

**LETICIA PARDO
JEREMIAH HULSEBOS-SPOFFORD**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Allison Lacher, Bruce Burton, Sage Dawson; Emery Cox & Mike Jackson; Kellen Wright, Kalaija Mallery, Kentaro Kumanomido, Kristina Murray; Mojdeh Rezaeipour; Edo Rosenblith; Yoshien Kuo; Jeff Robinson; Lucas Cordes; Mad Green; Ila Sheren, Tabea Linhard, Lisa Bulawsky, Jay Buchanan; Juan William Chavez; Dean Daderko; Alice Gray Stites & 21C St. Louis family; Alivé Piliado; Summer Bozeman; Neiva Mulhern; Nathan Miller.

STNDRD
NON STNDRD

NON STNDRD is an artist-run initiative that presents a program of exhibitions, interventions, and projects that are conceptually inspired and physically determined by the cultural, historical, and architectural significance of the communities and landscapes that surround the American Bottom near St. Louis. The program centers around an innovative site-based curatorial and exhibition initiative within the vast, complex, and vacant sand-casting bunkers that are located on the campus of the National Building Arts Center in Sauget, Illinois. Exhibitions feature a diverse group of emerging and established artists, and we are committed to providing access to contemporary art through community partnerships and collaborations. Our program is integrated within its surroundings and explores its relationship to individuals, neighbors, and communities. NON STNDRD is organized by Bruce Burton, Sage Dawson, and Allison Lacher.

A MATTER OF THE INVISIBLE

CURATED BY PIA SINGH

Driving into Sauget, IL., one crosses the expansive waterways of the Mississippi where mounds of sand and concrete drift between territories, historic economic trade routes, and political borders. Situated approximately 9 minutes away from any city or county line, this former industrial suburb (now an EPA dump site) turns away from the first and largest pre-Colombian urban center, Cahokia, onto Monsanto Avenue, where the land splits into layers. At the lower level, the river bed is 'protected' by a barrier wall built from tonnes of rock, concrete, and soil. At the upper level of the Industrial parkway, railroads criss-cross between active and abandoned industries. Smokestacks spit cobalt flames while networked pipes blow an endless cloud of steam, conjuring a post-apocalyptic scene with almost no human presence. Arriving at the National Building Art Center (NBAC), a regional archive for architecture and engineering, you will find NON STNDRD, a site that engages our imagination of what remains after techno-capitalism, extractivist development, and manufacturing supply chains are done with a place and its people.

NBAC houses the country's largest brick archive—some hand-molded from ancient clays, others from river-bottom silts. The collection also encompasses architectural objects and documents, along with ancient stone carvings, pillars, cornices, steel molds, and various tools, all spread across the floor of the former Sterling Steel Casting factory. Within this context, artists Leticia Pardo and Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford engage a sense of timelessness, anchored in the hauntings of machinic time. Tracing residues of human labor, the factory began to operate as a metaphor: a figural expression of human absence in service of a cheaper labor economy. As a historic border region between free and slave states, within a patchwork of segregation and integration, the artists began to evoke a delicate relationship between the body of the invisibilized worker and fragments from the NBAC collection—as a dismembered architectural body itself—to retell parts of a whole American story.

A Matter of the Invisible aspires to preserve and protect the fragile individualities, intimacies, privacies, and public lives of those systemically hidden from public view. As we enter the age of generative A.I., histories outside the dominant discourse of worker movements, labor histories, and non-Western modernities seldom factor into large datasets shaping machine consciousness. Automating intellectual and manual labor processes, workers are fated to grow increasingly distanced from the creative rewards of their productivity, its affective processes, and, perhaps most dangerously, the experience of sociality at the core of working-class communities.

Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford examines the role of digital processes and automated imaging software in relation to the scalability and assembly of sculpture. Developing material processes through the analogy of fragmentation in labor processes (from material outsourcing to the offshoring of jobs) *Metabolic Drift*, 2025, reflects the spectral bodies of union and non-unionized workers hidden in plain sight. Without access to the tools of their own socio-economic transformation, civic workers in "high-visibility" vests embody dynamics between the city, government, and private enterprise. Scanning surfaces of architectural objects from the archive, Hulsebos-Spofford yokes fragments of monuments to the antagonisms of class

division, pressing us to reconsider what civic skills, relations, and communal habits uphold the city as public space. Metabolizing materials produced in China, scanned in Sauget, modelled in Chicago, and stitched in Gary, the artist metastasizes contours in patterned neon pink, orange, and yellow abstractions, pointing to a network of actors involved in social production. Unlike the purism of architectural history, hybrid logics of plane and volume rearticulate a mutual dependency between man and machine. Patterned hallucinations move between painting and sculpture, drifting between hand and machine, as the artist resists the compulsion of repetition towards fluid compositions that enact entanglements between man, material, and machine, towards a third kind of subjectivity.

