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**Awareness, Denunciation and Pedagogy
The Rhizomatic Effects of Mexican Feminist Artivism Against Gender Violence. A
Qualitative Approach**

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**Awareness, Denunciation and Pedagogy: The Rhizomatic
Effects of Mexican Feminist Artivism Against Gender
Violence. A Qualitative Approach**

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PhD in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies

COVID-19 impact statement

The COVID-19 pandemic developed rapidly in 2020, making it difficult to make appropriate decisions in time.

Initially, I planned to have three focus groups with Mexican women from different backgrounds. I intended to appreciate if feminist activism had a perceivable effect on women and compare the results to see if there was any difference according to the women's backgrounds.

Before travelling to Mexico, I hoped to finish the primary research about the artworks or activist projects I was studying. Therefore, the trip to Mexico was scheduled for September. I was also going to interview Lorena Wolffer, whose work I analysed.

During September, the lockdown continued in Mexico, and a second lockdown was declared for the UK. Without certainty about when lockdowns would be over, I discussed with my supervisor and designed a different research methodology.

I organised six online discussion sessions about the artworks, and I was also able to interview Lorena Wolffer. I had three with women from the city of Querétaro and three with women from Mexico City. Hence, I was able to compare if the location affected their reaction. However, I initially planned to address an indigenous community in Mexico. Since access to the internet or technology is usually harder for this group, I could not evaluate if there was a different reaction from the indigenous women to the feminist artworks. I also considered it harder to control the environment during online sessions. Therefore, I added to my methodology some forms participants filled out before and after the discussion sessions; I analysed their narratives to complement the data I obtained through the discussion sessions.

Although I could collect my data and continue with my research, I might have obtained different results if I had been able to travel.

Abstract

Feminist artistic practice in Mexico began in the 1980s. From the start, feminist artists showed greater interest in social interventions than in meeting aesthetic standards. This thesis analyses artwork produced by three generations of Mexican feminist artists through the distinctive works of Mónica Mayer (1954), Lorena Wolffer (1971) and Cerrucha (1984). I argue that their practice falls within *artivism*, or cultural projects of social intervention, instead of art, and examine and discuss their strategies to confront gender violence in Mexico. My research identifies, describes and explains the rhizomatic effects Mexican feminist artivism produces on the fight against gender-based violence.

I defined the neologism of feminist *artivism* as a liminal artistic practice that is deeply committed to its audiences, with a clear social objective and a form of political art. Since *artivism* promotes heterogeneous, multiple reactions that release the flow of desire (which is consistent with the idea of gender as performativity), its effects are better explained as rhizomatic. A chronological analysis of Mexican feminist art allowed me to identify that, in most feminist *artivistic* projects against gender-based violence, the artists promoted awareness and denunciation with therapeutic or pedagogical intentions. Furthermore, my analysis led me to identify ways in which the artists modified their art to invite their audiences to participate actively and take part in the academic discussion about gender-based violence and be involved in political movements to oppose it. I argue that Mexican feminist artists tend to prioritise their sociological aims above their compliance with the artistic canon. Seeking to use the results of this research in addressing the crime of femicide in Mexico in a future discussion involving academics, activists and lawyers, my thesis has taken into consideration the legal framework available in Mexico in the field of gender-based violence.

My research has another angle to either challenge or provides additional evidence to my conclusion. I organised two focus groups, one in the city of Querétaro and the other in México City, and held with them due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online discussion sessions. The most relevant results of my research were, on the one hand, that regarding Mexico's feminist artistic work as *artivism* or cultural projects of social intervention allows a better understanding of the artists' aims and their practices. On the other hand, I discovered three main rhizomatic effects of *artivistic* artworks: raising awareness of and denouncing gender violence with political, therapeutic and pedagogic outcomes. The artworks selected and discussed during the research

and discussions are effective in spreading gender concepts, making visible and creating awareness about issues of violence against women, validating the feminist protest, promoting empathy to and between victims and relatives of victims of gender violence, and allowing them, to a certain extent, to achieve a certain degree of psychological healing.

Keywords: *Mexican feminist activism, violence against women, rhizomatic effect, gender violence.*

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Introduction

In this thesis, I suggest that Mexican feminist *artivism* may provide efficient tools to eradicate violence against women. In that sense, this thesis is intended as a link between feminist academics and artists who work on the same theme of violence against women and the social impact of art in contributing to the actual reduction of that same violence. I begin by establishing the defining features of specifically Mexican feminist *artivism* by identifying a series of feminist projects which might be classified as *artivism* and offering a detailed, chronological analysis of works by three Mexican artists: Mónica Mayer, Lorena Wolfffer and Cerrucha. Since the study of *artivism* is relatively recent, an agreed definition remains elusive just as no definitive methodological convention yet exists for its analysis or conceptualisation. For that reason, while identifying the social impact of activist art projects, after Deleuze and Guattari (1980), as ‘rhizomatic’. I also employ qualitative methods from sociological research to highlight the similarities between *artivism* and social work. In other words, the results of my research with both community participants and artists support my overarching contention that Mexican feminist *artivism* can be conceptualised as generating a ‘rhizomatic effect’ against gender violence.

Gender-based Violence in Contemporary Mexico

In Mexico, violence against women is increasing year by year. According to Amnesty International’s latest report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (2020), between 2015 and 2018, 12,378 women were killed; meanwhile, there were only 407 femicide convictions in the country.¹ If violence against women is based on a sociocultural construction, then a proposal such as *artivism*, which aims at deconstructing culture, can potentially provide various solutions for these rates of gender-based violence. In that sense, the first step is to define gender-based violence against women. Given my objectives, I understand gender-based violence against women as those behaviours that harm (physically, psychologically, emotionally, economically or communally) any subject outside the heteronormed based on a binary logic that affirms the superiority of men over women. This

¹ Amnistía Internacional, *México. Informe al Comité Para La Eliminación de La Discriminación Contra La Mujer* (London: Amnistía Internacional, 19 November 2020).

heteropatriarchal structure guarantees the functioning of an economic system that depends on women being restricted to the private sphere and on men being productive in the public sphere.

