

The background features a complex abstract design with overlapping shapes. A large teal shape is on the right. A purple shape is on the left, partially overlapping a pink shape. A green vertical bar is in the center. A white circle is positioned in the lower right, overlapping the pink and purple shapes. The text is centered in a white rectangular area at the top left.

**The Fourth Annual
Symposium of Latin
American Art**

Vistas

Vistas 5

**The Fourth Annual Symposium
of Latin American Art**

**Erasures: Excision and Indelibility
in the Art of the Americas**

**Edited by
Madeline Murphy Turner**

The Annual Symposium of Latin American Art brings together graduate students, emerging scholars, and artists to share and discuss the multitude of perspectives that inform the artistic production and discourses of the region, as well as of US Latino art. This two-day series of panels also features prominent keynote speakers who are shaping the understanding of Latin American art today. Established by the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) and The Institute of Fine Arts at New York University in 2016, the event takes place each spring and is organized and run by the graduate students at The Institute of Fine Arts and invited partner institutions such as The Graduate Center of The City University of New York and Columbia University.

Contents

7

Foreword

Anna Indych-López

9

Preface

Madeline Murphy Turner

13

La memoria inventada: pistas para construirse desde la ficción

Anamaría Garzón Mantilla

27

Moving from Celebration to Critique: On Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga's *Ofrenda*

Ivana Dizdar

41

Ephemerality, Permanence, and the Circulation of Cultural Memory

Emily L. Butts

Foreword

Anna Indych-López

The Fourth Annual ISLAA Symposium of Latin American Art, organized by The Institute of Fine Arts students Brian Bentley, Francesca Ferrari, and Madeline Murphy Turner, and Graduate Center/CUNY students Sonja Gandert, Tie Jojima, and Ana Perry, concentrated on the theme of “Erasures: Excision and Indelibility in the Art of the Americas.” This framework allowed for considerations of distinct sets of operations including both artistic practices and historiographic quandaries. In thinking through the interstices between erasure and indelibility, we can mobilize new and unexpected ways to approach issues such as materiality, memory, heritage, and the politics of identity, among many other pertinent modes and themes. For me, a historian of Latin American and Latinx muralism, the theme conjures the ways in which acts of whitewashing and censorship can sometimes paradoxically lead to indelibility. Several controversial Mexican murals in the United States prove this point. Siqueiros’s *América tropical* (1932) was materially preserved as a result of being painted over, and Rivera’s Rockefeller Center mural (1933) garnered historical longevity as a result of its destruction. The practice of brownwashing can, in turn, not only redress the historical erasure of people of color, but also position underrepresented populations at the center of the American experience.

In her preface, Madeline Murphy Turner, who edited this issue, restates the question often asked of her: what can art history really *do*? I agree with her assertions that art history matters and that its stories can do the important work of recovery and counteraction so desperately needed in today’s world. More importantly, however, ensuring *access* to these narratives beyond the echo chamber of a few elite audiences and institutions remains key. In its effort to promote Latin American and Latinx art broadly across platforms, publics, generations, and perceived divides, ISLAA’s many initiatives—including *Vistas*—offer opportunities to shake up the inequalities of art history and its entrenched accounts and perspectives.

Preface

Madeline Murphy Turner

What can and cannot be erased? An unanswerable question, it nevertheless led me and my colleagues to the theme of the Fourth Annual Symposium of Latin American Art: “Erasures: Excision and Indelibility in the Art of the Americas.” With several recent and historical tragedies in mind—the 2018 fire at the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro and the fiftieth anniversary of the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City, for example—we discussed erasure as a forceful obliteration or removal of traces, whether human, nonhuman, linguistic, cultural, or historical.

Particularly today, threats of erasure seem endless. In Chile, the rising cost of public transportation set off a wave of revolts, revealing the extent to which large parts of society are excluded from access to the basic provisions of government. Turning to the United States and Puerto Rico, it is clear that we are still contending with the lasting effects of Hurricane Maria, the recorded death toll and details of which the current administration has attempted to expunge. This is not to mention the regime’s efforts to eliminate the presence of immigrants, claiming that the United States is “full.”

While the destructive nature of these events depicts a bleak picture of the current state of affairs, erasure also exists as a constructive process, particularly in the visual realm. One example of this is Emilio Hernández Saavedra’s 1970 work *El museo de arte borrado*, in which the artist called attention to Lima’s position as—at the time—the only Latin American capital without a modern art museum. What this work, and many others, shows us is that art and visual culture have the power to rework erasure into an effective tool for visualizing through an absence of representation.

Nevertheless, we must ask, what happens when there are no spaces dedicated to certain histories, cultures, and languages?

If we consider the immense power that museums, monuments, archives, and national emblems hold in the construction of memory, we can comprehend why institutions are integral to the conception or obliteration of histories. While the Museo Nacional was an inconceivable loss, there are still regions, people, and events that have never had a site constructed in their memory, a lack that can effectively contribute to the gradual erasure of entire groups of human and nonhuman entities. In fact, to this day, Guatemala still does not have a state-sponsored museum dedicated to the victims of the thirty-six-year civil war, most of whom were Maya.¹

Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor writes that an “emphasis on the visible . . . should not eclipse the power of the invisible, those specters and performative hauntings that help shape what we see.”² The three essays selected for this issue of *Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art* emphasize the potency of the invisible, especially as it is navigated across nationally constructed borders. Focusing on artistic projects produced within the past decade, these investigations question the concept of “official citizenship.” Together, these essays reveal the different ways in which artists working within and between regions defined as Latin America, Europe, and the United States attempt to undo the erasure of groups of people who are frequently denied access to human rights through their exclusion from the patriarchal, colonial, and androcentric definition of human.

In the first essay, Anamaría Garzón Mantilla looks at the work of Karina Aguilera Skvirsky and Karen Miranda Rivadeneira, both artists born in the United States to Ecuadorian immigrants and who spent their lives between the two countries.³ Taking an interdisciplinary approach, Garzón focuses on issues of displacement, as discussed by José Esteban Muñoz in his analysis of the concept of identity-in-difference. Through a series of photographic, video, and performance projects, Garzón underlines the ways in which memory can allow us to traverse borders. Both Skvirsky and Miranda undo the discourses that have been placed upon migrants in Ecuador and the United States, focusing on their own history—both constructed and based in family narratives—to create

subjective depictions of the migrant experience, which are often expunged from national narratives.

In her essay on Peruvian artist Daniela Ortiz and Spanish artist Xose Quiroga, Ivana Dizdar builds on the instability of historical narrative. Dizdar focuses on Ortiz and Quiroga's collaborative performance *Ofrenda* (2011) as an entry point from which to probe the history of Spanish colonialism in Latin America, the way that history has played into a nationalist ideology of Spanish identity over centuries, and the reasons that such ideas are still ingrained in contemporary celebrations of the state. Dizdar's analysis depicts the performance as a subtle and ephemeral, yet powerful, gesture that exposes the connections between Barcelona's monument to Columbus and the nearby immigrant detention center, or, more conceptually, the links between colonial practices and migratory control.

Interrogating national mechanisms of erasure, Emily L. Butts's contribution delves into two works by Texas-based artist Adriana Corral: *The Trace of a Living Document* (2017), which deals with the destruction of a legal document, and *Unearthed: Desenterrado* (2018), which examines the hypervisibility of a national emblem. Through her discussion of these two projects, Butts shows that historical erasure comes in many forms. As the author reminds us, no matter the format or strategy, the destruction or concealment of histories is a powerful practice of oppression that particularly impacts collective and individual identity.

More and more frequently, on academic panels and in daily conversations, I am asked if art history can really *do* anything to improve the current state of the world. I would argue that the three essays featured in this compilation demonstrate the power of research to counteract and recover excised narratives, and the lasting reverberations those stories can have. Furthermore, while the selection of essays was not made with a gendered perspective in mind, each one deals with questions of migration, immigration, borders, memory, and transgression that are predominantly explored by artists who identify as women. As such, this edition is a small attempt to counteract the centuries of erasure that women artists have experienced.

I want to thank my co-organizers of the symposium: Francesca Ferrari, Ana Perry, Tie Jojima, Sonja Gandert, and Brian Bentley. I would also like to send my sincerest gratitude to the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA), which has given me and my colleagues an incredible amount of support. Finally, this endeavor would not be possible without the unwavering efforts of Professor Edward J. Sullivan, who has worked tirelessly to provide his many students with every opportunity imaginable.

1. Many thanks to Hugo Quinto for discussing this subject with me. While the Guatemalan government has yet to construct an official museum, many others have created their own monuments and sites of memory. For example, the Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala calls the plaza between the rectory and the library the Plaza de los Mártires (Plaza of the Martyrs) in honor of those lost in the Civil War, and many individuals have created small but powerful personal monuments to their lost loved ones.

2. Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 30.

3. This essay has not been translated in order to respect and preserve the original public lecture on which it is based.

La memoria inventada: pistas para construirse desde la ficción

Anamaría Garzón Mantilla

La historia del Ecuador está marcada por las migraciones. Ecuador es un país que expulsa a su gente en ciclos que apenas se distinguen entre sí; cambian los lugares de destino, pero no los motivos, que están siempre relacionados con problemas económicos.¹ Con esa historia a cuestas, el gobierno ha capitalizado la imagen de los migrantes para armar discursos nacionalistas, los cuales no dejan espacio para concebir que la identidad es performativa y que desde la praxis cotidiana se crean siempre nuevos repertorios de sentido. Desde la academia abundan los estudios sobre factores económicos, problemáticas vinculadas a la separación familiar, la experiencia de género en relación a las labores de cuidado o la vivencia de costumbres ecuatorianas en otros territorios, pero poco —o nada— se habla de las prácticas artísticas generadas por procesos migratorios o producidas en situaciones de migración.

