the island to assume a stronger, more profound role in the creation of their work. As is revealed in the culminating, collaborative

exhibition, both share a deep sense of site-reactivity, a subtle difference that allowed them to react to their surroundings, both in the microcosm of the Island, and GAR itself. The intersection—or more appropriately, the interactivity—of their work is the play between the organic and the inorganic, using the space of the island and the gallery of GAR as their incubator. The exhibition balances natural elements with those manufactured and man-made; it becomes a metaphor for the island itself, whose complicated history has maintained a careful balance between man versus nature, creation and destruction.

Between the juxtapositions and dichotomies the two have subtly choreographed visual and physical movement that keeps both the eye and the body interacting in the space. Kristina's silicone drapes fall in thin, seductive layers over the sheetrock of the gallery. They haunt the space, illuminating its nooks and crannies. The highly industrial silicone somehow converts into organic matter as it falls loosely along the walls, in contrast to the collection of objects collected by Justin over the course of a year. Placed carefully on tables suspended from the ceiling, Justin's collections range from lost flip flops, crustacean shells buried in the ground, to rusted metal pipes, and aerosol cans, and each object has been meticulously covered in salt crystals. The iridescence of the salt covering the objects adds texture and layers to the installation, giving it movement in its stillness and echoing the tension between the organically growing crystals and the heavy industrial, rusting metal parts. The eye then travels back to Kristina's half of the gallery, where the iridescence of Justin's collected objects becomes mirrored in the massive column of oyster shells mortared together by Kristina.

There is a visual playfulness, a dance that allows the viewer to move back and forth in the space, and ultimately it is the space that becomes the third collaborator in the exhibition. Rather than simply being a backdrop for artistic production, the site has become a voice and an implication that the character of the island is always present.