With the steady increase in feminicides and the fact that over 60% of Mexican women have experienced some form of violence,² various mechanisms have been developed to stop violence against women. One of the most outstanding achievements of feminist activists and academics is the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2012) [LGAMVLV]; this legal framework defines violence against women, determines the areas in which it can occur and proposes actions to eradicate it. It also took into account the international documents signed by Mexico on violence and discrimination against women (CEDAW, Belém Do Para, Beijing Platform for Action, among others). Moreover, derivations from this law have been introduced which function as legal mechanisms known as 'Gender Alerts on Violence against Women'. Organisations activate these alerts to point out severe crimes of violence against women in specific populations; after an alert has been received, the Mexican State joins a team of experts to evaluate the situation in the indicated location. If the experts deem it pertinent, a gender alert is declared to force state governments into implementing clear measures to eradicate violence. Currently, there are 21 active alerts; however, they have not had the desired consequences: 'Si bien las AVGM han servido para visibilizar violencias sistemáticas contra las mujeres y vacíos legales y en política pública, no se observan cambios sustanciales en la disminución de la violencia feminicida'.³ Affirming that violence is based on a sociocultural construction also indicates that one factor behind the lack of efficiency of these alerts is that they do not promote cultural change.

In parallel with the history of violence against women in Mexico and the implementation of such legal measures to combat it, the country has produced a vast, wide-ranging literature which has bolstered the understanding of that same violence as culturally based. A seminal reference within the national debate over gender-based violence who is equally fundamental to the theoretical basis of this thesis is Marcela Lagarde, a feminist activist, academic, former congressional deputy and co-author with Martha Lucía Micher of the LGAMVLV.⁴ Lagarde's work as a feminist academic has focused more generally on analysing those social constructions that justify and perpetuate the contempt for women as inferior subjects. In her youth, she explored the contexts of Mexican women through the

² INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional de Dinámica En Los Hogares* (Mexico City: INEGI, 2016).

³ Amnistía Internacional, p. 12.

⁴ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Las Leyes de Violencia de Género En México: Medidas de Prevención y Sensibilización', *Redur*, 10 (2012), 253–75.

metaphor of ‘captivity’: without maintaining that women are physically captive, Lagarde explained how it is that men are seen as subjects of rights who own women. Meanwhile, she claimed that the social function demanded and imposed from female subjects is to satisfy male desires, sexual reproduction, and maintain the private sphere.⁵ Finally, she introduced the term *sororidad* to the feminist discussion in Mexico; although she did not define it, she theorised it and proposed it as a pertinent and necessary pact between women who face a sexist system.⁶ Hence, any engagement with Lagarde’s project means exploring other national and international references with which she has maintained a dialogue.

Crucially, Lagarde defined the concept of *feminicide* to refer to the murder of women for reasons of gender and thus established a conceptual before and after for feminists in academia, art or activism.⁷ That said, the term is ultimately derived from Diana Russell and Jill Radford’s concept of *femicide* which they elaborated in 1992 after having invited women from various fields (including those in arts represented by Suzanne Lacy) to theorize how to stop the murders of Mexican women.⁸ The difference between one concept and the other is that Lagarde’s *feminicide* proposes that women are murdered *because of* their gender, while femicide simply refers to the murder of a woman *whatever* the reason behind it. Since the conceptualisation of the term, other authors have explored the murders of women as feminicides. For example, Rosa-Linda Fregoso, an expert in Latin American studies, examined the existence of feminicides to terrorise women and keep them constantly submissive.⁹ On the other hand, Rita Laura Segato, one of the first researchers to interview men convicted of feminicides, theorises the war against women and supports two hypotheses. The first is that women systemically face feminicide; the second is that women’s bodies are the first form of ‘colony’ to be conquered and dominated.¹⁰ Other perspectives that have contributed to the discussion on feminicides in Mexico have been from journalism; for instance, Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso who investigated and participated in the famous trial against the Mexican

⁵ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI and UNAM, 2015).

⁶ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, ‘Pacto entre mujeres. Sororidad’, *Aportes para el Debate: México*, 25, 2006, 123–35.

⁷ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, ‘Del Femicidio al Feminicidio’, *Desde El Jardín de Freud*, 6 (2006), 216–22.

⁸ Jill Radford (ed.) and Diana E.H. Russell (ed.), *Femicide. The Politics of Woman Killing*, Primera Edición (Nueva York: Twayne Publishers, 1992). Suzanne Lacy, ‘In Mourning and in Rage’, in *Femicides. The Politics of Killing Women*, ed. by Jill Radford and Diana Russell (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), pp. 317–24.

⁹ Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, ‘Feminicidio Sexual Serial En Ciudad Juárez: 1993-2001’, *Debate Feminista*, 25 (2002), 279–305. Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, *Terrorizing Women. Feminicide in the Americas* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Rita Laura Segato, ‘Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres’, in *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de sueños, 2016), pp. 57–90.

State, *Campo Algodonero*.¹¹ Monárrez Fragoso is a professor at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, a border institution that, due to its geographical location, explores violence in Mexico from a transdisciplinary perspective that is enriched by academic debates in both the US and Mexico.

Another fundamental reference for the analysis of gender violence in this thesis is the work of Sayak Valencia, an academic who also undertakes her research at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte. Valencia's analysis of violence in Mexico is indebted to Judith Butler's seminal definition of performative gender. According to Butler, gender is a performed identity; it is a verb and not a noun as it is an action. That 'is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being'.¹² In affirming this, she recognises that the imposition of gender from a superficial interpretation of sexual differences results in a binary and heteronormative construction that 'maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire'.¹³ With this background, Valencia determines that 'no naces mujer, devienes en ello'.¹⁴ Anatomical difference does not determine gender as an immobile and biological quality; however, a binary and heteronormative construction is violently imposed in which there is only one way to 'perform' masculinity and another for femininity. In this context, Valencia observes that the construction of gender imposes violent masculinity on men and a submissive femininity on women.¹⁵ This dynamic fosters what she calls 'gore capitalism': this term presupposes that, in countries like Mexico, neoliberalism has promoted activities that guarantee the consumption of goods, or people, by the countries of the North as the only form of enrichment.¹⁶ In the context of gore capitalism, explicitly violent masculinity is equated with the appropriate qualities for a man to be successful; furthermore, women's bodies are just another socio-political field where men can express their violent capacity. Bearing this premise in mind, some artists have sought to respond to the levels of violence women face. Even if Valencia contributes with the artists in *Disidenta*, a community of social practice and feminist knowledge founded by feminist artists and writers including

¹¹ Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso, Rosa-Linda Fregoso, and Cynthia Bejarano, 'The Victims of the Ciudad Juárez Femicide. Sexually Fetishized Commodities', in *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas* (USA: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 56–69.

¹² Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 33.

¹³ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Sayak Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, Primera Edición (España: Editorial Melusina, S.L., 2010).

¹⁵ Sayak Valencia Triana, 'Teoría Transfeminista Para El Análisis de La Violencia Machista y La Reconstrucción No-Violenta Del Tejido Social En El México Contemporáneo', *Universitas Humanística*, 78 (2014), 65–88.

