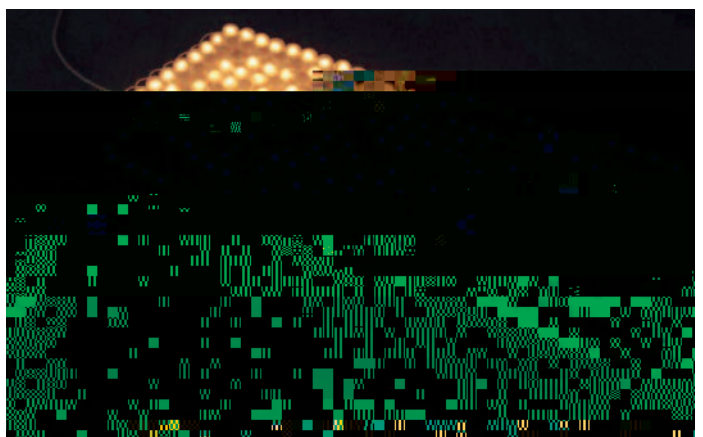




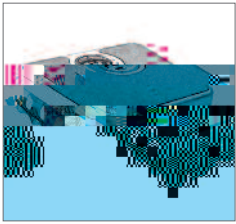
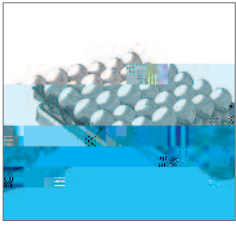
Alejandro Almanza Pereda

Within the realm of possibilities



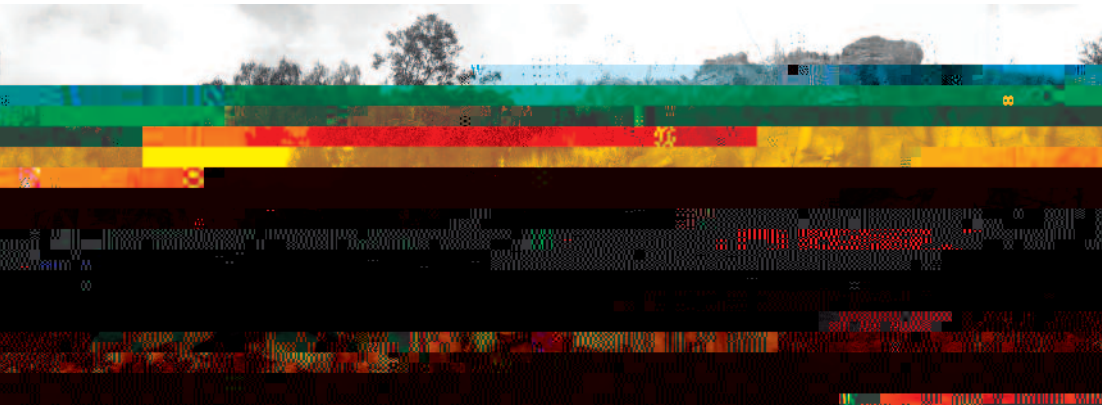


residential buildings where, in case of a fire, smoke trips a sensor so the spotlights come on enabling occupants to find their way out. Placed above the interior door of the gallery with the word EXIT altered by the addition of an "O," it takes a few minutes to realize that this object is not part of the intentional gallery signage. This sets into motion a series of questions, with the first probably being that since the Spanish word for "exit" is *salida*, what then does EXITO mean? For those who know Spanish, it is likely that they will immediately translate EXITO to SUCCESS. Ultimately though, meaning in this piece will always depend on the dominant language of the area or country where this work is experienced. Exhibited among a Spanish-speaking population, it will either be terribly confusing, or it might imply that immigration is perceived to be the path to success.¹ For a primarily English-speaking populace however, the word EXITO becomes a "false friend," or a word in a foreign language that bears a deceptive resemblance to a word in one's own language suggesting, in this context, that some assumptions that seem so right may actually be quite wrong.



The next work, *White carpet treatment*, 2009, is also found at the point of ent ag vwD %bD%DOD %oDDN %uPLLSDWè 9W%00%Dp.8D8

the TSA's (Transport Security Administration) slogan "If you see something, say something," to ask whether or not the security theatre routinely encountered in airports and at the border is real or not. As the author and technology "security guru" Bruce Schneier has said, safety is always an economic trade-off, and often people respond to the feeling and not the reality of danger because cognitive biases about risk tend to exaggerate the spectacular and downplay the common. Those that seem the most imminent and threatening become so mostly because they are named and appear repeatedly in the media.



Untitled, 2011
wallpaper
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and
MagnanMetz Gallery,
New York, NY

What happens then, when security becomes such a driving force within a society that it becomes a filter for making government policies? And is it possible that security theatre actually creates more danger by calcifying us to the "other"? In his work, Almanza does not presume to offer answers to such timely and serious questions. Instead, he places familiar materials and objects into unusual situations to ask that these ideas be considered and debated in a world where borders, people, and economies are simultaneously fluid and rigid.

