

The Importance of the Non-Important
-re-orientations.

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Abstract

This text is a multi-layered exploration of three central issues regarding the production of my artistic works. The combination of chance, non-conscious cognition combined with biological, social, and political constraints generate strategies that produce new conceptual readings and reframe modes of existence. Secondly, the mediation of these entanglements through instrumentality complements the ways in which artistic awareness is grounded in multiple body states, that seek the formation of new ways of feeling, seeing, thinking, and re-representing. And border thinking, understood as the superposition of multiple fully complex modes of existence and not in between. These intricate clusters of relations provoke nonconventional ways to resist material and conceptual hierarchies that in turn spark the creation of experimental artistic works that reflect multiple positioning in the search for authenticity or autonomy.

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| | |
|---|------------|
| | IV |
| Abstract | II |
| Acknowledgements | III |
| List of Figures | VI |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Botanical Connections. | 4 |
| Pawpaw | 4 |
| Zapote | 6 |
| Bougainvilleas | 8 |
| Functional (Dis)organizations | 10 |
| ImmigrArt. | 10 |
| The End of Thought | 14 |
| Illegal | 19 |
| Infinitesimal Self-differentiation | 21 |
| Rocks | 23 |
| Tabula Raza | 24 |
| Daydream | 26 |
| Layers | 28 |
| Limitations | 32 |
| From Material to Medium | 35 |
| The Butterfly Effect | 35 |
| Viewing | 46 |
| Dust | 48 |
| Ausencia | 50 |
| Rules | 50 |
| The Swiftness of Experimental Motions | 57 |
| Margins | 65 |
| Situations | 67 |
| Unsettled Modes | 71 |
| Poetry is in the streets | 75 |
| Diversity | 78 |
| DeLinking | 81 |
| Lola's Art | 83 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| | V |
| Queens and Bees | 85 |
| The Business of Spaces | 88 |
| D-enunciation | 93 |
| Cognitive Journeys | 97 |
| On Withings, Nonthings and (In)coherences. | 97 |
| Travelogos | 99 |
| Border Thinking | 104 |
| Conclusion | 111 |
| The Importance of the Non-Important | 111 |
| Works Cited | 120 |
| Additional Bibliography | 122 |

List of Figures

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1.1 | Pap Paw. Still. Niagara, Ontario. 2017 | 5 |
| 1.2 | In the Solitude of My Opulence. Still. Video. 2014 | 6 |
| 1.3 | Cara de Guanabana. Still. Video. 2018 | 8 |
| 2.1 | Invisible Hands. A to Z. Still. Video. 2017 | 12 |
| 2.2 | The End of Thought. Still. Video.1990 | 14 |
| 2.3 | Illegal_its impact on the body. Still. Video. 2017 | 18 |
| 3.1 | Unden Malum. Still. Video. 2016 | 21 |
| 3.2 | Tabula Raza. Still. Video. 2011 | 23 |
| 3.3 | 1948. Still Image | 26 |
| 3.4 | Ima(Genes). Still. Video.1991 | 27 |
| 3.5 | Stratigraphies. Still. Video.2012 | 30 |
| 3.6 | Civil War. Still. Video. 2012 | 31 |
| 4.1 | Remembering the Portapak. Still. Video. 2010 | 41 |
| 4.2 | Forms of Emerging Behaviour. Still. Video. 2017 | 45 |
| 4.3 | Tactical Cycle-ordination. Still. Video. 2015 | 50 |
| 4.4 | Blinking Pathways. Still. Video. 2016 | 52 |
| 4.5 | Green Bunker. Still. Video. 2014 | 54 |
| 4.6 | Cleaning Practice. Still. Video. 2016 | 56 |
| 4.7 | Does the knife Cry when It enters the Skin? Still. Video. 1989 | 61 |
| 4.8 | Dis-continuity. Still. Video. 2018 | 62 |
| 4.9 | Situations. Still. Video. 2015 | 67 |
| 5.1 | The Aloneness of Photograms. Still. Video. 2016 | 71 |
| 6.1 | May 1968, Graffiti. Still. Video. 2006 | 74 |
| 6.2 | The World Upside Down. Still. Video. 2016 | 78 |
| 6.3 | Lola's Art. Still. Video. 2009 | 82 |
| 6.4 | Samuel and Samantha. Still. Still. Video. 1990 | 86 |
| 6.5 | Gravitational Interferences. Still. Still. Video. 2017 | 91 |
| 6.6 | D-enunciation Still. Video. 2014 | 93 |
| 6.7 | Moving Still. Still. Video. 2014 | 104 |



My mother rewinding a motor. 1948

“Durante medio siglo / la poesía fue / el paraíso del tonto solemne. / Hasta que vine yo / y me instalé con mi montaña rusa. / Suban, si les parece. / Claro que yo no respondo si bajan / echando sangre por boca y narices”,

For half a century / poetry was / the paradise of the solemn fool. / Until I came / and I settled with my roller coaster. / Come on, if you like. / Of course I would not answer if you go down / throwing blood through your mouths and noses "

Nicanor Parra. *Versos de Salón*. 1962.¹

Introduction

This text is about politics from within: to recognize how much we are what we question. It is about border thinking and epistemological disobedience: border thinking, the capacity to unsettle singular notions of belonging and to cross pluriversal, interrelated positionings. It is about decoloniality, to resist, to re-imagine, to re-exist outside given totalities and the established geopolitics of knowledge. It is about the change that happens when we imagine the impossible. It is about resisting social and conceptual oppression and the capacity to transform forms of domination and normalization into productive existences. It is a recognition, a celebration of all forms of life beyond human exceptionalism. This text is about doing(s). It is about encounters with the reverberating forces of materiality that coalesce into creative acts to transform constraints into artistic knowledge. This text is about playful and risky reconfigurations of conceptual relations in contemporary ideas. It follows an erratic trajectory that spins in multiple directions and orientations. As the text emerges through the writing of each sentence, it expands and contracts into numerous singularities like a big bang. This text is about

¹ Parra, Nicanor. Popular poet in Chile with enormous influence and popularity in Latin America, and also considered one of the most important poets of Spanish language literature. He describes himself as an anti-poet, due to his distaste for standard poetic pomp and function—after recitations he would exclaim, *Me retracto de todo lo dicho. I take back everything I said.*

the recognition of new forms of life, new forms of living, of seeing, feeling and thinking; new forms of becoming and changing. This text is about my doings, my personal and limited doings, it is about my workings on.²

Nicanor Parra³ died today, January 22, 2018. Outside Ontario Lake is frozen; I can see it from my window. I swear, it looks like another planet without Nicanor. To read about his poetry is to re-read his endless life. Death is so strange in Canada, so far away yet so close, so silent. Death is a continuation of the life of matter. This paper lives in Nicanor anti-poetry that has no author: “Nunca fuí el autor de nada porque siempre he pescado cosas que andaban en el aire”/ I was never the author of anything because I fished things floating in the air.

This text is about collective imagining, diversity, complexity, and differentiation. This text is about self-realization, the capacity to strip away illusions to arrive at new forms of illusion; a self under-reconstruction, to find commonality in variability. This text is about sharing and making audible, seeable, hearable, that which has been excluded or rendered inexistent, and where real desire is not confined to disciplinary norms. This text is a public space to explore the shifting and contradictory connections between aesthetics and politics.

Social production and desiring-production are the same, and they have differing regimes, with the result that a social form of production exercises essential repression of desiring-production, and also that a desiring-production—a “real” desire—is potentially capable of demolishing social form. But what is the “real” desire since repression is also desired? How can we tell them apart?⁴

² The understanding of Self as a work in progress, a substance, that has to be “worked on.”

³ Parra was one of the most important Latin American poets of the 20th century, heralded for his biting, ironic, lucid style—what he called “anti-poetry.” Parra claimed poetry as a colloquial, irreverent art. “I always associated poetry with the voice of a priest in the pulpit. ... Let the birds do the singing,” he once said.

⁴ Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley. 6th printing edition. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2009, 116.

I internalize the wide range of theory that I read and then engage with it not by using a traditional academic methodology but as a zooming into and out of sources in such a way that they refuse normalization and conformism. Similarly, the chapter divisions are movable bridges that mark places where one set of ideas opens up into another. This method asserts that unexpected entanglements become key to executing the writing of this text. The block quotes in the text might appear to free float and to set up a sequence of incoherencies but in fact they are not at all arbitrary, they are a deliberate strategy for endowing the text with its own kind of rigour. Their sense comes forth as the writing moves forward. Following these methods, writing and making videos are very much parallel processes in my practice

This text is about decolonization from within, through creative acts, through artworks, their capacity to subvert the quotidianity of conceptual imperialism and the data mining of advanced capitalism of every single living organism, desires included. It is also about how we withdraw from change, and defend privilege, by creating new layers of non-productive synthetic connections. It is about how we willingly hide under moral rights to protect a compacted general will of national self and sing the songs of a group of individuals who hold power and legislate discipline. Deep inside it all seems pointless, non-localizable. This text is about the importance of the non-important; that which has been excluded, rendered invisible. Three main theoretical concerns accompany most of my random reflections throughout this text: first, how artistic creativity transmits transformations of non-conscious cognition into cognition; secondly, that the production of instrumental knowledge is embedded in technical systems and how that affects the production of artistic representations; and thirdly, that creativity, the production of novelty, is initially constituted by our proximity to material reverberations and not produced by solely semiotic structures.

If you, reader, get lost in this swirling noise that is about to begin, fear not. That is the idea. The text is organized in disorganized fragments, strata, plateaus that you can arrange, and hold onto what belongs to you, forests where you can enter and leave at your own will. We can find things that make us closer or that would increase our distance. We still should be friends. The rest, throw it away; purple flowers grow in a desert not so far away: *Argylas* (velvet and cartuchos), *Ananucas* (rhodophialas), *Calandrinias* (guanaco foot), *Don Diego de la noche* (oenothera coquimbensis), *Flor de Pajarito* (Corola violacea), *Garra de Leon* (Leonthochir ovallei), *La flor del minero* (centauria chilensis), *Los cuernos de cobra* (skytanthus acutus), *Leucocorymnes* (spring onions, huilles), *Nolanas* (three colored pansies), *Pata de guanaco* (calandrinia logiscapa), *Retamo*, *San Alatodo* (Caesalpinia Angulicaules), *Rhodophilias* (the red and yellow; ananuncas).

Botanical Connections.

Pawpaw

There is a tree that grows in Ontario and has gone unnoticed by scientists, government, and the general public until recently. This tree called Pawpaw, *Asimina atriloba*, appears to have been stranded in this region since the last ice age. It has modified its genetics to adapt to the Canadian climate. It is a tropical tree that produces a fruit that tastes like pineapple, mango, and banana combined. The Cherokee and Seminole peoples knew it, but most of the knowledge of its medical properties were lost during the habitat destruction of colonialism.

Asimina Atriloba, the pawpaw, is an excellent lesson in the importance of

biodiversity. It is a warning to us to be careful. Because if you destroy the forest, you destroy the pawpaw understory. If you destroy this understory, you destroy the specialized beetles for pollination. If you destroy them, you destroy the fruit. If you destroy the fruit, you destroy the yellow-billed cuckoo that uses it for food. If you destroy this bird, you destroy the distribution of the seed. If you do this, you destroy the host plant for the zebra swallowtail. If you do all those things, you destroy the molecular protection that the lowly pawpaw can spin into the chemistry of man against cancer.⁵

I didn't know the Pawpaw, I have never tasted its fruit, but I am longing to eat one.

I have found pawpaw trees growing in a farm near Niagara Falls. I write these words as I look at her fruits. In order to produce fruits female and male, trees have to be at a certain distance. Male trees produce flowers but not fruit. Because of increasing temperatures affecting female trees, male trees are becoming hermaphrodite or bisexual, and are self-fertile and manage to produce uneven elongated fruits.



1.1 *Pap Paw*. Still. Niagara, Ontario.2017

Much has been said about the mysterious conducts of Pawpaw(s), but to become hermaphrodite under stress is more liable than other sex forms. Evolutionary adaptations

⁵ Beresford-Kroeger, Diana. *Arboretum America: A Philosophy of the Forest*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2006, 18.

maximize reproductive success under difficult conditions. Living things have complex adaptive systems that change with changes in the environment. We humans respond similarly to constraints with a combination of conscious and non-conscious strategies. We migrate and recreate patterns from home to feel at ease and less like a stranger. We surround ourselves with clusters of significant things, plants, objects, and memories to keep attached to simulate our past. Under cultural stress we take risks and with the remains of the past create narratives that create communities that are the product of our imagination, as real as the real. We are constantly uncovering persistent forms of power hidden in our daily existence that take us away from our initial expectations. Events appear in our lives that change our direction and help us to discover or create new things.

Zapote

I feel an especial affinity to the Pawpaw tree adaptation, and to my Zapote tree planted in my indoor garden of tropical desires. A seed from a fruit that I ate and brought from Colombia grew into a very atypical small plant with huge leaves covered with a sugary syrup that drips into the soil and attracts all kinds of sweet loving insects. I had been immersed every day in the observation of this plant and how it gradually changed forms and colours each day. I was intrigued by the capacity of life to create variety, to attract change. At the same time, the Israeli bombardment of Gaza in 2014, Operation Strong Cliff as it was called, started. I was moved by the sudden sheer destruction and the number of children who died that day. I felt impotent facing so much cruelty. I decided to do something, and the first thing I did was to record the Zapote tree which made me realize how isolated and privileged I was. This encounter with my privileged existence threw me out of balance and I felt empty. I went out into the streets to video record the emptiness of an empty city.



1.2 *Within the Isolation of My Opulence*. Still. Video. 2014

Initially I wanted to show the diversity of cultures using architecture as a referent and to contrast the feeling of safeness as opposed to Gaza. As with all wars, I feel that they can be avoided. We know that sooner or later the opposite parties will have to resolve the conflict politically, which renders all these deaths absurd and unnecessary. Above all, it filled me with great pain how we register these events with a great deal of frustration at not being able to stop it. I went every day and recorded observational scenes making sure that there were no people or cars in the frame; empty urban landscapes. I recorded one each day and made a tape called *Within the Isolation of my Opulence*⁶, a short essay on how we conform to the innumerable violent acts that happen regularly and how we live our lives as if nothing is happening. I wanted to question our lack of solidarity, lack of action living within a fairly materialistically rich society, and how our silence supports the misery and ruins created by military solutions. The tape starts with a shot of my Zapote tree whose seed had just germinated, and to my surprise it

⁶ Lozano, Jorge. *Within the Isolation of My Opulence*. Vimeo. 2014. vimeo.com/133552410.

had grown into what looked like a small brain held by a thin stem. I stopped shooting the tape fifty days later when the bombing stopped. The tape ends with a shot of the tree fifty days later with small leaves emerging from its brain.

Life is made of surprises that redirect our actions to unknown territories of multiple dimensions, oscillations that unseat us from the comfort of our daily life routines. When we become aware of these oscillations we go through realignments, we are pushed outward into the world, and it is then we realize that we are alone unless we enact, with whatever resources available, a creative response that will bring us back in coordination with all forms of matter.

Bougainvilleas

I was in Cali recording this unusual Bougainvillea tree whose trunk has grown horizontally going through the spirals of a metal fence. There was no one around. The heat was unbearable. I could see the mirage of heat steaming on the pavement; streaming a high pitched metallic sound. Suddenly a motorcycle stopped abruptly⁷. I did not think twice, and with a choreography of two quick moves I landed behind the young driver and grabbed his left hand firmly, as he was trying to pull something out. He panicked and accelerated the motorcycle with the other hand. I let him go; he took off like a meteorite. I was shaken and quickly fled the scene. On my way, I decided to buy a guanabana tree (soursop)⁸ with the money that the young man could not steal.

⁷ It is very common in Cali “these days” to be robbed by armed motorcycle riders.

⁸ The fruit of *Annona muricata*, a broadleaf, flowering, evergreen tree. The exact origin is unknown; it is native to the tropical regions of the Americas



1.3 *Cara de Guanabana*. Still. Video.2018

I bought a 6 feet tall baby tree on the market close to my old neighbourhood. I asked my two old friends Roman and Rodrigo to help me plant it in the park where I grew up. While planting the tree, many memories became alive. I remembered that in our often-dangerous neighbourhood it was important for our gang of friends to protect the birds by planting trees in the abandoned, garbage packed parks. We grew up in a world of endless violence. We saw many of our friends become rich and quickly die. Our neighbourhood was a nest for upcoming cocaine drug lords who rapidly became millionaires and brought weapons and killings into the neighbourhood. They left a trail of stories that we are just starting to uncover. Amidst all this violence we knew that trees were more important than us. Now, many of our friends are dead, but the trees are exuberantly growing. Roman and Rodrigo know it all. They lived through all and survived. Roman is an actor and writer and Rodrigo a film critic and founder of the first Super 8mm film festival in Cali. I left the country, and perhaps this is why I am still alive. I decided to make a video work using our stories and images that I have previously taken of the

Bougainvillea tree, the market, the parks, and street life. I titled it *Cara de Guanabana*⁹. The work illustrates the past of my neighbourhood using amongst other visuals, flowers that the wind and rain are always blowing on the sidewalks. I use my voice-over interrelated with Rodrigo's as a narrator. While I was editing the work, I remembered that my friends called me Cara de Guanabana because I had pimples on my face.

Art is made out of encounters of all shapes created by the chaos of materiality and life's endless variability. With art we try to comprehend and put order to the endless chaos and impacts that appear to be disconnected but in fact are part of the constant integration of forces that emanate when matter becomes visible with all its infinite differentiations.

The totality of a system is an illusion.
There is only integrations of functions¹⁰.

Functional (Dis)organizations

ImmigrArt.

I am part of the class of humans that for diverse political or economic reasons have gone to inhabit other lands uninvited, usually to places called first world. Following similar rules of population displacement when we arrive to the new zones of engagement we enter into social and territorial conflicts where our presence is questioned and we become foreigners. However, through endurance and constant struggle we manage to infiltrate our modes of thinking and being to the new territories. Ours is a decolonization process that in the words of Frantz Fanon,

⁹ Lozano, Jorge. *Cara de Guanabana (Soursop Face)*. Vimeo. 2017. <https://vimeo.com/227550007>

¹⁰ Negarestani, Reza. *Symposium: Speculations on Anonymous Materials*. Accessed January 25, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg0lMebGt9I>.

colonizes the colonizer and in my words creates diversity to monolithic thinking and feeling. It brings into effect a different order, an experiment of growing differences. When we leave our home country we don't know where we are going. Some make it, others no. We become immigrants without knowing it. The definition comes from the outside. I learned to use art as the clearest language to express myself satisfactorily. My doing immigrant's art (re)stores presence, concepts, affects, percepts and prospects—disjointed by stereotypes—and potentially relocated at a border crossing, border thinking, and epistemological transformation. I create space-times in a foreign land. A land where I don't belong. I was not invited. Here I am, within a nation-state with many Indigenous nations, colonized by the English and French. Here, in this plurinational state of many languages, I use English as a second language to communicate and to transmit personal views. With this second language, I partially (re)enact the significance of who I am and learn to transform the exclusionary patterns of prevailing social arrangements and politics of exclusion. At another level, I live in a world of chance, of the temporalities of the coexistence of the present with the past that we carry within. My life, my acts are in response to these temporalities of (in)comprehensible encounters.

Living is about location, position, where am I at ontologically, epistemologically, ethically, aesthetically, and politically. Likewise, writing and visual arts are about encounters with other worlds and other lives, a joyful affirmation of otherness. Art is to see differently what we all see. It is the pleasure of doing in our manner, in our style. I do what I do initially for my pleasure, playful, spontaneous visual travelogues, self-essays of my immigrant trajectory and visual responses to the historical moment. One can imagine a visual notebook, a combination of the spatial imaginary found in *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac and Franz Hessel's idea of the flâneur as the stroller, the urban explorer. Hessel describes the nesting of the concepts of



2.1 *Invisible Hands Still. Video.2017*

cyclical (repetition), linear (ceaseless) and non-linear rhythms (intervals) which he takes from Henri Lefebvre's essays on *Rhythmanalysis*, and the Lettrists' psycho-geographic urban experiments. When I look back at some of my works I discover that they are cartographies of emotions and unnoticed theoretical belongings that I have carried unknowingly rooted in collective philosophical variances. The spontaneous association of ideas that I started to use since I began to write poetry at an early age, was prompted by the realization that arriving to a conclusion was the starting of a new problem. This free association of ideas and/or using fragments was a way to let myself be taken by the endless current of poetics, observations and responses. My artistic work can be considered non-linear transmissions from the processing of not-so-conscious conceptual complexities to subjective perceptions that I randomly assemble, re-cognize, and re-represent. The writing of this text will follow this experimental logic of multiple levels, entries and exits where works and theories merge. In my writing and in my

work I escape established forms of comprehension by entering into other cognitive domains, some unintelligible. The frequency of unintelligible ideas in a text hinders the rules governing comprehension or can become an intriguing invitation, to explore different perspectives, the gaps and in-betweens left over from the displacement of grammatical rules. I fluctuate between agnosia produced by repetition ad nauseam and the sparks of crafting wrought by compacted concepts, to shape significant connections between the unintelligible and the legible.

In 2017, I made *Invisible Hands. A to Z*¹¹. The title *Invisible Hands* is a combination of Adam Smith's description of non-intended social benefits created by self-interested actions, and the trigger of a vague memory of a book that I read in the 70s by Gilberto Sorrentino where he uses each letter of the alphabet to begin a poetic paragraph. *Invisible Hands. A to Z* is a response to the economic separations that exist in Toronto. The work is a visual juxtaposition of two neighbourhoods separated by Bloor street: Rosedale, in the north of Toronto, one of the oldest and wealthiest, most highly priced neighbourhoods, and St James Town, the most extensive high rise community in Toronto and Canada; it is one of 13 economically deprived areas in the city. Inspired by Le Corbusier's "towers in the park," it has 13 towers, and each one named after a major Canadian city. Around 13000 people live in these buildings where more than 60% of its population is identified as immigrant. Trapped in one of these buildings lives my friend Simon, a Cuban actor and playwright who had to abandon his career as a playwright to survive as a cook. *Invisible Hands. A to Z* is a dual-screen video/sound experimental docu-installation that compares and contrasts views that reflect and critique the hierarchies creating exclusion and separation in urban environments.