Es así que la migración y sus efectos en las prácticas artísticas son un capítulo que no existe en la historia del arte ecuatoriano. No es sorprendente, dado que el campo artístico y sus estudios han estado marcados históricamente por una constante precariedad institucional generada por la falta de políticas públicas y de presupuestos destinados al impulso de la cultura.² La década de los noventa fue traumática para Ecuador. Una gran crisis económica derivó en el cambio de moneda del sucre al dólar y produjo una de las oleadas migratorias más fuertes de la historia del país. En esa misma década se produjo en la práctica artística un giro tardío de la modernidad a la contemporaneidad, donde si bien varios artistas trataron temas vinculados con preocupaciones sobre los discursos oficiales y la crisis económica, la experiencia de la migración no se retrató a profundidad ni de forma masiva en el relato artístico.³

En medio del silencio, y con esos contextos artísticos y sociales entrecruzados, este ensayo nace ante la ausencia de una línea de investigación de la historia del arte ecuatoriano que incluya a artistas migrantes o a hijas/hijos de migrantes sin

absorberlos dentro del relato únicamente como artistas ecuatorianos ni remarcar la incidencia de la migración familiar en su praxis. Al crear una amplia línea de investigación —que considere cómo las fronteras, los desplazamientos, los nuevos emplazamientos, las distancias, las comunidades y las identidades aprendidas y aprehendidas proveen posicionamientos para la producción artística— es posible abarcar con mayor profundidad la complejidad de los procesos creativos.

Para justificar la necesidad de un relato específico que reconozca lo que está en juego en el arte creado por hijas de migrantes ecuatorianos en Estados Unidos, me baso en la referencia que el teórico José Esteban Muñoz hace del concepto “identity-in-difference” para pensar en la manera en que se entiende la conformación de la identidad en relación a la práctica cultural y la afectividad. Según Muñoz:

Ser consciente del propio estatus como identidad-en-diferencia es saber que uno cae fuera de los mapas mayoritarios de la esfera pública, que uno está exiliado de los paradigmas de la razón comunicativa y de un consentimiento cultural más amplio. Este exilio es como un desplazamiento, cuyo origen es un prejuicio históricamente específico y culturalmente situado que bloquea la trayectoria del sujeto latino hacia una ontología “oficial” de ciudadanía-sujeto político.⁴

Mientras Muñoz analiza ese desplazamiento del sujeto latino en Estados Unidos, yo encuentro ese mismo exilio cultural en las hijas y los hijos de migrantes que regresan a Ecuador. Visibilizar los tránsitos culturales y las identidades-en-diferencia permite generar conocimientos sobre estos individuos y las formas en que, a su vez, sus experiencias y sus cuerpos crean nuevos conocimientos. En este ensayo analizo a dos artistas que nacieron en Estados Unidos y crecieron yendo y viniendo entre los dos países: Karina Aguilera Skvirsky y Karen Miranda Rivadeneira.⁵ Mi análisis está centrado en obras en las que las artistas buscan localizar experiencias de infancia que vivieron, escucharon o se inventaron. Esas experiencias están mediadas por ideas sobre la familia, la distancia, el cuidado, la memoria y el legado.

En la búsqueda de un marco teórico desde donde analizar las obras de Aguilera Skvirsky y Miranda, encontré asidero en los estudios de *performance*, en la historia del arte chicano y en algunos feminismos latinos.⁶ La mezcla cultural y la dualidad de esas áreas de estudio me brindan la flexibilidad necesaria para entender en las obras la existencia de unas fronteras desde la permeabilidad, sin tomarlas como bordes absolutos. La tarea no es simple, pues como anota la historiadora del arte Jennifer A. González, una línea de investigación con énfasis interseccional puede resultar opaca por las complejas temáticas que presentan las obras. Según González, los enfoques interseccionales siguen siendo difíciles de entender para la cultura dominante:

Esto puede producir alienación en los críticos de arte, pero también puede generar un discurso o debate productivo sobre temas de calidad, gusto y jerarquía cultural ¿Cómo se puede juzgar una obra de arte usando un criterio al cual esta nunca aspiró?⁷

Teniendo en cuenta estas circunstancias, busco en las obras puertas de acceso a la memoria de lo vivido, la memoria de lo imaginado y la memoria de lo deseado. Las obras de Aguilera Skvirsky y Miranda están imbuidas de nostalgia, afecto, humor y pertenencia a territorios geográficos y simbólicos cruzados por varias fronteras.

Karina Aguilera Skvirsky es hija de una mujer ecuatoriana que emigró a EE. UU. en la década de los sesenta y de un judío estadounidense. Durante su infancia, en los años setenta, vivió un año y medio con su familia en Guayaquil, donde tomó fotos con su cámara fotográfica Kodak de plástico. Antes de volver a EE. UU, su padre le sugirió que tomase fotos de los problemas de la ciudad. Esas vivencias se convirtieron en la obra *My Photos from Ecuador 1977–1978* (Mis fotos de Ecuador 1977–1978) (2009), la cual revela cómo se construyen las relaciones a través del lenguaje y cómo la mirada matizada por la perspectiva paterna la convierte en cazadora de escenas precarias, en etnógrafa de un territorio que en parte es suyo, pero al mismo tiempo no lo es. En un trabajo más ligado a la búsqueda de otras migrantes dentro de su familia está *El peligroso viaje de María Rosa Palacios* (2016) (figs. 1 y 2), donde Aguilera Skvirsky sigue trabajando con la memoria de su familia para encontrarse con la historia de su

bisabuela materna, que migró del Chota, una comunidad afroecuatoriana en la sierra andina, hacia Guayaquil en 1905. Sin embargo, la artista no va únicamente tras sus pasos, sino que inventa la manera de ocuparlos. Cuando María Rosa salió del Chota tenía apenas quince años y el viaje, partes en burro, partes caminando, podía durar entre tres semanas y tres meses. Ciento once años después, Aguilera Skvirsky emprendió el mismo camino.

En *El peligroso viaje de María Rosa Palacios*, la artista no busca fidelidad en los espacios, sino que plantea el viaje de su bisabuela tal como ella lo inventa. La idea del viaje tiene varios ecos en el arte contemporáneo. En un viaje crítico en 2011, el artista ecuatoriano Fabiano Kueva empezó a recorrer los pasos del explorador Alexander von Humboldt, cuestionando el legado colonial del viajero.⁸ El artista chileno Juan Downey, en cambio, empezó en 1973 un largo recorrido por Latinoamérica, creando una cartografía de la identidad y de las conexiones entre comunidades y países. El viaje y el territorio, para Aguilera Skvirsky, tiene otras connotaciones. Los paisajes que aparecen en su video parecen hacer un guiño a escenarios de la pintura paisajista ecuatoriana —la cual fue de creación esencialmente masculina y asentó en el siglo XIX los imaginarios del estado-nación y ayudó a sustentar los discursos de grandeza territorial que hasta hoy se repiten en las diatribas nacionalistas—. Pero la artista, al ocupar estos paisajes, rompe con esos discursos, pues revela imposturas y decisiones arbitrarias que dan forma a una cartografía imposible de poner en práctica. Es así que incluso llegamos a ver inmiscuida en el video la empinada cuesta de acceso al Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Quito; cuesta que definitivamente no estuvo en la ruta de la bisabuela María Rosa, ya que hubiera sido geográfica y temporalmente imposible. Al evitar las grandes narrativas sobre el territorio, en el video se activan otros afectos, otras representaciones, que favorecen la aparición de historias mínimas, personales y lúdicas.

Así como en el video de Aguilera Skvirsky hay una transformación en el uso del paisaje, hay también un proceso de ocupación del cuerpo que nos conecta con repertorios y encarnaciones de saberes culturales.⁹ Al inicio del video, Aguilera Skvirsky se deja peinar por una pariente como si fuese una niña, accediendo así a su propia infancia y conectándose

con las niñas del siglo XIX, que son antepasados de su familia en el Chota. Hay en esta obra una ocupación del territorio familiar que se hace con el cuerpo y desde lo sensible. Después de ese acceso a la infancia, todo es impostura: vemos la llegada del burro que llevará a la artista del Chota a Guayaquil, montado en una camioneta, pasando por una estación de peaje —el proceso de producción del video no se oculta—. Aguilera Skvirsky camina con el traje típico de las mujeres indígenas de Otavalo, no con el traje de las mujeres del Chota, relacionándose arbitrariamente con la tradición de una comunidad diferente a la de su bisabuela. Así, la recreación del viaje de María Rosa Palacios está llena de ficciones, imposturas y relatos incompletos. El recorrido nos hace conscientes de que las fisuras son lo que pone en crisis —y compone— una identidad.