¹⁶ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*.

Wolffer, Cerrucha and Mónica Mayer, none of the academics explaining gender-based violence in Mexico have considered the artistic approach and its possible outcomes.

Feminist Art Practices in Mexico

Since the millennium, as violence against women has increased, Mexican feminist artists have sought to adapt and respond to new situations. In 2001, eight years after the phenomenon of feminicides first emerged in Ciudad Juárez, Marta Lamas interviewed four feminist artists, — Maris Bustamante, Mónica Mayer, Lorena Wolffer and Magali Lara— who were well-known opponents of gender violence, to discuss the reasons why the murders of women on the border between Mexico and the United States were not being artistically denounced.¹⁷ The four artists present in the dialogue with Lamas had a long history of condemning various forms of violence against women and of complaining about how feminist scholars did not take feminist artists seriously. Indeed, although artists like these were keeping themselves informed about the increasing spirals of violence and had diversified their artistic practices accordingly, critics remained indifferent to their work. Even so, during the more than two decades since the feminicides began, many feminist and non-feminist artists have continued to devote artworks to the feminicides phenomenon. The approaches have been wide-ranging: from Teresa Margolles and her sound installation in *Sonidos de muerte* (Venecia, 2008), to Sonia Madrigal's *La muerte sale por el Oriente* (2014-to the date), a photo-documentary project of mothers placing pink crosses where they found their daughters' bodies.¹⁸ Using performance, plastic and visual arts, theatre, photography, installation, music and strategies of activism, others have sought to support the eradication of violence against women. Nevertheless, due to my conceptualisation of gender-based violence in this thesis, I am especially interested in exploring the reception and social impact of such practices when they are community-based and, hence, not easily categorised as art.

The study of feminist art in Mexico poses several challenges. The first is related to the availability of theoretical materials that analyse and conceptualise these art projects from a gender perspective. That said, since the first Mexican artists began to identify their work as 'feminist', they were complemented by art scholars who dedicated their careers to making

¹⁷ Carlos Arias et al., '¿Arte Feminista? Mesa Redonda', *Debate Feminista*, 23 (2001), 277–308.

¹⁸ To see more artworks dealing with feminicides visit the archive/platform/website, *Arte contra la violencia de género*. https://artecontraviolenciadegenero.org/?page_id=26.

visible and theorising about feminist artists. Amongst the first generation of feminist art academics and journalists, I would mention Sol Henaro,¹⁹ Deborah Dorotinsky,²⁰ Raquel Tibol,²¹ Gabriela Aceves,²² Gladys Villegas,²³ Karen Cordero²⁴ and Araceli Barbosa.²⁵ The latter five have collaborated in different ways with the artists. For example, Gladys Villegas and Araceli Barbosa were the first to do a doctoral thesis on the historiography of feminist art in Mexico. Raquel Tibol and Karen Cordero also participated as curators in some of the exhibitions; Cordero still collaborates constantly with Monica Mayer. Even so, none of the Mexican scholars have addressed feminist art with the term *artivism*, with the exception of Cordero in her recent conference presentations. Another source of valuable information is that made by the Argentines María Laura Rosa and Andrea Giunta. María Laura Rosa carries out work from the aesthetics and history of art to recognise the value of these artistic practices,²⁶ whereas Andrea Giunta works from the sociology of art in her own analyses of the same practices.²⁷ Both recognise the work of Mexican women as pioneers in feminist art in Latin America and mention the links that have been established between feminist art theorists and artists in the United States and Mexico.²⁸

In addition to standing out as a pioneer of feminist art in Mexico, Mónica Mayer was one of the first to teach feminist art workshops in Mexican art academies. Since she did this after pursuing her master's degree in Sociology of Art at The Woman's Building at CalArts in the USA, many of the readings she explored with her contemporaries derived from an Anglo-American tradition. Therefore, to understand the objectives and language the Mexican artists

¹⁹ Sol Henaro, 'Retrocolectiva de Una Imparable: Mónica Mayer', in *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, ed. by Mónica Mayer (Mexico City: MUAC and UNAM, 2016), pp. 10–15.

²⁰ Deborah Dorotinsky Alperstein, 'Mirar desde los márgenes o los márgenes de la mirada. Fotografía de mujeres indígenas de Chiapas', *Debate feminista*, 38 (2008), 91–113.

²¹ Raquel Tibol, *Frida Kahlo. Una Vida Abierta* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2002).

²² Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda, *Women Made Visible* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

²³ Gladys Villegas Morales, 'Los Grupos de Arte Feminista En México', *Revista La Palabra y El Hombre*, 137 (2006), 45–57.

²⁴ *Crítica feminista en la teoría e historia del arte* (Mexico City, 2020)

<<https://m.facebook.com/Mitote.ICDAC/>> [accessed 11 January 2020].

²⁵ Araceli Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género* (Cuernavaca: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos and Casa Juan Pablos, 2008).

²⁶ María Laura Rosa, 'Un triángulo posible. Redes de relaciones entre el arte feminista argentino, brasileño y mexicano durante los años 70 y 80', in *Compartir el mundo. La experiencia de las mujeres y el arte*, ed. by María Laura Rosa and Soledad Novoa Donoso (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Metales pesados, 2017), pp. 109–44.

²⁷ Andrea Giunta, 'Feminisms and Emancipation. Mónica Mayer: Radical Aesthetics and Latin American Simultaneities', in *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, ed. by Mónica Mayer (Mexico City: MUAC and UNAM, 2016), pp. 85–99.

²⁸ Rosa, 'Un triángulo posible...' p. 126. Andrea Giunta, *Feminismo y Arte* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 2018).

were committed to, it is pertinent to also be familiar with the work of Linda Nochlin,²⁹ Griselda Pollock,³⁰ Lucy Lippard,³¹ Germaine Greer,³² Judy Chicago and Arlene Raven.³³ In fact, examples of the work of these feminist art scholars were even published in Spanish as long ago as 1976 in *Artes Visuales*, the magazine of artistic dissemination of the Museum of Modern Art. Particularly relevant to this study are those amongst this group of researchers who have continued to collaborate with Mexican artists. For example, Amelia Jones³⁴ and Griselda Pollock³⁵ were amongst the authors who analysed Mónica Mayer's work in the catalogue of her 'retrocollective' (a term referring to a retrospective exhibition that, at the same time, is the result of a collective effort) exhibition. Whereas Pollock has dedicated herself to studying art history to recognise the role of women artists and to question the male gaze, Amelia Jones has adopted a more philosophical approach by tracing the impact of poststructuralist discussion on feminist art.³⁶

Towards a Definition of Mexican *artivism*

Since the first feminist art exhibitions in Mexico, the artists have shown an interest in using their art to actually help women outside the art world. The projects designed specifically to counter gender-based violence with which I am concerned are germane to both social work and art. Hence, in addition to a gender perspective, the analysis is predicated upon an interdisciplinary methodology. After all, these art projects are characterised by their privileging of the sociological and activist objectives that motivated them to create specific artistic projects rather than any cultural agenda. For that reason, the category of *artivism* is more appropriate to conceptualize these practices. The definition of the term that I employ in this thesis theorises *artivism* as a practice with social and activist ends and objectives which result from the artist's

²⁹ Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?', in *Women, Art, and Power. And Other Essays* (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 145–78.