¹¹ Lozano, Jorge. *Invisible Hands. A to Z*. Vimeo. 2017. <https://vimeo.com/191289498>

Se siente mal, profesor? ----
 Mareado. Siento la rotación de la Tierra
 Siéntese para que no se caiga. Le traemos
 agua? No. Tequila.

*Are you feeling down professor?
 Dizzy. I'm feeling the rotation of the Earth
 Sit down you might fall. Would you like some
 water? No. Tequila.¹²*

The End of Thought

Overextending a quote from Tristan Garcia's philosophy book *Form and Object* to a social realm, is a good starting point to understand feelings of emptiness and displacement and to introduce my video called *The End of Thought*.¹³

“Absence is either comprehension without being or being without comprehension. In the first case, absence resembles emptiness: something comprehends another thing that is not there. In the second case, absence resembles exile: something is in another thing, but this other thing doesn't comprehend this something. The two faces of absence, emptiness and exile, are the two possible operations of presence.”¹⁴

A while back coming from Miami to Toronto, I decided to be last in line to customs. I was the only person of colour on the flight, and I wanted to see if the immigration officers would stop me. I was always getting stopped; back then, being Colombian was a profession.

¹² Vallejo, Fernando. *Las bolas de Cavendish*. Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial Colombia. 2016. 83

¹³ Lozano, Jorge. *The End of Thought*. Vimeo. 1990. <https://vimeo.com/255816242>

¹⁴ Garcia, Tristan. *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2014, 168.



2.1 *Invisible Hands: A to Z*. Still. Video. 2017

2.2 *The End of Thought*. Still. Video. 1990

Everyone on that flight was welcomed and allowed to leave without disruptions except for me. They sent me to another room. I was searched and questioned. I told them that they were racist. An officer with tears in the eyes denied that there was racism in Canada and told me that I was overreacting, that it was a legal routine, and I had no right to make such accusations. Finally, I was let go. In subsequent trips, they stopped me again, and this time I was sent directly to a room where they send visitors only. When my turn came, they interrogated me. What did you do in Colombia? Have you been in prison there or in Canada? Instead of answering their question I would ask them: What I am doing here if I have a Canadian passport? Nonetheless, they would send me to a very awkward and intrusive inspection of my body and luggage. This routine went on for around five years, and I travel a lot. Each time, they would draw a pink line across the immigration entry form and send me to the newcomer's immigration room. Why am I here, if I am a Canadian citizen? They would shake their heads and interrogate me. Next, they would send me to another room to carefully inspect my luggage and ask more questions. I decided never to

wash my clothes before I came back to Canada. I would put my dirty underwear on top and make a mess of the rest. I also talked to my MP who sent a letter that did not have an effect whatsoever. At one of my “why am I here, if I am a Canadian citizen?” an immigration officer told me that another officer a while back had put a warning in my file that could not be taken off, it would become obsolete in five years. *The End of Thought* starts with: *nothing is better than leaving. Nothing is better than coming back: If you are welcome!* The tape is a collage of bits of visuals that reconstruct personal moments of daily events that refuse literal translations. It is a trip to somewhere in nowhere's land, a timeless, unscripted exercise to fight the boredom produced by repeated exclusions and rejections. It is a way to exist and to celebrate the warping of lineal-thinking and the reiterations used to control us.

The contestation of bodies and bodily forces is no more fierce than the contestation of ideas.¹⁵

Being immigrant (artist) is obligatorily being affected by others, with what appears to be a wall of orderly rules, imposed behaviors, and limitations of being. The immigrant's spiritual force, practice, orientations, goals, seduced or subdued by the new geographic, social, and cultural environment, would soon perish asphyxiated by the forces of assimilation. A cultural continuum of customs, social norms, stereotypes, hypocrisy and shitty jobs interrupted only by a strong will and resistance to becoming a bad copy of others. Defiance is not a total denial of present Canadian reality, the goodness in it; but of the systemic incapacity to create new forms of organization from differences. Changes benefit all of us, but the compactness and fears of

¹⁵ Grosz, Elizabeth. *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017, 110.

dominant cultures blindly reject newer modes of existence. There has been a historic tendency in the European settler population to equate coloured immigration with danger, and differences with terror. Resistance to subjugation explodes the body of the immigrant, physically, semantically, and linguistically into multiple creative possibilities. Each quantum bit of her body is displaced, and it hurts. There is no solace in so many suspicious looks and misunderstandings. Hostile people who pretend to smile but cannot help but judge you as the stranger. Passion invigorates challenge. The body and mind of the immigrant blossom here, and there: in the aggressive stagnation of dominant culture. The immigrant blossoms in the poverty of a knowledge nurtured in colonial intransigency. She/he/it blossoms in the complacency of art, and the privilege of art institutions, in the sweat of the factories, in the university classrooms, in the pits of progressist theories and social causes. It blossoms in the lack of love, in judgment by appearances, in the one-sided goodwill of multiculturalism, and in solitude. Immigrant lives matter. There is only one way out: de-assimilate or die fast another's death. The death of the immigrant should be slower: a continuous morphing process that deconstructs commanding positions, reverts hierarchies by exposing their arbitrary nature, and mutates from the inside out producing a multidimensional being with the power to change a nation. The converted converts single-mindedness and binary distinctions into heterogeneous dimensions of transnational identities.

Tupi or not tupi that is the question.

Catiti Catiti
Imara Notia
Notia Imara
Ipeju^{*16}

The immigrant is a cultural Brazilian Anthropophagi Machine that swallows all and then throws up the old parts looking like new. Many times the immigrant ceases to be and decides to adjust as proof that we are all the same; he goes in a closet and becomes part of the somnambular laws of assimilation. Not without contradictions, the immigrant at her best brings happiness and change. She imports different colours, new flavours, different spices, new geographies, different sounds, new odours, different sexualities, new words, different concepts, new rhythms, different dreams, new strategies, different gestures, new combinations, and new knowledge to the homogeny of sameness. Immigration (legal or illegal) is biodiversity. However, this is far from a proposition for a full structural revolution or the radical change needed for humans to coexist with all living matter and together restore the life of the planet. Capitalism, our system of knowledge, the other Biotech Post Anthropophagi Machine will take all that it needs including the immigrant's children and will confine them to the residential pre-post-secondary schools of conformism and consumption.

¹⁶ De Andrade, Oswaldo. *The Cannibal Manifesto*. May, 1928.

Illegal



2.3 *Illegal Its Impact on the Body*. Still. Video. 2017

When I came to Canada in 1971, I used to look at myself in the mirror and tell my reflection “ *I am not so different, I might have an accent but then...!*”. I firmly believed that we were all equal but as time passed I started to realize that I was different and that difference had a price: exclusion and discrimination. Since then, the corporeal and non-corporeal components of my immigrant body have endured radical changes to resist its total loss. I do still look at myself in the mirror and ask myself who is that man looking at me. In the innumerable jobs that I had to do I met people from many other countries living and working illegally. I still remember their stories highlighted with a sense of humour and an incredible capacity to withstand the transformations that an illegal person has to go through. As years pass by I have found that I have lots of memories and I spend more time remembering them than I used to.

Life contracts the past. In 2017 I made *Illegal_its impact on the body*¹⁷, a compilation created from histories of illegal immigrants in Canada, nomadic friends who quickly disappeared into new identities or were forcibly deported. There are approximately 200,000

¹⁷ Lozano, Jorge. *Illegal_its impact on the body*. Vimeo. 2017. <https://vimeo.com/240383621>

illegal immigrants in Canada. This video is just a spark of their constant re-invention of freedom, endurance, and resistance. The last amnesty was in the 1980s, and the only pathway to legal status is under a Humanitarian & Compassionate application with an estimated 5% success rate.

Illegal_its impact on the body is an exploration of the possibilities of creating transversal situations in order to embody subjectivities and points of view of the subjects treated in the work. A non-conventional documentary, *Illegal_its impact on the body* breaks accepted rules by assembling unrelated events, inexplicable realities that point to facts that are inexplicably true. It is an exploration of the power of creative practices to create critical discourse, theory, knowledge, At the same time it explores aesthetic and political determinations implicit in the real and image making. This dual operation of visually cracking open the relationship between the real and image making reflect their political and social complexities. It makes visible the crisis of representation and the people represented. A crisis that also circulates through the body of the artist maker. In other words as I, the artist constructs the representation of the illegal people, I the artist assume the weight of illegality as my own in order to negotiate out of a inexplicable experience some kind of truth.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Illegal_its impact on the body* reviewed by Mike Hoolboom, local Toronto experimental filmmaker. “*Illegal_its impact on the body* (33 minutes 2017) offers a harrowingly eloquent quartet of illegal immigrants living in Toronto, Canada. Each works a variety of routinely underpaid jobs, including dishwasher, janitor, metal shop hack, construction crew. Chief amongst the economic precariat, they are routinely exploited for free labour (you mean I have to pay you?) and sexual services. At any moment their new “friends” can report them and have them deported, diminishing the possibilities of resistance or refusal. In a closing title the artist states that “this video is just a spark of their (illegals) constant reinvention of freedom, resistance and endurance.”

Infinitesimal Self-differentiation

I have said South School, because in reality, our north is the South. There must be no north, for us, but in opposition to our South. So now we put the map upside down, and then we have a fair idea of our position, and not as they want in the rest of the world. The tip of America, from now on, prolonging itself, points insistently to the South, our north.¹⁹

I always go in the opposite direction that most people go. I could not figure out where south, north, east or west was. Not that I care. I am erratic. My adolescence was being against all. I knew that I was not alone on this planet, but other humans made me uncomfortable. I could not join nationalist, class, race, age, ableist, heteronormative, sexual, financial, artistic elitist behaviours and discourses. Colombia felt too oppressive, too small, and too Catholic. Religions are experts in willful acts to spread confusion in a world already wrecked by exploitation, inequality and lies. They are ancient knowledge that became corrupt and disciplinary, and have killed the vibrancy of matter. I have never believed in god; I could not bear the thought of someone's omniscience copiously spying on me. Mr. KnowItAll had no space to prohibit my delightful desires, my ongoing disobedience, and my unearthing poly-sexuality. I had enough of my father who worked like hell to please his ignorant bosses and at home bossed us around. He used to post on the walls of our house a code of conduct under the threat of punishment. *La Letra con Sangre entra*, he used to tell us. In 2016, I made a diptych video-tape called *Unde Malum* using breakfast cereal, Alphabits floating on milk. I write in English and Spanish: *La Letra con Sangre entra*, Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child (He that spareth his rod hateth his son), corporeal punishment since day one. The sweet light brown letters from Alphabits Cereal float on milk.

¹⁹ Torres Garcia, Joaquin. *Universalismo Constructivo*. Ed. Poseidón, Buenos Aires, 1941.



3.1 *Uden Malum*. Still. Video. 2016

The wind moves them around writing the phrase simultaneously on two screens: *Uden Malum* is 5 minutes long. Long enough to become viewable and conceptually edible. Recently a friend asked me what the meaning of *Uden Malum* was. *The origin of evil*, I replied. *And what does have to do with breakfast or cereal* she asked. *Maybe nothing, but John Harvey Kellogg, the owner of Graham Flour and Cornflakes Kellogg's was involved in developing anti masturbatory technologies including mutilation. They also made chastity belts as they are making cornflakes. Around 1880, they started making vibrators, the trunk-shaking and other devices that were later redefined by queer and heterosexual communities into sexual practices of resistance.* During this period of industrialization the production of instruments designed to regulate domestic practices, starting with breakfast to the control of sexual contact. *From Kelloggs to anti masturbatory belts.*²⁰

²⁰ Preciado, Beatriz. *Manifiesto Contrasexual*. Barcelona: 1.st ed. Anagrama, 2011, 94

Rocks

Democracy:

A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.²¹

Mr. Trump got elected. He is a man whose knowledge of science, the complexity of life, and the importance of diverse forms of existence can fill a can of sardines, a man who represents about half of how his nation thinks. When he accuses journalist Mika Brzezinski of being dumb as a rock, he ignorantly dismisses the fact that rocks are not dumb because they don't process information as Mr. Trump does. They are living things that support all living organisms. They evolve with time and are indefinitely complex. They are like a window if you know how to look through it. French geologists Arnold Rhesar and Pierre Escollet have long studied rock specimens collected in different parts of the world. They arrived at quite an amazing conclusion in the end. They believed that stones have some kind of a vital activity though a very slow one. The geologists maintain the structure of stones is subject to changes, and stones can grow old. Moreover, the geologists claim stones can breathe, to a certain extent. Taking one "breath" takes them from three days to two weeks. And each of their "heartbeats" lasts about three days. The scientists say they gathered photographic evidence clearly indicating that stones could move. The pictures of stones were taken at large intervals. One of the stones is reported to have moved 2.5 centimeters in two weeks' time. The geologists stubbornly maintain that stones are living organisms though some physical processes relating to earth shove or water impact seem to be the most likely reasons behind the phenomenon. "We can assume that any object in our world is alive," says Marianna Anisosyan, a therapist and

²¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

expert in biological energy. “Any event is driven by energy, which stones undoubtedly possess too. Every stone carries a certain amount of life in it,” she adds.²²

Tabula Raza

I am in a vast multidirectional space situated nowhere but everywhere. I am in what could be considered a personal *détournement*, a placing of myself in another context while simultaneously becoming intelligible and unrecognizable. A doing and being that implies more doing than being. In a world that does not accommodate my being I have to include myself, regardless of the many obstacles and pressures trying to be part (not as a whole) of what excludes me. An inclusion that in effect won't take effect as it is partial. In the world of art, of thought, I practice a seeing dissimilarly in what we all see; my un-thoughts becoming thought. I re-direct myself in the homogenous constellation of mediated meanings that we inhabit. I also inhabit the unknown. In close proximity to one or the other, I create thought. There is significance in what is proven meaningless, something enigmatic in what we assumed as ordinary and lots of details in flatness.



3.2 *Tabula Raza*. Still. Video. 2011

²² <http://www.pravdareport.com/science/earth/12-07-2006/83225-stones-0/>

We live in scenes and create maps to navigate them. I look through patterns, material process, the flow of it rejects contentment. My thought process is in a constant state of superposition. I constantly reorient myself and reject the colonial positioning, south, north, east or west. We live in an (in)finite²³ universe, of multiple directions or no directions at all. I discovered that a white Japanese doll with a blank body and head found on the street had a large cult following. People would paint the dolls in accordance to their personalities and fantasies. Their web site was filled with intriguing artistic depictions, or interpretations of this blank plastic body. A tabula rasa or a body waiting for information to be intervened. I was intrigued with the complex ideas that an encounter with an object like this can initiate. I started to dress the doll with a visual narrative organized in small chapters of playful histories. Each narrative or history was the result of a dynamic interaction of thoughts and blank object. I created sequences that acted as somatic and social markers to mediate the interaction.

*Tabula Raza*²⁴ was made as an absurdist multidirectional commentary on the transformative nature of an immigrant's body and mind. Me: an unidentifiable presence that narrates the history of my becoming. *Tabula Raza* recounts histories that are no longer offered as narratives but as visual interventions where I travel to the city and my visual archives in search of meanings. It is an invitation to participate in deciphering a playful ontological and epistemological positioning. The visuals create singular events to question socially imposed and self imposed constraints that give us the sense that we belong to a community, that we share a world, that we are part of a common good, that all is normal.

²³ In their 2018 research paper "*A Smooth Exit from Eternal Inflation*" Stephen Hawking and Thomas Hertog suggest that the universe is "globally finite and reasonably smooth."

²⁴ Lozano, Jorge. *Tabula Raza*. Vimeo. 2011. vimeo.com/256578236.

Daydream

Aesthetics designates a mode of thought that develops with respect to things of art and that is concerned to show them to be things of thought. More fundamentally, aesthetics is a particular historical regime of thinking about art and an idea of thought according to which things of art are things of thought.²⁵

I have chosen to make my artistic practice so close to my life that my life has become my artistic practice and my artistic practice a working space to understand my life and my artistic practice. Out of this reciprocal causation of the entanglement of praxis, aesthesis and aesthetics, I build a cognition of my own, “the re-enactment of perceptual, motor and introspective states acquired during experience with the world, body and mind.”²⁶

I remember my mother trying to sew a hole in my father’s shirt. It lasted days and days, and every day that she tried to put the needle through the shirt her eyes would get that glassy look, and her lips would relax and I would know that she was gone, into daydreams. She died a month after I visited her. She waited for me after a deadly cancer operation in the larynxes. I spent a whole month looking at her and wanting her to die. I knew that she was in pain, and her pain was more painful because she could not be affectionate with us; still, she would playfully and painfully try to hug, and kiss me. She was always playful. It is all that she knew. Her knowledge was affection; it was her loving, objective reality. Her warmth replaced language. She had no education; she could hardly write or read. She spent all her life working the double shift taking care of us and helping my father. I have an original black and white still of her, hand- coiling a fridge motor: the picture is one square inch, the same size as the negative. It is extremely sharp after so many years.

²⁵ Rancière, Jacques. *The Aesthetic Unconscious*. Cambridge: Polity, 2009, 5.

²⁶ Barsalou, Lawrence W. *Grounded Cognition*. Annual Review of Psychology. 2008. 59: 618



3.3 Still. 1948

I don't think that she knew that she was going to die. If she had known it, she would have kept it a secret. She hated spending money on doctors, she would never have spent that money on herself. With more concern and money, things could have been different. Why do we acknowledge things after the fact? I made a video work called *Ima(genes)*. A tiny little woman with lips painted red, wearing a straw hat, says goodbye while a swirling river takes her away. When my mother died, I felt absolutely alone in the deepest level of my existence. *Ima(genes)* like the rest of my works are re-representations of material agency. They are modes of responding to corporeal and incorporeal matter's infinite differentiation, and intensities that become conscious and semiotic. We don't represent, we re-represent.



3.4 *Ima(genes)*. Still. Video. 1991

Layers

Thirty years ago, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1980) intuited that recursion was central to cognition, a hypothesis now tested and extended through much-improved imagining technologies, microelectrode, and other contemporary research practices.²⁷

Thinking is an intervention where often I am not sure if I am aware of what I am thinking or that I am thinking. Thinking is done in many layers caused by storms of firing neurons. Amongst those overlapping electrical firings from below, conscious and non conscious thoughts and their multiple combinations coalesce to create maps of body states, coherences, consciousness or awareness. Writing follows similar patterns. Writing is to go where you have not been invited. Unknowingly, writing releases thoughts from beneath, dissemblance trapped within analogies. Writing creates entwinement of the sayable and the (in)visible, a play between the here and there, the before and now. At the very least it inquires about being a being that

²⁷ Hayles, N. Katherine. *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2017, 47.

inquires. Thinking is re-representation; it rearranges judgments, takes apart, objectifies, and discriminates. It is a way to articulate knowledge and to know of limits: of the world's limits and our limitations. It somehow masquerades the real. This text that accompanies reflections on my creative doings is a personal history of modes of thinking and doings: that which is in the doing and that in which doing is. This text is a singular endeavour, which also belongs to collective thinking; it is simultaneously a sum of self-representations and differentiations. It is the imprint of individuation, a confrontation with the perceptible and intelligible and a peek into the unthinkable. It is an action that in most cases we are compelled to follow as if driven by an aesthetic unconscious: an unconscious dealing with the poetic translation of the unspoken and concealed alignments of the hidden within the real. For Rancière, the aesthetic unconscious doesn't indicate psychoanalytical analyses but merely acknowledges the existence of a kind of thought that always remains undetermined. The aesthetic unconscious is a "poetic" force that we have to reckon with. It gives priority to the knowledge that is not lesser knowledge but acknowledges that life and action have been deadened by objectivism, rationality, reductionism, and essentialism. Poetics help us to take risks to invent new knowledge, new practices; without expecting to know totalities, compact objects, self-sufficient identities, perfect realities, nice endings.

To earn your daily bread you are obliged
 To swing the censer like an altar boy,
 And to sing Te Deums in which you don't believe ²⁸

²⁸ Baudelaire, Charles. *Les Fleurs Du Mal*, trans. Richard Howard, First edition, second printing edition, Boston: David R. Godine, 1985.

I live my life with this irreducible solitary feeling left by the unstoppable stream of incomplete endings. It is a testimony or evidence indicating traces of places, situations, unexpected events, feelings and people who have shared their worlds with me. My video works imitate me; they represent visual and conceptual personal responses that resist rare, disjointed, unfriendly, many times exclusive cultural landscapes with their endless human divisions. They are made of non-directional and non-compacted views of those encounters of inclusions and exclusions. They are non-thoughts that became thoughts: comprehensions of my being: being in what does not comprehend me and being comprehended by what I am. My life: it's how I live it, and the production of my works are intrinsically attached. They are interrelations of intensive presences. A presence becomes events that contain scenes, and scenes that become events; events that become another distinctive event, and scenes that join other scenes to become distinctive. Scenes comprehend things, objects, people in the world and the world in a universe of material corporeal and incorporeal appearances. The world is not one place, we can be in many worlds without moving or can be moving through different worlds and be in the same world as if you never went anywhere.

To translate these constellations of indeterminacies, overexposures of our daily becoming, I made a work called *Stratigraphies*.²⁹ It was a deliberate attempt to twist and dislocate the quotidian; to explore the possibility to alter non-linearly by fragmenting realities and assembling incongruences through the punctuating movements of a “female fantastic” Alexandra Gelis, across the Americas.

²⁹ Lozano, Jorge. *Stratigraphies*. Vimeo. 2012. <https://vimeo.com/117172013>

Stratigraphies is about the dissolution of the self into multiple selves in conflict with the real, its undecidability and instantaneity. Going beyond specific meanings, it seeks the search as its goal.³⁰



3.5 *Stratigraphies*. Still. Video. 2012

Resorting to a series of visual techniques and philosophical theories, it creates a rhizomorphic play, an “adventure trip” inviting the viewer to become co-author. Alexandra travels through different “here(s)” and “there(s)” but never arriving anywhere always (non-) leaving. She inhabits movement, the everywhere and nowhere in the present today and the present tomorrow. *Stratigraphies* is also about the collapsing of globalization. You can be everywhere without moving, and you can go everywhere and be in the same space.