Este tipo de fisuras son también el recurso de creación de Karen Miranda Rivadeneira. Rivadeneira nació en Nueva York, de padres migrantes ecuatorianos, y pasó su infancia entre los dos países. Una de las obras que quiero analizar en este trabajo es *Other Stories/Historias Bravas* (2009–2011) (figs. 3 y 4), una serie en la que Miranda recrea, representa y fotografía hechos de su infancia que nunca fueron fotografiados. Si los saberes culturales y familiares heredados funcionan como repertorios en la *performance* que Aguilera Skvirsky hace mientras recorre los caminos que supuestamente recorrió su bisabuela, podemos establecer la misma conexión con Miranda, siguiendo a Diana Taylor:

El repertorio requiere presencia: gente que por el hecho de “estar ahí” participa en la producción y reproducción de conocimiento, siendo parte de la transmisión. Contrario a lo que ocurre con objetos supuestamente estables en el archivo, las acciones que conforman el repertorio no permanecen iguales. El repertorio mantiene y transforma coreografías de significado.¹⁰

En este caso, la propia artista es la protagonista de la serie fotográfica. Aunque su cuerpo es, evidentemente, el cuerpo de una adulta, Miranda se interpreta a sí misma como una niña. Representa su infancia tal como la recuerda, no necesariamente como la vivió, y en esa recuperación de lo sentido hay un afecto

que está mediado por el regreso al hogar de su familia y la presencia de su madre en las fotografías. La mayor parte de la serie se desarrolla en espacios domésticos que, en la manera en la que se presentan, hacen un guiño a la fotografía documental, pero, por la manera en que se ocupan, entendemos que son intervenciones performadas. La conexión de Miranda con el legado femenino de su familia está presente en cada foto: en una imagen, desnuda y encogida como una niña curiosa, Miranda observa cómo bañan a su tía abuela. En otra, desnuda también, deja que su madre le pase un huevo por el cuerpo para limpiarle el mal de ojo. En otra, recibe la bendición de su tía María con el torso desnudo. Deja que su madre le trence el cabello. En una terraza, se mojan juntas, agradeciendo la lluvia. Reviven sus vidas, cerrando una brecha de tiempo y espacio. El conocimiento de Miranda sobre su infancia se basa en un repertorio familiar, el cual se convierte en legado al repetirse, al encarnarse y al medirse nuevamente a través del cuerpo.

En *El peligroso viaje de María Rosa Palacios y Other Stories/Historias Bravas* hay una ocupación radical y consciente del propio cuerpo que sirve para cuestionar sistemas de representación, confrontando las imágenes de la migración que promueve la narrativa oficial de Ecuador. En estas obras, las artistas se hacen cargo de su propia representación y de las versiones que quieren contar de sus historias familiares, reconstruyendo sus memorias a partir de relatos heredados de sus familias, recuerdos borrosos de la infancia y de las ficciones que se les ocurren en el camino. Las investigadoras Norma Klahn y Cecilia Olivares llamarían a estas obras ficciones autobiográficas, pues las artistas, “construyen identidades presentes mediante la reactivación de recuerdos situados en geografías sociales y simbólicas. Estas narraciones de lugar reconocen la importancia del espacio y la localización en los procesos de formación de identidad, pues dichos factores están necesariamente implicados en la historia, la lengua y la comunidad.”¹¹

Las artistas ocupan varios espacios simultáneamente: están en el cuerpo de la memoria; son el cuerpo que performa la memoria y el cuerpo que la dota de una interpretación espacial. En estas obras, sus presencias se convierten en canales para entender ideas sobre el hogar y la familia. De cierta forma, al representarse y representar sus pasados,

resisten ser representadas por un discurso normalizado y afirman que sus identidades-en-diferencia producen nuevos conocimientos de lo sensible. Así, la manera en que se encargan de sus historias puede ser leída como un gesto político. bell hooks reconoce la diferencia entre la nostalgia y la memoria politizada. La primera propone un retorno a un tiempo que no existió realmente, pero la memoria politizada, “sirve para iluminar y transformar el presente.”¹² Eso es precisamente lo que ocurre en estas obras: con ellas, las artistas iluminan un presente, abriendo una nueva trama de pensamiento para entender cómo las migraciones atraviesan la producción de sentido en la historia del arte.

1. Varios estudios realizados por instituciones gubernamentales y académicas coinciden en que desde mediados del siglo XX se pueden “identificar al menos tres períodos con características distintas, que dan cuenta de patrones de migración que varían entre sí: la emigración de la década de los años 1960; la de los años 1980 y, finalmente, la de fines de la década de 1990 y principios del siglo XXI”. Herrera, Gioconda, María Cristina Carrillo y Alicia Torres, eds. *La migración ecuatoriana: transnacionalismo, redes e identidades* (Quito: FLACSO, 2005), 17.
2. Las políticas económicas del estado ecuatoriano han estado siempre marcadas por perspectivas neoliberales, en las cuales el estado ha restringido al máximo su participación en áreas como la cultura. La Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana, fundada en la década de los cuarenta, ha sufrido una constante pauperización de sus labores, sobre todo a partir de la década de los ochenta, para llegar a los años dos mil convertida en un espacio conflictivo y sin propuestas. El Banco Central del Ecuador se ocupó de asuntos culturales hasta 2007, cuando sus competencias pasaron al recién creado Ministerio de Cultura. Este ministerio ha afianzado una política efectista, basada en fondos concursables y no en políticas de largo aliento que produzcan cambios estructurales en el sector.
3. Una exposición que retrata profundamente los efectos de ese período es *Amarillo, azul y roto. Años 90: arte y crisis en Ecuador*, curada por Pamela Cevallos y Manuel Kingman y expuesta en el Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Quito entre enero y junio de 2019. Ya entrados en los 2000, surgen algunos proyectos que se aproximan a la temática migratoria. En 2007, el fotógrafo Geovanny Verdezoto presentó una serie fotográfica titulada *Los que se quedan*, en la que retrata la cotidianidad de personas que se quedaron en Ecuador y no quisieron o no pudieron migrar con sus parientes. La serie se presentó en forma de exposición y de libro. En el 2008 apareció el proyecto AMAME (Archivo de la Memoria Audiovisual de la Migración Ecuatoriana), del colectivo Ñukanchik People / Arte y Audiovisuales, formado por Juan Pablo Ordóñez y Melina Wazhima. El proyecto es un archivo de cientos de videocartas compartidas por familias separadas por la migración, recogiendo treinta años de historias familiares. Se puede acceder al material a través de este enlace: proyectoamame.blogspot.com.
4. José Esteban Muñoz, “Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho’s ‘The Sweetest Hangover (and Other STDs)’,” *Theatre Journal* 52, no. 1 (2000): 67–79 (traducción mía). La versión original de la cita en inglés es la siguiente: “To be cognizant of one’s status as an identity-in-difference is to know that one falls off majoritarian maps of the public sphere, that one is exiled from paradigms of communicative reason and a larger culture of consent. This exile is more like a displacement, the origin of which is a historically specific and culturally situated bias that blocks the Latina/o citizen subject’s trajectory to ‘official’ citizenship-subject political ontology.”
5. En otro trabajo que aún está en curso, tomo en consideración la producción de otros artistas ecuatorianos, como Ronny Quevedo, Sonia Guiñansaca y Ruth Cruz.
6. Encuentro particularmente importante la compilación de ensayos publicados en Jennifer A. González, C. Ondine Chavoya, Chon Noriega, and Terezita Romo, *Chicano and Chicana Art: A Critical Anthology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

Es fundamental la influencia de Gloria Anzaldúa para pensar en las fronteras no solo como zonas geográficas, sino también simbólicas y espirituales, que dotan a las *new mestizas* de una conciencia abierta a la ambigüedad y la contradicción. Ver Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 79.

7. González, "Introduction", en González, Chavoya, Noriega y Romo, 9 (traducción mía). Esta es la versión original de la cita: "This can produce alienation in art critics, but it can also produce a productive discourse or debate about questions of quality, taste, and cultural hierarchy. How can one judge a work of art by criteria to which it never aspired?"

8. Una explicación ampliada de la obra de Fabiano Kueva está disponible en este enlace: <http://fabianokueva.net/archivo/archivo-alexander-von-humboldt>.

9. Pienso en esto en diálogo con Diana Taylor, entendiéndolo cómo una práctica cultural encarnada — *embodied culture*— es transmitida por medio de un repertorio de saberes compartidos y heredados.

10. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 20 (traducción mía). La cita en versión original: "The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there,' being a part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning."

11. Norma Klahn y Cecilia Olivares, "(Re)mapeos literarios: Desplazamientos autobiográficos de escritoras chicanas," *Debate Feminista* 25 (2002): 321–58; y la Carta de la

Libertad de la South African Congress Alliance (1955), citada en bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," en *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, ed. bell hooks (Boston: South End Press, 1990), 205.

12. hooks, 205.

Figuras

Anamaría Garzón Mantilla

La memoria inventada:
pistas para construirse desde la ficción



Figura 1

Karina Aguilera Skvirsky, fotograma de *El peligroso viaje de María Rosa Palacios*, 2016.
Video monocal, 30:39 min.
Cortesía de la artista



Figura 2

Aguilera Skvirsky, fotograma de *El peligroso viaje de María Rosa Palacios*, 2016.
Cortesía de la artista



Mom thanking the rain and Maria worrying that I might get sick, ongoing until 1992

Figura 3

Karen Miranda Rivadeneira, fotografía de la serie *Other Stories/Historias Bravas*, 2009–2011. Impresión por chorro de tinta, dimensiones variables. Cortesía de la artista



Mom curing me from the evil eye, ca 1991

Figura 4

Miranda, fotografía de la serie *Other Stories/Historias Bravas*, 2009–2011.
Cortesía de la artista

Moving from Celebration to Critique: On Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga's *Ofrenda*

Ivana Dizdar¹

On the National Day of Spain in 2011, Peruvian artist Daniela Ortiz and Spanish artist Xose Quiroga performed a simple but radical gesture: they removed a floral arrangement from the foot of Barcelona's Christopher Columbus monument and relocated it to the city's immigration detention center. Set against the building's exterior concrete wall, the floral arrangement appeared fragile and abandoned but also introduced a hint of color to an otherwise grim landscape, at once evoking hopelessness and a sense of remote possibility. In displacing the arrangement of neatly ordered red and yellow carnations—a kitschy floral replica of the Spanish flag—Ortiz and Quiroga used a symbol of commemoration, honor, and national pride as a comment on Spain's colonial history, immigration laws, and detention practices.

