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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Forensic Botany

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Visual Arts

by

Lesha Maria Rodriguez

Committee in charge:

Professor Teddy Cruz, Chair  
Professor Brain Goldfarb  
Professor Fred Londier  
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Professor Ernesto Silva

2013

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Chair

University of California, San Diego  
2013

For my aunties: Yolanda Konopken and Norma Guerra

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page .....	iii
Dedication .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Forensic Botany      (See supplemental files)	

## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Forensic Botany

by

Lesha Maria Rodriguez

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts

University of California, San Diego, 2012

Professor Teddy Cruz, Chair

My work investigates the relationship and ceremonial practices of a traditional Pre Columbian society while moving in parallel within a modern society focusing on Oaxaca, Mexico. Through a series of inter related projects you will be shown a unique prospective of Oaxacan life and society. I have been working on a long-term project in Oaxaca, Mexico since 2009 using alternative photography methods in combination of toy cameras and digital photography. My work is a palimpsest of materials layering one image upon another. Although at first glance the information may seem unrelated there is one connecting factor: ceremonial rituals and uses.

This catalogue will cover several areas of my art practice in Oaxaca starting with several interrelated projects. The first project is the festival of San Juan Bautista in San Juan Mixtec. The second is an investigation of the ritual practices involved in daily meat production from the only slaughterhouse in the

capitol. The third spans a continuous 4-year project of photographing the General cemetery in Oaxaca city, and ending with botanical studies of native and indigenous plants in the state of Oaxaca.