³⁰ See Root, Deborah. *Splintering Time, Fragmenting Spaces*. The Video Works of Jorge Lozano. V-Tape, 2013, 6. “Stratigraphies is a hyper kinetic masterpiece of a travelogue offering glimpses of scenes shot in your native Colombia, New York, Toronto and beyond. A female fantastic (Alexandra Gelis) knitting on the fly (subways, bankomats, beaches) and making audio recordings provides a throughline of sorts, as queer marriages give way to videogame palm trees, warm gatherings of friends are interwoven with public noticings, workers mostly, street hawkers and construction zones of the self. These lyrical interludes (in this movie the in-between is at the heart of the matter) are punctuated by rescanned YouTube interviews with authors/philosophers/scientists Jorge Luis Borges, Francisco Varela, Julio Cortazar, Beatriz Preciado and Gilles Deleuze. They muse briefly on creativity, exile, the biopolitics of the birth control pill, and the necessity of making mistakes in philosophy”.

Stratigraphies assembles moments as references and activates the sense that resides on the surface of events.

Limitations

Organization, prohibitions, interruptions, orders, powers, structuring, subjections are now in the realm of temporality. And that is where resistance should be. If we fight in space instead of fighting in time, it's like meeting Ray Bradbury's characters in *The Martian Chronicles*, who are there without being there.³¹



3.6 *Civil War*, Still. Video. 2012

In the summer of 2012, lightheartedly, I decided to make a feature film ignoring the most standard rules of making a film. The film is called *Civil War*. I wanted to make something as I wanted, without rules. But what is a rule? It seems that rules are paradoxes of the impracticality or illegality of doing things differently to what the rule demands. Rules are definitions to frame limitations. They exist and coexist with other multiple dynamic organizations. A rule thrives on being universal and ethically unequivocal; until a radical change

³¹ Virilio, Paul, and Sylvère Lotringer. *Pure War*. New York: Semiotext(e), 1997, 116.

renders it passé. The likelihood of breaking a rule or not breaking a rule is the substance that makes the rule a rule, and it gives it the appearance of an immutable fact. My rule was to not have rules. However, when I started the recordings of the film, I found out that the "making itself" was a rule and that technical systems had ways of their own. I started the film by asking two friends from my youth to talk about why our neighbourhood became what it became and not something else.

A nest of infamous drug lords and a bunch of artists all inhabiting a space within three or four blocks; the bad ones died in many forms, the good ones are still alive at many levels. Unknowingly, I started to create rules by asking each one to interrupt the other during the scenes without either one knowing it. At the same time, I asked another friend to become the director of the film and never to allow my two friends to finish a scene. Needless to say, my friend director didn't know that I was going to interfere with their direction. Unwittingly, the making of the conflict became the conflict: what, why and how. I ended up limited to a classical narrative structure; set-up, development and resolution. Films are emotion-producing apparatuses that glue us to a chair where we enter a world of appearances without much questioning. I wanted to make a challenging film, to neglect logic and reason and create interruptions to help the viewer's attention shift into forming their representation, in their private world of material appearances. The film tries to confuse how much appearances correspond to reality and at the same time to uphold that appearances and reality are submerged in each other and how this symbiosis is enough to make sense of reality, which is both. The dust and hairs that we see in films are not the same dust and hair of the reality that the film represents. Nonetheless, dust and hair are part of film reality, a film within a film, appearances within facts, and reality within appearances.

I soon started to realize that regardless of improvising everything and not knowing conclusions, I was not too far from the traditional ways nor was I close enough to propose a strong challenge to normative filmmaking. What I was doing was just re-structuring predictable rules by randomly rearranging them differently. A film is a film. You cannot escape it. Films put us in place of another, and in doing so they reassert the hard-to-escape, quasi-imperceptible rules that dominate the production of the imaginary, the fictional, the historical, the experimental and language itself. Instead of proposing scenes that illustrated differences of importance, or built hierarchies typical of narrative structures, I allowed the layering of contradictory and noncontradictory expressions to coexist, to recognize their uniqueness. I wanted the viewer to stumble in these chaotic visual and oral propositions to enable the meaning to tip in either direction simultaneously or superposed, at the same time.

The history of fiction has been the production of anxieties that recreate the obvious. We blindly follow films with complicated detours, regardless that in most cases we know the end all the way along. We are made to believe that we participate in a collaborative discovering of the new. With *Civil War*, I wanted to take a different or perhaps a less straightforward road, away from conventions that make things functional, easily understood, tacit, many times forcibly polarized. To avoid this approach, I deepened my attention to the most undetermined situations. I followed the trace of those most impermanent memory fragments, moments all equally ephemeral, and importantly dysfunctional, but it did not fully succeed. Shot in seven hours, I was left with disarticulated feelings of loss. It took me two years of going back to Colombia to record small scenes to link the recorded dislocations and to create new contours out of conventional materials. Finally, I stopped the filmmaking when one of the actors was killed, and I could not continue adding new scenes to the film. It turned out to be a genuinely

experimental comedy and an homage to the capacity of my assassinated friend to foresee his future.

From Material to Medium

The Butterfly Effect

I constantly conflate the words film and video, most people do. It is a mix-up that blends distinctions. It is similar to what Bergson calls a process whereby “the nature of what comes after only finds its explanation by reference to what came before.”³²

In film or video what makes one thing what it is, whether experimental, abstract, conceptual, fictional, documentary, art/film/video is expressed with form: a set of conventions, relationships used to comprehend, evaluate, and give meaning to a particular work. Film and video are tools used to imagine what is visible, and to extract the invisible; they are both image machines. No film exists without someone filming it, no consciousness without representation. Film is that which uses film and video does not. In the making of a film using film we get temporally put on hold between the representation of an object and the object of representation. Video is immediate. The representation of the object and the object of representation are mediated by instantaneous possibilities. Both film and video represent the already represented, both are (in)dissociable from the selves which they help to constitute. Film like photography is the art of a double action, that of disappearance and reappearance. The “real” disappears within the camera to reappear a few hours or days later as a negative that will disappear once more to become a positive, a print. Errors in this process will cost time or money. Video, on the other hand, is the art of serial reproductions. Errors are erased instantaneously. Therefore you would not be able to make the same film if you use a film camera and a video camera at the same time

³² Costelloe, Karin. “What Bergson Means By Interpenetration” in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 13 (1912), 148.

to record the same thing at the same time. This is one big difference. The distinctions between film and video from a technological perspective are significant but most important will be to detect how these two media have managed to create relations of distinction, similarity, and frictions that go beyond machinic properties. Film has managed to live within video; we are still at the stage of “making videos that look like film.” All visual technologies are born out of a need for instantaneous reproduction. Living at a faster speed became suitable for the invention of the portable video camera and its further developments. Speed (more than time) condemns all technologies to obsolescence (but time is speed). By creating cameras that continually increase the quality of digital image reproduction, we are essentially lessening the differences between film and video or rendering old film technology obsolete, and transforming our relationship to light and movement. The closer we get to replicate the human eye with video cameras, the better imagery we can create. Time and speed play an important role in how we go through subtle biological and mental changes that make new seeing and optical technologies apparently normal. Forgetting to see the before is perhaps what Paul Virilio means when he says “speed is violence.”³³ The invention of digital technology is the acceleration of disappearance. Nowadays, you can make a film using video because film has become a structure, a way of doing things, a narrative: however, to shoot with a film camera will always look like film.³⁴ Most films are scanned to video, and a few videos become films. In both cases, the editing process is the tool and technique to extract or rearrange that which appears to be absent. In independent experimental film and video the contact with the normal creates dissemblance or visibility and multiple possibilities of interpretation by reorienting the real

³³ Virilio, Paul, and Lotringer, Sylvère. *Pure War: Twenty-five Years Later*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2008.

³⁴ See second program of screening for dissertation “*the importance of the non important*”, meditations on things that become other things. All were shot in super 8 and transformed digitally. They are screened in the second program for my defense.

through “self” and “selfless representations.” A selfless representation constitutes what is shareable, exchangeable, and communicable par excellence. Anyone who has the capacity to see can see the same film, can self-represent (differently) the same selfless representation the film is.³⁵ Video has inherited techniques inherent in film and it has become part of film’s history. Inasmuch as video has modified this history by becoming a portable tool of synchronized multiple screens, film technology and its narrative solutions circulate within video’s multiple screen installations. The old will inhabit the new until the new becomes too old to inhabit the new-new but the old will remain, disappear, come back and finally disappear “who knows when.” Typewriters were invented for blind people to write.³⁶ We learned to type without looking at the typewriter (like blind people), and we still do the same with the keyboard. Perhaps typewriters will conceptually disappear forever with the use of voice recognition.³⁷

The history of experimental cinema is very closely linked to the materiality and chemical composition of film and to the technical attributes of the medium.

Celluloid³⁸ became a synonym for cinema. Its chemical composition, nitrocellulose and camphor, made it highly sensitive to heat. The vulnerability of films helped to shape the exploration of what was considered non-important or unwanted in commercial cinema.

Scratches, dirt, hand painting, chemical interventions, burns, weather, time and

³⁵ Garcia. *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things*, 242.

³⁶ Lozano, Jorge. *Shifting Fragments*. Installation using video and large photographs presented at Sur Gallery, Toronto, March 8th, 2018.

³⁷ Lozano, Jorge. *The End of Type (Writers)*. Vimeo, 13 Feb. 2018, vimeo.com/161697415.

³⁸ Clever artisans fashioned celluloid into artificial ivory or coral, semi-precious stones, and tortoiseshell, which was especially in demand for hair combs and eyeglass frames. Early advertisements often promoted the material’s versatility and shape-shifting qualities. Because many people equated celluloid with guncotton, tragicomic urban legends about exploding combs and buttons abounded. Celluloid, though, was more dangerous to its makers than its consumers, with factory fires a common hazard.

accidents alone or combined became part of the rich vocabulary that started the physical and abstract exploration of the medium. Concepts united to these attributes facilitated multiple forms of representation in experimental film. The radicalism of experimental film traversed the medium itself and entered the visual arts and other disciplines.

Directly or indirectly, experimental filmmaking as a whole rejected specificity and influenced, and was influenced by, the unique point of view of other artists, photographers, dancers, painters, playwrights, writers and sound artists. Video entered the scene to complement all these experimentations with access to real-time, portability, and affordability. Real-time replaced the mirror and accelerated the reproduction and distribution of information within an instantaneous realm. The personal became visible politically and artistically.

In the mid-1960s a seeing and thinking revolution was brewing. The Sony video Portapak had arrived. It was a portable video camera cabled to a heavy recorder that allowed viewers to see recordings in real time, or with a small delay undetected by the human eye. Instant replay was a blessing for activists. The information could be recorded and replayed immediately, and it could be moved around and shared with other activists. It was an alternative to the monopoly of right-wing broadcast television and a tool to fight sexism, racism, war, and homophobia. Using portapaks, artists from all disciplines started to explore new ways to intervene in galleries and other public spaces. The search for real-time brought intimacy and a new distance: ironically, in the years to come (at the present moment for instance) our technologies of speed and instantaneity have exiled us to new electronic privacy. The first video artist I met in Toronto was Colin Campbell. I was an immigrant willing to work at whatever job I could get. We were hired to do election surveys in Ontario, knocking on door after door asking

owners or tenants if they had registered for the upcoming election. It was another one of those mind-numbing Ontario elections where mostly it doesn't matter who gets in power, the government policies change very little, and we manage to survive them. Canvassing was a tedious job that paid perhaps four dollars an hour. Colin was bored and uninterested but I enjoyed everything, particularly the smells emanating from the houses, each one as different as the people who lived there. My head would gently spin in these places. Most of the people were Polish or Portuguese elders who hardly spoke English. I still feel nostalgic imagining their uprooted lives, their loneliness, and their foreignness. Colin and I walked slowly and talked a lot to kill time.

At the end of our working day, he invited me to his apartment to have orange juice. That day he showed me one of his videotapes. He was walking in front of a window talking, as he always did in his work. Everyone talked to the camera in those days. The tape showed him walking naked in front of a luminous window. It was so simple and so complex; an immediate self-made work using the monitor as a reference for movement in space. I was profoundly moved. I remember the beauty of the Portapak's black and white light embedded in its cathode-ray tube. You could write and inscribe words into the tube if you aimed it at a light bulb or the sun, such was its sensibility and fragility! The light wrote images on the tube, and the camera stamped those images on the magnetic tape. It was a different way of seeing that only artists understood as an aesthetic alternative to the expensive and complicated system of filmmaking. I left Colin's apartment wanting to make tapes about myself and thinking about what I had seen. It was like a light reflecting from a phosphorous cloud, an x-ray of real time. The material (technical system) and the body became the medium. I could be my subject, not an actor.

I experienced a radical phenomenological shift. I started to look at the outside and inside worlds from many angles or as the same connected thing. My surrounding events

presented themselves multilayered. As a new subject, in a new journey, a seeing, thinking and doing alteration started when I began to use a portable video camera. Working in real time was an invitation for self-representation, and to reimagine the body of the artist within technical systems. It offered new possibilities and approaches. Because of its low costs and portability, video slowly became an expanded form of cinema with a rich and diverse language. The works were called tapes. The tape that I remember the most in the 70s is that of a man sitting in front of the monitor, a camera connected to the monitor showing a medium close up of the back of his head. He was using instantaneous replay to cut his hair on his own. He was a hippy with long hair, and obviously, the tape lasted a long time. It was so predictable it became intolerable. I left. Other work about self observation is *Birthday Suit with scars and defects* (1974) by Lisa Steele. In this tape, she stands naked in front of the camera (in those times we all made tapes naked) telling the stories of the scars on her body. Later on, I found out that Colin and Lisa had come together from the USA with other draft dodger friends who were against the Vietnam War.

In 1972 I made my first two super 8mm films; one is lost forever with my friend Patrick and two other friends pulling down their pants to show their asses to the camera, with the words freedom, equality and justice written on their skin. Of the other film, I have a few frames of my friend Lupe walking on Wards Island beach wearing a red dress and welding eyeglasses. Slowly I began to join the 70s artistic process. I became part of a generation of young artists seriously at play, carrying these heavy portapak machines to record ourselves and our precious time and space. We included the “errors” inherent in this analog reel-to-reel technology, such as electromagnetic noise, feedback; we cut the tape to make loops, we lowered the quality by making second, third, and fourth generation copies of the same image to attack the image and sound. Risking the information, we increased the medium’s vocabulary until it eventually

became repetitive, tedious, and sometimes difficult to see. We weren't afraid to risk failure in the hope of formulating something new.

Like most of the vision machines, the portable video camera was developed by the American military-industrial complex to be used as real-time surveillance and recording equipment during the Vietnam War. We have to be realistic, demand the impossible and convert technologies of oppression into technologies of resistance in search of the reorientation of spaces of pleasure. In our hands, the technology became a cognition tool for bringing forth our private worlds. It helped us to transform our perceptions and aesthetic concerns. With the portapak, we started to understand the forthcoming mechanisms of bio-political image technology used to control populations by replaying information instantaneously and ubiquitously, as it is with face or iris recognition nowadays. The possibility of exploring the city and spaces with a camera attached to the body became imprinted in my perceptual experience and it has always been with me like the sensation created by a phantom limb. In Bresson, space itself acquires an effective autonomy, and affect becomes a function of cinematic framing.³⁹ And I will add that cinematic framing creates new spaces. Many years later I attached a camera this time to my bike and went out to experiment with the motion and distortion.

Remembering the Portapak is a short 5-minute tape, created in the spirit of instant pleasure when facing the unplanned. I mounted a small portable mini DV camera to the handlebars of the bike. I rode the bike for a few blocks and returned to where I started. The soundtrack is location sound processed using Ableton Live software. The bike ride becomes an urban abstraction of moving lights and lines, extemporal differences caused by technical mediation. Linear perspective and linear causation dissolve into random constructions.

³⁹ Hansen, Mark B. N. *New Philosophy for New Media*. MIT Press, 2004, 147.



4.1 *Remembering the Portapak*. Still. Video. 2010

We live our lives with surprising interruptions that create a before and an after. These punctuations give authenticity to our lives, and (re) orient our actions. The continuity of this process gives cohesiveness to that before and after. It feels like we live in an extended present. This process is not ruled by intentionality but by the intrinsic possibilities (contingency) of the movement created by the process itself; it makes the unprecedented possible and allows for the emergence of novelty, understanding novelty as the inexhaustible mushrooming of difference. Similarly, creative acts are about the emergence of novelty, the changing of contours, the unexpected alignments with the unknown within the obvious. Likewise, the production of meanings in this text are built on the trajectory that I follow in the process of writing, they are disruptions within processes of individuation, conceptual redirections that gradually become stable, sedimented, organized knowledge, ideas. There is no plan to follow, or an end in sight; the path is created as I go. The going affects the contents of the ideas, and the ideas become the side effects of indeterminacy. Innumerable bifurcations shape its numerous directions and locations. They generate the possibility of seeing differently, of putting things differently, thinking

differently, living differently. Amongst this chaos, this constant, endless flux of vibrations I pause for a moment: I find refuge, solace within my artistic re-representations, the only way of seeing, feeling otherwise. My art adds ideality to my life in order to make sense of what I do here, amongst other living and non living matter, always resisting imposed conceptual and social forms of the orderly, rebelling, experiencing life in unpredictable ways, coexisting with the problems, and solutions that create new problems and representations that need to be endlessly re-represented.

I am drawn to theories of representation that are emblematic of a reaction to dualism and an acknowledgment of indeterminacy. Produced by the negation of the Cartesian distinction between object and subject, knower and known and the recognition of separations, differentiations, relations, enactment of boundaries, exteriority within, representations of objects by objects and representation of objects by a subject, self-representation, self-presence. As regarding Quantum fields of subatomic particles, I cannot ignore my position in the production of knowledge. Indeterminacy and variability steer my creative acts. My theoretical inquiry into the making of *The Importance of the Non-Important* is focused on how differences are constructed and represented in the creation of art, and how exclusions and inclusions are enacted in the development of texts. These encounters with problems, ideas, old and new critical approaches to the dynamics of patterns and entanglements are solutions of problems that create new problems. The real conceals its own reality and we have to start again. Art plays a significant role here splitting open the regime of the possible. Art has the capacity to uncover emerging properties within normalizing conditions, it can invent new freedoms. In the production of art, many material and incorporeal independent agents interact with one another producing results that cannot be predicted but emerge from the complex interactions of the

system, the event, the sequence, the material itself.

What language *expresses* (rather than refers to, denotes, or designs, which is itself material) is incorporeal, a process, an event, a change of state, a modification, something that adheres to or floats on the surface without penetrating the identity and continuity of the body, a thin film at the limit of things and word.⁴⁰

Art can be a working space to explore the convergence or divergence of my perceptions with the real, or with current philosophical understandings. In the absence of a total view, I segment, (de)categorize, integrate, re-position, rearrange conceptual networks to find connections to concepts within my artwork. The artworks act as an interface of multiple perspectives, and as navigational tools to dislocate totalizing views, short-circuiting given separations of the real with the virtual, the real with the imaginary, and the disturbances of memory and the failures of recognition. Art has the capacity to present images that displace totalizing aesthetics of the whole. privileging uncertain openings to the outside. The virtual structure of art and concepts have the potential to help us enter in contact with the forces of the world, which in turn provide us the potential to want to become in some other sense. In a similar way, with this writing I try to create a dynamic cluster of interrelated sequences where the re-mixing of different discourses might spawn new readings. This text is modelled on a modus operandi similar to the making of films using found footage, likewise when we find consistency in randomness by pasting together personal and non-personal footage that was filmed or video recorded at different moments in time and space. It is an assemblage of conflicting or unrelated events to create new mappings that include unexpected configurations created by the unintentional integrations of material relations and by the effects of technical

⁴⁰ Grosz, *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism*, 39.

systems used in the production of the works: outcomes that go beyond our initial mediations.

The Importance of the Non-Important has become a re-evaluation and re-thinking on the go of techniques and concepts implicit in experimental video and film work, its links to what it represents, its correlation to contemporary thought and these thoughts' dynamic relations to other ideas and ultimately, to my practice. The appearance of these types of ideas in my work is intuitive or accidental and does not form part of an intentional contemporary academic critique, rather it confronts the compactness of theories to craft final open-ended configurations. It is a process of infinitesimal differentiations provoked and produced by gradings in the intensity of corporeal and incorporeal encounters "many times irreducible to biological or physical terms."⁴¹

Representation makes the absent present. Representation belongs to life whatever the limitations of a specific cognitive field. What does the frog's eye tell the frog's brain when carving out its own cognitive domain? In our human case, "no imagination exists without someone to imagine it, no sight without someone to see, and no touch without someone to touch, these representations are indissociable from selves, which they help to constitute."⁴²

⁴¹ Parisi, Luciana. *Terms of Media II: Actions Conference - Forecast - Mediate.*- YouTube, 14 Mar. 2016. Web. 12 Feb, 2018.

⁴² Garcia,. *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things*, 243.



4.2 *Forms of Emerging Behaviour*.. Still. Video. 2016

In 2016, I made *Forms of Emerging Behaviour* a short video work of an event that irrupted into my lenses when I was recording in the rain in the Medellin airport. A work that made itself or was already circulating in its natural environment. Some worlds/works exist before we know of their existence. This one entered the camera recordings on its own, with a minimal effort from my part. When I became aware, it turned into a complex event and a conceptual demonstration of the natural drift of the real in the rain.

Viewing

A friend sent a copy of this two-minute film to Caspar Starcke⁴³ a German filmmaker and writer. Caspar responded by creating a fictional narrative that in addition to describing a careful observation of the film, made a kaleidoscopic reframing of the film by allowing the presence of metastable characters revolving around his own internal monologue, like a system evolving within systems of forms of emerging behaviour solving and resolving on the spot diverse disparate inconsistencies of the materiality represented in the work:

A moving image is put in front of us (Forms of Emerging Behaviour). For her, for him, for all of them and for my insignificance, this image seems to mean something entirely different. We are all staring at this moving image at the same time. So far, no words have been exchanged. Yes, I am reluctantly adopting the “we” which always comes with certain obligations and responsibilities. But I will try to act as an trustworthy spokesperson for this collective and its

⁴³ Caspar Stracke is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker from Germany, living and working in New York City since 1993 and Helsinki (since 2012) His work is situated around architecture and urbanism, media archaeology as well as various social aspects of cinema.

viewing experience.