Leticia Pardo's *Palindromo*, 2025, addresses the agriculture and construction industries' longstanding dependency on Mexican migrant laborers; men and women who continue to face unsafe working conditions, limited protections, and labor exploitation in the U.S.. Pardo marks the monumental absence of *traqueros*, employed during the Bracero Program (1942-1964), in the history of a new American nationalism. Grading roads, shoveling rocks, lifting and laying rails across the Southwest and Central Plains, *traqueros* had to resist the racial/ethnic image of being a model labor minority, reinforcing their own social beliefs and identities against other groups of migrant workers. Vetted against one another on lines of race and class, assimilated into American culture, Pardo reimagines a suite of actions that gave shape to their daily lives. As a *dériveur* along abandoned tracks in the region, Pardo mimics the act of "laying a line", transgressively casting latex impressions of tracks once used to connect the region through the transport of bulk raw material. The registers lie skin-to-skin on exposed concrete, growing sensitive to climatic and environmental changes on the factory floor. Building a perimeter of oppression of found railway sleepers, Pardo's *Palindromo* lies at the complex intersection between capitalist oppression and cultural alienation, moving between past and present through spatialized material identities. A mandala of reclaimed metal spikes scores the hours, lives, and aspirations needed to survive labor migration in *Palindromo*, *Parte II: cuadrilla*, 2025. Marking a continuum of days, waiting and living on pennies to a dollar... the Bracero era might have offered legal channels for cross-border migration, but it also created a pathway for industrial employers to bypass paperwork to hire increasingly cheaper labor, resulting in long-term structural imbalances in today's U.S. immigration system.

As both artists drift between local and global, North and South, mobility and stasis, here and there... there are tactics of movement and hybridity entangled in our understanding of how architecture and machinic thinking are, also, both ethical and social conditions. Constituted by individuals, for a society or group, and by representing bodies that fuel machinic innovation, Hulsebos-Spofford and Pardo work through networks of materials, communities, and histories to safeguard a porous boundary between civic innovation and life zones or what has become *A Matter of the Invisible*.

