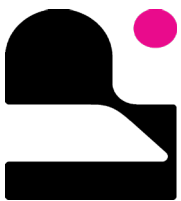


Daniel Almeida and Adrian Rivera, *The Elephant Never Forgets*.



**LOCUST  
PROJECTS**



# *The Elephant Never Forgets* Daniel Arturo Almeida & Adrian Edgard Rivera

Sept 7 - Nov 2, 2024

Locust Projects presents *The Elephant Never Forgets*, a major multimedia installation in the form of an uncanny backstage TV studio lot by Daniel Arturo Almeida (b. 1992, Caracas, Venezuela) and Adrian Edgard Rivera (b. 1991, Austin, Texas).

Drawing from 'la vecindad,' the iconic setting of the 1970s sitcom 'El Chavo del Ocho,' and other historical and contemporary references from the artists' experience of Mexican and Venezuelan mass media, the immersive installation traces Latin American media history to lay bare the socio-political intricacies of memory through themes of transnational

telecommunications, piracy as access/agency, the public broadcast theatrics of authoritarianism, constructed memories, and soft power. The exhibition is a Knight Digital Commission with nearly every element of the exhibition created using the novel application of digital tools and technology, including 3D printing, laser cutting, artificial intelligence (AI), image transfer, and holographic projection.

The title of the exhibition, "The Elephant Never Forgets," is inspired by the third song on side B of pioneering electronic musician Jean-Jacques Perrey's 1970 album *Moog Indigo*, featuring the iconic sounds of an early Moog synthesizer. This playful electronic adaptation of Beethoven's "Turkish March" was famously used without authorization as the opening theme for 'El Chavo,' the most watched sitcom in Mexican television history, and still airing today in syndication cementing it as an iconic and unmistakable sound across Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world, including the United States.



Daniel Arturo Almeida & Adrián Edgard Rivera,  
backdrop photo by Andrés Ibarra.

The installation invites visitors to enter a TV production studio set filled with screens, costumes, props and set dressings. Suspended from the ceiling, a mass of "digital bootleg" marionettes with 3D-printed faces of iconic characters populate the space. An industrial metal puppet theater "castelet," armored with counterfeit national decorations, frames a hologram. A grouping of monitors tune in footage of a broadcast performance from varying camera angles undressing the manipulative choreography of televised state ceremonies of power. Large photo backdrops cascade down from a towering wall of scaffolding. Three oversized heads of El Chavo characters allude to a contentious dispute over copyright and ownership. On the opposite side of the scaffolding is an intimate space, filled with a collection of photos, books, and familial paraphernalia, among them a couch shining in the glow of a TV set displaying looped footage from 1990s and early 2000's anti-piracy commercials. The artists' use of AI-mediated dubbing software intended to translate the

actors' dialogue with an artificial voice imbues the work with a sense of uncanny humor and dissonance, each permutation of looped video's audio slightly different from the last.

Deep economic inequalities and censorship have historically limited access to media, leading to piracy as a way to bypass exclusionary paywalls and state-controlled narratives. In many countries in the region, a volatile economy made a single DVD or video game worth more than a week's salary. Piracy provided agency and became a transformative force, allowing people to remix and escape the oversaturation of foreign

media. Fansubs and other grassroots efforts contributed to this cultural exchange. While the issue of piracy raises questions of ownership and authenticity, in the face of cultural flattening, the counterfeit often becomes more authentic than the original.

Almeida and Rivera's set is a platform where the artists reminisce and reflect upon their respective biographical journeys linked by fragmented memories and layered experiences of a bygone era in Latin American media consumption.

*The Elephant Never Forgets* was selected from online Open Call for the Main Gallery in 2021 from more than 280 applicants online and was coordinated by Locust Projects' artist co-founder Elizabeth Withstandley. The 2021 Main Gallery Open Call review panel included: past exhibiting artists Shikeith (2019) and Juana Valdes (2020) and Aldeide Delgado, founder and director of WOPHA (Women Photographers International Archive).