Titled *Ofrenda* (Offering), the project is a moving metaphor. The work does more than call attention to the treatment of Latin American migrants, some of whom are routinely detained within walking distance of the colonial monument and increasingly denied the right to live (legally or at all) in the “former colonial ‘motherland.’”² By connecting the Columbus monument and the detention center, *Ofrenda* emphasizes the relationship between the legacy of European colonialism and migratory control in contemporary Europe. Moreover, the work echoes Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano's statement that coloniality remains “the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed.”³ The visual and conceptual link Ortiz and Quiroga draw between the two sites suggests that—by virtue of systemic racism, institutional exclusion, and biopolitical regulation—today's system of migratory control is in fact an extension of colonial practice.

Immortalized as a large-scale statue, Columbus stands proudly atop a forty-meter cast-iron column in Barcelona's busy seaside Plaça del Portal de la Pau (Square of the Gate of Peace). The monument's pedestal is adorned with angels cast in bronze and, in stone, depictions of historical figures such as the navigator

Martín Alonso Pinzón, who accompanied Columbus on his (in)famous voyage to the New World in 1492. Befittingly, Columbus's likeness—crafted by sculptor Rafael Atché in 1888—holds a scroll, perhaps a map, in his left hand; with his right, he points intently toward the Mediterranean Sea, as though recalling the route of his victorious return to Spain.⁴ The monument appears especially elaborate and grandiose when juxtaposed with Barcelona's immigration detention center, located in the industrial part of the city's Sants-Montjuïc district. Somber and nearly colorless, the Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros looks much like a prison, complete with imposing walls, gates of barbed wire, security cameras, and panoptic watchtowers. If this is what it feels like on the outside, what is it like to be on the inside?

Ofrenda's low-quality photo documentation, which appears to be taken by a cell phone camera, shows the commemorative floral arrangement in two juxtaposed contexts: at the base of the monument (fig. 1), where it has been placed by an unknown celebrant, and outside the wall of the detention center (fig. 2), where it has been laid by Ortiz and Quiroga. These before and after photos highlight the parallel transformation of background and foreground.⁵ In the first image, the floral arrangement obstructs the inscription on a bronze plaque. Despite its biological transience, the arrangement demands attention. Although it is far below the elevated figure of Columbus and appears relatively insignificant in size, its color—those red and yellow stripes—accentuates the object against the base's subdued earth tones. Yet because of its size, the arrangement appears as a self-consciously humble offering to the monument, to Columbus himself, and to what he represents.

In its new location, leaning against the wall of the Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros, the arrangement seems listless and desolate. While both documentary photos are devoid of human figures, the second feels particularly empty, the arrangement especially isolated from its surroundings. Although the images are taken only a couple of hours apart, the shadows in the second photograph make the floral arrangement appear darker than in the first, as though the flowers have already begun to wilt or even rot. A number of its carnations have been shed, which leaves gaps in the object and signals the passing of time. The floral arrangement is damaged, less alive. The presence of a celebratory object ironically set against this unwelcoming facade highlights

the absence of the many migrants who remain faceless behind its concrete walls. Originating as a tribute beneath a monument, perhaps the floral arrangement's relocation fulfills its potential to become a memorial; perhaps it reframes the detention center itself as a memorial, or even an anti-monument.⁶ *Ofrenda's* memorialization of unseen and largely unacknowledged subjects recalls Colombian artist Doris Salcedo's series *Atrabiliarios* (1992–2004). Built into a wall and covered with sheer pieces of preserved animal fiber are box-shaped alcoves containing shoes previously owned and worn by women who went missing in Colombia between the 1960s and early 1990s. The women have been rendered invisible, and yet, with their shoes on display, their absence becomes markedly present.

Ortiz and Quiroga performed *Ofrenda* on October 12, the day of the Fiesta Nacional de España, which honors Columbus's arrival on American soil, the landfall that marked his so-called discovery of America on the same date five centuries earlier.⁷ Not by coincidence, October 12 celebrations began in the late nineteenth century as Spain's colonial empire in the Americas was nearing its end. Originally called Día de la Raza (Day of the Race), and later Día de la Hispanidad (Day of Hispanic Heritage) among other names, the holiday would promote the country's continued transcendence of territorial boundaries. It would underscore Spain's place among major colonial powers like Britain and France, commemorating Hispanic identity and a collective "faith in the future of the 'Race.'"⁸ Even a hundred years later, in 1986, when the state pronounced December 6 Constitution Day, Felipe González's socialist government decided that Spain would retain the October 12 holiday: the nation would be celebrated not through a date that denoted advances in democracy but through a date that marked the launch of a colonial empire.⁹

Today, October 12 festivities are a "re-encounter with a colonial past" that is viewed with pride.¹⁰ Columbus remains the poster child for the National Day and a symbol of Spain itself.¹¹ But his idea that a country's borders should be extended, its territories boundlessly expanded, has—five centuries later—been replaced by a Fortress Europe mentality: the motivation to close borders and keep outsiders out.¹² Some are particularly vulnerable to regulation and exclusion. Among Latin American immigrants to Spain, those from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru—who are perceived as "Indigenous-looking"—receive significantly

worse treatment than migrants from Argentina and Chile, who “look European.”¹³ Once in Spain, migrants who read as “whiter” meet fewer challenges when it comes to finding work, opening businesses, and integrating into Spanish society.

This kind of racial stratification has deep roots in colonialism. As New Spain began to establish itself as a colonial society, it became increasingly difficult for people of mixed race to secure social rights and privileges.¹⁴ By 1530, distinctions were being drawn between “pure” Spaniards and, for instance, children with one Indigenous parent, who were labeled “mestizos.”¹⁵ Meanwhile, and throughout the sixteenth century, black Africans were forcibly brought to New Spain, which led to additional interracial unions and mixed lineages. By the mid-seventeenth century, those with “impure blood” were formally and legally recognized as belonging to an entirely separate category of personhood.¹⁶ Within what became known as the *sociedad de castas*, those considered furthest from pure whiteness were characterized as most inherently illegitimate, inferior, poor, vulgar, and criminal¹⁷—epitomizing what Frantz Fanon would describe as “the enemy of values.”¹⁸

Reaching a zenith in the eighteenth century, Spanish *casta* paintings explicitly portrayed the racial hierarchies and social differences at play in New Spain. In the form of successive images, the paintings depicted the mixing of people, tracing sequences from what was considered pure Spanish blood to increasingly polluted blood.¹⁹ The paintings reflected the elite class’s profound anxiety about the erosion of racial borders.²⁰ They forged a link between social order and physiognomic classification that corresponded to a colonial compulsion to order society and its members. The *casta* genre not only reflected approaches to human categorization but was itself a way of codifying so as to demarcate the boundary between “human types” and “monstrous races.”²¹ As preoccupations with surveillance intensified throughout the century, the genre also satisfied a colonial need to observe, scrutinize, and monitor Spain’s population.

Many contemporary artists have addressed the intersection of social stratification, surveillance, and exclusion, often emphasizing its link to captivity. At the Tate Modern in 2012, Cuban artist Tania Bruguera foregrounded the connection between migratory control and concentration camps. Her work, titled *Surplus Value*, forced some visitors to wait in line for over an hour, while

others, chosen arbitrarily by museum guards, were allowed to skip the line entirely.²² Those forced to wait underwent a lie-detector test as they were interrogated by an officer. They were asked questions like “Have you ever deliberately overstayed a visa?” Once permitted access to the space, viewers were confronted with reproductions of signs from Auschwitz and Dachau.²³

Philosopher Giorgio Agamben has recalled that camps in Europe first emerged as sites of refugee control, noting the progression from internment to concentration and finally extermination camps.²⁴ In 1995, he argued that nations should reevaluate the conditions under which they grant or deny rights, forewarning that neglecting the growing migrant and refugee crisis in Europe could have serious consequences, including the reopening of extermination camps, which he noted was already beginning to take place.²⁵ This same trajectory—internment, concentration, extermination—had occurred during the rise of fascism, when statelessness spread, in the words of Hannah Arendt, like “a contagious disease.”²⁶ When it came to dealing with the displaced, internment camps became the routine solution.

The presence of migrants in contemporary Europe remains tied to the presence of camps and other sites of confinement. Initially employed as an exceptional measure in states of emergency, detention as an instrument of immigration control has been increasingly normalized since the 1990s.²⁷ International movement itself or even a migrant’s mere presence may qualify as a criminal offense and lead to internment or deportation, neither of which the migrant has the right to appeal.²⁸ Immigration laws and regulations are continually being modified, and most migrants are unable to keep up with their frequent revisions.²⁹ Changing, unreasonable, counterintuitive, and conflicting laws force migrants into a narrative where, as Ayten Gündoğdu writes, they are forced to play “Kafkaesque characters.”³⁰

Detainees who violate formal—often arbitrary or unstated—rules are subject to a range of disciplinary measures. Many of these, such as solitary confinement, fall within the domain of torture.³¹ Isolated and abused, some detainees have turned to hunger strikes, performed self-mutilations, and attempted suicide in protest against these conditions.³² Such forms of protest, however, are invisible beyond detention walls. On the outside, Ortiz and Quiroga engage in an act of protest that endeavors to make visible the struggle of migrants, whether those migrants are unseen (detained),

semivisible (present but working underground), not in Spain (denied at the border or deported³³), or nowhere at all (perished).