³⁰ Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

³¹ Lucy Lippard, *From the Center* (USA: Dutton, 1976).

³² Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (New York: Barbara Ward & Associates, 2001).

³³ Mayer, and other Mexicans, learned about these last two when the magazine of the Museo de Arte Moderno published a special issue on feminist art on 1976. Museo de Arte moderno, 'Artes Visuales. La Mujer En El Arte', *Artes Visuales*.

³⁴ Amelia Jones and Mónica Mayer, "'Lubricating the System" and Other Feminist Curatorial and Art Dilemmas: Amelia Jones in Dialogue with Mónica Mayer', in *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, ed. by Mónica Mayer (Mexico City: MUAC and UNAM), pp. 202–50.

³⁵ Griselda Pollock, 'Mónica Mayer: Performance, Momento y La Política de La Vida', in *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte* (Barcelona: Editorial RM, 2016), pp. 100–114.

³⁶ Amelia Jones, *The Artist's Body* (New York: Phaidon, 2014).

deep involvement in a certain cause. It is a form of political art that conceives of its effects beyond the time and place of its exhibition/installation/performance since it interpellates the public as active participants who, ideally, should be able to continue with the development of the work, either thanks to a pedagogical, material or a restorative action. The medium, material, and place do not usually depend on the artist's wishes but on the identified needs of the community with which they work. The art project usually promotes some form of social or political change so that it could be conceived simultaneously as political art or social work. Given the prioritisation given to the participation of the members of the community involved, the artist's role can, in many cases, even be relegated to the level of contributor instead of author or leading figure.

To better understand activism, it is necessary to engage with other sources that allow these projects to be regarded as both derivations of art but, at the same time, as different kinds of social practices. For instance, the origin of the *artivism* neologism leads me, once again, to look at the historical relations between Mexico and the United States. Suzanne Lacy's proposal is particularly enlightening in that respect and, even though I could identify her with the other American theorists or artists read studied by Mónica Mayer, I prefer to explore her ideas in the context of activism. In addition, Lacy's relationship with the Mexican sphere, and specifically with Mayer, is closer. On the one hand, she has established contact with Mexican artists, was Mayer's thesis director and also invited her to mount the piece *The Clothesline* as part of the artistic-social project, *Three Weeks in May* (1977). In her work, *In Mourning and in Rage*, Lacy observed that some artists opted for activist or sociological strategies to generate pieces that responded to a social problem.³⁷ Similarly, in 1995, with a view to theorising and understanding these projects better, she edited a book in which various artists and art theorists analysed these new forms of public art.³⁸ Rather than referring to them as activism, Lacy used the term *new genre public art* to categorise projects that escaped aesthetic limits (resorting to design strategies, media communication, and social work, among others) as a means for formulating highly involved responses to a given communitarian situation. Amongst the authors she invited to collaborate was Chicano artist Judy Baca whose trajectory has been prolific in Chicano studies on *artivism*.³⁹ Indeed, it is important to note that the neologism itself

³⁷ Lacy, 'In Mourning and in Rage'.

³⁸ Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art*, Second Edition (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).

³⁹ Judy Baca and Suzanne Lacy, 'Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Culture Society', in *Mapping the Terrain, New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), pp. 94–111.

was first formulated in the sphere of Chicano culture as an expression on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border to neoliberalism.

Ethnomusicologists and Latin Americanists Marisol Berríos-Miranda, Shannon Dudley and Michelle Habell-Pallan, make a genealogy of Latin musical expressions and Chicano resistance in which they identify the first use of the concept ‘artivism’.⁴⁰ According to them, the neologism was coined after the meeting between the Big Frente Zapatista and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Both groups met in 1997 to share strategies of resistance against the neoliberal regime that was consolidated after the signing of NAFTA. Their proposal, especially on the part of the Big Frente Zapatista, was to produce art with lyrics that called for resistance and protest against neoliberalism’s capitalist, racist and sexist system. Moreover, by singing them publicly, they sought to invite the public to sing along and join the ‘revolution’; in this way, they conceived their art as a creation between art and activism. This formulation of a cross-border strategy is consistent with Gloria Anzaldúa’s text *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestizo*.⁴¹ In fact, Quetzal Flores, the founder of the Big Zapatista Frente, has acknowledged the influence this book had for defining the type of subject that benefits from his art. Understanding the border as ‘a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition’,⁴² presupposes the understanding of an equally transitory *identity* on which geographical, national and identity limits are imposed (including binary gender constructions). Subsequently, the neologism was applied to study other forms of art, including non-musical forms; particularly prolific, therefore, at least for the objectives of this thesis, are those analyses formulated from Chicano and Latin American studies.

The Rhizomatic and the Liminal in *artivism*

The use of the term artivism has become common in art and cultural criticism. However, for the specific purposes of this thesis, three projects can provide clarity in defining the term more precisely: that of Sandoval and La Torre, the work of Ileana Diéguez and the theoretical work of Tania Bruguera. The first is the study done by the experts in Chican@ studies, Chela

⁴⁰ Marisol Berríos-Miranda, Shannon Dudley, and Michelle Habell-Pallán, *American Sabor: Latinos and Latinas in US Popular Music* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2017).

⁴¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera, The New Mestiza* (New York: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

⁴² Anzaldúa.

Sandoval and Guisela La Torre⁴³ in which they use term in relation to the work of Judy Baca. Baca, who participated in the previously-cited publication by Suzanne Lacy, has created collective murals since the 1970s before the neologism even existed. Sandoval and La Torre observed how, from the beginning, her murals have shown an organic relationship between art and activism; for them, Baca uses the strategies of the oppressor to empower the oppressed (and they recognised how the Zapatistas do the same). One of the conclusions they formulate in their study of the work of the Chicana artist is that these are projects that have a ‘rhizomatic effect’ and hence, can be analysed according to the emblematic critical proposal put forward by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari⁴⁴ in *A Thousand Plateaus*.⁴⁵ In the first instance, Sandoval and La Torre apply this category of the rhizomatic to Baca’s work by observing that the participants in their murals have a heterogeneous reaction, which generates new nodes (even outside the sphere of art), and thus does not produce a chalcographic reproduction; instead, it generates a cartographic one that releases the potencies of each participant.

Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical work, like Judith Butler’s, is also germane for understanding the socio-political commitment informing Sayak Valencia’s feminist theory. Crucially, when Valencia affirms that ‘she becomes a woman’, she employs the verb ‘to become’ in the sense theorised by Deleuze and Guattari. It is not only a performative matter, but it is an act that escapes from patriarchal and heteronormative determinations that benefit the economic system, becoming identities that constantly escape binary possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari observed how the capitalist system, when bolstered by the ethos of traditional (Freudian) psychoanalysis, generates and imposes subjectivities which are regulated for productive purposes.⁴⁶ Valencia updates this hypothesis according to the context of neoliberalism and states: ‘Ya en la década de 1970, Deleuze y Guattari afirmaban que nuestras sociedades producen esquizos del mismo modo que producen automóviles Ford...; casi cuatro décadas después, el capitalismo, al devenir gore, produce no sólo esquizos, sino sicarios especialistas en la violencia’.⁴⁷ Similarly, according to Valencia, it is only through transfeminism that it is possible to deconstruct the gore capitalism on which violence against women is founded. Agreeing with Valencia means identifying those projects which contribute

⁴³ Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre, ‘Chicana/o Artivism: Judy Baca’s Digital Work with Youth of Color’, in *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, ed. by Anna Everett (Cambridge: The MIT Press and the John D and Catherine T. Macarthur Foundations Series on Digital Media and Learning, 2008), pp. 81–108.

⁴⁴ Even though Deleuze and Guattari’s work has been prolific in Mexico in social sciences and philosophy I do not delve into that discussion; rather, I focused on the feminist perspective influenced by these authors.

⁴⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

⁴⁷ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 110.

to the struggle for women's rights (as a political category) from a transfeminist perspective and that 'al mismo tiempo integra el elemento de la movilidad entre géneros, corporalidades y sexualidades para la creación de estrategias que sean aplicables *in situ* y se identifiquen con la idea deleuziana de minorías, multiplicidades y singularidades'.⁴⁸ Clearly, this conceptualisation of the fluidity of genders is also indebted to the formulation of a cross-border identity by Gloria Anzaldúa and thus provides greater cohesion to the theoretical apparatus necessary to carry out this analysis.

Similarly, Ileana Diéguez's categorisation of these art projects as 'liminal' has proved to be significant in articulating another terminological and theoretical line of inquiry within the chapters which follow. To categorise these projects as liminal has several implications. First, Diéguez uses the concept of liminal associated with anthropologist Victor Turner to analyse artworks that are not clearly classifiable as art, that *present* reality rather than representing it, and that are conceived from the perspective of and for the audience/participants. For Turner, the liminal manifests itself during 'all rites of passage or 'transitions''. These are transitive rituals with pedagogical or restorative elements that encourage an inversion of the hierarchy which ultimately results in *communitas* (this presupposes the realization that 'implies that the one who is above could not be above if there was not the one who was below' (p. 103-104)).⁴⁹ While Diéguez retains these qualities of the liminal posited by Turner, she also redefines the concept when employing it to analyse contemporary art. Secondly, Diéguez defines the liminal as those practices that 'cuestionan la categoría de "obras", trascendiendo la dimensión contemplativa y proponiendo modos más participativos, configurándose también como prácticas esencialmente políticas'⁵⁰. Rather than following the trajectory of Turner and the cultural social sciences, however, my interest is in verifying the extent to which the 'liminal' may be an appropriate term for describing feminist activism. If Diéguez is correct, activist projects should result in *communitas*.

Furthermore, besides the fact that Diéguez accompanies feminist artists and relatives of victims on many of their performances, another reason why her work is suitable for my own analysis is that she shares an understanding of gender compatible with my wider theoretical framework. This is illustrated most clearly in her conceptualisation of those bodies which are 'present' in liminal artworks. Diéguez states that these are 'overflowing' bodies: 'de los otros

⁴⁸ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 178.

⁴⁹ Victor Turner, *El Proceso Ritual, Estructura y Antiestructura* (Madrid: Taurus, 1988), pp. 103-4.

⁵⁰ Ileana Diéguez, *Escenarios Liminales* (Mexico City: Paso de Gato, Instituto Queretano de Cultura and Secretaría de Cultura de San Luis Potosí, 2014), p. 252.

no-incluidos por los sistemas hegemónicos de representación'.⁵¹ It is not simply a matter of the male gaze; it is also the problem of a hegemonic framework, clearly patriarchal and heteronormative, which serves as a filter for the experiences that can be represented in art. I do not intend to simply repeat what Diéguez has said about liminality; the originality of my own methodology is predicated upon a combination of the idea of a rhizomatic effect with the liminal quality. More specifically, my intention is to mobilise this methodology to ascertain the extent to which the rhizomatic and the liminal are actually present in Mexican feminist activism.

Finally, mention must also be made of the Cuban artist Tania Bruguera who represents another significant point of reference in the following chapters. In 2010 she wrote the *Declaración de Arte Político*,⁵² a declaration used by Mexican activist Cerrucha to explain her artistic practices in Mexico. In this manifesto, Bruguera established that political art works more on its consequences than on the moment of its exhibition, that has a political action that escapes the possibilities of representation (like Diéguez' notion of art that presents instead or represents), that makes the viewer feel uneasy, and that proposes an interaction. Interestingly, Bruguera now identifies her work as *artivism* rather than political art. In this sense, I elaborate on why this artist made this change to recognise her work as *artivism* instead of political art. Even if I consider Bruguera's art interesting, I am not analysing her work as an artist, but as an art expert and founder of the Artist Institute 'Hannah Arendt'. The change of terminology could be observed in her first conferences about political art and her late ones about activism.⁵³ On the other hand, I use her declaration to elaborate on the qualities of activism in greater depth.

The Selected Artist Projects

I chose a number of criteria to determine the *artist* projects I analyse here: they had to demonstrate involvement with the community, have artistic and social strategies, understand gender as something to be performed, share a similar way of understanding violence against women and probably result in *communitas*. Given that *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* (Mexico City, 2018) exhibits all of these characteristics, it represents the ideal project to analyse as exemplary of Mexican feminist activism. Moreover, this particular project

⁵¹ Diéguez, *Escenarios Liminales*, pp. 253–54.