*I think the others agree when I say we are basically looking *through* this image. Why? Not because there is a window in the foreground. But there is depth. Here you find nothing and everything. Parts of the foreground are blurry. There is a pulsating, mesmerizing flicker, caused by two fast running water streams on the glass window we are looking through.*

*One could say: it is an eternal image. Shot handheld, we can sense minuscule movements, but it remains aimed at one and the same motive. There are no tilts, pans, cuts whatsoever. But it's not only grounded, it is also an unstable image, as parts of it are constantly distorting, collapsing. The scene immediately evokes a specific mood. Although here the accounts vary. One of our collective notes the feeling of uncertainty, other senses a darker mood: sadness. I, on the other hand, call it a *sublime* image. A third account agrees and mentions that there is also something magical, yes, something beautiful happening here. We collectively decide to get to that later. We should mention to you, dear readers and possible future viewers of this moving image, that the image is accompanied by a slightly menacing drone sound. Industrial machinery at work. There are possibly diegetic sounds that add a note of bitterness, like when the sugarcoating of a Prozac pill has been fully dissolved. But a few seconds later, the bitter taste dissolves as well. Now, I have been asked to propose a different reading of this image. That's a bit absurd, because so far I haven't had a chance to describe what is actually being depicted. But right away one of us points out that the main concern here is the depiction of labor. Well, there is again a disagreement; it's supposed to be a scene of hallucinations, attests another. But why can't labor and hallucination coexist? It can, very well, actually.*

OK, we should now specify details. I mentioned the glass window. And I don't mean the laptop screen we had been staring into, although it's pretty much the same thing over there - we, the viewers are behind the screen, just as the camera is behind an interior window. In the exterior, outside in the rain, four workers sweep with large brooms.

Where was this image taken? one of us wants to know. She speculates, given the subtitled location of this work, Medellín, that it is the view of the tarmac of José María Córdova airport.

She adds that this reminds her of a too-familiar moment in "liminal-land." She explains the latter as a state (both geographical and temporal) of being no longer here but not yet there either. I recognize that recurring state while in transit. The passive traveller, prompted to wait. All one can do is stare. Stare into a concrete void. It is being cleaned up before your eyes so it's even emptier. The other disagrees again. How do you know it's an airport? We see only gray concrete with yellow markings, but no planes or vehicles. There are just workers cleaning the ground with big brooms. It could be a parking deck, possibly even a construction site. "Sí, mira, reconozco la empresa constructora, CNV." Now a fourth voice, that so far has not participated, joins the conversation. All we have read out of this image so far is not relevant, this voice argues. What is relevant are the ghost images. The voice has a good point, actually, this is where the magic and hallucinations come in. One of the sweepers is doubled by the light beam fractures caused by the fast-running water stream on the window pane. No matter where this sweeper moves (and he moves quite a bit) he remains doubled. Another speculative question arrives. Is there a relationship between the water stream on the window and the sweepers? And if that is the case, is the water stream actually moving the sweepers or is it vice versa?

No one has an answer. But there is more. The workers are wearing yellow hard hats and vests with typical neon-yellow stripes. In the water refraction, these stripes and hats are blurred

into large yellow blotches and therefore have a much stronger color presence in their ghostly double than in the real image.

Objection. She strongly questions this distinction. Both the sweeper and its ghost are real images, she explains. Valid representations of one true image captured in the past that we assume is real. The fourth voice agrees and adds that there are moments where we cannot distinguish the sweeper from its ghost. Once he crosses the water stream from the left to the right side of the image, it appears as if this worker and his ghost exchanged roles. Another mumbles something about a cave and moving shadows but none of us can bring it in relationship with the moving image so we don't ask for elaborations. At this moment I am reminded of the beginning of the video. Didn't I mention that there were four sweepers? Two pairs? Now we know there are ghosts involved but I cannot remember if the other pair was also a single sweeper with a ghost companion. One of us, the shy one, demands that we watch the beginning again. Aha! We had been tricked. The first pair who exit the frame were a real pair. She sighs, and reminds us again not to use the word real. Well, OK, there are two workers, wearing slightly different clothes, therefore no doubles or ghost involved. Paying attention to this fact leads us to conclude that the sweepers could have been following a pre-rehearsed choreography created for the exact viewing angle of the camera. These actions may have been planned and performed by the maker of this image – whose presence goes so unnoticed he had hardly been granted any part in this unfolding phenomenon.

But now we see that the pair of workers are dance-sweeping around each other, one sometimes exactly covering the other. We now agree with the speculation that they are actually trying to re-create what the third one achieved solely with running water. Which, in conclusion, makes these two dancers mimic an optical illusion. All these small parts contribute to a greater phenomena, establishing an emergent behavior. This is the moment where the group looks at me, all with the same sinister smile. Am I trying to mimic emergent behavior by producing this conversation?

Dust

I remember looking at films in the dark and dusty cinema theatres of Cali where most bad Hollywood films ended up practically in pieces. The film would break or burn frequently; the burning created colour bubbles that burst and expanded in slow motion before the film stopped, leaving the hall in total darkness. In total darkness the young audience would start to scream extremely loud while banging the folding wooden chairs: *Montes, Montes leave the boy alone.* Montes was the owner and very famous for seducing young boys in the screening rooms. It was very common for older guys to offer us money in the theatre to show them our penises or to masturbate them. This theatre was our private dark space to time travel to the future and the past.

We would hide there to imagine. With so many screenings of films from the USA, we thought that the world outside our geographical peripheries was only blond English speaking people driving Cadillacs, smoking Marlboro or Lucky Strikes and eating Sundae Ice Creams. I sold my collection of Superman comics for ten cents to see *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* written by Jules Verne in 1870, made into a film by Walt Disney in 1954 with Kirk Douglas who looked a lot like my friend Ramiro who attracted many women because he had a dimple in his chin like Kirk. I spent many years at the Teatro Asturias as it was called. A scene that I see appearing here and there in my work that impacted me the most to provoke a state of bewilderment, was the straight soft transparent line of floating dust and clouds of smoke mixing with the light of the projector. A black and white animation of dancing particles, qualitative multiplicities that would disappear when the lights went out. Cinema is the dark space; it doesn't exist outdoors on bright sunny days. It is not the same. We loved USA films, mostly cowboy movies, and El Santo films, the overweight masked superhero that spoke our language with a Mexican accent. We all wanted to be cowboys to kill Indians. I usually wanted to be a dead Indian because I found the game really boring and hated cowboys. I wanted to be El Santo, but he only jumped out windows and landed in moving cars and did not use a gun, he was a wrestler and fought against zombies, vampire women, and evil brain. American⁴⁴ culture was our daily bread, and it heavily reinforced its colonialism at school through the Alliance for Progress initiated by Kennedy in 1961. Each morning for breakfast we were given hot powdered milk, and yellow cheese that smelled like cheddar, a smell that I recognized years later when I came to Canada. After breakfast and anti-communist speeches, we were given anti-communist comics made in the USA, where clean American heroes fought against the rough-bearded Cuban

⁴⁴ America is a continent.

revolutionaries. But we were not deceived. We ate the food and supported the Cuban revolution, that later became a parody of itself but that is another story.

Ausencia

When I speak of time, the fact is it is not yet
 When I speak of place, the fact is it has disappeared
 When I speak of time, the fact is it already is no more⁴⁵

While writing this text, I went back to my super 8mm archives and found 3 minutes of footage; a portrait of a person obsessively repeating an action. I made tiny holes in the film using a sewing machine and intervened with chemicals to affect and change the composition of the texture and image integrity. I discovered that when I projected the film, the emulsion was literally flying away from the celluloid like dust. I had used too much of the chemicals and had weakened the emulsions glued to the celluloid. I projected the film back and forth many times observing the acceleration of the gradual random destruction and disappearance of the images that time would have erased anyway if I had not interfered or provoked it. The work is called “ausencia (absence).” It doesn’t exist. Probably, some of the film entered my lungs, and the rest got dispersed throughout this (in)finite universe. Experimental work is a twofold operation that gives coherence to what appears unknown, invisible, chaotic and unintelligible. It creates new incoherence and new intelligibility that make more (non)sense than before.

Rules

Digital systems have changed the tools of production and the rules of engagement.

Making films has splintered into many forms. New optics, new algorithms have transformed

⁴⁵ Clarke, D.B. et al, eds. *Jean Baudrillard: Fatal Theories*. London, UK: Routledge, 2009, 24.



4.3 *Tactical Cycle-coordination*. Still. Video.2015

our notions of in-focus and resolutions, hence our perception of the real. Experimentation creates fabrications and not copies of reality. We create visual symbionts infecting each other: paths to enter the modal logic of multiplicity and poly-dimensionality. These are moments when we close the split between culture and nature, moments of creative noise when *subject figure* against *ground* disappears within the turbulent modes of our existence.

I recorded with a portable HD camera the shadows of my bike and my body riding through the city using one hand. The work is called *Tactical Cycle-coordination*⁴⁶. The shadows break apart and slowly disintegrate while the tape progresses. I use text as a guide to understand the fragments of the used locations embedded in the shadows: *Green is the arrow that takes me to...> the symmetry of flamingos...> bees and flowers comprehension...> unthoughtful cars...and the pink of punk...> With this work I unwittingly un-dusted techniques used in the 70s and 80s*. Now it has different aesthetic and political concerns emerging from the abstractions. My art is a living process of a living investigation of the living. It is a wide-ranging activity that creates networks with technology, instrumentality, history, politics, art

⁴⁶ Lozano, Jorge. *Tactical Cycle-coordination*, Vimeo. 2015. <https://vimeo.com/143407452>

history and local quotidian immigrant settings. It is the composing and assembling of the different and diverse scales that constitute my reality. It allows me to confront this reality on my own terms. I am a simultaneous mixture of local and historical events, individual and collective thoughts that I fragment and remix through mediation and transcoding.

To create art is an inquiry that transcends disciplinary limitations and produces boundary-crossing exchanges or feedback loops that reveal the Social, Political, Economic, Cultural, Spiritual, Religious and Chemical toxins that pollute modern life. The process is a practice that acknowledges dynamic relations and social processes between diverse systems and entities. It lives within local variations of intense patterns in a living world. To produce an artwork is to shape those interactions and to think into new relations, new imaginations however incomplete they might be. Art is to make visible what is there, but we don't see it. As in all methodology there is rigour in the creative act, it has the categories and rules of an open game. It is a form of navigation through the multipliability of thin layers of individuation. A personal, sometimes terrifying adventure where we reassess our assumptions, structures, substructures, that hold steady the aftershocks of change. Art is a way to complicate what appears uncomplicated and normal. It is a way to make sense of ourselves, our planet, our universe and our connection to all living inorganic and organic living matter and to rethink the overwhelming damage we have created and above all to recognize the creativity of material forces.

The making of *Blinking pathways* has a different approach and a different result than the other works mentioned above. It is a chemical intervention of Super 8 footage. It randomly creates meaning out of other meanings. It is an uneven portrait of the passing of time as the

chemical erases and leaves memories behind to create a new present. A repetitive twirl of actions that become as obsessive as the chemical marks on the celluloid⁴⁷.



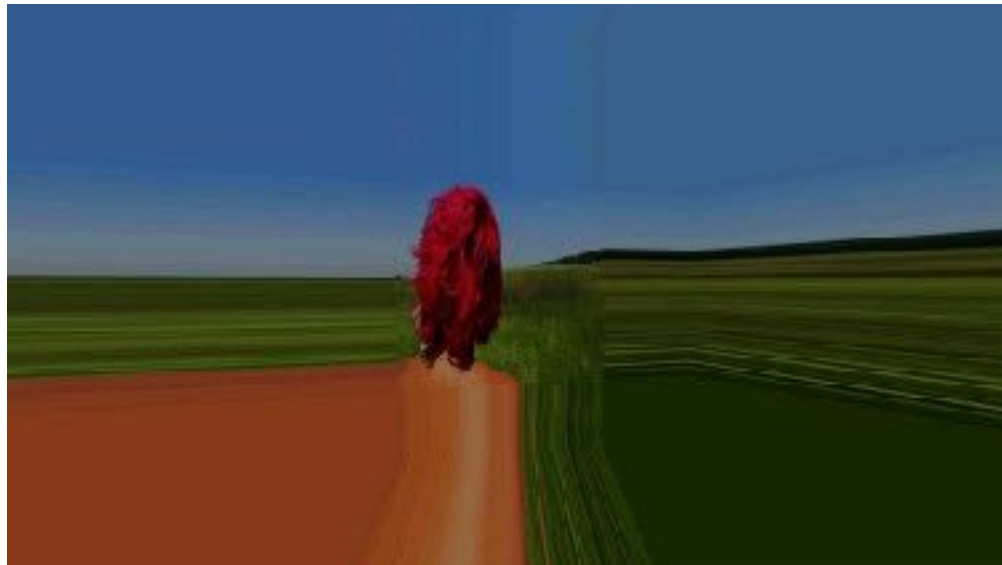
4.4 *Blinking pathways*. Still. Video.2016

Things are fluid if you are going the way things are flowing. However, artistic processes can become jam-packed with disturbances that frame a before and now, or past and present. Under unplanned conditions, they become problematic and provoke the emergence of things, entities that were not there, glitches, pixels, coloured marks, unexpected associations, events, behaviours, unusual integrations and new subjectivities. *Blinking pathways* is the product of chemical interventions, that created an indeterminacy that became cohesive with a certain (non)linearity through the process of editing. The players in the making of (my) experimental video work are systems within systems, which make unpredictable and indeterminate what is to come and create differences from what is supposed to be. Experimental video is a combination of multi potentialities that cannot achieve a total comprehension of its constitution. Creative processes are at one with living matter, a response to unintelligible forces made legible through de-fragmentations and re-fragmentations. It is not just matters of the mind; it involves an affair with technical systems – automation and instrumentality. Technical mediation and algorithmic

⁴⁷ Lozano, Jorge. *Blinking Pathways*, Vimeo. 2016. <https://vimeo.com/253346624>

thinking that make decisions without asking us. Automation creates new orders of relations and actuates the production of novelty, making our immersion within the real, with instrumentality and with representation, one of *indeterminacy*.⁴⁸

The experimental approach is a mutual intervention that produces aesthetic or epistemic objects (films/videos). This process is more visible in the kind of art that refuses to represent an entire totality or forecast compact results. In other words, the emergence of novelty in experimental works is governed by unexpected laws, material (corporeal, non-corporeal) constraints, which are the properties of technical systems (camera, lenses, sensors, hard drives, and files) activated by our capacity to disrupt the rules, transgress systems and material and social boundaries in the making. Systems are not autonomous. Such was case when making *Blinking pathways*.



4.5 *Green Bunker*. Still. Video.2014

⁴⁸ Barad, Karen. *Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter*. *Signs* 28, no. 3 . 2003.

Systems are not rigid. Systematicity is functional integration that has stabilized causal components (mechanism) linked by its functions: allowing navigation back and forth for these mechanisms to escape from the straightjacket of its constitutions.⁴⁹

Personal feelings, thoughts, and knowledge are the products of resistance to limitations.

Responses to our embodiment with(in) the dynamism of material processes which are one and the other, transmissible, that circulate in and around, all over and through, a process that occurs before the creation of concepts of our negotiation of concepts and things. It belongs to virtual fields of relations where thoughts and things are equally immersed. A plane of immanence or a plane of composition⁵⁰

During the 2014 Joan & Martin Goldfarb Summer Institute, Sonic Praxis in X Actions, organized by York's Department of Visual Art & Art History I made *Green Bunker*,^{51a} a visual essay. After I made it, I realized that I was intuitively thinking about dromology, a term coined by philosopher Paul Virilio⁵² to describe the effects of movement and circulation in the control of territories, and how speed in warfare and contemporary technologies affect our field of perception. *Green Bunker* was made using a Max/MSP patch that accelerates the integrity of the video image. The work was done live. I improvised the creation of the soundtrack using a patch that controlled the shapes and speed of the final video, relocating pixels through the use of sound. It can only be done once the same way. The title suggests that we live in a green bunker where we are trapped and quickly disappearing, or, that we have created a collective bunker

⁴⁹ Negarestani, *Symposium: Speculations on Anonymous Materials* -. Accessed January 25, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg0lMebGt9I>.

⁵⁰ Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1987, 265.

⁵¹ Lozano, Jorge, director. *Green Bunker*. Vimeo. 2017, <https://vimeo.com/117447719>

⁵²Virilio. Paul, *The Original Accident*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008, 11.

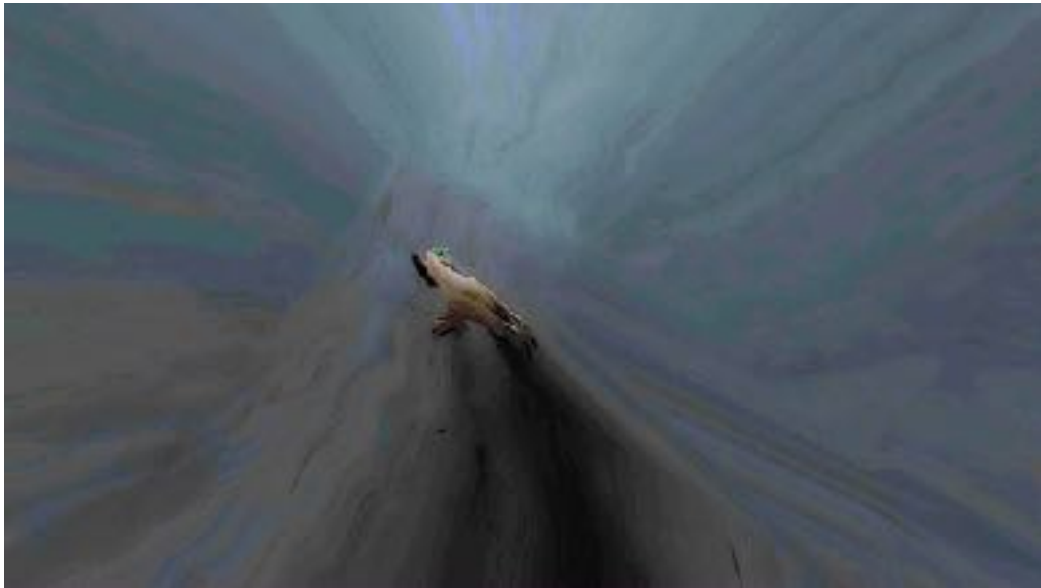
where nature slowly asphyxiates.

At the same summer institute, I also created *Cleaning Practice*, a single screen, loop video: an ontological and epistemological never-ending practice remembering the many cleaning jobs I did upon my arrival to Canada. It was made using a Max/MSP patch that affected the image when I was doing the live soundtrack.⁵³ When I came to Canada in 1971, I would get up at four in the morning and take the first boat from Toronto Island. I would then line up for daily work hires at temporary agencies that had outdoor offices in different parts of the city. If you were selected they would send you to do cleaning or moving jobs for 30 dollars a day. I worked in all kinds of jobs, they were like a university of philosophical and political pragmatism. I learned many skills: washing dishes, carpentry, fabrics, roofing, demolition, surveying, cooking, plumbing, etc. The first thing I did with my first money was to buy a banana split for 10 cents, with three large scoops of ice cream high as a mountain of sugar topped with a banana. I also bought a bicycle, a soccer ball, a 35mm camera, and corn flake cereal. I created my own darkroom in the bathroom and started to capture my floating identity through photography.

In *Cleaning Practice*, I have a visible tattoo on my back. It shows a “red skin Indian.” In 1992 I did a performance with Marcel Commanda at the Harbourfront Centre. He was a Mohawk called Bear. A big strong street wise poet constantly challenging authority. The police had to use five or six officers to subdue him. He had gone through what many Indigenous people go through: exclusion, drug addiction, alcoholism and jail. He wrote poetry, long lengthy mediations, longing for the possibilities of a better world from a traditional Indigenous perspective. We worked together on the installation/performance. I made a video

⁵³ Lozano, Jorge. *Cleaning Practice*. Vimeo. 2016. <https://vimeo.com/143181250>

and his poetry was written on the wall. My video section was the recording of the tattooing of the “red skin Indian.” I used as model the logo printed on a package of Colombian cigarettes that I brought with me called red skins. The logo is similar to the North American Indian image that can be seen on the old US 10-cent coin. In Cuba that image is very important for the practice of Santeria. When you go to the houses of religious people they have this icon at the entrance, it’s a protector.



4.6 *Cleaning Practice*. Still. Video.2016

The Swiftness of Experimental Motions

It is not my intention to present here a cohesive history of experimental cinema, which exploded in many places and minds, with a rich history regardless of historical omissions but rather I have quickly followed the path that I followed when I was beginning to inquire about alternative cinema. The idea with this scattered introduction is to point out some sparks, still actively precious in the archives of my imagination that have played a role in understanding the richness and complexity of non-linear representation.

Experimental filmmaking is to make worthy in unconventional manners the unstable impact between the real, the filmmaker and the medium itself. Technology has inherent attributes that artists explore and include in their experimentations, collapsing barriers created by linear thinking. Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1928) has it all: double exposure, fast motion, slow motion, freeze frames, jump cuts, split screens, Dutch angles, extreme close-ups, tracking shots, footage played backwards, stop-motion animations and self-reflexive visuals, split screen, text, voice over. In *Venom and Eternity* (1951) by Lettrist Isidore Isou, the non-relational use of sound and image, the bleach and scratch of the film cannot pass unobserved as a revolt against traditions and as an important influence on cinema. Likewise in the radical anti-film without images. In *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* (1952) by Situationist Guy Debord we find long sections of black and white sequences that experimental filmmakers would use to produce epileptic reactions.

“Cinema already has its masterpieces (...) Vomiting up old masterpieces is the only way for us to manifest our originality: puking out these masterpieces is our only chance to create cinematic masterpieces of our own,” declares Daniel, the “hero” of the *Traité de bave et d'éternité*.⁵⁴

The 60s continued the conversion of mind-bending exploration of the materiality of the medium itself into cinematic grammar. Of all the innumerable filmmakers at the time, Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), moving away from content to the peripheries and centralizing form, synthesized the idea that I had at the time of playing with the medium. Nonetheless, I never did care much about structuralist film's peripheral content, because I was interested in giving form to content politically. I feel that nowadays I have so little to say about formalism. Initially, it made

⁵⁴ Isou, Jean-Isodore. *Traité de Bave et d'éternité Marcel Achard - Original Trailer*. Accessed January 27, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hy7XrmOqgyc>.

sense and still does: to explore, manipulate, intervene into the elements that make the materiality or “what it is” (film) and to liberate it from the constraints of narrative representation.