The artists extend their gratitude to artist Itzel Basualdo for her critical role and contributions in the early conceptual development of "The Elephant Never Forgets." They also extend special thanks to Maria Avellaneda, Roxana Barba, Dimitry Saïd Chamy, Coco Klockner, Haruko Hashimoto, Andres Ibarra, Kevin Leonard, Carlos Fabián Medina, Claudio Marcotulli, Eric Monasterio, Pilar Rodríguez Aranda, Sterling Rook, Corey Silverman, and Harrison Tyler, Inkub8, Bakehouse Art Complex, Lorie Mertes, Tom Mickelson, Tony Kapel, Nuria Richards, Laurie Rojas and Sid Wolf.

## RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### **Little Haiti Little River Art Days**

Saturday, October 19 | 12-5pm, Artist Activation: 4pm

Highlighting arts and culture offerings in the neighborhood on a quarterly basis; Artist Activation: 4pm performance by Carlos Fabián Medina, a multidisciplinary creative, actor, and director from Caracas, Venezuela, activating *The Elephant Never Forgets*.

### **Closing Event: Tianguis Flea Market**

Saturday, November 2, 2024 | 12-5pm: Artist Talk: 4pm

"Tianguis" are open air/street Mexican flea markets known for their rich culture of marionette making, which were a major source of inspiration for *The Elephant Never Forgets*. Local Miami makers, artists, and vendors gather to celebrate the closing of *The Elephant Never Forgets* and *Niñalandia Skycoaster* by LIZN'BOW.

El Chavo del 8 is a Mexican situational comedy television series created by and starring Roberto Gómez Bolaños and produced by Televisión Independiente de México (later, Televisa). El Chavo first appeared in 1971 as a sketch on a Mexican show called Chespirito. It officially ended in 1980. Syndicated episodes existed until 1992 and were broadcast across all of Latin America, Brazil, Spain and the United States with an approximate audience of around 350 million people per episode across the Americas.



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Daniel Arturo Almeida & Adrián Edgard Rivera,  
photo by Andrés Ibarra.

**Daniel Arturo Almeida**, born in Caracas, Venezuela, is an interdisciplinary artist and independent curator whose work encompasses installation, photography, sculpture, video, and oral history. His practice delves into the intimate and collective stories that shape belief systems, hierarchies of power, and memory in the Americas. His contributions have earned him significant recognition, including a Curatorial Fellowship at The Latinx Project at NYU and membership at NEW INC, New Museum, NY.

Almeida's artistic journey unfolds through diverse independent and collaborative projects exhibited across the United States at various institutions, galleries, and festivals, including A.I.R. Gallery, Tiger Strikes Asteroids, La Salita

Project, Columbia Teachers College, Satellite Art Show, and SVA Chelsea Galleries, among others. In addition to his artistic practice, Almeida is deeply engaged in curation. He recently curated Roxana Barba's solo exhibition *Dos Cuerpos* at Laundromat Art Space and co-curated *Pattern/Makers* alongside Dimitry Saïd Chamy. Since 2022, he has been collaborating with artist Jennifer Wen Ma and artist and oral historian Nyssa Chow on various oral history projects, including *An Inward Sea: Oral History*.

Almeida is an Associate at the Bakehouse Art Complex and holds an MFA in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts (2020) and a BFA in Art and Art History from Florida International University (2017). Currently based in Miami, FL, his work has been reviewed and published in publications such as *Hyperallergic* and *Terremoto Magazine*, and *The Daily Lazy*.

**Adrián Edgard Rivera**, born in 1991 in Austin, Texas, and raised in Yautepec de Zaragoza, Morelos, Mexico, is a contemporary artist who currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Rivera's artistic journey is marked by a series of thought-provoking exhibitions, including recent showcases at Black Brick Project and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery in New York. His work delves into themes of identity, cultural authenticity, and memory, as seen in his solo exhibition at Plexus Projects and participation in various curated group shows across prominent New York venues. Rivera's commitment to his craft has been recognized through residencies and awards, notably at The New Museum's NEW INC program and Plexus Projects. Beyond his visual art practice, Rivera engages with the art community through lectures and talks, sharing his insights and experiences at institutions like the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami and Northern Michigan University, fostering dialogues that bridge art and technology.

## ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national and international artists. We invest in South Florida's arts community by providing artists with project grants and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through an onsite artist resource hub and access to pro bono legal services.

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297 NE 67 ST, Miami, FL 33138  
305.576.8570 | [info@locustprojects.org](mailto:info@locustprojects.org)  
[www.locustprojects.org](http://www.locustprojects.org)