⁵² Tania Bruguera, 'Declaración de Arte Político', *Blog de Tania Bruguera*, 2010
<<http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/388-1-Declaracin+de+Arte+Poltico.htm>> [accessed 21 November 2021].

⁵³ *Art + Activism = Artivism | Tania Bruguera* (Ted Talks, 2013)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C38sPtBj4uo>> [accessed 18 May 2022].

brought together feminist artists from the three generations of existing feminists: Mónica Mayer (first generation, the 1980s), Lorena Wolffer (second generation, the 1990s) and Cerrucha (third generation, the 2000s). Ileana Diéguez herself was also involved and defined it as a liminal work; clearly, understanding how *Estado de emergencia* can be regarded as a liminal project allows me to expand the concept to the other projects studied in this thesis. It is also worth noting that by using a combination of workshops, conversations, performances, installations and street art, *Estado de emergencia* could be regarded as analogous to Suzanne Lacy's previously mentioned project. By the same token, some of the performances included in *Estado de emergencia* replicated the Big Frente Zapatista's methods, thus linking the project with the origin of activism. Finally, throughout the project, the artists made constant allusions to the LGAMVLV and the work of Marcela Lagarde, Butler's conceptualization of gender and the notion of gender violence as conceptualized by Valencia. Axiomatically, therefore, there is a correspondence between the theoretical framework I formulate and my analysis of this particular project. Ultimately, I intend to ascertain whether this illustration of *activism* can be identified with a rhizomatic effect which promotes the emergence of agency in the participants and allows them to face gender violence. At the same time, I aim to determine the artists' social strategies and goals.

As a recent work of *activism*, *Estado de emergencia* may be indebted to and also represent a consolidation of several of the principal elements of Mexican feminist *activism* which have been formulated throughout its history. Hence, with a view to further developing my analysis of this artistic manifestation, I also include a historical overview of other key works of activism. In this way, *Estado de emergencia* is presented as the culmination of the historical trajectory of *activism* and an indication of how far Mexican feminist *activism* has evolved. The objective is to identify what motivated feminist artists opt for these strategies, how they have engaged with various communities and what factors they have considered to formulate both their artistic language and their gender discourse. Subsequently, to further clarify this point, I offer a critical overview of the artistic trajectory of each of the artists involved in *Estado de emergencia*. In Chapter I, I explore Mónica Mayer's artistic projects (Mexico City, 1954), who first introduced the notion of feminist art to Mexico in her work, as part of Polvo de Gallina Negra. I reflect on how the practices of feminist activism were consolidated in the first feminist performances in which Mayer participated: *Receta para hacerle mal de ojo a los violadores o, el respeto al cuerpo ajeno es la paz* (1983) and *La Fiesta de los XV años* (1984). By aligning her work with activism, before the term even existed, I am obliged to both justify the use of the

concept and, subsequently, to signal the elements of her early work that allow such a categorisation. To that end, I aim to determine the extent to which Mayer's pioneering projects promoted a rhizomatic effect, proposed a restorative or pedagogical dynamic and if they could be classified as liminal.

Another artist who coordinated *Estado de emergencia* and whose work can contribute to a more complex understanding of activism, not least of all because of her criticism of the term, is Lorena Wolffer. At the beginning of her career, she was widely acclaimed for work with performance and since then, she has modified her practice to develop projects characterised by a plurality of voices. An illustration of one such project and one in which she conceived of her artworks as platforms was *Evidencias* (2010-2016). In Chapter II, my intention is to analyse this project as a form of social work that uses artistic tools to encourage the denunciation of gender violence. My hypothesis is that *Evidencias* enabled the emergence of the notion of *sororidad* or a political agreement between women to confront patriarchy which is predicated upon the generation of a rhizomatic effect, and, thus, the proliferation of various nodes (organizations — formal or informal—, platforms of denunciation, self-defence strategies, shelters or even meetings of study of feminist contents). Finally, the third artist involved in *Estado de emergencia*, who, given her well-defined artistic strategies, officially identifies as an activist is Cerrucha. In Chapter 3, I analyse her first project in Mexico — *In/visible* (2011)— a street art installation for feminist educational purposes which is significantly distinct from her contribution to *Estado de emergencia*. In an attempt to determine what motivated the artist to modify her strategies in the later work, my hypothesis is that *In/visible* had sought to generate awareness even though the artist had little contact with the community that received her work.

From Art to Social Work: Qualitative Research with Participants

Overall, therefore, my intention is to investigate how the *activism* of Mexican feminist artists such as these has generated pedagogical awareness, and restorative or denunciation strategies that may be effective against gender violence. However, to explore the scope of its impact in greater depth, I have incorporated social research methodology into my analysis. Indeed, in their recent theoretical studies of feminist activism both Andrea Giunta and María Laura Rosa recognised that, above all, it is a creation committed to the community and it is therefore in

that same community that the social efficiency of *artivism* can be observed.⁵⁴ Even so, they have not yet produced enough literature on the subject or explored how its efficiency could be measured. Another feminist art scholar who has been closely following the Mexican scene and, more importantly, who has identified *artivism* with a rhizomatic effect, is the Chilean, Julia Antivilo.⁵⁵ While Antivilo considers herself an academic and an *artist*, her own work has been primarily characterised by a historical methodology when researching the Mexican artists' archives.⁵⁶ In fact, during the last year, she published some of the documents from Monica Mayer's archive and together with Katnira Bello, she selected those that contribute to the historiography of Mexican feminist art.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, in my research into the existing literature on Mexican feminist *artivism*, it is evident that no one has yet elaborated on the measurement of the impact (or the rhizomatic effect) that these works may have. I find a justification for the use of social research methodology in Nelly Richard's⁵⁸ theory about feminist art. Although she did not discuss *artivism*, she observed the study of feminist art requires a transdisciplinary approach

Clearly, the similarities between feminist *artivism* and social work justify the complementary use of sociological research methods. Of particular significance in this respect is the fact that feminist social work is based on the principle that it is necessary to modify the unequal social order between women and men and eradicate gender violence.⁵⁹ At the same time, the success of such social work is predicated upon the assumption that affected subjects are directly involved rather than simply having an external agenda imposed upon them in a given situation. Hence, social workers, much like *artists*, seek to identify a problem from the community's perspective with which they might work in an attempt to formulate a strategy that

⁵⁴ *Mujeres Artistas: Perspectivas e Imágenes de La Historia* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Artes del Espectáculo UBA, 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR0oTaMNeDYn0pI63ovgfKaHr_sNBFe80BpL4WZRYefpuSbQsWGIZGIMJII&feature=share&v=xq8k-ZFHik8&app=desktop> [accessed 4 November 2020].