However, its aridity and deviance from those initial 60s concerns is the result of a kind of repetition that doesn’t generate differences. It becomes torturous, lazy and predictable. Bad fashion. Also, the lack of consideration of the social implications as part of the elements that are inherent in the materiality (film) has narrowed the ontology of the material. We should not only consider the “what it is” (celluloid) and the “what it can be” (altered chemically, scratch, etc) but also pay attention to the “where does it come from” (labs that make it, workers, toxins, etc) which will add the social-political content that most experimental film and video lack with their repetitions of the same techniques and agonizing self-indulgence. *Wavelength* still resonates.

As to politics in both senses, the watchword was Godard’s “*the problem is not to make political films, but to make films politically.*” A Brechtian sentence down to the very formulation.⁵⁵

I owe Cali’s cine-clubs in the 70s for my exposure to the old films of Jean-Luc Godard (*Vivre Sa Vie*, *Masculin Féminin*, *La Chinoise*, etc.) I find them tedious now, too single-minded, and (im)mature. However, *Adieu Au Language* made in 2014 brought back the initial impact of his earlier films: his search for new languages, visual quotations, and the use of hand-held camera and fragmentation and above all his capacity to take risks and explore new ways to go beyond traditional narratives. But Cinema was not all. I had the fortune to see *Egyptology* by playwright Richard Foreman, creator of disorienting, post-dramatic Ontological-Hysterical Theatre, quasi- structuralist non linear examination of conflicting cultural systems, and dancer Lucinda Child’s minimalist walking pieces presented at the Bowery's Kitchen, both intriguing

⁵⁵ Farocki, Harun. Accessed January 28, 2016, 136 .<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/H/bo3705113.html>.

experiments that produce minimal differences through repetition to make imaginaries that appear to be a reality on their own. Experimental film is not a solitary discipline. Pierre Schaeffer's experimentation with sound reverse, slow and speed motion, mixing differences, audiovisual techniques have entered the underground scene and retro-complemented with experimental film. Sound-loops and sampling became possible with reel-to-reel tape recorders, and video Portapak, analog editing, cutting, and sound splicing to create repetition and, with repetition, differences. I witnessed the (re)appearance encounter of the Beat generation, William Burroughs with Schizo-Culture philosophers Felix Guattari and Sylvère Lotringer, at the Nova Convention in 1978 in NYC. I had just finished reading *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* a schizoanalysis treaty that in my punkish mind made sense as if I had written it.

I met William Burroughs at the Schizo-Culture Conference in November 1975. I was just back from one year in Paris and he was just back from a long self-imposed exile in London. The context of Schizo-Culture was definitely political — it was about madness and prisons. Felix Guattari had been extensively involved in treating madness. He co-directed the La Borde clinic south of Paris, well known for its innovative and unconventional treatment of mental patients. The clinic was the French version of British anti-Psychiatry movement. Both Felix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, who attended the conference, were involved with the question of madness and psychiatric treatment. Foucault had been closely involved with the question of prisons and was part of a group, which included inmates. All of them knew of — and of course — admired Burroughs' work and they had a chance to meet him at the conference. My intentions when I organized the conference was to put together the most formidable French theorists with the most creative American artists and writers (John Cage, Cunningham, etc). I realized that Burroughs was widely considered a "has been" in America. He had had his 15 minutes of fame in the 50s, and he had a hard-time finding a publisher in New York. Burroughs was revered in Europe, and once more, I tried to bring the two together by organizing another event — The Nova Convention — but exclusively around him this time. Burroughs detested politicians and considered the current ideologies with utter disdain. He was some kind of free libertarian, adept to skepticism and cynicism. But he wouldn't have minded if one wanted to call "political" his preoccupations with the fate of

the planet. It was. The idea that humans were destroying their own environment wasn't original per se, but it fit his lucid and apocalyptic mind. We didn't realize that this huge event would be an adieu to the American avant-garde. No other event after that gathered so many of the artists, poets, musicians of the underground scene. The whole idea of an artistic avant-garde collapsed in the 80s.⁵⁶

And in the artistic collapse of the 80s I saw many of my young friends, artists, and poets, shoot heroin, perhaps influenced by the belief that to be a better poet you had to be a junkie. Drugs were good; so we thought, they had an underground creative aura. With time, some of my friends OD'ed or sold everything including their bodies to buy junk around Yonge Street, Kensington Market, or Ossington Avenue; where once I met my friend Lisa who sold me the Collected Works of C.G. Jung for 10 dollars to buy some H. Many friends moved to New York City where it was easier to get it. New York was dangerous and exciting. It was open all night. I did not take heroin because I had a different perspective on the functions of artistic practice and being hooked on repetition without difference was not in my books. The routine of self-destruction was not an issue when you come from a country immersed in a civil war. Instead, devouring books became a habit. I bought them in rummage sales or stole from bookstores. We had no money, only enough to go to the Cameron House each day, drink beers and talk about art with absolute confidence with Rebecca Garrett, Gloria Berlin, Dimitriev Martinovic, Susan Mackey, Denise Cooper and others who thought that the local art was boring and we had to make it different and try hard at doing different. We wore black clothes, leather jackets, pointed shoes and drank Southern Comfort. Our originality was not in dressing black, but in realizing that we did not have to make sense or feel part of the mainstream art-scene because we were invited to

⁵⁶ Lotringer, Sylvère. Interview, Nova Convention | RealityStudio. Accessed January 27, 2018. <http://realitystudio.org/interviews/interview-with-sylvre-lotringer-on-the-nova-convention/>



4.7 *Does the knife Cry when It enters the Skin?* Still. Video. 1984

General Idea's cocktails in their studio. We were more comfortable at CEAC⁵⁷ or out in the streets looking for trouble doing performances that challenged the logic of toleration. I stopped writing this text and went looking in my storage boxes filled with books that survived the many evictions since living on Queen Street in the 80s to look for my old copy of *Anti-Oedipus*. Instead, I found books by Antonin Artaud, Jean Genet, Barba Jacob, Gabriela Mistral, Dadaism, the Vietnam War, Angela Davis, Brown Panthers, about the student's revolts, Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, Friedrich Nietzsche, and bell hooks *Talking Back* and others. I did find the first English publication of *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism, and Schizophrenia*.

When I opened its pages floated in the air all over the place falling like leaves in the autumn. I also found many publications printed by Semiotexte, in the 80s, lots of feminist theory,

⁵⁷ Centre for Contemporary Arts and Communication. (1975-1978) It provided an important venue for the production and exhibition of experimental art in Toronto during the 1970s. In its brief existence, the centre drew artists, musicians, and activists from across North America, organizing exhibitions such as *Language & Structure in North America* (1975), *Body Art* (1976), and *BOUND, BENT, AND DETERMINED* (1976). With its "Contextual Art Conference" (1976), CEAC seemed intent on signalling a turn away from Conceptual art proper (as represented by New York Conceptualists, Joseph Kosuth, and Sarah Charlesworth, who came to defend it against Contextualism). Major figures from Toronto and New York were deeply divided over the possibilities for politically-engaged art.

and lesbian thrillers. I found small publications about the Italian Transvanguardia a term coined by Achille Benito Oliva, a critic curator who formed part of the new crop of critic curators that became superstars, and dictated directions. The Transvanguardia was an Italian form of neo expressionism that brought the figure and emotions into art opposed to conceptual art. I found the catalogues of Mark Rothko and Joseph Beuys retrospectives at the Guggenheim Museum. I found a forgotten album of the Sex Pistols and a VHS copy of a short piece called *Theatre of It*, made in 1978. *Theatre of It* is a reel-to-reel portapak video with God Save the Queen and her fascist regime by the Sex Pistols as a sound backdrop. I use my naked body as a canvas while I read random excerpts of rebel and anarchist Jean Genet's writing that rejected all forms of social discipline and political regimes. But most interesting is how a simple action of looking at one thing can trigger the unexpected and bring you into the garden of forking paths.⁵⁸ Amongst all these books in my box of 80s goodies, I found a small Super 8mm film reel shot in the 80s filmed in Toronto and a music cassette tape with *Sweet Jane* by Lou Reed that I brought from NYC. The tape and the super 8 mm film were wrapped in a 8.5x11 flyer with a text credited to Albizu Campos⁵⁹ that read: *Puerto Rico Libre* (Free Puerto Rico). They have been there since one of my trips to NYC around 1982, and have existed alone, forgotten, ruled by the special effects of time. The sound tape had been stretched by the changes in temperature, and the song sounded warped. I decided to put the three elements together.

⁵⁸ The comment is used with no reference to the 1941 short story by Argentine writer and poet Jorge Luis Borges, first translated to English in 1948 by Anthony Boucher.

⁵⁹ Pedro Albizu Campos was the leader of the Puerto Rican Independence Movement from 1930 to 1965.



4.8 *Dis-continuity*. Still. Video.2018

I digitized the super 8mm film, used the distorted Sweet Jane song to make the soundtrack and used text. The work is called *Dis-continuity*. New York at the time was in a precarious state, with totally run down buildings on Avenue A, B, C, D, where Puerto Ricans, junkies and some adventurous artists coexisted. New York did not sleep and kept us awake all night.

*Dis-continuity*⁶⁰ is a 5-minute meditation on memories rescued by the presence of the unexpected and the endurance of chance. The work remembers Handsome Ned, country singer, Toronto's music scene hero who died of a heroin overdose. *Dis-continuity* is part of the series *The Importance of the Non-Important*, ten super 8mm based video meditations that I have been making while I write this text, screened at my oral defence.

⁶⁰ Lozano, Jorge. *Dis-continuity*. Vimeo, 2018. <https://vimeo.com/260936600>

Margins

What faces you, the storm, this day's sigh
as the day shifts its leaves, the wind,
a prompt against the calm you can digest.⁶¹

In 1984 I made a video work in two parts called *Untitled* and *Does the Knife Cry When It Enters The Skin?*⁶² I use a phrase to start the work: *It is not enough to die, you still have to disappear*. It was taken out of context from the many versions that I had read at the time about simulacrum, death and disappearance by Jean Baudrillard. The one that I remember the most is “Dying is pointless... You have to know how to disappear.” ; which I used this idea in a different manner to talk about forced disappearance, a common practice by most repressive governments. Although disappearance for Baudrillard is not a state between life and death, I was thinking at the time of the capacity of violence to erase people from the map, and that those maps are not deserts where the state hides its deaths but they are our own deserts, places where we hide our potential for change, our complacency, places to quickly forget, get used to it or mutate things into images that are incomplete references of what they represent.

In my work, Colombia is always present. After you leave, going back is a guiding force that helps you resist feelings of isolation and to reposition personal concerns. I filmed using super 8 film a street march of actors from the Cali Theatre School. Their work was influenced by Brecht's dialectical theatre and produced a theatre for the working class that I found condescending. Middle class actors trying to imitate and resolve the problems of the working class using literary agitation. They firmly believed they could make a revolution. They were

⁶¹ Rankine, Claudia. Section V, from *Citizen; An American Lyric*. *Places Journal*, August 1, 2017.

⁶² Lozano, Jorge. Part I: *Untitled* and Part II: *Does the Knife Cry When It Enters The Skin?* Vimeo. 1984 <https://vimeo.com/253533768>

beautiful and committed, regardless of whether I agreed with them or not. *Part 1/Untitled* (10 minutes) is a slow motion symbolic funeral denouncing the disappearance of actor Harold Almonaco who was murdered by the paramilitary or the police in Colombia. Actors and friends in the city painted their faces white, and called the demonstration The March of Silence. I wrote a voice-over narrative as if Harold was describing his own death. Local poet Fred Gaysek delivered it. I re-shot the super 8 film from a piece of paper that was hanging on the ceiling, and a fan is blowing it to create a floating turning page. Special effects!

Recently I told people in Cali that I had this footage, but no one remembered the march or the actor. A sad thing. So many people gave their lives for revolutions but in capitalism we erase the past with new conflicts. In our protected worlds remembering is painful; being aware that our lifestyle is part of the global problem is painful. This is the price of our so-called peace and happiness protracted through voluntary amnesia.

“Jorge Lozano’s two-part paeon to war and peace was exquisitely realized visually. The inter-media device of shooting a projection on super 8 film with its focal point at rest on a screen, which lifted and curled in the breeze against a backdrop of the out-of-focus image, provided the viewer with a beautifully poignant semiotic adjunct to the image-content of a funeral procession.”

(Victor Coleman, Vanguard, 1992.)

The second part is called *Does the Knife Cry When It Enters The Skin*. It uses scientific, war, and found footage of scientific experiments. I recycle philosophical ideas from Baudrillard, ideas on simulation using images of techno-capitalism. The work continuously asks how to stop the absence of meaning. I allow texts to flow freely and create random association with the visuals. I created the work in two parts because I’m split, I am a diptych. I have two countries and two cultures merged in one me. Recycling is the re-appropriation of what once was collective knowledge, authentically rendered, that has become privatized. The importance

of recycling ideas and visuals to find various meaningful connections, new ways of thinking and doing is the result of being an intersectional person and artist, a transcultural foreigner marked by coloniality, exclusions, in opposition to all discriminations. As immigrants of shifting identities, we live in this world regularly reconfiguring positions within the colonial matrix of power. The existence of transnational identities, the decolonization of knowledge, our confrontations with the neo-colonial shattering of differences by the so-called capitalist globalization are the issues that illuminate this text, and my work.

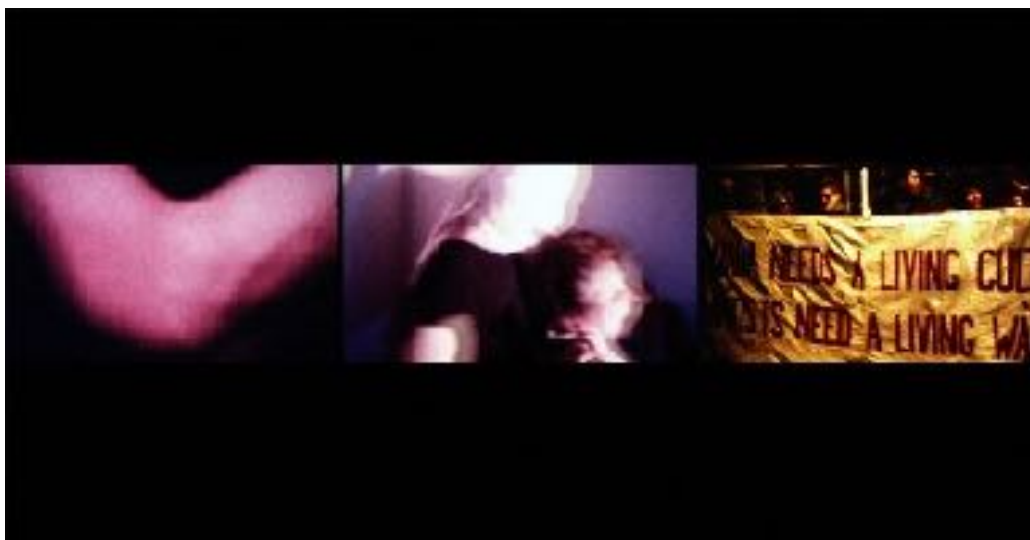
Situations

My life is in permanent reorientations of desire and delinking from the legacies of colonialism, and I call coloniality the system of hierarchies based on racial and economic differences that privileges mostly European populations: racism, sexism, homophobia, slavery, apartheid, anthropocentrism, capitalism, undignified work, animal submission, addiction to money and all forms of oppression between ourselves and other species and living things. The nature of these hierarchies can change according to socio-political situations outside or within Western countries. Since the 70s I started to record all kinds of political situations I had a Canon 518 super-8mm camera that I took everywhere to shoot around six frames per second segments. I still have many of those rolls of evidence of how cities, countries, landscapes, fashions used to be. Most of my recordings using the Portapak camera have disappeared. When things change, new technologies appear, and older ones slowly become difficult to access or simply disappear. Most of the footage that I shot in the 70s, my trips to Europe, Colombia, shots of Toronto Island landscapes and personal self-observations and fictional sequences stayed in boxes until 2014 when I made a three-screen video installation called *Situations*,⁶³ a

⁶³ Lozano, Jorge. *Situations*. Vimeo. 2015, <https://vimeo.com/117438800>

tryptic video installation. I explore issues concerning how time flows, where the past is still observable in the present and makes the present look like a camouflaged past, and how the past becomes a timeless dissemblance of itself. *Situations* explores the feeling that things change so fast that we have no time in the past. And at the same time, we reiterate that things have not changed at all. *Situations* is a mess of a film. It uses three screens to make a bigger mess. And the mess is that a lot of the issues that we have fought for have not guaranteed social justice. We are relatively free in Canada; we speak of lesbian, gay, bi, transgendered, women, colonized subjects and all social minority rights. Feminist theory has been intuitively incorporated; however, we are re-living the globalization of patriarchy and the re-strengthening of militarisms, homophobia, racism and blatant violation of all rights. We know that extremism and intolerance are embedded in the social fabric of the nation, that they are dormant and at any time they will rise to demand a conservative white Canada. Canadian international business practices support the relentless exploitation of nature for profit and the subsequent violation of human rights here and abroad like with the mining industry or the participation or support of Middle East military interventions. We become comfortable with self-recognitions of our goodness and forget our government's double standards. We are privileged and coexist with the system's hypocrisy and social and ecological control. Pyramidal hierarchy, corporate bureaucracy, representative democracy, sovereign fiat, are forms of social and political control. The First World economic privilege is a system of oppression of others, and we all willingly or unwillingly participate in it.

With these contradictory thoughts in mind I wanted to show the contradictory histories that I have witnessed and recorded since the 70s. In *Situations*, I use fragments from a

4.9 *Situations*. Still. Video. 2015

super 8 of *Cine Blanc*, a film made with Rebecca Garrett about revolution as a fashionable fiction. I was inspired by the work of Beth and Scott B, super eight filmmakers from New York. CEAC was a very active gallery, performance space, workshop, library, punk showcase in Toronto during this time and accessible for youth with politicized views. Amerigo Marras, his boyfriend Suber Corley, and Ron Gillespie published via Xerox issues of a zine called *Strike*, which expressed solidarity with Autonomia Operaria movement, and the armed faction of the Red Brigade anarchists, in Italy. This support and their copycat infantile threats and misplaced avant-garde machismo cost them public funding. They were forced to close and leave the country, marking this act of censorship by the Canadian central government, an action that was supported by the silence of Canadian artists. Back to *Situations*, I took all the material I recorded since 1978 in super 8mm and different video formats. Much of it shows public protests, feminist rights, gay rights, and demonstrations against oppressive conservative governments. When I stitched them together, I avoided chronology and intermixed those moments of resistance as if they were in the present. I realized that we're still fighting for the

same things, and that each breakthrough becomes another threatening entry. Like most of the work I do, this one triggered many memories that cannot be represented using images. I use text as a unifying device to fill in the voids. In 1978, I was at a rally at the University of Toronto's Medical Building. The rally was in support of the people of Namibia, West Africa, who were fighting against apartheid. A white power group had infiltrated the event. At some point, one of them aggressively took his biker's jacket off, and I could read the words "White Power" on his tight, white t-shirt. He screamed, "White Power!" He and his friends started to kick men, women, children, tables, everything. They had knives, baseball bats, chains and knuckle dusters. They threw a can of tear gas and shot a pistol in the air. They beat up people and sabotaged the gathering, leaving behind bleeding men, women and children. Another Colombian friend and I confronted them. I used a pink umbrella that I found on the floor to hit a big biker on the head; he was so busy hitting a black guy that he didn't feel anything. I pushed him hard, and the guy and I followed him outside the building hitting him with the umbrella until his biker friends came to the rescue. We went back to the Medical building that looked like a war zone. In those times, there were racist slogans in the city everywhere. This attack never really made it into the news. Perhaps there was a small paragraph in the Toronto Star, amidst bigger articles about the lives of sports celebrities or life on other planets. With *Situations*, I started to mix films that I made in Europe, North and South America and Berlin before the wall went down. Europe was anti-Reagan, and you could hear lots of music from the Beatles. Sendero Luminoso ignited Peru. Eva my partner and I made tapes about her androgyny. Susan Britton was the best artist in Toronto, General Idea made *Shut the Fuck Up*,

Andy Patterson and Robert from Government played at the Cameron House. As the installation progresses, I continue mixing landscapes, faces, and cities in an achronological order. The seeing and unseeing happen at the same time. I used to live around the corner from the Morgentaler Clinic where the first abortions were being performed in Canada. People holding up signs of the “Canadian Abortion Rights Action League” picketed it every day holding photographs of bloody fetuses. One night the clinic was bombed. It fell flat between the two buildings beside it, it was an explosive surgical operation. It’s amazing that in this country where the police know everything, they were never able to find who was responsible. It was such a professional job, obviously by someone linked to an army expert or a demolition company. The camera moves through crowds and faces. Here are the Bunch of Fucking Goofs, a punk band from Kensington Market, still goofs and fucking (up). They became more conservative as the years passed when Vietnamese gangs moved into the Market, I heard that the Goofs asked the police to provide more security. It should be the other way around; as we get old, we should become more radical, like Deleuze, who jumped out of his hospital window. There are protests in Toronto and Montreal and many gay marches. Selecting the bits from the twelve years of recordings that I have of Pride Weeks became very painful because many of these people are not alive anymore. They were not alive until I started to view the material.

Unsettled Modes

My contact with cultural and natural environments is mostly based on sensations, impacts and affect. I recognize literary influences when I think of William Burroughs’ use of randomness or cut-up techniques. I privilege unsettled modes of thinking proper to experimental film and video making, where “all is possible no matter what.” I share the idea

that thoughts are a tribute to commonly generated and publicly shared conceptual resources, and most importantly that the self is no longer bound to a compacted identity but a process of ongoing self-realization. With these thoughts in mind, this writing is no longer limited by the compactness of the “proper way”. It is a process of fulfilment through self-learning and Nietzschean transvaluation⁶⁴ the revaluation of all values and the exaltation of life.