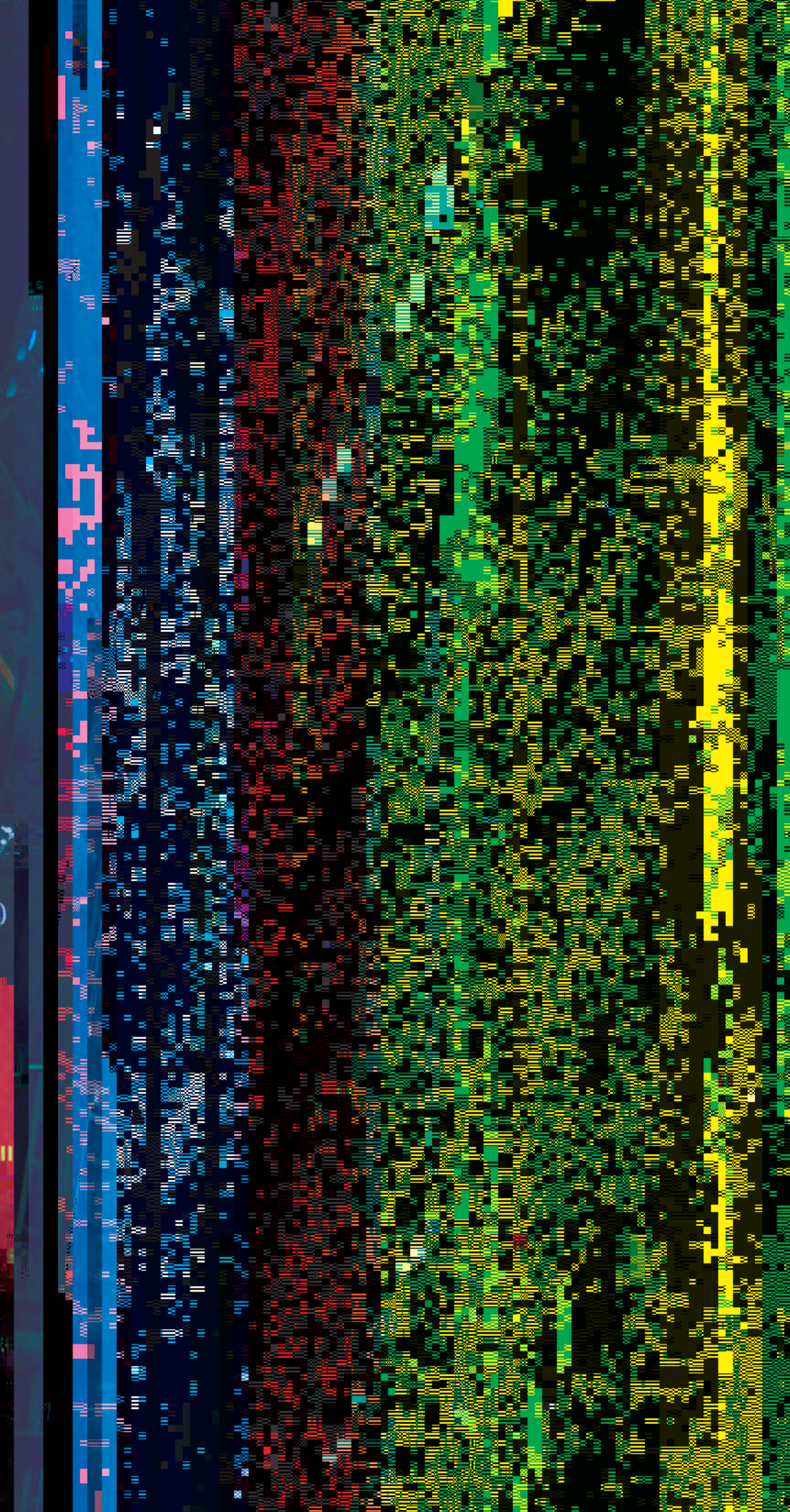
Kitty McManus Zurko
Director/Curator
The College of Wooster Art Museum



If you say something, see something, 2010
rope, resin
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and
MagnanMetz Gallery,
New York, NY

Notes

1. *Exito* was initially made for El Museo del Barrio's Bienal. Even though the work was curated into the exhibition, the museum elected not to show the piece because, in the event of a fire, visitors would become confused as 90% of their audience are Spanish speakers.
2. *Papel picado* is a Mexican art form of cut tissue paper squares strung together to commemorate feast days and celebrations.
3. *Just give me a place to stand*, 2007, is not in this exhibition. It was shown at The Soap Factory in Minneapolis, MN, and is used here as an example of a similar work created by the artist specifically for The College of Wooster Art Museum.



About the artist

Alejandro Almanza Pereda was born in Mexico City, in 1977, and received his BFA in Sculpture in 2005 from the University of Texas at El Paso. The recipient of a Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation Grant in 2008, and a Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Summer Residency in 2004, his work is represented