⁵⁵ Julia Antivilo Peña, 'Arte Feminista Latinoamericano, Rupturas de Un Arte Político En La Producción Visual' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Universidad de Chile, 2013).

⁵⁶ There are two really important feminist art archives. One was created by Mónica Mayer and Víctor Lerma. Mónica Mayer, 'Una Relación Más Que Íntima Con El Performance', *Pinto Mi Raya*, 2021 <<https://www.pintomiraya.com/pmr/monica-mayer/performance-3>> [accessed 5 May 2022]. The second one, which I also plan to consult, is Ana Victoria Jiménez' which is held at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City.

⁵⁷ Mónica Mayer, *Intimidades...o No. Arte, Vida y Feminismo*, ed. by Julia Antivilo and Katnira Bello (Mexico City: Editorial Diecisiete, 2021).

⁵⁸ Nelly Richard, 'La Crítica Feminista Como Modelo de Crítica Cultural', *Debate Feminista*, 40 (2009), 75–85.

⁵⁹ Ana Alcázar Campos, 'Miradas feministas y/o de género al trabajo social, un análisis crítico', *Portularia*, XVI.1 (2014), 27–34 <<https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.5218/prts.2014.0003>>.

encourages a change or a transition towards the elimination of that same problem.⁶⁰ Although to date there have been no comparable attempts to combine research methods from feminist social work and the arts in the study of *artivism*, other research projects from the feminist social sciences allow me to determine the best way to approach the social evaluation of feminist artivism. For instance, according to social scientists Rosaline Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger,⁶¹ qualitative methods are more suitable for feminist social research since, unlike quantitative methods, they avoid reducing women to generalizable statistics; instead, they foster access to an individual understanding of gender, and promote the creation of safe spaces in which women can freely express themselves. For this reason, I formulate the organisation of focus groups in Mexico (the public to whom these works were addressed) to supplement my analysis in this thesis; however, due to the restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, I had to organise them online. Finally, I turn to two extra tools as complementary elements of my social research methodology (and to address some of the gaps involved in conducting online focus groups).

The results of these instruments are merely a support for the qualitative gathered through focus groups. The first of these instruments are the ‘Epistemically-Related Emotion Scales’ by Reinhard Pekrun, Elisabeth Vogl, Krista R. Muys and Gale M. Sinatra.⁶² These researchers start from the principle that the elements that generate knowledge also suppose an emotional reaction; hence, it is possible evaluate the participants’ initial emotional response to recognising the works of Mexican feminist artivism as generators of knowledge. The second measuring instrument I use is inspired by the ‘Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method’ popularized by Gabriele Rosenthal.⁶³ While not encouraging the participants to undertake a biographical writing exercise, I designed open questionnaires for participants to fill out before and after participating. My goal is to see if the participants’ perspective on violence against women changes after being exposed to artwork. To ensure that my analysis has a gender perspective, I employ the work of sociologists Adriano Beiras, Leonor Cantera and Ana Casasanta,⁶⁴ who, after applying the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method, identified

⁶⁰ Carmen Cisneros Flores and Gudelia Martínez León, ‘Hacia Una Concepción Del Trabajo Social Contemporáneo En México: Su Condición Profesional’, *Revista Katálysis*, 9.2 (2006) <<https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-49802006000200012>>.

⁶¹ Rosaline Barbour and Jenny Kitzinger, *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 1998).

⁶² Reinhard Pekrun and others, ‘Measuring Emotions During Epistemic Activities: The Epistemically-Related Emotion Scales’, *Cognition and Emotion*, 21 (2016) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2016.1204989>>.

⁶³ Gabriel Rosenthal, ‘Biographical Research’, in *Qualitative Research Practice*, ed. by Seale Gobo, J. Gubrium, and D. Silverman (London: Sage Publications, 2004), pp. 48–64.

⁶⁴ Adriano Beiras, Leonor M. Cantera Espinosa, and Ana L. Casasanta García, ‘La Contrucción de Una Metodología Feminista Cualitativa de Enfoque Narrativo-Crítico’, *Psicoperspectivas*, 16 (2017) <[10.5027/psicoperspectivas-Vol16-Issue2-fulltext-1012](https://doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-Vol16-Issue2-fulltext-1012)>.

that a feminist analysis requires identifying the micro-system and the macro-system in order to understand how women narrate their reality and their position in the patriarchal system in which they live.

In conclusion, I observe that the sociological objectives are fundamental for *activist* projects; hence, a sociological methodology enriches the analysis of activism. Therefore, I employ a transdisciplinary approach that allows me to understand Mexican feminist *activism's* artistic and social strategies, their conceptualisation of gender and the whole project to confront violence against women. To select the *activist* projects, I considered the history of Mexican feminist art, the topic common to the artworks analysed (all are dealing with gender-based violence) and their shared key concepts. All the artists or *activists* included here understand gender as a verb, violence against women as rooted in culture, and the artists' need to take art to non-traditionally cultural or artistic spheres. My contribution is to value and evaluate Mexican feminist activism with a rhizomatic and liminal effect that can be deployed as a sociological tool. Since I identify an adaptation of *activist* practices through time, the chapters are organised in a genealogical order. Firstly, in Chapter I, I analyse Mónica Mayer's initial artistic works as activist projects. Mayer and Maris Bustamante were amongst the first generation who promoted a feminist agenda through their art. Hence, I identify what made their art feminist, how they approach society through art and the social practices they inherited for the future generation of feminists. Secondly, in Chapter II, I explore Lorena Wolffer's *Evidencias* as representative of how artists changed their work to have closer contact with society. I claim that *Evidencias*, as a denunciation platform, promotes the emergence of *sororidad*. Thirdly, in Chapter III, I analyse Cerrucha's activist street art installation *In/visible*. I investigate the awareness and educative qualities of her art and how she modified her work to become conscious of the social effects of her art. Fourthly, in Chapter IV, I find that *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* bolsters the development of women's agency to confront feminicides. This project included the involvement of Mónica Mayer, Lorena Wolffer and Cerrucha. Thus, it is also possible to observe the consolidation of certain artistic practices that could be regarded as activism. Finally, in Chapter V, I present the results of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies I designed. It is important to reiterate that I do not consider this methodology a useful tool for analysing all forms of *activism*. Instead, I encourage designing and implementing a social specific method that answers the *activist* project's needs while appreciating the activist's social and political intentions.