Immigration to Spain was sporadic until a sharp influx of migrants from Latin America and North Africa, as well as Eastern Europe, occurred in the 2000s, peaking precisely in 2011, the year Ortiz and Quiroga performed *Ofrenda*.³⁴ Spain's inability to adjust to the heightened flow of migrants led to the formation of immigration detention centers throughout the country.³⁵ Between the years 2000 and 2012, the number of immigration detention centers in Europe increased dramatically, from 324 to 437.³⁶ Spanish detention centers specifically were on the rise, not only within the country but also beyond; centers in North Africa, for instance, were put in place to hold migrants who were seized while traversing international waters.³⁷

Ortiz and Quiroga's concern with the precarity of migratory movement translates formally into their work: it is not the floral arrangement itself but its relocation that constitutes *Ofrenda*.³⁸ The arrangement undergoes a semiotic shift, its conceptual significance forever altered by its movement from one site to another—in and of itself a kind of (forced) migration. The relocation in *Ofrenda* is reminiscent of a 1998 proposal made by Croatian artist Sanja Iveković. Submitted in response to an invitation from Manifesta 2, the proposed project would have taken the form of a “civic intervention” involving the removal of the statue of the Greek goddess Nike from the Gëlle Fra (Golden Lady) war memorial in Luxembourg's Constitution Square and its reinstallation on the premises of a shelter for battered women.³⁹ The proposal probed asymmetrical grievance and commemoration—whose freedom is celebrated, whose plight memorialized? Iveković makes a powerful attempt at shifting attention; like the arrangement in *Ofrenda*, the Nike statue would have moved from a place of pride to a place of pain. But Iveković's proposal was not approved.⁴⁰ Never realized, the project's impossibility became an essential aspect of the work. The proposal's failure, the rejection of the idea to move Nike to the shelter, denoted broader sociopolitical failures: the symbol of freedom would not set female victims of violence free.

In *Ofrenda*, against the wall of the detention center, the floral arrangement mirrors the detainees within the building. It appears evidently misplaced, unwanted, as though someone had disposed of it there or as though—if we didn't know better—it had been

carried there by a gust of wind. Here, the only people who see, watch, or think of the object are the cameras, the guards, perhaps lawyers who frequent the center, an occasional passerby, and the artists who brought it there in the first place. Leaning against the wall, the floral arrangement resembles an abandoned body, sleeping at best, dying at worst.

Indeed, the flowers are subject to inevitable decay. Bright with life at the beginning of the performance, the flowers quickly begin to fade, to darken, to droop, betraying their impermanence. As they are transported and pictured, they are already in a state of semideath—cut, wounded, no longer with roots and full stems, they await their own passing.⁴¹ Even the artists' engagement with the object connotes dying or death; instead of finding a place to hang the arrangement of flowers or placing it on an elevated surface, they rest the object on the ground, as though before a tomb. Like the detainees—who may be allowed into Spain, but will more likely be deported and may face death—the object will eventually disappear.

The evocation of death in *Ofrenda* conveys a connection between migration and the loss of life. Beyond literal death (Spanish diplomat Agustín Santos Maraver has described the Mediterranean as a “burial site”⁴²), to migrate is to lose one's place, one's home, and to some extent one's self. In the case of Barcelona's detention center, its detainees suffer, furthermore, the death of their freedom and privacy: they are at once isolated and surveilled, both hidden and exposed. Their confinement entails a disruption of what Homi Bhabha calls the border between home and world, epitomizing the unhomely—a “paradigmatic post-colonial experience.”⁴³

Bhabha takes his cue from Freud's concept of the uncanny—something frightening, something previously repressed that now returns.⁴⁴ Repression is essential to coloniality; we can recall Walter Dignolo's claim that, while Europe celebrates modernity, “coloniality is regarded as the darker and distant side, not always remembered as a reality . . . until massive migration comes, and with it the rumor of coloniality—through the colonial external difference that invades the EU.”⁴⁵ By drawing a link between Barcelona's Columbus monument and the city's detention center, *Ofrenda* not only calls attention to coloniality's ever-presence but conveys the relationship between colonial practice and migratory control, between colonial violence and the violence enacted on migrants in Europe today.

The work serves as a reminder that migratory control, no less than colonial history, implicates and affects a range of people. The celebrant who originally placed the floral arrangement at the foot of the Columbus monument—presumably a proud Spanish national—becomes an unwitting participant in the performance. The work also includes those who follow the floral arrangement, whether with their bodies or their eyes, as it is moved. It includes, by extension, those who celebrate Spain's national holiday. Finally, and most poignantly, it includes the detainees. Perhaps *Ofrenda* serves as a decolonial gesture by offering them—in addition to the objects itself—a symbolic promise of voice and visibility.

Is it possible that someone detained within Barcelona's detention center, maybe through a window, saw the floral arrangement leaning against the concrete wall? What would such a sight have meant to a detainee? And what might have *Ofrenda*, the object's relocation, looked like from farther away? If an aerial video had been captured, surely one would have seen floods of red and yellow pouring toward Barcelona's spaces of congregation. Perhaps, too, one would have seen a single, lonely object drifting away to a place where nobody belongs.

1. Thanks to Ben Conisbee Baer, Pablo Báez Guersi, Yelieny Bidó Rodríguez, Sophie Delpeux, Ashleigh Deosaran, Francesca Ferrari, Carlos Junco, Marisa Lerer, Santiago Luengo Martin, Jess Shane, Madeline Murphy Turner, and especially Rosalyn Deutsche for invaluable discussions and feedback.

2. Helma Lutz, "The Limits of European-Ness: Immigrant Women in Fortress Europe," *Feminist Review*, no. 57 (Fall 1997): 99.

3. Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," in *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, eds. Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar (New York: Routledge, 2010), 24.

4. An elevator within the column takes people to the top of the

monument, where they can look out at the city and the ocean, aligning their view with that of Columbus.

5. Video documentation reveals that, at its original site, the arrangement was accompanied by about a dozen red carnations, probably laid down by passersby participating in the celebration, as if making contributions to a growing shrine. What does it mean for Ortiz and Quiroga to use, to take, an object that does not belong to them? Initially left at the foot of the monument, the floral arrangement is no longer the property of the individual who purchased and placed it there; the object, like the monument it was meant to adorn, belongs to no one and to everyone. Still, the artists engage in a deliberate act not unlike theft: they decide, with purpose, not to acquire and move their own object but to (mis)appropriate another's.

6. See Katherine Hite's *Politics and the Art of Commemoration: Memorials to Struggle in Latin America and Spain* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
7. Marcela García Sebastiani and David Marcihacy, "Celebrating the Nation: 12 October, from 'Day of the Race' to Spanish National Day," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 (2017): 733–35.
8. García Sebastiani and Marcihacy, 733–43. The holiday would also celebrate specific colonial accomplishments, from evangelism to the spreading of language.
9. García Sebastiani and Marcihacy, 755.
10. García Sebastiani and Marcihacy, 734.
11. The center page of the Spanish passport—easiest to open to—boasts an illustration of Columbus's impressive ship. This not only epitomizes the centrality of colonial history in the nation's identity but also suggests that to be Spanish is to be implicated in that legacy. In Barcelona, Columbus's image appears everywhere: his silhouette even replaced the letter "I" in the city's LGBTQ pride logo until 2018. There are, moreover, recurrent claims from segments of the pro-Catalan independence group that Columbus was Catalan and that his voyage to America was financed and promoted by the Crown of Aragon (a state that included what is now Catalonia) rather than the Crown of Castile (the rest of Spain, excluding the Kingdom of Navarra). Though largely discredited, and marginal to begin with, the claims expose a striking determination not only to retain but to make concerted efforts to adopt as exclusive a symbol of colonial history. In other words, some Catalan separatists reject Spanishness but do not reject its colonial ideology.
12. Philomena Essed, *Diversity: Gender, Color, and Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 137–38.
13. Interview with immigration lawyer Santiago Luengo Martín, Madrid, March 11, 2019. Among immigrants to Spain, though, Latin Americans are subject to a lesser degree of racism than, for instance, those from sub-Saharan Africa, who are considered to be culturally and ethnically even further removed from Europeans. (See Landry-Wilfrid Miampika and Maya García de Vinuesa, "Migration, Racism and Postcolonial Studies in Spain," in *Racism Postcolonialism Europe*, eds. Graham Huggan and Ian Law [Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009], 94.)
14. Magali M. Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 36.
15. Carrera, 36.
16. Carrera, 36–37.
17. Carrera, 36, 101.
18. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1966), 34.
19. Carrera, 36. See also Diana DiPaolo Loren, "Corporeal Concerns: Eighteenth-Century Casta Paintings and Colonial Bodies in Spanish Texas," *Historical Archeology* 41, no. 1 (March 2007): 24–25.
20. Evelina Guzauskyte, "Fragmented Borders, Fallen Men, Bestial Women: Violence in the Casta Paintings of Eighteenth-Century New Spain," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 86, no. 2 (March 2009): 175–204, 192.
21. Loren, 26; Guzauskyte, 185.
22. Tania Bruguera interviewed by Tate Modern, "Tania Bruguera: *Surplus Value 2012*," *Performance at Tate: Into the Space of Art*, Tate Research Publication, 2016, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/resources/films-and-videos/tania-bruguera-tanks>.