Transvaluation is defiance and it triggers our capacity to represent artistically and create realities that are their own world or many worlds. We temporarily inhabit these worlds and share them with others who in turn create their own situations. They are an intent to energize thoughts and unveil the contents of operations. How much do we want images to relate to the things they represent? How can we challenge the prevailing forces of given reductionism? A reductionism that.

Should I be identified with definitions that you might have of me? I can be beside you, and you don't see me. I can talk to you, and you don't hear me. You want some truth, but you don't want to hear it. You know the truth, but you don't want to say it. - I know, I wreck your eco-logic with so many questions when you just want to relax and use the “post-truth” excuse as a prothesis to make you rightful but you very well know that there has never been truth.⁶⁵

In 2016 I made in Colombia *The Aloneness of Photograms*, a short work with a playful taste for subtlety, paradox, and aporia. A break from the seriousness of rigour. It was made in response to conversations that I had where each time I would hear a different definition about myself. Descriptions that I enjoy very much because they helped me to position myself within

⁶⁴ Grosz. *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism*. 98.

⁶⁵ Lozano, Jorge. *Self-talks*. Written on a boat to Cartagena thinking of nothing, 2016.

comfortable “in-betweens.” In *Aloneness of Photograms* I play with the absurdity of creating meaning to tap into the conceptual resources that populate the plane of immanence where concepts flow like soap bubbles: a thing is a thing alone or in another thing.⁶⁶



5.1 *The Aloneness of Photograms*. Still. Video. 2016

The Importance of the Non-Important is a nomadic journey through my production process, the way in which thoughts and things become equally engaged, and how thinking is forced by proximity to materiality’s *maximum intensity of presence*.⁶⁷

I explore the multiple ramifications and mutual connections of creative and political actions as responses to colonial, postcolonial, gender, race, financial, philosophical based inequities. In most of my physical, intellectual, and artistic undertakings I activate conditions to prompt decolonization processes. By decolonization I mean active participation in epistemological disobedience with unpredictable ontological results. Hence the choosing of strategies that question inflexible hierarchies, regimes of being, thinking, seeing, and feeling, all forms of status quo, elitisms, exploitations, conformism, and complacency: be they linguistic, philosophical, economic,

⁶⁶ Lozano, Jorge, director. *The Aloneness of Photograms*. Vimeo. 2016, <https://vimeo.com/143664583>

⁶⁷ Garcia. *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things*. 182.

political, sexual, aesthetic or creative. The random methodology that I use to build this body of texts, apparently chaotic, is the same method that I follow to create my video/film work. Actions that at the very least locate moments where binary distinctions break down to expose the constructed or arbitrary nature of hierarchies, traditional oppositions, and commanding roles. This text and my art-work are reaffirmations of presence over absence in the realities that I inhabit and relentlessly re-represent. Realities that are material - corporeal, non-corporeal processes, that come from all directions, many times aggressively imposing provincial narratives. The vehicle that I use to navigate through these turbulent seas often complacently calmed is my creative work: the production of video works as a means to construct new imaginaries and my engagement in adventures of the decolonial cognitive kind. Cognitive adventures refer to the motor-sensorial experience of moving through time and space on my own terms coupled with nonconventional resistance to theoretical constraints. Reading creates chain reactions that bring me to another writer(s), different conceptualizations. The list is long and always changing. Their theories at the very best have helped me to rethink my understanding of their colonial constitution, my position within such theories, and to reformulate, mix, recycle them. It is perhaps a way to rebuild using my own resources, for my own purpose, a creative appropriation. Like Derrida's deconstruction and the arbitrary nature of hierarchy where a seemingly dependent term turns out to be foundational for the dominant term. The idea is not to create a dependent relation that we flip and re-flip or to invert the hierarchy but to crack open distinctions and determine new creative relations. Comparably, in my idea of "politics from within," we say capitalism is damaging all but is the ground where we stand, the system we live in. How can we change it, if it changes us faster, if we are capitalism? It would not exist without us. We can get what we need but we cannot get what we want or you can always get what you want but if you try sometimes you get what you need.⁶⁸ The control over one's self is an illusion. Each artistic work becomes a snapshot of the efforts to complete a final piece with endings that create more questions, hence the need to continue making. The liberation that art can provide us rests on the creation of visual imaginaries that act as accounts of dissemblance instead of resemblance, the connection of randomness to create complexity and new contents, and

⁶⁸ Rolling Stones. *Let It Bleed*. Vinyl, LP, Album. Discogs.

the celebration of who we are and of our capacity to transform. We, artists, are warriors of desire, nomadic thinkers, free to bond, or disconnect, who go through limitless changes, variations, engagements, entanglements, reappearances, remixes, and fade outs and fade ins. We create for pleasure and enjoy it. Our work reflects a world of many full-bodied concepts and ideas, which have documented histories or none at all. Unknowingly, the concepts that unwillingly suffuse throughout our practice somehow help to connect, to re-represent. Concepts are in the air. We breathe concepts. They are collective cognitive achievements; concepts and us are fish from the same pond.



6.1 May 1968, Graffiti. Still. Video. 2006

Constraints imposed on pleasure incite the pleasure of living without constraints.⁶⁹

Poetry is in the streets⁷⁰

1968 happened in Colombia at the height of the defence of the Cuban revolution and the protests against the Vietnam War. In 1963, Julio Cortazar published *Rayuela* (Hopscotch), a

⁶⁹ May 1968, Graffiti. Paris.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

novel made out of expandable chapters that fill the gap that the main narrative is incapable of covering. It is a book that had an impact on our lifestyle and understanding of rules, structures that needed to be transformed, challenged with new forms, styles, and contents. *Rayuela* is an assemblage of short chapters: philosophical dissertations, personal meditations, literary journeys of one person and two countries. The book's ludic structure, the possibility of a disorderly reading within a chaptered structure, its jumps, contractions and expansions has had a strong influence on how I have understood reality, how I do my own work and in the organization and development of this text. Every thing is made out of contradiction that will become visible with time. A current reading of the book renders its male vision content questionable. Likewise, the epoch in which it was written. It reaffirms men's dominance in the production of thought. It is part of the gendered history of the male privileged exceptional self of modernism active since the avant-garde artists and the revolutionaries of the early 20 century until our day. To understand this contradiction and value in the ideas of May 68, I went back to read its graffiti. The reading positioned me within a tremendous bellicose era of world wars, of euphoric revolutions, urban guerrilla warfare in some cases influenced by avant-garde theories and an ongoing feminist struggle that challenged the universalist conception of representation unmasking the power structures which made it possible. Around 1916-17, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, alias Lenin lived in Zurich, 14 Spiegelgasse, on the same street where Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, and others were performing their anti-spectacles or Dadaist interventions at the Cabaret Voltaire. Lenin leaves for the Soviet Union to direct the socialist revolution and at the same time Dadaists spread their anti-establishment gospel all over Europe.⁷¹ Coincidentally two of the most influential events that marked what was to follow until now departed from the same place the same year; one proposing

⁷¹ Granés, Carlos. *El Puño Invisible. Arte, revolución y un siglo de cambios culturales*. Taurus Print, 2012, 14.

an economic, political and social violent structural new beginning and the other proposing the overthrow of all old values with new ways of thinking and living by subverting traditional narratives. Both failed to change anything. The demolition of museums and academies of art and knowledge never occurred inside the intuitions and art centres; on the contrary, they have become large corporations. The socialist revolution collapsed in the 80s under the rubble of the Berlin wall, and the artistic vanguard lost all its utopic battles, but their actions still resonate.

I decided to use May 68s graffiti as reference to recreate concepts that had detonating consequences in the students' struggle.⁷² We can read now the relevance of those moments and their relationship to our current political and cultural situation. They bring back memories of artistic and social emancipation to our times of complacency and pessimism.

Capitalism continues to be a patriarchal reaffirmation, overwhelmingly oppressive and destructive, militarized and supremacist. On the other hand, art has become more dependent on spectacle and trapped in the passivity of trying to be a new product for capital accumulation. Neoliberalism has sharpened its mechanism of control for ensuring compliance at all levels. The promise of happiness has been used by capitalism to justify social oppression, racism, neo-colonialism, colonialism, and human rights abuses. For many artists and immigrants, equality has become something that seems to be imposed by management. Instead of dismissing inequality, it increases marginality. We witness each day how the diversity of points of view can become exhausted and swept away by homogenization. I have lived with a dual feeling of

⁷² Lozano, Jorge. *1968 Graffiti*. Vimeo, 2011, <https://vimeo.com/254604556>

believing in change and the impossibility to exercise my right to appear and to exist at my own will within the dominant social body. Combating the exclusions and lack of diversity causes unhappiness and lots of conflicts, and when you complain you feel that you are always repeating the same thing over and over and over...

Diversity

The phrase social body therefore promised full membership in a whole (and held out the image of that whole) to a part indebted as needing both discipline and care. The part must be willing to perish for the body where willingness is a moral project of becoming worthy...parts must be willing to obey commands.⁷³

We live in the world of others who don't comprehend our world, our gestures, forms, and rhythms. We are with others who don't comprehend we are in the world of their gestures, thoughts, forms, and rhythms. In both cases, it presupposes that we are in a world that is not our world, a world where our presence is exiled: the relation that connects the thing to what the thing is. The language of diversity has become today a holy mantra across different sites. We are told that diversity is worthy, that it makes for improved multicultural societies, and that diversity instills values of cooperation, fairness, and justice in a democratic society. However, institutional diversity has become for minorities a feeling of coming up against something static, a solid separation instead. The idea of implementing diversity in educational and cultural institutions is used to reinforce dominant discursive practices. True diversity implies reorganization at all levels, a repositioning, and a redistribution of access and doings, which

⁷³Ahmed, Sara. *Rasism, vithet och mångkultur som fantasi*. Interview. May 27, 2011 Södra teatern/Kägelbanan. Stockholm, Sweden.

entails structural changes.

The belief that recognition of the other's otherness unlocks differences and creates new reorientations of our perceptions, new modes of transversality and the capacity for interaction makes us strong-willed. Whenever I have come close to having a sense of identity, I discover a new path where that identity crumbles and so on and so on. I would say that my work is a testimony of this trans-individualization of the different positions that have occupied my (artistic) life. I want to explore how art works and texts produced randomly on the road, a kind of travelogue, can acquire the status of artistic expression and be able to move across dominant epistemologies and market demands.



6.2 *The World Upside Down*. Still. Video. 2016

I am concerned how the artistic act gets dissolved into aesthetic evaluations and definitions that hinder how to create new forms, new representations, and new political positionings to challenge the essentialist and the exceptionalist positions that hold western capitalist and liberal societies on top of others. My works derive from the recognition that

living and therefore creating and viewing works of art are both nonlinear and dynamic experiences. Life is a creative adventure. "A personal 'adventure' is no a priori, no positive and absolute and inelastic thing, but just a matter of relation and appreciation—a name we conveniently give, after the fact, to any passage, to any situation, that has added the sharp taste of uncertainty to a quickened sense of life".⁷⁴ For Bergson, any real act of perception is always contaminated with affection—both as a factor determining the selection of images and as a contribution to the resulting perceptual experience.⁷⁵ One day at York University in Toronto, I was walking in front of one of Rodney Graham's upside-down landscapes placed on a wall at the Ross Building where hundreds of students pass by every day; a river of students from all cultures in the world, each one with a unique form of walking and gesturing. The contrast of the landscape with the racial and cultural diversity was too strong to ignore. Regardless of the number of people, the photograph would try to absorb them, and struggle to be more important, more visible, but people will pass by ignoring it. I started to imagine that the photograph was OK but that we were upside down, and decided to create *The World Upside Down*.⁷⁶ When I was recording it, I was thinking about the lack of diversity at York University at the faculty level. Based on my experience twice as a course director and as a teaching assistant, I remembered the feeling of recognition with many of the global south students' immigrant experiences and how we would form creative bonds because of this acknowledgment. They would feel at ease talking about their experiences and would take risks when transforming them into personal works. They would postulate conceptual and aesthetic solutions without the fear

⁷⁴ James, Henry. *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, Reprint edition, Chicago ; London: University Of Chicago Press, 2011, 167.

⁷⁵ Hansen, Mark B. N. *New Philosophy for New Media*. 99.

⁷⁶ Lozano.Jorge. *The World Upside Down*. Vimeo.2016. <https://vimeo.com/143540067>

of feeling weird or misunderstood about their cultural backgrounds and different forms of existence. *The World Upside Down* starts with a sentence taken from Julio Cortazar's "Instructional Manual", page 6 in *Historias de Cronopios y Famas*: "The job of having to soften up the brick every day, the job of cleaving a passage through the glutinous mass that declares itself to be the world, to collide every morning with the same narrow rectangular space, the same taste of the same toothpaste, the same sad houses across the street..."

DeLinking

Ecstasy⁷⁷ makes people more flexible to love others and freely dance submerged within currents of pleasure caused by the intense flow of dopamine production to wake up the next day with a feeling of emptiness, and boredom. Boredom is where consumption is taking us, a body emptied of dopamine ⁷⁸. Instead, some of us want a body intoxicated with the subversive feeling generated by transforming political matters in our own hands through self-organization. We live in a world of chemical control. These chemical regulations designed to achieve certain freedoms loop our lives within the eternal ephemeral belief of finally achieving success or satisfaction. The laws of capital drive these distinctions between need and want. We are producers and consumers of neurotransmitters and emotions in a techno-bio-political regime where art still can remain the only possibility of doing "whatever pleases us." Doing "whatever" can take us out of this techno capitalist laboratory into adventures of disequilibrium, away from the proposed symmetry of universal truths of duty, choice, good and evil amongst all possible

⁷⁷ Ecstasy or Molly is a synthetic, psychoactive drug that has similarities to both the stimulant amphetamine and the hallucinogen mescaline. It produces feelings of increased energy, euphoria, emotional warmth and empathy toward others, and distortions in sensory and time perception. Very popular among White adolescents and young adults in the nightclub scene or at "raves" (long dance parties), but the drug now affects a broader range of users and ethnicities.

⁷⁸ Dopamine appeared very early in the course of evolution and is involved in many functions that are essential for survival of the organism, such as motricity, attentiveness, motivation learning and memorization. But most of all, dopamine is a key element in identifying natural rewards for the organism. These natural stimuli such as food and water cause individuals to engage in approach behaviors. Dopamine is also involved in unconscious memorization of signs associated with these rewards.

dualities. A body adrift.

I propose that through the de-linking from the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality we can acquire the capacity for genuine emancipation and the capacity to introduce new subjects and heterogeneous objects into the field of perception, politics, aesthetics, and sexuality. We artists, cultural institutions, people on the margins, feminists, transsexuals, and immigrants can play a crucial role in the formation of our trans-modernity and post-gender sexuality. The changes within neoliberalism that we are witnessing are characterized not only by the transformation of “gender,” “sex,” “sexuality,” “sexual identity,” and “pleasure” into objects of the political management of living, but also by the fact that this management itself is carried out through the new dynamics of advanced techno-capitalism, global media, and biotechnologies. We are being confronted with a new type of hot, psychotropic punk capitalism. These recent transformations are like assemblages of biomolecular, micro-prosthetic mechanisms of control of subjectivity.

Our world economy is dependent upon the production and circulation of hundreds of tons of synthetic steroids, on the global diffusion of a flood of pornographic images, on the elaboration and distribution of new varieties of synthetic legal and illegal psychotropic drugs (e.g., enaltestovis, Special K., Viagra, speed, crystal, Prozac, ecstasy, poppers, heroin, Prilosec), on the flood of signs and circuits of the digital transmission of information, on the extension of a form of diffuse urban architecture to the entire planet in which megacities of misery are knotted into high concentrations of sex-capital.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Preciado, Beatriz. Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics - Journal #44 April 2013 - *e-Flux*.” Accessed January 27, 2018. [http:// www.e-flux.com/journal/44/60141/testo-junkie-sex-drugs-and-biopolitics/](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/44/60141/testo-junkie-sex-drugs-and-biopolitics/).



6.3 *Lola's Art*. Still. Video. 2009

Lola's Art

I made *Lola's Art*⁸⁰ in one day of continuous recording and talking during Pride Day parade. I started the work following Lola to a rented truck with a crane where she rehearsed a dance choreography using a steel ring supported high up with the crane. The woman who was driving the truck, a Nicaraguan lesbian ex-guerilla Sandinista fighter, did not get a license to drive it, and the police stopped Lola's vehicle from joining the parade. The tape continues and it goes beyond Lola's frustrations into intimate, raw narratives. *Lola's Art* is a testimony of the multiple transformations that Lola's body has endured beginning in Caracas, Venezuela when she drove a pink Vespa blowing kisses to the passersby who insulted her. She was assaulted many times by the police and homophobic population. Lola has theoretically and practically transformed her body through the use of pharmacological technologies, testosterone, and other molecular prosthetics to create polymorphous identities that confuse binary distinctions. She helps us understand the relationship between the body and how technologies become body. Lola is a living archive using all modes of production at her disposal. She is a corporeal

⁸⁰ Lozano, Jorge. *Lola's Art*. Vimeo. 2009. <https://vimeo.com/123372787>

demonstration of how the production of consumerism (cars, motorcycles), raw materials (rubber, silk, leather), urbanism (parks, dark alleys) is essential in the development and transformation of new sexualities.

“normality“ cannot be sufficiently anchored by consciousness alone, or indeed by human cognition.⁸¹

We can travel with Lola back in time to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries to track the history of instruments like globes to block the contact between the hand and the clitoris and penis; devices created to stop the masturbating hand from wasting the sexual energy assigned to reproduction and industrial production; the treatment of hysteria and the development of vibrators, chastity belts, and many other repressive instruments, became instruments for the production of pleasure in contemporary sexual practices starting in the 20th century. They were transformed into technologies of resistance and pleasure by S&M queer and heterosexual communities and have become inserted in the body as in the case of the use of dildos in Lola’s collection. Dildos, more than a replacement, became a nomadic organ of multiple shapes to enhance Lola’s endless plasticity. Lola is the living embodiment of Beatriz Preciado and Foucault’s concepts of resistance, bio-power, and queer praxis. Disciplinary technology can be intervened in and transformed into a technology for producing pleasure. Preciado argues that sex is technological and how in the anthropological and colonial discourse, the definition of humanity depends on a notion of technology. Technology is the colonizing criterion to determine the degree of culture and rationality between colonizers and colonized. Male and female bodies are defined in their relationship to these technologies. Technology is the totality

⁸¹ Hayles, N. Katherine. *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2017, 110.

of material and non-corporeal fabrications to artificially construct human nature definitions and binary sexual differences. For Preciado, technology and sex are the strategic anthropological colonial discourses that place masculinity in relationship to a technological apparatus of power, and femininity as sexual availability and procreation. The categories of male and female as we live them are not natural; they are normative ideals, fictions that became real, culturally constructed, subject to change in time and culture.

Lola's sexuality is a combination of organic and inorganic technologies (hand, tongue, vibrators, rubber, dildos, whips, chastity belt, electrically charged apparatus, mouth and genital locks) producing a short-circuit between control and the production of pleasure and freedom. In the early 2000's, Lola the activist sued the YMCA because she was asked to get out of the whirlpool by a group of traditional gay men who were outraged at sharing the pool with a man with penis and breasts. Lola has been a very successful prostitute serving gay, lesbians, hetero men and women. With her earnings, she bought her own house and paid for innumerable plastic surgeries demanded by the passing of time and age.

Queens and Bees

bell hooks was essential for me as a POC⁸² to understand the intersection of forms of oppression in capitalism, at a time when there was no position for immigrant non-white men within white feminism. We were assumed to be womanizers and macho. Xicanadyke Cheri Moraga and her opposition to assimilationism were deeply influential. The Stonewall riots, and the igniting presence of Latino and Black drag queens, who were suffering discrimination from many corners was reassuring for us Latino men who have

⁸² POC. People of Color.

been radically questioning capitalism, sexism, patriarchy and discrimination towards Latin women, queer and immigrant population.

“Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad”⁸³

Out of my involvement for more than ten years working with the queer Latin Community, recording and promoting their events, I have the most complete archives of the Latin drag queen boom in Toronto, in the 90’s. *Samuel and Samantha*⁸⁴ is the product of this involvement. This video was instrumental in validating the importance of the life and thoughts of the drag queen community in Toronto within the wider gay community and outside of it. It captures Samantha's story-telling while her brother is putting on her makeup. Samantha speaks up. She questions the discrimination against Latinos within the gay community in the 90’s. She denounces the police abuse against gay men taken to Cherry beach to get beat up. Nothing is left untouched.



6.4 *Samuel and Samantha*. Still. Video. 1990

⁸³ New York Daily News coverage of the Stonewall riots, 1969.

⁸⁴ Lozano, Jorge. *Samuel and Samantha*. Vimeo. 1990. <https://vimeo.com/254595159>

Samuel and Samantha was made when a strong Latin lesbian and gay community was becoming organized, specifically the drag queens. The tape shows the lip-syncing talent of the community and their riotous dramatic interpretations of Latin Divas. It was recorded at the Pink Panther, a club on College St and Euclid Avenue. Pink Panther was one of the clubs that formed the Pink Triangle, a triangle made of three Latin gay clubs, Pink Panther, Tacones, and El Convento Rico, in an area of eight blocks that went through little Italy. Every weekend, La Lupe, Gloria Trevi, Chavela Vargas, Paquita, Jennifer Lopez, Carmen Miranda would walk from one club to the next on College Street. The walking back and forth during the night caused confusion and commotion amongst the male Italian population of little Italy. The men blew whistles and flirted with the beautiful Latin Divas. *Samuel and Samantha* was shown first at the Images Festival, at the Euclid Cinema to a full house. We organized the celebration party at the Pink Panther with Samantha and most of the artists performing. It was the first time that a big audience of a non-Latin gay population was there. From that night on the Pink Panther became known outside the Wellesley and Church St area, and became a popular gay space outside the gay village or ghetto⁸⁵ as Samantha called it. Latin Drag queens were starting to be visible. Soon after, the tape was shown in the Toronto LGTB Film Festival, *Inside Out*, at the same theatre. We decided to have the party at El Convento Rico, a new dancing spot that was going through a transition from hetero to gay club thanks to the work of Dario, a Colombian gay activist with an irresistible laugh. He was the founder of the Pink Panther and transformed El Convento Rico into a “drag queen”⁸⁶ performance space. A year later he opened a new place called Tacones (High Heels) on

⁸⁵ The use of the word ghetto for many of us is not derogatory. We see it as a place of resistance and complex creative strategies and also acknowledge the social inequality and stereotypes that surround it.