JEREMIAH HULSEBOS-SPOFFORD

1 *Metabolic Drift*, 2025

Safety vests, thread, wood, plastic, hardware, screw jacks

2 *Metabolic Drift 4*, 2025

Safety vests, thread, zippers, hardware, plastic

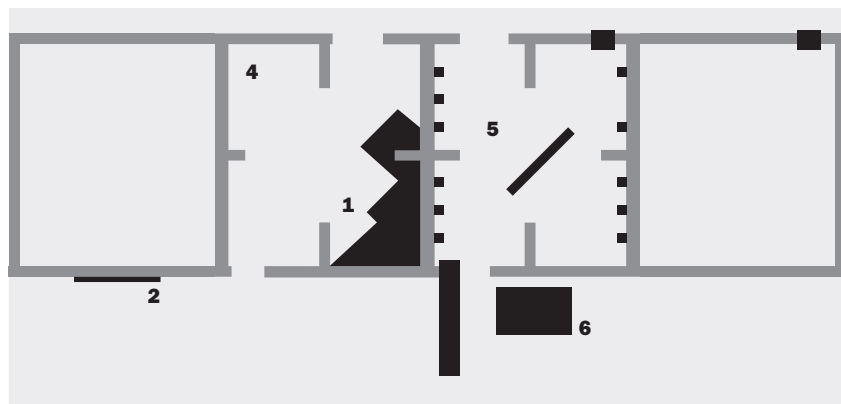
3 *Metabolic Drift (Test)*, 2025

Safety vests, resin, epoxy putty, hardware, wood

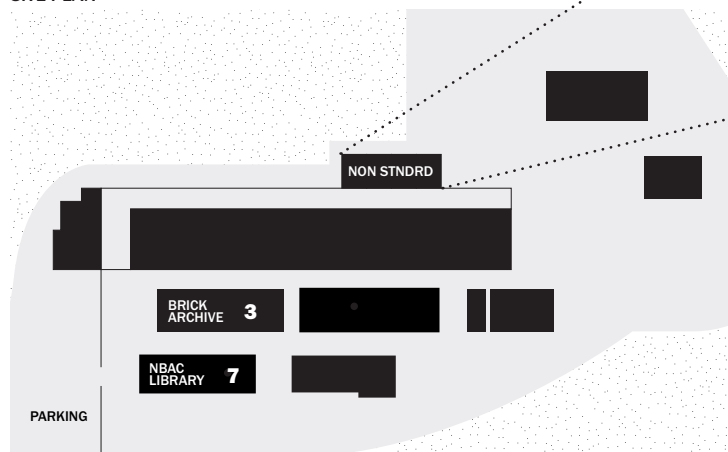
4 *Metabolic Drift (National Building Archives)*, 2025

Safety vests, resin, epoxy putty, hardware, wood, aluminum

NON STNDR



SITE PLAN



LETICIA PARDO

Palíndromo, 2025

5 *Parte I: en resistencia al olvido*

Latex and cotton manta registers from abandoned railway tracks built by braceros; wooden ties

6 *Parte II: cuadrilla*

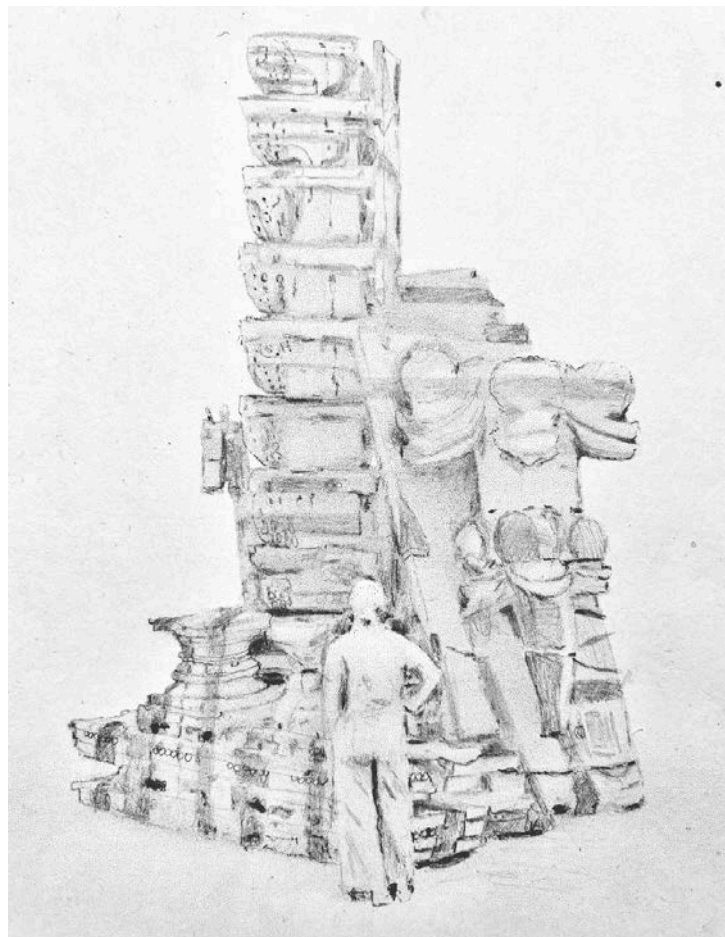
Spikes collected during dérives along railway tracks

7 *Parte III: fe de erratas*

Interpolations in archival histories

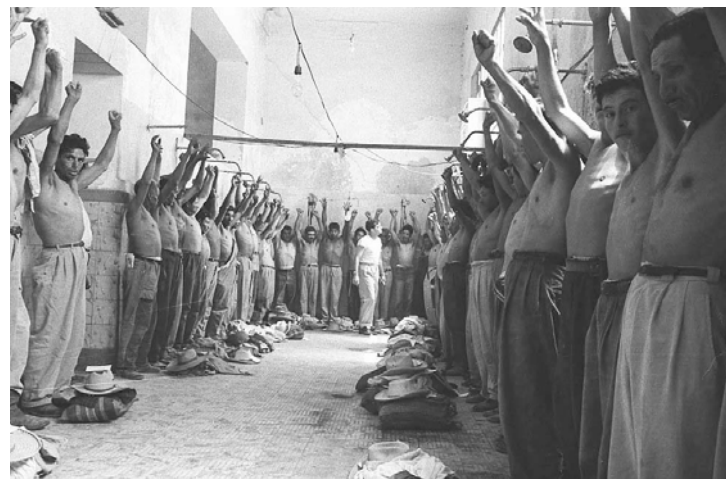


Latex register for *Palíndromo*, Leticia Pardo



Sketch for *Metabolic Drift*, Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford





Archival images informing *Palíndromo*, Leticia Pardo

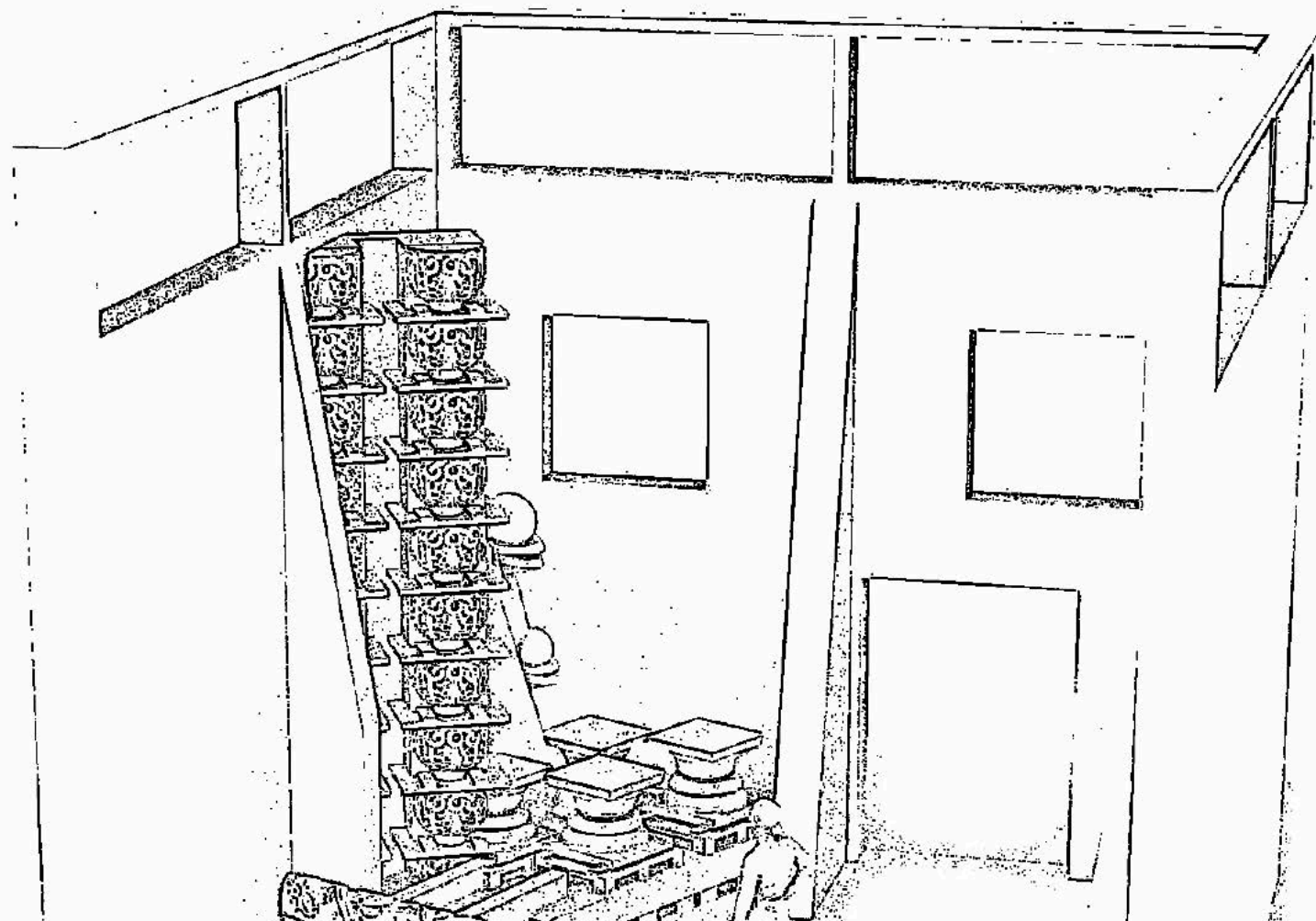
PREVIOUS SPREAD: *Braceros Waiting in Line*, Leonard Nadel, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, ca. 1950