23. "Tania Bruguera: *Surplus Value* 2012." The denial of equal access, or any access at all, was similarly addressed at the 2003 Venice Biennale by Spanish artist Santiago Sierra, who denied visitors without Spanish passports access to the Spanish pavilion. (See Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 [Fall 2004]: 74.)
24. Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees," *Symposium* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 117.
25. Agamben, 118.
26. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1962), 285.
27. Ayten Gündoğdu, *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights: Hannah Arendt and the Contemporary Struggle of Migrants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2015), 116–17.
28. Gündoğdu, 96.
29. Lutz, 105.
30. Gündoğdu, 17.
31. Gündoğdu, 17, 21. Although international human rights norms forbid "arbitrary" and "indefinite" detention, there are ongoing debates about what those terms mean. Such norms are thus difficult to define and impose.
32. Gündoğdu, 156.
33. In March of 2019, the Spanish conservative Popular Party proposed a policy that, if passed, will allow undocumented migrant women to stay in Spain during pregnancy if they opt to give their babies up for adoption. These women would be expelled from Spain after giving birth. This example reflects just how deeply immigration, bioethics, and gender intersect. See Natalia Unquera, "PP Proposes Delaying Deportation of Pregnant Migrants Who Opt for Adoption," *El País*, March 14, 2019, accessed March 15, 2019, https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/03/14/inenglish/1552551266_621264.html.
34. Jordi Garreta Bochaca, ed., *Immigration into Spain: Evolution and Socio-Educational Challenges* (New York: Peter Lang AG International Academic Publishers, 2016).
35. Mariona Lladonosa Latorre, "National Identity and Immigration in Spain. The Management of Immigration in a Multi-National State," in *Immigration into Spain*, 19.
36. Gündoğdu, 117. The rise in the number of immigration detention centers in Spain was rooted in the country's poor structural approach to immigration policy. Spain had traditionally been a country of emigration and was insufficiently prepared when the flow of incoming migration soared in the mid-1980s. Suddenly, because there were virtually no government workers with immigration experience, not to mention expertise, the task of dealing with immigrants was largely delegated to police forces. Within a short period, immigration shifted from a relatively insignificant point of concern on Spain's political agenda to a matter of urgency. In 1985, an uninformed and unproductive parliamentary debate concluded with practically no amendments to a proposed immigration bill.
- In an effort to satisfy the European Economic Community, the EU's predecessor, the new legislation was highly restrictive in nature. It emphasized the implementation of strict border control, introduced presence in Spain without authorization as a punishable offense, and instituted a challenging set of criteria for renewing temporary residence permits. Throughout the 1990s, Spanish lawmakers

prioritized the EU's objectives, demonstrating a "thoughtless acceptance of European policy" that did not adequately account for nationally specific immigration issues. As for Latin American countries, new visa policies were particularly difficult to legitimize given Spain's historical debt to its ex-colonies. (See Francisco Javier Moreno, "The Evolution of Immigration Policies in Spain. Between External Constraints and Domestic Demand for Unskilled Labour," *Estudio/Working Paper*, no. 211 [2004]: 10–17.)

There had been a transition from a focus on ethnicity to, after immigration law was initiated, the status of migrants as noncitizens of Spain. This, Ortiz claims, was a clean, politically correct "way to justify racism," since migrant status was usually (and continues to be) "tied to skin color." (Interview with Ortiz, Paris, November 2018.)

37. Gündoğdu, 91.

38. In response to an earlier version of this paper, in which I included a discussion of vandalism and destruction of monuments in service of protest, art historian Marisa Lerer insightfully observed that Ortiz and Quiroga offer an "alternative to defacement and destruction," suggesting that "perhaps it is not the removal of monuments, but their reframing through intimate gestures that offers a vehicle of understanding our contemporary relationship to historic figures in the public sphere." (Personal correspondence with Lerer, April 2019.)

39. Roxana Marcoci, "Sanja Iveković: Lady Rosa of Luxembourg," *Inside/Out: A MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog*, MoMA, December 1, 2011, https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2011/12/01/sanja-ivekovic-lady-rosa-of-luxembourg/.

40. However, Iveković did realize a major Nike-related project a few years later. See Rosalyn Deutsche, "'We Don't Need Another Hero': War and Public

Memory," in *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good*, eds. Johanna Burton, Shannon Jackson, and Dominic Willson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 14–17.

41. Since they are documented in a perpetual state of dying, perhaps, as Ken Gonzales-Day might suggest, the flowers' deaths last forever. (Ken Gonzales-Day, keynote lecture at *Erasures: Excision and Indelibility in the Art of the Americas*, New York University, New York, NY, April 12, 2019.)

42. Agustín Santos Maraver, lecture at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, New York, April 11, 2019.

43. Homi Bhabha, "The World and the Home," *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992): 142.

44. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 132.

45. Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 239–40.

Figures

Ivana Dizdar

Moving from Celebration to Critique:
On Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga's *Ofrenda*



Figure 1

A floral arrangement at the foot of Barcelona's Columbus monument.
Still from video documentation of Daniela Ortiz and Xose Quiroga's *Ofrenda*, 2011.
Video by Xose Quiroga. Courtesy Daniela Ortiz.



Figure 2

The same floral arrangement, relocated by the artists to Barcelona's immigration detention center. Still from video documentation of *Ofrenda*, 2011. Video by Xose Quiroga. Courtesy Daniela Ortiz.

Ephemerality, Permanence, and the Circulation of Cultural Memory

Emily L. Butts

Adriana Corral's artistic practice grapples with histories that are both a threat to and threatened by erasure. This essay will consider works by Corral that challenge the perceived permanence of historical narratives by blurring the lines between invisibility, visibility, and hypervisibility. I examine two recent projects of Corral's in which she confronts the assumed veracity of documents by exploring ephemerality and stability.¹ The first work is a piece made of ashes, titled *The Trace of a Living Document* (2017) (figs. 1–2), which employs abstraction to communicate the inexpressibility of a body in pain. The second, *Unearthed: Desenterrado* (2018) (figs. 3–4), is a site-specific installation at a former processing center for the Bracero Program that features a white flag embroidered with the American bald eagle and the Mexican golden eagle.² While the former work reveals how the abstraction of documents intended to protect victims of state-sponsored violence can critically distance viewers from the very violence that was enacted in the first place, the latter exposes the emblems of nationhood that the United States relies on to assert and maintain hemispheric dominance.³ Considering the self-erasing material—the document that stands in for the human body—alongside the monumental flag that represents the origin myths of neighboring countries exposes hierarchical mechanisms of erasure that are hidden in plain sight.

Corral was born in El Paso, Texas in 1983, and her artistic production stems from a practice based in profound research, which often results in large-scale site-specific installations. Working with ashes and soil as her primary mediums, she deals with the concept of loss by using matter in its most basic form: the earth that we stand on and the burned remnants of what has been. In doing so, Corral calls attention to symbols—legal documents and signs of nationhood—that permeate our cultural landscape and that, in their hypervisibility, are internalized within the individual and collective consciousness.⁴ She investigates the material circumstances of memory through her ephemeral

installations by using erasure not only as an aesthetic device but also as a method of production. Ashes persist beyond the act of destruction, and while the emblems of nationhood are often interpreted as permanent, the relationship between these symbols and the histories they obfuscate, or render invisible, is multifaceted. In this essay, I intend to present the objects as foils to one another: the near invisibility of the geometric ash floor pieces in *The Trace of a Living Document* and the hypervisibility of the flag in *Unearthed: Desenterrado*.⁵ How might observing the two together help us better understand how to counteract erasure? By reenacting and appropriating the violence of erasure, and the emblems that reinforce such violence, Corral's aesthetic practice reflects and inverts the very social and political structures that perpetuate historical erasure.

Erasure can be understood as the forceful elimination or destruction of content by means of removal, often with the goal of leaving no trace behind. It can manifest itself in many ways, including censorship, effacement, exclusion, and rejection, and through acts such as the elimination of histories from textbooks, the toppling of monuments, the replacement of political structures, and the destruction of cultural artifacts. The main effect of erasure is the enactment of organized forgetting. Its violence becomes palpable not only for the communities that bear it, but also for those who inflict it on others. But the threat of erasure relentlessly haunts minorities, more than it does any other persons or demographic—women, people of color, and nonbinary people, among many others—whose existence is seen as less valuable or as readily replaced by those who benefit from their oppression. In the United States, ethnic and racial minorities carry their individual and cultural memories but possess little to no historical capital. Discovering a buried past is made all the more difficult for communities that have suffered intentional erasure. Memory can be viewed as a political project, a vigilant attempt to remember. Without such vigilance, the speed of history threatens to sweep certain stories away.

In *The Trace of a Living Document*, Corral uses ashes to gesture toward the gross human rights abuses, corruption, and state-inflicted violence prevalent along the United States–Mexico border. Her charred medium comes from the burning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), an international document adopted by the United Nations General

Assembly on December 10, 1948. The eight-page document outlines the basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. It was implemented as an effort to shape a new national—and even international—identity by attempting to develop a universal moral standard.⁶ Created after the Second World War, the document functioned as a form of postwar reconstruction to cope with the horrors that were experienced on a global scale. The document symbolizes the creation of a postwar moral bottom line to ensure that those oppressed would be protected from their oppressors.⁷

Thus, the document serves as a consciously organized and largely utopian form of cultural memory. Rather than reflecting natural histories or memory, the declaration produces history. It is particularly rooted in moral uniformity and in the championing of democratic freedom prevalent at the onset of Cold War politics. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt argues that what convinces the masses is not fact but repetition and consistency. In other words, making fiction is a powerful tool in the production of ideological content. Arendt writes:

In an ever-changing, incomprehensible world the masses had reached the point where they would, at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and nothing was true. . . . Mass propaganda discovered that its audience was ready at all times to believe the worst, no matter how absurd, and did not particularly object to being deceived because it held every statement to be a lie anyhow.⁸

Over the seventy years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was put into effect, its unrealistic utopian worldview—one wherein all human beings are universally protected by international law—has become evident. Its words lose meaning as we learn that other political forces are—mostly in the name of economic growth—working in tandem with and against international human rights law.

