

## Carissa Rodriguez

CCA WATTIS INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS  
California College of the Arts, 360 Kansas Street  
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We are all Northern Californian now. Conscious, sustainable, holistic, but with no sacrifice of artisanal luxury from our eco slow-lives. This style of contemporary living—with its ethics and repercussions—is the fulcrum of Carissa Rodriguez’s exhibition “I’m normal. I have a garden. I’m a person.,” for which she foraged from what was once the fringe and is now the heart of American culture that serves as digital technology’s geographical and spiritual headquarters.

*Succulents* (all works 2015) is a floor installation of over 200 grass-fed cattle bones in a post-broth state, sourced from a holocratic Berkeley kitchen. Has scatter art gone ethically grown and nutrient dense? Nearby, *Untitled* (“still renting”) is a cashmere-blend tank top smeared with beef tallow dangling from a brass hook—conceptual rigor finds its match in understated chic. Finally, *Untitled* (“the use and abuse of vegetational concepts”) is a slab of bone-colored, cold-pressed soap hung with inlaid tallow and bone segments, which wouldn’t feel out of place in a shop in the neighboring Mission District.

A trenchant reference to the volatility of our corporatized, tech-fueled lives takes the form of a trio of shiny dye sublimation prints on aluminum from photos taken in 2015 at the Napa home of Tracy Ann Valenzuela, who was among those accused of a 2010 cyber attack against PayPal after it suspended Wikileaks’ account. Like the exhibition itself, all three works in this series are titled after her incantatory words from a pretrial interview. In two, the Guy Fawkes mask—used by the group Anonymous, credited with the cyber attack—protrudes into domestic kitchen scenes, while autographs of other defendants in the case consecrate the mask. Together, these works demonstrate how radical defiance and vigilance can bubble out of signifiers of normativity.



View of “Carissa Rodriguez: I’m normal. I have a garden. I’m a person.,” 2015–16.

— Jo-ey Tang