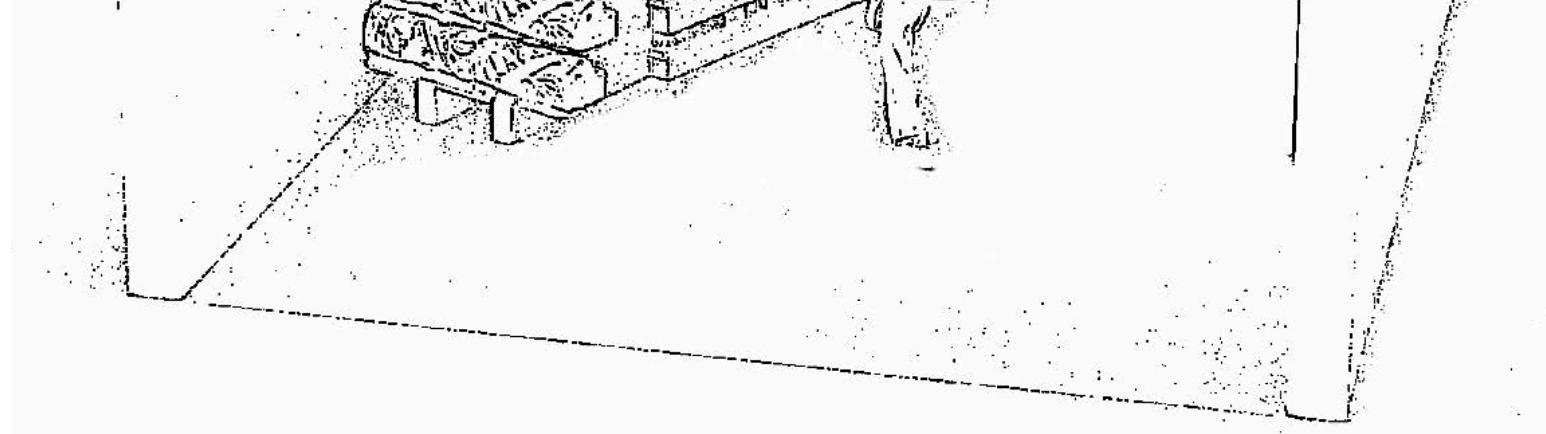
TOP LEFT: *Vaccinating Braceros*, Leonard Nadel, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, ca. 1950

BOTTOM LEFT: *Braceros laying railroad tracks*, Colección Archivo Casasola, Archivo General de la Nación, México, ca. 1940

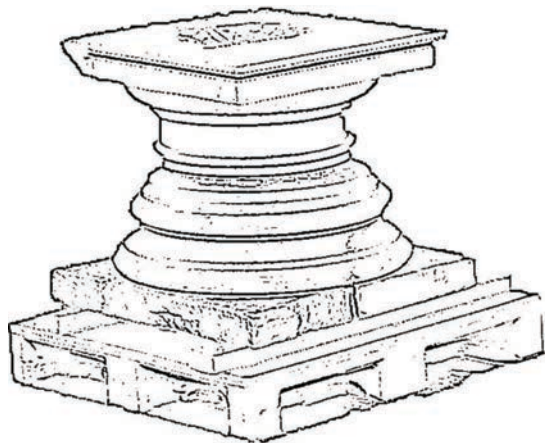
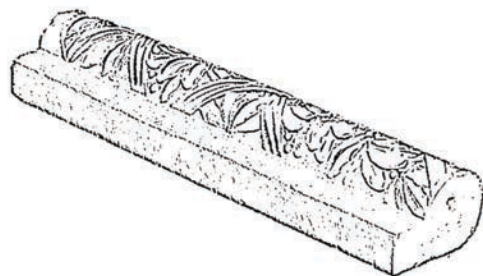
TOP RIGHT: *Physical Examination of Braceros*, Leonard Nadel, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, ca. 1950

* The Bracero Program was a binational agreement between Mexico and the United States, in effect from 1942 to 1964. It began in response to the demand for labor in U.S. agriculture and railway industries during World War II.





Three mmaacchiinne iiss aq
ssoocciaall vveellaattiiioonn,
nnoott aq tthhiinnng



Process images for *Metabolic Drift*, Jeremiah Hulsebos-Spofford:
3D scans of architectural objects from the NBAC collection