Corral conceived *The Trace of a Living Document* after attending the 106th private session of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances at the UN, where she observed court proceedings and had access to confidential

documents from Campo Algodonero, also known as the Cotton Field Case, which concluded that despite its awareness of the frequency of gender-related violence in the region, the Mexican state of Chihuahua did not protect its victims.⁹ Cases such as these underscore the failure of postwar policies—and moreover, the dangers of idealizing the UDHR—to protect against state-sponsored and gang-related violence.

The legal document is to be understood as a tool through which culture tries to make sense of history—and the trauma it carries— buying into the widespread belief that history can consolidate itself into one narrative. Corral's work addresses what we do when history doesn't give us what we want. The artist questions the ways in which historical and national emblems inform our ability to remember. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag states, "perhaps too much value is assigned to memory, not enough to thinking. Remembering is an ethical act, has ethical value in and of itself. Memory is, achingly, the only relation we can have with the dead."¹⁰ If our trust in history lies in official documentation, how do we incorporate the ghosts of history that linger in our periphery? Corral's ash floor pieces, in turn, ask us to see the disappeared through their own apparitions.¹¹

The English version of the UDHR is eight pages long; for each page of the document, Corral maps out eight four-foot by eight-foot burial-sized plots on the floor, which she spaces about a foot apart from one another. While preparing and installing the work, Corral wears kneepads, an apron, and a respirator mask so as not to breathe in or blow away the artwork. Corral's insulation is not only practical and precautionary—the image of the artist in protective gear also personifies a long-standing, discriminatory anxiety of contamination by foreigners. This sense of caution and distrust parallels the racist fear that foreign bodies carry unwanted contagions, as well as the categorization of bodies as "clean" and "unclean" that has led to a practice of medical gatekeeping in the borderlands.

Corral states that her practice is about the traces: the ashes that accumulate in the cracks of the gallery floor, the debris that sticks to the broom that sweeps away the installation, or the ashes she transfers onto walls that are then painted over for the next installation. This investigation reflects that while certain bodies that enter visual circulation can just as quickly disappear,

they can also continue to haunt us. Although the freshly painted gallery gives the appearance of a blank slate, Corral's practice emphasizes the idea that this blankness is only a facade. Through her display of censorship and destruction, the apparitional and the disappeared can become visible, allowing us to recognize what has been attempted to be erased but can never fully be so.¹²

By enacting the violence of erasure as a form of geometric abstraction, Corral's ash installations symbolize what has gone missing. The ambiguity of geometric nonfigurative forms reflects the faceless and anonymous bodies whom the UDHR intends, but fails, to protect. The artist avoids sensationalizing victims of violence by forgoing the use of their names, faces, or any inkling of specificity. Instead we are left to face the overwhelming sense of "universality" caused by the sheer number of cases that fall under the UDHR's purview.¹³ Thus, viewers are positioned within a comfortable distance of violence, even as they observe the remnants of the destruction it has wreaked. Corral asks us to give practical consideration to disappearance, censorship, and exile to understand that we too could be at risk of becoming, just like the subjects of her work, erased.

The phenomena the works address—the erasure of marginalized people's identities, narratives, and histories versus the hypervisibility of national symbols—cannot be regarded as separate, but rather as closely intertwined. Corral's latest large-scale installation, *Unearthed: Desenterrado*, is the first of her investigations into the symbols that permeate our everyday, so embedded within the individual and collective psyches that their original meaning is lost. In fact, as an object that is fixed in our collective consciousness, the flag has become inconspicuous because of its visual presence.

The structural inequalities of social and political life can be found in architecture, for it is through the inhabitants of these structures that we can deduce whose invisibility is desired, created, and maintained. The built environment is the subject of *Unearthed: Desenterrado*, installed at Rio Vista Farm, a former processing center for the Bracero Program just outside of El Paso, Texas.¹⁴ Founded in 1942, the Bracero Program was created to ease the labor shortage in the agricultural and railroad sectors while American men were away at war.¹⁵ From 1951 until 1964, Rio Vista Farm alone processed more than eighty thousand Mexican workers per year. The program lasted long after the war

ended, as contractors became increasingly dependent on cheap labor and willing workers despite harsh and inhumane working conditions. By the time the program ended in 1964, the codependent relationship between foreign labor supply and the United States' demand for cheap labor had cemented itself, resulting in an increase in undocumented immigration to the United States. More than fifty years after the termination of the program, cheap Mexican labor continues to be in high demand, despite the increase in border hysteria and xenophobic and racist rhetoric surrounding immigrants within the United States. The control of these bodies through their labor represents the economic authority that the United States has over Mexico, effectively asserting and maintaining hemispheric dominance in the guise of economic policy.

Corral's installation at Rio Vista featured a sixty-foot pole flying a white cotton flag embroidered with the American bald eagle on one side and the Mexican golden eagle on the other. She placed this flag in the same location where United States and Mexican flags once flew to welcome braceros to the camp. The flag flew for three months, from March through June of 2018, allowing just enough time for the harsh desert winds to weather nearly half of the flag into shreds. Here, the mangled flag stands for the bodies of braceros that were exposed daily to severe working conditions for less than minimum wage or, more often, for no pay at all. At the end of the installation, the white flag was removed and the flagpole was reused to fly the flag of the United States.

Flags have become the ultimate device for displaying propaganda to the public; they are large, highly visible, and mutable in their ability to represent a multitude of meanings to many people at once. Therefore, a flag is not only a symbol of nationhood but also a mechanism to control the masses. In discussing the totalitarian movement, Arendt elaborates on the way in which leaders create and maintain control over the masses: "Everything hidden, everything passed over in silence, became of major significance, regardless of its own intrinsic importance."¹⁶ In Corral's piece, the flag symbolizes the cumulative structures and forms of socialization that are produced and maintained by nation-states, the community, and individual subjects, as manifested in the United States flag that now flies in the place of *Unearthed: Desenterrado*.

Flags fly above the people who are forced to work underneath them; they dwarf the bodies of those who stand below them, which are visible along the horizon and from a distance. Yet the presence of this national symbol is often rendered invisible by the sheer fact of its cultural and architectural ubiquity throughout the United States.¹⁷ Underneath these flags, we recite our pledges of allegiance to our respective countries; it is not rational but symbolizes the romanticization of sovereignty. Achille Mbembé distinguishes between reason and unreason, and between passion and fantasy, by defining this romance as

the belief that the subject is the master and controlling author of his or her own meaning. Sovereignty is therefore defined as a twofold process of *self-institution* and *self-limitation* (fixing one's own limits for oneself). The exercise of sovereignty, in turn, consists in society's capacity for self-creation through recourse to institutions inspired by special social and imaginary significations.¹⁸

This sense of division between self-institution and self-limitation is not only relevant to the geographic separation of space and territory along the borderlands, but also to the idealization of binaries such as good-bad, us-them, and white-nonwhite that determine on which side of sovereignty an individual may fall, or, in this case, which side of a flag an eagle is stitched on.¹⁹

By displaying the American eagle on one side of the flag and the Mexican eagle on the other, *Unearthed: Desenterrado* embodies the idealized binary prevalent within the borderlands. This symbolism is deepened by the material the artist used to trace the two eagles onto the cotton flag: ashes from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The use of this document serves as a reminder of the socialization tied to objects such as flags or national emblems such as the bald eagle. These objects maintain a certain status due to their own visibility, which is subject to modification by or loss to the speed of history.²⁰ *Unearthed: Desenterrado* explores what could happen if the reigning system of rule dissolves and is replaced by another. This possibility is represented by the many flags that have flown at Rio Vista: the flags of Mexico and the United States that during

the Bracero Program flew next to a sign that said “Welcome Braceros,” Corral’s white flag, and now the flag of the United States. The transient nature of *Unearthed: Desenterrado* suggests that systems of power can crumble despite the documents, doctrines, and monuments that suggest permanence. Through this ephemerality, Corral investigates the precariousness of minority positionalities in this country, but also of political leaders, regimes, nations, and the images and symbols that identify them as such.

Social rights, human rights, and injustice cannot be addressed within a system that perpetuates binaries—us-them, invisible-visible, erased-thriving, or war-peace. Police violence, mass incarceration, eugenics as a form of medical gatekeeping, and economic and military intervention in Latin America make up just a few of the systems of oppression that the United States relies on to promise freedom, liberty, and justice.

How do these two examples of Corral’s practice work together to blur the lines between ephemerality and permanence? On the one hand, they confront cultural and political systems that simultaneously ignore and condemn the violence of enforced disappearances. On the other, they highlight an economic system that enforces structural inequalities vis-à-vis xenophobia and racism in the United States. Can these two cumulative structures of violence fit within a system of binaries that outlines good-bad or just-unjust—and at whose expense and for what gain? In other words, are these two forms of oppression structurally similar in the social, economic, and political consequences they share? These two works by Corral reveal a hierarchy of systems of control and the ways they are circulated within visual culture and our collective memory. Perhaps these two forms of violence are not, in fact, separate at all, but rather intrinsically linked by shared moral principles that render some people and histories subservient to others.

