

# An Art & Science Multi-media Digital Project

for the book manuscript by LPB

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## *American Venom: Snakes, Science, and Hemispheric Relations.*

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Proposal

by

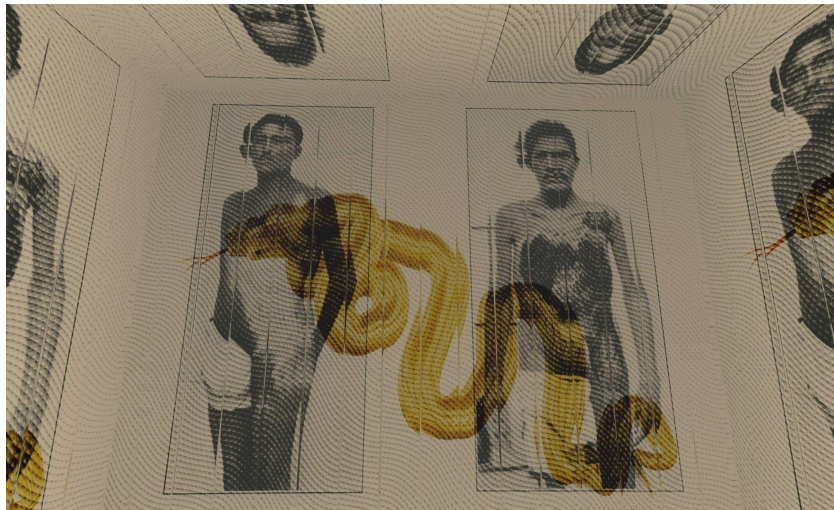
**Saul Villegas**

ARI Fellow, GSR, Digital Arts & New Media, UCSC

In collaboration with

**Lily Pearl Balloffet**

Associate Professor, Latin American & Latino Studies, UCSC



Cal Academy of Sciences, Academy Library, and Archives  
San Francisco, CA

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Arts Research Institute Summer Pathways Fellowship

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**Historic medical records are transformed into art by creating a multi-media archive that digitizes the special collections of curated specimens to accompany Balloffet's research—a current project focused on her book manuscript, *American Venom: Snakes, Science, and Hemispheric Relations*. Digital design aesthetics will create an overall theme for her research through the curation of extensive dialogue and collaboration with the materials, research, and creative experimentation of the media produced from the material's experimental art process.**

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My research proposal focuses on the use of art, digital virtual worlds, and archives as a means of disseminating information to the broader public, particularly to those who do not have access to the university system. This project aims to create a more inclusive way to converse about art and science projects, making archives more accessible to all. The project will use a digital virtual world component to create an immersive and interactive experience that allows users to explore art and science archives in new and exciting ways. By utilizing digital technology, we can break down barriers to access and provide a more engaging and inclusive experience for those who may not have the opportunity to visit physical archives, attend a university, or search through library databases available only to those enrolled.

To develop this project, I will collaborate with Professor Balloffet and the Cal Academy of Sciences archivists to create a digital archive that combines the artistic and scientific aspects of various snake specimen collections. This archive will include a virtual exhibition, digital photographs, and drone footage to provide a platform for learning and discovering about venom, snakes, and their environments.

This project aims to engage audiences from all backgrounds, promoting a more diverse and inclusive approach to exploring archives. I will also focus on creating accessible content that can be accessed by people with visual and auditory disabilities, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to experience and learn from our digital archive through alternative text descriptions of the environments in the virtual exhibition.

The project will culminate in a series of a symposium and exhibitions style where visitors can engage with the digital archive in person and learn about the history and development of the project. These events will be held in libraries and community spaces, providing access to the archive for those who may not have access to the university system or museums.

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Being part of the ARI Fellowship program has allowed me to gain perspective on the grant writing process, collaboration and mentorship, and scholarship. Throughout my academic career at UCSC, my efforts in creating interdisciplinary Art & Science projects have enabled me to mentor students entering the university system. Worked closely with departments at The Humanities Institute, Institute of Marine Sciences, Kenneth S. Norris Center for Natural History, Genomics Institute, and lastly, with Professor Balloffet in the Latin American & Latino Studies department. These self-driven art projects have inspired me to create a sense of community that seek visibility within the arts and extend efforts for DEI. Being connected to OpenLab Collaborative Research Center & E.A.R.T.H. Lab at UCSC has also fostered those efforts of disseminating artwork. Being a first-generation Latino and the only minority in my cohort at DANM makes me think of ways these groundbreaking art and science collaborations will help inspire new generations of minorities that strive for excellence. I'm grateful that the university has noticed and funded me for previous projects. I'm confident that with the funding and mentorship the Arts Research Institute will provide, alongside Professor Balloffet—that research project will succeed.

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[Preview of Virtual Exhibition](#)

Research Art Project: **An Art & Science Multi-media Digital Project** for the book manuscript by LPB  
*American Venom: Snakes, Science, and Hemispheric Relations.*

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