⁸⁶ The first recorded use of "drag" to refer to actors dressed in women's clothing is from 1870, according to the OED..

the corner of Lippincott and College. He came to Canada in the late 60s or early 70s, with a wave of gay men and drag queens who were very active within the Colombian immigrant community. Most of them died of AIDS. Dario is still around and is trying to get funds to open a space to help immigrants. The last time I showed *Samuel and Samantha* with another tape, called *Tacones* and shot in Tacones, was at a gathering of HOLA members. To my surprise, the screening brought back the performativity, strength and political importance of many trans-individuals who had passed away at the height of their recognition and were performing in the tape. Samuel became a filmmaker.

The Business of Spaces

We live in a globalized planet where many of us understand globalization as the cartography of differences instead of local cultural content expanding everywhere with its subsequent impoverishing of differences. We live in a globalized world that is not one thing, but infinite things and countless events. We see it as only one thing, like when we feel we cannot change the world even though it is getting deleted in front of our eyes. Unless we change ourselves first, so we say. But the world is many things and not a thing. Each day we have to find glimmers of hope amongst the many cracks of our neo-pessimism. Neo-pessimism is to know that there is no hope, no future, but to act as if to avoid the uncomfortable compromise of a radical change in our lives. No matter where we go (tourism) or no matter what we buy (consumption) it is difficult to affirm that we are free. What we call material possessions are not enough to fill the spiritual emptiness. Some of us, accused of “talking crap”, imagine the world without work, a world for contemplations, where laziness is pragmatic and can be considered productive. By productive we mean a doing that is not an obligation, a doing where we do what

we want to do, a not-for-profit doing, a creative working. We compare this world to Orwell's 1984 and are afraid to wake up next day turned into a Kafkian cockroach.⁸⁷ We are the panopticon. We don't need guards, or video cameras spying on us. We have Facebook, our trillion selfies and face recognition cameras. We have become virtually nomadic and individualistic in our living rooms, and we achieve the highest form of gratification, analyzing films, discussing the originalities of our tattoos, laughing at superstar Zizek's repetitive hand dancing to the rhythm of his apothegms about the collapse and contractions of 21st century capitalist markets. We eat fresh strawberries and swallow fresh oysters in the winter, we take care of our costly bodies breathing contaminated air indoors and outdoors, but we continue to be lonely. We are polyamorous and polystressed. We want money, unstoppable attention, we wear black to look like the 70s, but the underground was a mode of existence experimenting the body, and it came with a price. Now we live above ground and have been domesticated. We are good citizens, and revolution means success; the private is political, so we say. Do we know that in the year 2017, there were 27 transsexuals killed in Colombia? Or how many Indigenous people still live under poverty conditions, in this our native land of plenty? We acknowledge in all cultural events that we are on native land, and thank their spirits for lending us their land, but are we prepared to give our home back to the owners of the nation? Eager to triumph we consume all that we need and corporations get more powerful. We colonize animals and call it love. We compare their abilities and conflate intelligence with obedience; the more obedient, the more intelligent, the more intelligent, the more we love them and buy them treats. Good girl! We tell her, and then we take them out, leashed to our bodies. Dogs and cats know more about us than we know about them. Do they really love us? Or have they adapted to obey to get what

⁸⁷ Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Radford: Wilder Publications, 2018.

they want? Or are they are just waiting...?

I remember going with my grandmother to the market to buy meat and other groceries. The market was a large square space with a roof and hundreds of small businesses run by mostly Afro-Colombians. The market was in a poor, dangerous neighbourhood. There were many thieves around, waiting for a chance, and many beggars, prostitutes, and happy drunkards. My grandmother used to hide her money inside her brassiere, under her breast. The black women hated her because she was always bargaining for a lesser price beyond the reasonable. It was embarrassing. They were very loving to me and would give me slices of sweet tropical fruits. Lots of dogs with really strategic smart gestures would somehow infiltrate the market and cleverly avoid getting hit with sticks or garbage. They would hang around the meat section. In those times people would use wicker baskets to carry the food. There were no plastic bags only newspaper wrapping which would get soggy especially with the meat. When we headed back home, my grandmother would ask me to get a big stick. Outside the market there were packs of wild urban dogs walking around; sometimes they would have bloody fights for a piece of bone. They were smart and tough. We had to be careful; you knew that they would follow you and that at any time they would attack you. They carry the survival genes of the hunting tactics of their wolf ancestors. They know how to cooperate, and to plan. They follow you close behind, to create panic and so they did. They followed us, and at some point, they split into several groups and went on different directions. My grandmother and I chanted victory and changed sides to hold the heavy basket. We were by a small park close to the house; an area where several streets converged. Suddenly, out of nowhere; we saw around fifteen dogs coming from all directions to attack us. We left the basket on the road and ran for cover. I even left the stick behind to help my grandmother jump a fence. From behind it, we witnessed a display of absolute freedom and

euphoria; the ecstasy of a Dionysian banquet. Blood was drunk, and meat collectively torn to pieces devoured amidst a dissonant barking and tenacious biting. Finally, they all went in different directions, and all left in the basket were the bruised green vegetables and fruits.

I propose a “politics of space” to conceptualize the ways in which settler moves to knowing and/or constructing animal bodies and/or subjectivities (re)locates animals within particular geographic and architectural spaces. The insertion of animal bodies into specific industrialized, colonized, and vacated spaces (such as (factory) farms, urban apartments, and “emptied” forests) is, therefore, the gesture through which animality is made intelligible and material in the settler imagination. In other words, I argue that colonial animalities are inseparable from the colonized spaces in which they are subjected and laboured. Here, a decolonial animal ethic must also be a land ethic insofar as the repatriation of land to Indigenous peoples would logically require a re-articulation of animality. This falsely naturalized relationship between the animal body and colonized spaces must then become a point of decolonial intervention.⁸⁸

We live in a multipolar world, in hyper-capitalism, in the age of extinctions and exterminations, of racist nationalism or authoritarian democracies. But there is hope, so we say. Some resist fighting for change, some resist and fight for change. Some change. Do we know that 40% of Canadians think that accepting immigrants fleeing from the United States could make Canada less safe? We see the return of repression; the demise of all that we have fought for. We live waiting for the accident to reach our backyard. And at the end of the day when everything is over, the only humans to survive will be our dogs and the gravitational sound waves of our planet traveling in space carrying the vibrations of the mountains of garbage that we collected since we invented agriculture.

⁸⁸ Belcourt, Billy-Ray. Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought. *Societies* 5, no. 1 (December 24, 2014): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc5010001>.



6.5 *Gravitational Interferences*. Still. Video. 2017

*Gravitational Interferences*⁸⁹ is part of a series of experimental fiction works that I made without using a script, it represent the kind of works where theory emerges out of spontaneous configurations of what appear to be unintelligible connections. It is a humorous exploration of contradiction in our personal lives and it questions how what we think is right can be wrong. It uses a main character dislocated from time and space as a driving force to address issues of communication and control. Our life regulated by knowledge-producing machines needs a non-hierarchical reaffirmation of all life through internal critiques of prevailing orders. The work imagines personal and social rebellion and liberation and recognizes that desires have been appropriated and are now part of a bigger broader network that transforms emancipation into new forms of exploitation and assimilation. Our ecological concerns, new coordination with living matter, and our relations with other animals have been converted into profitable enterprises where we pay for our liberation and sense of belonging. The film is improvised and was shot using two simultaneous cameras. Zero script. The film also explores the multipolar effects of discrimination from a trans-identity, transcultural and transgender, often contradictory, multi-viewpoint. Issues of animality, humanity, gender fluidity and violence are networked through fast cut-up editing techniques. In a script-less film, the writing of the script ends with the last edit.

⁸⁹ Lozano, Jorge. *Gravitational Interferences*. Vimeo. 2017. <https://vimeo.com/162289162>

The Oedipal scenario can only acquire a privileged status after the abolition of the regime of thinking about the arts, a regime that implies a certain idea of thought: thought as action imposing itself upon passive matter. This is precisely what I have called the aesthetic revolution the end of the ordered set of relations between what can be seen and what can be said....⁹⁰

D-enunciation

My participation and work with the artist community, Latin queer community, and Latin youth in conflict has helped me to develop a self-representation strategy, in my work and workshop practice. It has helped me to go beyond marginality and to understand the importance of doing for one's enjoyment. The use of experimental film/video technologies, and practicing art as modes of resistance has released me from the pull of homogeneity and complacency. Being experimental is paying attention to the politics of forms and patterns of social processes, in this case when traveling through the north of Colombia in La Guajira.

My friend Alexandra Gelis and I visited two islands on the Atlantic coast, north of Colombia. El Islote is a small little place populated by Afro-Colombians. They call it the most populated Island in the world. You can walk around the island in ten minutes if you ignore the ceaseless current of events and situations that occur every millisecond. Hundreds of little half-naked children run and play in the sandy streets.

⁹⁰ Rancière, *The Aesthetic Unconscious*. 2.



6.6 *D-enunciation* Still. Video. 2014

The constant flow of older people is interminable as well. The other Island, Mucura is a bigger one. Most of the people from El Islote work there catering to tourism. It has two big resorts and a small local population. History says that Salvatore Mancuso's⁹¹ army and other paramilitary groups had a biopolitical control over most of the Atlantic region of Colombia for about ten years or more. These armies are still there but less noticeable. Alexandra and I left the two islands with a vast amount of video footage, landscapes, portraits, interviews and a good sense of the history of the region. We took a boat to Rincon del Mar, a small town on the coast. Rincon del Mar is made of three long streets. We got there in the evening. A large crowd of local people were dancing to salsa and drinking outdoors. It was the magic hour. The red sun was going down. The sunlight was brush-stroking the people, animals, buildings, and the landscape with contrasting hues of gold, orange, and brilliant red colour. We recorded people celebrating, dancing, arguing, flirting and eating. They were friendly to our presence and

⁹¹ Salvatore Mancuso, a landowner, paramilitary commander, assassin, author of many massacres, who under the government of Álvaro Uribe was invited in 2004 to speak to the Congress, and later was extradited to the USA by the same Uribe government in 2008.

cameras. Later on, we realized that we were careless and should have known better. In places in conflict, group recordings are dangerous, you might register the wrong person, and it could get you in trouble or killed. It has happened before. Later in the night, we went for a walk.

The lights in the houses were on. We noticed how each living room in each house had distinctive, innovative designs; they were truly artistic installations, an exhibition of popular aesthetics. Next day we decided to record them, we had already spoken to most people to ask for permission. Alexandra left the “hotel” while I prepared the rest of the equipment and waited for the owner to request an extension to stay longer, which was unnecessary because we were the only tourists in the hotel, and in town. I decided to join Alexandra. I was on the third floor and going downstairs. I could see through a window that armed people dressed as police carrying heavy weapons had surrounded the hotel. They walked around the two exits of the building; one facing the street and the other one facing the beach. I waited for the men in the back to go to the front and quickly left to look for Alexandra. We decided to confront them and act as if nothing was happening. We went back to the hotel. They were there, and we said hello, smiled and told them as if talking to ourselves that we were just taking pictures of such a beautiful town. They just looked at us like rare objects. Finally they left, and we went to eat. In the small restaurant, we met a family that had just arrived and were passing through. They were trustworthy, intellectuals, university professors. We told them about the armed men in case anything happened to us. After they left, the woman owner of the restaurant came to talk. She asked about what we did and who we were and asked us to come back the next day and bring our cameras because she wanted to denounce something. That night, I slept with one eye open and had all kinds of nightmares. Alexandra who is braver and ignores danger slept all night. It is very common in Colombia for women or men to travel alone and go to

dangerous places against all the odds and survive. Life is risky and to experience life, the country wilderness and have fun we have to ignore danger. You leave home, and you never know if you are coming back. It doesn't make us unhappy or paranoiac or to believe that everyone is a killer. We learn to be aware, to quickly re-“act” if you cannot run. You have to be un-perceptible, or be friendly, and be persuasive, because they know how to read you too. It is a dangerous situation, and you have to get out of it alive. It does not work all the time.

Next day we went early and recorded the woman's testimony. Unbelievably her story took place in the Rincon del Mar, in El Islote and Mucura, the two islands that we just had visited, and thoroughly recorded. We had the visual documentation without planning it. She was from El Islote; her father was one of its first settlers. Her two brothers were boat mechanics, a profession that cost them their lives. Those waters were used by the paramilitary to transport cocaine to the USA, and they needed boats to be modified to make them faster, and the two brothers were experts. Regardless, they had to work for these people or face intimidation or death. They could not escape. Eventually, the Colombian government started to recuperate these territories and some paramilitary were captured or went into hiding. Before this, the two brothers were accused of being informers and were tortured and killed. The woman gave us names of people from the town involved in the killings and pointed out places used for torturing. She had to leave Rincon del Mar for many years because they were going to kill her too. A Canadian friend had helped her to open the restaurant. The town has entered into a relative calm because a man who went exiled to Canada has denounced the paramilitary commander “Cadenas” who was eventually killed. The woman felt that it was time to talk. We left the restaurant because we wanted to continue recording the living rooms. Alexandra went to record, and I went back to the hotel to transfer the interview to my hard drive. When I was

going out, I saw the heavily armed people again surrounding the hotel. While I waited, I packed all our belongings ready to go. Finally, I was able to go out to warn Alexandra. We waited and took pictures of the streets and trees and plants to get closer and closer to the hotel to see what was happening. When the armed men left, we ran in and took our backpacks out of the hotel. We stopped two guys driving motorcycles and paid them to take us out of the town to the main road to take a bus to Cartagena. While I was on the motorcycle, I was nervous because there were police stopping people on the road. I didn't pay attention to my movements and put my leg on the hot cylinder of the exhaust pipe and scarified the word Honda on my skin. The word lasted about a week until it burst and became flat and rather ugly.

Back in Toronto we made *D-enunciation*⁹² using the story told by the woman in Rincon del Mar and illustrated with all the material previously recorded on the islands and Rincon del Mar. The installation version is a single projection plus rows of small monitors that form a corridor like the streets in Rincon del Mar with videos of people going about their business in their artistic living rooms.

Cognitive Journeys

On Withings, Nonthings and (In)coherences.

Information, data, algorithm, procedures, compressions, entropy and randomness are the internal constraints to computation that define how automated systems produce knowledge or develop a theoretical order.⁹³

The following text is inspired by the work of electronic literature and digital artists who use chaos-bound strategies and digitally coded electronic screens instead of the printed

⁹² Lozano, Jorge. *D-enunciation*. Vimeo. 2014. <https://vimeo.com/116888130>

⁹³ Parisi, Luciana. *Terms of Media II: Actions Conference - Forecast - Mediate* - YouTube. Accessed January 28, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k9bZN-quG4>.

page to create flash poetry, hypertext fiction amongst some of the categories. I use this approach to provide a dis-orderly break in the reading of this text. It is an island to experiment and play, an intent to see when randomness stops randomness. I use texts previously written from Garcia's *Form and Object*, and Luciana Parisi's e-flux lecture *Digital Automation and Transcendental Instrumentality*. It was written with a program that works out the proportion of characters within the text according to a chosen order. For example, an order of 2 means the program looks at pairs of letters, an order of 3 means triplets of letters and so on. The software can regurgitate random text that is controlled by the proportion of characters:

Thing other things. All thing world, the things of the things are withings. Things. The thin a world that is not a thing but not the thin other things and the thing but the thing other things but the things withings and the things and the things. Thing but the things are withings of the things. The things but all thing, but all things. The things are things are things. Things but all things are withings. Thing but all things. All things a world of the things are from matter: but the thing, but not the l things with other things with multiple interest with material constraints and things. Our sense of self is things. Our sense of encounteral separations, gaps and bridges. All things are constraints the result of self is the one. And we are only one and the world with other things and the world with material constraints. Material constrained, by being in their things. Our sense of encounters with material constraints their things. Our sense of self is the result of self is their things. O reverberations, vibrations, entanglements, intellectual can cognize, act, things, groups of material reverberations, entanglements, intellectual can break constraints. Groups of matter and can break constraints to create new knowingly or unknowingly old and cannot separate from it; our ideas of think, look similar, but the truth is that is indeterminacies. Groups of material reverberations, entanglements, intellectual can break

constraints to create from it; our ideas of thing, look similar physical, integral. When things are not, there is no point for they cannot be any more, but can for the previous things change, the previous there they cannot be any more again but in other the previous thing anymore, but in other thing stops things can continue change, there is no thing. When things can continue changing. When changing. When thing. When things changing any more again but cannot be any more again but can continue change, the previous things, to know a system we have to know a systems behaviours and I more real. A curve or more real. Points of inflection are moments; material instances when the real than the new emerges. Consciousness is a points of inflection are moments; material instances when the real become another curve or more real. Then the real than the real become another curve ceases to be a curve and become and becomes interpreted, or more real. when the real become another curve or more real become and becomes interpreted, or something when the new emerges.

The idea of entropy comes from a principle of thermodynamics dealing with energy. It usually refers to the idea that everything in the universe eventually moves from order to disorder, and entropy is the measurement of that change.⁹⁴

Travelogos

To travel is a process: interventions, contagious abstractions, lateral non-linear thinking to process and transmit information. Transversal mental associations coding movements, intensities, transformations of multiple eco-logics. In the winter of 2017, I took a trip by bus and alone through several countries in South America— Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile and Bolivia. The purpose of this trip was to write on the road happenings. What

⁹⁴ Dictionary Definition: vocabulary.com

I wrote on the bus is unreadable but when I revised the readable parts they create a different narrative than planned. I filmed with my super 8mm, and video recorded endless moving and changing realities. But mostly, I would spend many hours in those long trips thinking about the meaning of it all. I would combine my observations and speculations with timeless self-talks. I began to understand that this constant mental agitation and self-reflection was part of a complex adaptive system in reaction to solitude and the restraints caused by being a traveler, a stranger going with... (and what it ended up to be) : no purpose.

Senses is of the real but not about it.

Thinking is about the real but cannot enter in contact with it.⁹⁵

On the longest bus trips, I would travel looking out of the window in a quasi-unconscious state. Like in a roller coaster I traveled with an empty feeling going up and down my chest and belly. I was often brought back to the present by the changes of light hitting the trees and their flickering reflections on the window glass and my eyes. Suddenly I would find myself surrounded by mountains 25 million years old. They looked immobile. Nonetheless, I knew that they were moving. The whole system is always moving, expanding or contracting I don't know. The mountains would stay behind, but I would take those mountains in my head and spend hours trying to make sense of time. Being on the road means moving through constant changes and exposure to a profound feeling of wonder and loss. I felt adrift, entangled in this endless current of a superabundance of presence and time, trapped in a sensorium without inside and outside.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

I spent most of my time figuring out how to name or what to make of the visible. Furthermore, I'd wonder if my naming corresponded to the realities that I sensed and categorized. I would become involved in a world of facts. The mountain glaciers with snowy peaks, the deep red- purple and yellow of the quinoa plantations. The lack of oxygen, the morphogenesis of volcanic rocks, the elegance of lonely alpacas walking through the deserted landscapes, the thin white narrow cracks of the dry land filled with snow, the small homogenous vegetation forming pointillism landscapes, the movement of tourists desperately invading the enigmatic landscapes with their selfies, the local ancient cultures captivated by the influx of dollars, the foreign languages and mostly white skin colours brought up by tourism. My disparate ideas about the origins of all, and the reason of all, the logic of all, the categorizations of the slippery: the people, the land and mountains and their constant infinitesimal moves, the colonialist resilience of old and new explorers coming from nowhere, somewhere to conquer the here and there. My inadequate lungs, whizzing with light-headed semi-unconscious thoughts and piercing headaches. But all is real: The headache that strikes my brain, the snow about to fall, the sound that cracks the sky open, the memories of lilies' scent in the springs of Toronto. God that doesn't exist, marginalization, UFOs, USA neo-imperialism, China's ruthless capitalism, A cat's visual field, the 100 trillion microorganisms from some 400 different species that flourish in our intestinal tract, which make us a collective, the exuberance of bacteria calculations and mutations. Ideas, feelings, racism, life on another planet, extinction, my videos, all is real, what we see, what we don't see, the corporeal, the incorporeal, all is real. The reverberant spirit of matter is as real as this one who writes this real text now and re-represents the leftovers of un- representable cognition provoked by the aftershocks of material agencies. I would travel wondering how to connect what is seen to... to what it is... or what it is... to what

it is seen, and what is what the seen conceals?

Hamlet:

Let us go in together,
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint—O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together.

Hamlet Act 1, scene 5, 186–190

Writing a text is a trip, a logos-travel or a travel-logo, a journey, with many stopovers, moments to reflect on what to do with ourselves, and what to do with the text. This journey reworks the relation of what is already there and what we don't know. A not knowing that resists our conceptual representations. Writing is a physical journey full of complications different than traveling, which has its own material complications. A journey is the time that it will take us to know the residues left over from traveling. Time is out of joint.

We call consciousness our higher level of understanding; some call it a transparent window that we cannot see but allows us to interpret what we call reality, to have awareness of ourselves and other things but not consciousness of consciousness itself or of the body as a whole.⁹⁶

Going through Uyuni, 10.582 km² of a continuous desert of salt, situated at 3.650 feet above sea level in Bolivia, I share my vehicle with five young Israelis who had just left the army, and sung and played captivating Israeli songs all the time. They spoke Hebrew, and I enjoyed the sound of their conversations and made up my meanings that after a while helped me to create my

⁹⁶ Metzinger, Thomas. *The Ego Tunnel: at TEDxRheinMain* - YouTube." Accessed January 28, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFjY1fAcESs>.

narratives. I love the sounds of all languages. I have always felt an affinity with Jewish people, they are loud, and like dancing, they like eating, are very smart and seriously complicated like us Colombians. However, I could not understand why they spoke so much and didn't look out of the window. They played a game of words that they play in the army or listened to music instead of looking at the magnificent landscape. They complained about the un-safeness of all, and at some point, they forced the driver to get a different vehicle. They brought their medications to treat all the local illnesses. When I offered a pill to cure high altitude sickness to one of the girls who had a penetrating headache, she responded that their pills from Israel are trustworthy. They kept asking me if coke (cocaine) is good and cheap in Colombia. I told them that I only do heroin and they stopped asking. The driver refused to talk to them because he found them rude. I had to offer them my version of history, of the hard work and exploitation registered in the battered bodies of Indigenous people, how their land was stolen and how they had practically been forced to live in poverty and how each time they revolted they had been massacred and displaced. I told them they were converted into second-class citizens. I told them to observe their slow pacing gestures of survival, their peaceful faces, the sound of intimacy in their tender language, their daily routines trying to convince us about the significance of their arts and crafts including beliefs and rituals. I told them all is for sale: buy, spend some money, leave some here, that we have lots of money compared to the locals and you are one of the best economies in the Middle East. They didn't like my comment, and I understand. I told them that the Hopi in Northeastern Arizona sell exact copies of their sacred objects because they know that they have no power except financially. The real sacred ones they keep for their ceremonies. They looked at each other. Not knowing can be deceiving, it creates the illusion that things appear to have been there forever as if nothing has happened. I looked out the window to see a herd of llamas passing by.