1. Michel Foucault discusses “values of truth” in relation to the “domain of fictitious objects, endowed with arbitrary properties . . . without any authority of experimental or perceptive verification,” which are linked to “laws of possibility, rules of existence for the objects that are named, designated, or described within it, and for the relations that are affirmed or denied in [the statement].” Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 91.
2. In April 2019, an exhibition catalog was released by Washington and Lee University’s Staniar Gallery in Lexington, Virginia. The exhibition ran from April 22 to May 24, 2019, and it was the first place where the flag was displayed outside of Rio Vista Farm. The catalog includes essays by curators, historians, and art historians, including an oral history of a former bracero, Felipe Serrano, conducted by Yolanda Chávez Leyva, director of the Institute of Oral History and of the Borderlands Public History Lab and associate professor at the University of Texas at El Paso. Other contributors include Andrea Lepage, Denise Markonish, David Dorado Romo, and Courtney Lane Stell. The catalog offers a comprehensive review of the piece across disciplines. For more information, please visit <https://www.wlu.edu/staniar-gallery/current-season/adriana-corrал>. Andrea Lepage, ed., *Unearthed: Desenterrado, Adriana Corral* (Lexington, VA: Washington and Lee, Staniar Gallery, 2019).
3. Benedict Anderson provides a comprehensive global interpretation of nationalism in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).
4. Maurice Halbwachs explores the crossover of memory, history, and the lived experience and how their relationships to class and race are intertwined. See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
5. As I present these two artworks as foils to one another, the question of art spectatorship comes into question as well. The geometric forms on the floor could be considered legible as “fine art” to the trained art viewer, while the flag is not considered art at all, but rather a fixture on our horizon.
6. The text of the UDHR can be accessed at <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.
7. It could be said that the erosion of this moral standard led to the rise of neoliberalism. The exhibition *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* at Haus der Kunst, München, examined the first twenty years following the end of the Second World War, observing the ways in which artists responded to the traumas of the Holocaust and atomic bombings, the use of abstraction and realism by the two political blocs of the Cold War as tools for propaganda, the end of European colonial systems, decolonialization, and civil rights movements in the United States, among other topics. For more information, please see Okwui Enwezor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes, eds., *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965*, English ed. (Munich and New York: Haus der Kunst/Prestel, 2016).
8. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1951), 382.
9. Email from the artist on March 4, 2019. This case was taken to court in 2009, eight years after the bodies of three women were found in a cotton field just outside of Ciudad Juárez. The case, *Campo Algodonero v. The*

United Mexican States, concluded that the state of Chihuahua did not protect the victims despite its full awareness of a pattern of gender-related violence that had resulted in the murders of hundreds of women and girls.

10. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 115.

11. Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

12. The burning of the document is fueled by a sense of unrest. Occasionally, states are sued for failing to properly investigate a case, although more often than not the case doesn't make it to court at all. The cases that Corral observed from Chihuahua, Mexico, represent only a small fraction of the hundreds of victims of disappearance in Latin America—thousands if we count those who are lost to human trafficking on their way to the United States, whose foreign policy reinforces such acts in the region. If the document is a way for culture to try to make sense of history—such as understanding the traumas of war—through the belief that history can be consolidated into one narrative, how do we confront terrible deeds that are systematically occurring in the present? In the case of Corral's work, confronting the ghosts of history is not done through the document but is achieved through the disappeared and the apparitions themselves.

13. Corral's conception of the piece came after her time at the 106th private session of cases of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances at the United Nations, wherein she was able to observe court proceedings. With the help of Ariel Dulitzky, the chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance cases, Corral was able

to obtain confidential documents to the court proceedings from the Cotton Field Case, Campo Algodonero, which were used in the Inter-American Courts of Human Rights in Chile.

14. The artist worked with Sehila Mota Casper from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to name the farm a National Treasure of the National Trust and thus protect the land and buildings against the encroaching urban expanse of El Paso, Texas. For more information on the project, visit <https://savingplaces.org/places/rio-vista#.XL39i-tKjKY>.

15. Over twenty-two years, the Bracero Program offered temporary worker contracts to five million braceros in twenty-four states. It is considered to be the largest foreign worker program in United States history.

16. Arendt, 351.

17. In other words, what symbols evoke patriotism in different contexts? As a colleague once pointed out to me, the sheer presence of flags placed in front lawns of people's homes or hung outside businesses is unique to the United States. The display of flags as a symbol of national pride is unrivaled in other countries. It evokes a level of fandom and obsession with one's patriotism that may only rival a person's dedication to a sports team.

18. Mbembé continues that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die." J.-A. Mbembé, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, in *Project Muse*, previously published in *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 13 (emphasis Mbembé).

19. Mbembé, 11.

20. Pierre Nora calls this the "acceleration of history," which "confronts us with the brutal realization of the difference between

real memory—social and unviolated, exemplified in but also retained as the secret of so-called primitive or archaic societies—and history, which is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organize the past. . . . This conquest and eradication of memory by history has had the effect of a revelation, as if an ancient bond of identity had been broken and something had ended that we had experienced as self-evident—the equation of memory and history.” Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 8.

Figures

Emily L. Butts

Ephemerality, Permanence, and
the Circulation of Cultural Memory



Figure 1

Adriana Corral, *The Trace of a Living Document*, 2017.
Site-specific installation of eight sifted ash plots and eight compressed
ash tablets (all ashes acquired from burned paper copies of
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights); each plot 48 × 96 in.
(121.9 × 243.8 cm); each tablet 12 × 12 × 2 in. (30.5 × 30.5 × 5 cm).
Installation photographed at the Gallery at the University of Texas at Arlington.
Courtesy the artist.



Figure 2

Detail of installation view of *The Trace of a Living Document*, 2017,
at LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions).
Photograph by Christopher Wormwald.
Courtesy the artist.



Figure 3

Adriana Corral, *Unearthed: Desenterrado*, 2018.
Site-specific installation at the historical Rio Vista Farm, various dimensions.
Photo courtesy Anais Acosta, Dr. Yolanda Leyva, and the
Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas at El Paso.



Figure 4

Detail of *Unearthed: Desenterrado*, 2018.
Photo courtesy the artist.

Contributors

Anna Indych-López

is the 2018–2019 Stuart Z. Katz Professor in the Humanities and the Arts at The City College of New York and professor of Latin American and Latinx art at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York. Her work investigates Latin American modernisms as well as Latinx and US-Mexico borderlands contemporary art, focusing on trans-American exchanges, the polemics of realisms, and public space. Her most recent book is *Judith F. Baca* (2019), and she is a frequent contributor to exhibition catalogs, such as the Whitney Museum of American Art's *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art* (2020).

Madeline Murphy Turner

is a PhD candidate at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, where she focuses on modern and contemporary art from Latin America. Her dissertation examines women's artist's books, mail art, and theater in Mexico during the late 1970s and 1980s, looking at these mediums as strategies for inscribing, archiving, and circulating female narratives into history. Her writing has been published in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *DAMN° Magazine*, *Hyperallergic*, *ARTMargins*, and *AWARE* magazine.

Anamaría Garzón Mantilla

is a curator and research professor in the Faculty of Media Studies and Contemporary Arts at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito. She teaches contemporary art theory and curatorial studies. Garzón is the general editor of *post(s)* (<https://revistas.usfq.edu.ec/index.php/posts>), an international academic journal dedicated to contemporary art and critical theory. She holds an MA in contemporary art from Sotheby's Institute of Art, New York, and is an alumna of Independent Curators International.

Ivana Dizdar

is a writer whose work deals with the intersections of art, politics, and law. She holds a master's degree in art history from the Sorbonne and one in curatorial studies from Columbia University. At Columbia, she received several research awards, including a PepsiCo Research Fellowship from the Harriman Institute. Dizdar has presented her work at New York University, Princeton University, Trinity College Dublin, and Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, among other institutions.

Emily L. Butts

is the assistant director at Lawndale Art Center. From 2015 to 2017 she served as curatorial assistant at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where she was involved in the exhibition *Home—So Different, So Appealing*, organized as part of the Getty's Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA initiative. Her research interests include modern and contemporary US American and Latin American art, with a particular focus on the politics of representation.

Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art
Issue 5, April 2020

The Fourth Annual Symposium of Latin American Art:
Erasures: Excision and Indelibility in the Art of the Americas
April 11–12, 2019

Edited by Madeline Murphy Turner
Published by the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)

Series Editor: Blanca Serrano Ortiz de Solórzano
Image and Communications Coordinator: Guadalupe González
Copy Editor: Jessica Ruiz DeCamp
Proofreader: Lucy Laird
Cover: Santiago Pol
Design: El vivero
Printer: Artes Gráficas Palermo

Copyright © Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA), 2020
All texts © the authors

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form
or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without prior permission
from the publisher.

Special thanks to
Ariel Aisiks, Mercedes Cohen, Jordi Ballart, Natacha del Valle, Diana Iturralde,
Ernesto Rivera, Francesca Ferrari, Ana Perry, Tie Jojima, Sonja Gandert,
Brian Bentley, Edward J. Sullivan, Anna Indych-López, The Institute of Fine Arts,
NYU, and the PhD program in art history; the Center for the Humanities; and
the PhD program in Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Cultures (LAILAC) at
The Graduate Center, CUNY

ISBN 978-1-7334164-8-1 (print)
ISBN 978-1-7334164-9-8 (online)
ISSN 2688-478X (print)
ISSN 2688-4798 (online)

Vistas
Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary
Latin American Art

Vistas: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art is a platform for emerging and established scholars, curators, and graduate students working on Latin American art to share their research. The journal emerges from the context of the university but seeks a diverse readership. Its aim is to support the vitality of Latin American art and history, responding to ISLAA's mission to advance academic research in this area and to support future generations of experts in Latin American art.

The Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) was established in 2011 in order to increase the visibility of Latin American art on a global scale. Since its creation, ISLAA has played an international role in fostering advanced research in this field.