They wear pink ribbons around their necks as a sign of ownership. My trip friends started to sing again. We were about 5000 feet above sea level, and the lack of oxygen reaching my brain made me dizzy and spaced out, and I started a conversation with myself. Maybe it is not Hopis? Maybe it is the Zuni? Do Indigenous people have hidden resources, a kind of knowledge that protects them against destruction? Or has digital financial capitalism and tourism finally conquered them all? Is it to be expected? No one is indestructible. Here, in the west or all over capitalism has conquered us all, each day we buy and sell our bodies, beliefs, and subjectivities.

Border Thinking

We are living a transformation of our definition of language, of our gesturing and expressiveness with the use of screen-based electronic devices. Many people spend more time texting than talking. We live in worlds of screens, and mediated visual multi-tasks. Screens have become prostheses that produce ways of knowing where the private, our deepest thoughts, inhabit screens.



6.7 *Moving Still-still life*. Still. Video. 2014

One of the central concerns in my artistic and teaching practice has been how to offer youth the aesthetic means to analyze their past (Boal 1979: 02); to implement the concept of self organization and self-learning to their present condition; to expand the recognition of difference, and to embrace the collective initiatives of those diverting from the status quo. Youth in marginalized neighbourhoods create popular culture throughout “border thinking” practices, expressed in music, fashion, oral and body language, and border thinking modes of collective organization. Border thinking is knowledge produced from a subaltern perspective, imagined from the exterior of the modern/colonial world model system. It attempts to bring to the foreground the force and creativity of knowledge subalternized during a long process of colonization, discrimination and marginalization.⁹⁷

Border thinking creates new narratives, a new logic that critiques the production of western knowledge. Although postmodern theories of deconstruction can help us, they are to a large extent a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism. Border thinking, on the other hand, has an epistemic potential to decolonize dominant intellectual thought/knowledge—logos and Eurocentric knowledge. (Mignolo, 37-39). Border thinking is a complement to deconstruction and postmodern theories. There is no modernity without its darker side, coloniality. The transcending of the colonial difference can only be achieved from a perspective of subalternity, from decolonization and, therefore, from a new epistemological terrain where border thinking works (Mignolo, 45). Coloniality creates differences, values and it establishes hierarchies of human beings ontologically, both externally and internally. These hierarchies can be found everywhere, they are many times diffuse and hard to detect, but they act to fix bodies to assigned positions, speech and aesthetics.

⁹⁷ Mignolo, Walter. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledge, and Border Thinking*. Princeton: University Press, 2000, 45.

For Walter D. Mignolo, border thinking counters the hegemonic knowledge that governs dominant Western thought that has been perpetuated through Occidentalism (11-14). Border thinking can be understood as thinking from below, subaltern thinking, an epistemic option that produces new truths and subjectivities. Border thinking is the result of critical dialogue between diverse epistemic, ethical, political, aesthetic projects: a dialogue between multiple perspectives, cosmologies, and insights outside the mainstream. In the arts, border thinking proposes a new epistemic positioning from racial, ethnic subaltern locations to envisage a de-colonial critical theory beyond traditional cultural, political and economic paradigms. Border thinking is helpful as a new positioning to confront the uncertainty and the perceptive disequilibrium hidden beneath the normativity of universal values and official histories. Border thinking offers the possibility to understand artistic work as the result of representation, a law of exchange that converts one thing into another. It also offers the possibility of self-representation, the making present what appears to be absent, and finally allows viewers to activate their self-representations.

As opposed mimesis that reduces representation to the production of duplicates, border thinking allows visual and sonic explorations by questioning the production of duplicates. Border thinking is about indeterminacy instead of uncertainty: superpositions of the laboratory of the mind in the laboratory of facts. Border thinking is to rethink, to redefine paradigms set in motion by centuries of colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, racism, and marginality.⁹⁸

Border thinking moves beyond epistemological disobedience into very tangible strategies to survive, a matter of life and death in areas where the borders are fluid constantly changing control and where to cross one border can kill you. I will focus on two works that I created, one

⁹⁸ Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

in Colombia and the other one here in Canada, to recreate the conditions in which the works were made. Conditions like positions, are generative situations where the emergence of creative responses are intensively linked to the materiality of bodies. Many times we feel compelled to respond to these situations with the production of works that are not only recreations of the situations but the smoothing of the interferences that conform those realities in order to capture the violent intensity of its effects. A corporeal and non corporeal border thinking.

In 2010, I created a seven-screen video installation and a video work, both as the result of my work with youth communities in Toronto, Canada and in Cali, Colombia. I started the workshops in 1992 in Toronto, as a personal response to the lack of access to technical facilities, and the language barriers the Latin American community was facing at the time. I continued from 1992 to 2010 within the context of aluCine: Toronto film + media arts festival. From a cognitive viewpoint, the pieces focus on how attention, perception, memory motivation, emotional appraisal and movement affect human consciousness. Brazilian philosopher and educational theorist Paulo Freire's landmark book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* helped me to understand that education is not only the transmission of knowledge but most importantly it is also the pleasure of helping to discover and build a shared world.

After working many years facilitating the youth workshops in different neighbourhoods in Cali, but mostly in Siloe, a marginalized, culturally rich and dangerous place with very complex, constantly changing social relations. I decided to produce my own work and created *MOVING STILL_Still Life*, an eight channel video installation. I wanted to recreate the simultaneous multiple perspectives and the fragmented flow of events and visual information that I perceived and feel when I am in that place. It investigates how the environment affects the emotions and behaviour of individuals, and how these individuals can perceive, think, and alter

the coordinates of their world in order to negotiate with other youth living in the area but who belong to a different group. It captures both their conscious and unconscious responses to cultural, economic, and political constraints and inequities. *MOVING STILL_Still Life* is a psychogeographic experience, a social documentary and a personal film.

The use of multiple screens challenges the linearity of the single screen at a neurobiological level. The use of multiple screens or multi displays is nothing new. Multiple screens have been used in industrial trade fairs in the early 20th century. Eadweard Muybridge had already used multiple cameras to produce serial photographs in 1877. Abel Gance used them in his film *Napoleon*, in 1927. We are living a transformation of our definition of language, of our gesturing and expressiveness with the use of screen-based electronic devices. Many people spend more time texting than talking. We live in worlds of screens, and mediated visual multi tasks. Screens have become prostheses that produce ways of knowing where the private, our deepest thoughts, inhabit screens. The use of multiple screens and multiple cameras provides an optical flow where time splits in many directions. The use of multiple screens likewise the implementation of border thing practices in artistic creations can trigger the creation of disorderly perspectives that would reframe the traditional matrix of power.

In Toronto, I made *Watch My Back*⁹⁹ in 2010, a four monitor, silent video installation that is the result of my work with youth communities in Toronto. I decided to do *Watch My Back* after spending many years working with Latin youth who have been in jail. One thing became noticeable during many of our talks: Repeatedly they would tell me that to keep safe they had to watch their back all the time. I decided to watch their back instead, and created *Watch My Back*. I use a poetic structure instead of a traditional linear narrative documentary approach, rooted in

⁹⁹ Lozano, Jorge. *Watch My Back*. Vimeo. 2012, <https://vimeo.com/143176951>

my desire to create a work that aesthetically recognizes the creativity and spirituality of the youth and at the same time uncover deeper meanings in their socio-political reality. I also worked with the youth as colleagues in the construction of the documentary, as advisors, associates, self-interviewers and camera operators.

Watch My Back is about the conceptual and architectural spaces Latino youth inhabit and their day-to-day existence and subjectivity and their capacity for self-organization and self-learning. The concept of self-organization and autopoiesis (Maturana 1980:14) can be applied to help us understand the strategies those marginalized young women and men create to go beyond violence and imprisonment to produce popular culture, the social practice of staying alive, active and creative.

In *Imaginary Landscape: Making Worlds of Myth and Sciences*, philosopher, poet, and cultural historian William Irwin Thompson articulates that scientists and artists who think of visual terms as “nonlinear dynamic or complex system” do not have difficulties shifting their imagination to propose new world views (Thompson 1989:03). Chilean neurophenomenologist Francisco Varela identifies nonlinear dynamics as essential to the understanding of self-organization in autonomous living systems and the production of subjectivity. (Thompson. 1989). Organisms don’t necessarily adapt to their environment, but they move through it in time and space, in a natural drift preserving and modifying structures, and constructing their cognition. Cognition, rather than being, is epiphenomenal to an organism’s strategy of adaptation. Cognition is fundamental to the “organization of the living’: the living cell produces its components and maintains this structural organization of process through time; and when it ceases, it is no longer a question of life, but of death.

As an artist whose work has evolved through self-organization, self-referring, and self-learning, I find the same process applicable to understand human interactions within behaviours amongst youth. Youth use self-contained strategies to construct local orders. They create domains of interaction and preserve their autonomy in hostile environments amidst marginalization, violence, and punishment. Studies that deal with marginalized youth indicate that creative strategies, emancipatory and relevant ways to produce change are not as common as it might seem and are almost non-existent when approached from an optic of self-representation. Most of these manifestations happen in the periphery, at a local level, many times at a micro group level. These cultural expressions, “subaltern thinking,” are initially invisible and are aesthetic responses to daily challenges. In most cases, they are strategies to achieve knowledge and understanding, visibility, respect, and admiration. There is a tendency to frame youth cultural productions as work produced within the intersection between economic disadvantage and exclusion. However true this is, to leave it at just a the level of victimization limits the critique of youth’s strength when shaping sociocultural norms, and it ignores the capacity for resistance and creativity. Marxist historians have been devoted to understanding the role of alternative culture in the political mobilization of disadvantaged groups. They focus their analysis on their participation in the struggle for change, for social and economic transformation, the replacement of capitalism for socialism under the direction of a political party. They have also concentrated on unearthing new kinds of historical records to give voice to groups that have been absent from historical literature. However, it is important to include in all current analyses the cultural manifestation of youth in popular neighbourhoods, dance styles, fashion, graffiti, hip-hop, as well as the work and presence of marginalized queer youth in popular neighbourhoods. Popular culture can be seen as complex, multifaceted multifunctional cultural

responses or strategies which youth in marginalized neighbourhoods constantly use to self-organize and regenerate their creative actions while facing discrimination and economic disadvantage. The youth working within this model of self-organization for creative production cut across cultural hierarchies, erasing the distance that separates popular culture from what is deemed high culture, providing new methods to perceive art. Their artistic practices become laboratories for the production of emancipatory modes of expression, contrasting mainstream methodologies and the obvious and prevalent representations that focus on the spectacle and the exotic. Regarding my art practice, I will continue using my experience conducting video workshops for youth from marginalized neighbourhoods in Cali, Colombia, and in Toronto, Canada, since 1998. I will continue to investigate methodologies for community art practice for my teaching curriculum that uses a critical pedagogy of self-representation and self-learning. These models of workshops make a great impact on the participants' lives to change their focus and direction, making a conversion, "a move from a quantitative civilization to a qualitative civilization."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

The Importance of the Non-Important

Amongst the many bifurcations that I have encountered writing this text called *The Importance of the Non Important*—a dissertation on the obvious, the significant insignificant—the most intriguing one was when trying to find the equilibrium between rigour and the challenge of understanding and doing things on my own terms. It is clear in the text that I have chosen a style more similar to a twister or a dervish dance, natural and cultural systems that appear to be repetitive but in fact the

¹⁰⁰ Morin, Edgar. *Para una política de la civilización*: Ediciones Paidós Iberica. S.A. Barcelona, 2009, 70.

Twister and the Dervish Dance spinning are multidimensional, multidirectional orbits or worlds.

Throughout this text I have explored multiple angles for the production of artistic works: the combination of chance encounters, non-conscious cognition, random associations, instrumentality, and bio, social and political constraints in the formation of awareness. Video work or creative productions are coherent maps of re-representations of objects, events, situations. We coalesce them into scenes in answer to reciprocal material causations that are central to artistic cognition, rendering corporeal or non-corporeal materiality intelligible. I also explore from a personal perspective the role of contemporary capital that regulates through verification and self-control, molecular/information and the deprivation of autonomy regarding thoughts and body. These concerns are conflated within general observations about the strategies I have used to construct those quasi-stabilized systems that I call my artworks and memories and significant events of my past. They are personal intrinsic observations or speculation about my surroundings and my self that are one and the same. I use them as markers to start possible understandings of that which has become abstract, evasive or plainly obvious. I intervene in, manipulate, instrumentalize them. They at the very least represent functions that have allowed me to navigate between systems of control, their stabilized constitutions and my response or resistance. Most videos mentioned in this text were produced since 2009 while I have been at York; others are older works that are important because they helped me to contextualize the theory that they carried within them and I have started to unearth. It is important to understand my video work was not made to support any philosophical or political theory and that whatever connections I

make are *a posteriori* reflections. However the theories were there, or results of the work itself. I live my life politically and I make works to understand the world differently. In many cases, I don't understand the totality of the meaning of these works. They invite viewers to make their own stories. I took this writing as an open-ended artistic response coming from my artistic practices where cognition operates differently from philosophical, scientific, literary, historic, and political cognition regardless of how related they could be. I experimented with the relationship between art and academia to explore and to come out with new solutions that avoid propositions or statements or forms of knowledge subduing other ones. With this text, I have been looking for points of encounter instead of forcing academic discourses into my practice. Interestingly enough what I have found is how constraining it could be to create works of art that obey philosophical or political discourses but at the same time how productive it is to recognize the collective ownership of philosophical concepts or scientific truths, and most importantly that art consistently produces a kind of theory that resists theoretical constraints. My use of chapters and subchapters is to create markers to identify content or to use them as movable bridges to position that content. As we are all bridges, these chapters were created to join the gaps, where exits create new entries, or problems create new problems.

How then to conclude the inconclusive? The best way to conclude might be to say that this text, this "travelogue" from somewhere to somewhere, has been a joyful celebration of life in a Spinozan way, the only reason to exist in a full autonomous manner, learning as we go. I have struggled my way through a thin layer of overlapping meanings to arrive to a stop that is a new beginning.

Amongst pluralist conceptual connections I have reimagined new distributions. The closer that I have got to an answer, new questions have emerged: Whose agency? Which reality? Which authority? Which people? Which land? Which knowledge? Which art? I am arriving at the end of this “travelogue” to realize that the trip has just begun. That there are many layers to go through and many paths to follow. Although the above readings of theories and works, histories, memories, and speculative propositions have influenced the outcome of this text, *The Importance of the Non-Important* became the possibility of passing from one thing to another, from one world to another: an adventure of thought. I have made a theoretical attempt to understand the implications of how thought becomes sedimented, receptive and a product of consumption. I have thrown unrelated ideas together like when we throw stones to the water to create waves. The function of art, what triggers art, its relationship to thought and its resistance to complacency has been unfolded inside out and outside in like a globe. The risky nature¹⁰¹ of experimentality resides in those puzzling worlds where issues of aesthetics, politics and the politics of aesthetics spring up in the form of representation: self-representation that represents sense and nonsense, nonsense of sense and the sense of nonsense. Representation is the product of two operations: an active object/ event/person that represents and an active object/event/person that is represented. Representations presuppose presence(s) that represents presence(s). There is no representation without presence. My life, its indeterminacy, my art practice, my coordination with all living matter is about presence and enjoyment.

I have shared with you, brushstrokes of my Colombia and my Canada, what makes me what I am, and what I am not: ephemeral situations intersecting with the temporality of matter, my body, my becoming. The possibilities and impossibilities of certain possibilities.

¹⁰¹ The random unveiling of making sense within multiple distinct realms.

The challenge to understand, to grasp a significant something is neither determined by specific visual language nor structured by the blueprint of a theoretical system by simply re-connecting to the variability of material reverberations. However inexact this approach is, it has been rewarding because it doesn't promise a compact output but a process seeking architectures with their own rules of the game. We can find similar approaches in the tradition of Surrealism, Dada's experiments with randomness, Debord's *dérive*, the indeterminate work of John Cage and many other similar accounts of the recognition of chance and/or the non-conscious cognition in the production of aesthetic doings. To add one more complexity to the layering, we must include an aesthetic unconscious in the operation of non-thought becoming thought as the motivating force for all creative acts.

The recognition of an aesthetic unconscious, and of a cognitive nonconscious—that which we don't know but know—that something to be known, when objects, organism and their relation can be re-represented: all these underlying complexities have played a fundamental part in this adventure of re-orientations. It has been the steering wheel I have used to navigate misty sceneries, get lost in the labyrinths of awareness and crypts of the social and its many colliding worlds. I opted for a performative and playful approach when dealing with academic rigour; I added personal anecdotes and jump cuts instead of adopting the idea of thought imposing over passive matter, over discursive practices, over action, and over art. It has been a search for strategies to convey new subjectivities, new freedoms, new bodies, new entanglements. I have tried to avoid disappearing into potential scripted truths, solidified substances, within a minimum self-representational space. I don't live in a theoretical bubble.

I am of two countries, and one continent. Both countries utterly destructive, inhabited by people confined to the logic of capital, paying to exist or existing to pay. Both started as European colonies with a history marked by differences in the distribution of privileges, and the acceleration and extension of natural living and non-living resources. Both countries have resistances from within, and an Indigenous population on the rise; they remind us that the future is before the past. I am Colombia and I am Canada. I am their capitalism, its history. I am their colonial incongruities, their hierarchical modes of thinking and knowing, production of knowledge, subjectivities, and freedom. I am individuality or collective desires, art, or political action, I am forms of resistance to the colonization of our selves. I am like you.

The repression fell; above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivized expression, intellectual or visual. It was followed by the imposition of the use of the rulers' own patterns of expression, and of their beliefs and images with reference to the supernatural. [...] The colonizers also imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in a partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then European culture was made seductive: it gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction. [...] European culture became a universal cultural model. The imaginary in the non-European cultures could hardly exist today and, above all, reproduce itself outside of these relations.¹⁰²

The writing of this text has been an experiment in border thinking; the abolition of hierarchies, the reframing of representative orders, the production of new perspectives, imagined

¹⁰² Quijano, Anibal. *Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality*, Taylor Francis. *Cultural Studies* (online): vol. 21. 2007.169.

from the exterior of the modern/colonial world. We all are equal, we all can voice different directions and implement changes. *Everything speaks* implies the abolition of the hierarchies of the representative order.

Reflections on the geopolitics of knowledge are central to the epistemological (science/knowledge, arts/meaning), and ontological political de-linking that supports my creative works and this writing, the poetics of change and emancipation from the complacency of thought.

Border thinking fosters inter-trans-cultural connections between North and South.

In the timeless process of writing this text, I created 10 poetic meditations, short video works from super 8mm transferred to digital. The allowed me to release visually some of the issues that I was dealing with and freed me from the constraints of being trapped in the writing of an academic text. The works are part of a series that I call *The importance of the non-important*, the same title as this text. They were life savers that I used to freely explore, in my own visual terms some of the issues that I have mentioned here. I am including here the screening program that is central to my practice-based dissertation. The second program includes the collection of videos from *The Importance of the Non-important*.

Program 1

Within the Isolation of My Opulence. 2014. 12 min. <https://vimeo.com/133552410>

Forms of Emerging Behaviour. 2016. 2:32 min. <https://vimeo.com/191238897>

Illegal_ the impact on the body. 2017. 37:07 min. <https://vimeo.com/240383621>

Invisible Hands. A to Z. 2017. 17:52 min, <https://vimeo.com/191289498>

Program 2

Gravitational Interferences. 2016, 16 min.

Discontinuities. 2018, 5:08 min.

Recreations. 2018, 5 min.

How To Make a Beach To get a perfect Suntan. 2018, 4:13 min.

Punctuations. 2018, 9:26 min.

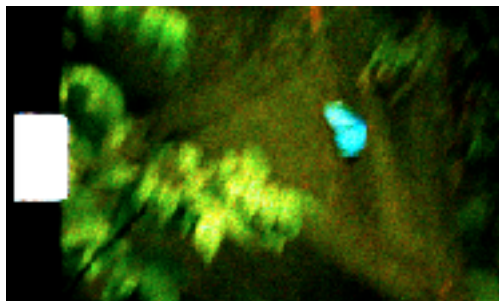
Butterfly Effect. 2108, 6:44 min.

Finitudes. 2018, 6:59 min.

Implosion. 2018, 4:24 min.

Repetitions. 2018, 4:54 min.

Spider's Zone. 2018, 4:30 min.



6.8 *The Butterfly Effect.* Video. 2018

The importance of the non-important, the video series, offers a different and simultaneous view of impromptu visual and conceptual architectures, mediated “psychosociocultural” environments. They are ceaseless reframing and distributions of collective or individual capacities and try to “crack open the unity of the given and the obviousness of the visible, to sketch a new topography of the possible.”¹⁰³ They are diverse poetic diffractions, stones that create ripples on the water, meditations on dreams of butterflies, grainy landscapes, flying punctuations on the sky, the implosion of truth, interruptions, finitude, the infrastructure of memory and discontinuities. These works have emerged as interferences to the writing and were created to de-link rigour from the illusions of rigour. I will leave them unexplained, academically unreferenced to allow you to find out their importance or non-importance. This text ends here. As for me, everything has just begun.

¹⁰³ Rancière, Jacques. *The politics of Aesthetics*, Trans, G Rockhill. English Edition. London, New York: Conitinium, 2000,. 12,13.

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