Chapter I: Understanding Mexican Feminist Art as *Artivism*

The Mexican female artists who labelled their work as feminist started working formally in the 1980s. Indeed, before this decade, there were some recognised Mexican women artists; however, they did not consider their creations as feminist, nor did their work had an explicit feminist objective. Even artists like Leonora Carrington, a feminist militant, distinguished her art from her designs for political demonstrations.⁶⁵ On the other hand, artists (that is, women artists as I shall explain further) in the 1980s, like Mónica Mayer (Mexico City, 1954) or Maris Bustamante (Mexico City, 1949), used their artwork to criticise gender inequality, divulge feminist knowledge and actually help women in different contexts. Hence, bearing in mind the original definition of *artivism* which was coined by Chicana/o artists, it is possible to analyse the artistic production of these women even if they were active before the invention of the neologism. Moreover, using the concept allows me to observe and establish the distinctions, if any, between traditional art and *artivism*. In this first chapter, therefore, I aim to identify the practices used by the first feminist artists that are still being used today in an analysis of the first two Mexican feminist art interventions: *Receta para hacerles el mal de ojo a los violadores, o el respeto al derecho del cuerpo ajeno es la paz* [*Recipe for Giving the Evil Eye to Rapists Or, Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies*] (1983) and *La fiesta de los XV años* [*The Quinceañera Party*] (1984). However, before embarking upon my reading of the actual artworks, I will explore the history and meaning of the term *artivism* to understand what distinguishes it from traditional art and how that distinction manifests itself in these two art projects.

Due to its origins, *artivism* is linked to multi-ethnic, feminist and anti-systemic actions. *Artivism* is a neologism coined by the Grammy-winning musician and leader of the Chicano/a music group Big Frente Zapatista, Quetzal Flores.⁶⁶ As well as the Zapatista movement, the identity and intentions of Flores and his group were influenced by Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera, The New Mestiza* (1987), a book that mixes autobiographical texts, poetry and essays in an exploration of the identities of the mestizas and mestizos in the USA. Significantly, Anzaldúa defended a transnational identity opposed to borders: 'A borderland is

⁶⁵ Rosa, p. 113.

⁶⁶ Since the invention of the neologism, it has been important for them to define their identity. Miranda Shannon Dudley, Marisol Berrios-Miranda, and Michelle Habell-Pallán, *American Sabor: Latinos and Latinas in US Popular Culture/Latinos y Latinas En La Cultura Popular de EUA* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2017). Flores is the best known of them, as he was the first Chicano artist to win a Grammy but there are other musicians who are promoted by Flores. Other Chicano/a *artivists* are Maya Jupiter, Alore Blacc, Martha González, Calina Lawrence and Martha González.

a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition'.⁶⁷ This resonated with the Chicano/as who were already mixing Latin American music with mainstream music in the US; in other words, Anzaldúa's border theory endorsed what they were already promoting through their songs: a multinational and multi-ethnic musical expression that went beyond borders. *Borderlands/La Frontera, The New Mestiza* immediately became popular amongst minorities and feminist scholars working in the field of intersectional Chicano studies.⁶⁸ Yet, regardless of the relevance of Anzaldúa's theory, it was controversial; it was even banned in states like Arizona where it was feared that the promotion of Mexicanity was opposed to national identity.⁶⁹ Precisely because of this controversy surrounding the book, Quetzal Flores and other musicians embraced the idea that what they sang and promoted was anti-systemic and transgressive, rather than being discouraged by the negative reception and criticism of border theory. For that same reason, when they became aware of the Zapatistas confronting the Mexican state in Chiapas, they considered themselves their allies in the struggle against neoliberalism. Accordingly, their musical group would come to be known as Big Frente Zapatista, while the roots of the term *artivism* were derived from this link to the same political struggle in Mexico.

After the First Encounter between Chicanos and Zapatistas in 1997 in Aguascalientes II, Chiapas, The Big Frente Zapatista [BFZ] and the EZLN [Zapatista Army of National Liberation] coined the term *artivism* to refer to artistic projects with activist intentions.⁷⁰ The EZLN was hence not only an influence in terms of their political convictions but were co-authors of the concept which underscored their common approach to art and politics. In 1994, in Chiapas, Mexico, different Southern indigenous communities had founded the EZLN to reject the NAFTA agreement between Canada, the USA and Mexico. They openly opposed the government's exploitation of their natural resources and defended their sovereignty, autonomy, and indigenous identity against foreign impositions.⁷¹ They gained international attention as

⁶⁷ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera, The New Mestiza* (New York: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), p. 3.

⁶⁸ Mónica Perales, 'Twenty-Five Years of Research on Gender in the Borderlands', *Journal of Women's History*, 2, 2013, 163–73. The article discusses the influence Anzaldúa's book had 25 years after it was published. She considers the book as an initial point of the discussion. Perales even mentioned some scholars who were influenced by Anzaldúa: Alicia Schmidt Camacho, Ann M. Little, José Alamillo, Deborah Cohen and Vicki Ruiz.

⁶⁹ Cassie Premo Steele, "'Una Herida Abierta': The Border as Wound in Gloria Anzaldúa's 'Borderlands/La Frontera'", in *We Heal From Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 41–55..

⁷⁰ Shannon Dudley, Berrios-Miranda, and Habel-Pallán, p. 280.

⁷¹ Today the movement has presence in other Mexican states like Oaxaca and Michoacán. Guiomar Rovira, *Mujeres de Maíz* (Mexico City: Biblioteca Era, 2012), p. 49.

one of the few organised communities opposing neo-liberal capitalism.⁷² When Quetzal Flores heard about them, he felt a connection that would confirm the transnational identity he was already evoking in his music: Mexico and immigrants confronting the USA's cultural and economic impositions.

Furthermore, both the BFZ and the EZLN shared a feminist vision in their *artivism* as they conceived of the system they were confronting as patriarchal as well as capitalist. This is apparent in the very first song they composed after categorising their work as *artivism*, *Todos somos Ramona* [We are all Ramona]. The song articulates the group's activism in terms of the indigenous and feminist values shared by the Zapatistas.⁷³ The song honours Comandanta Ramona, one of the initial leader-figures along with the Subcomandante Marcos,⁷⁴ and represents the feminist force inherent to Zapatista identity.⁷⁵ The lyrics of the chorus declare that: 'Soy mexicana, indígena, / chicana, mujer del pueblo / maltratada por cobardes / mi silencio se arrotó [sic] / y ahora nadie jamás me podrá ya / vencer'.⁷⁶ Hence, as well as an acknowledgement of women and the violence they suffered, the song seeks to recognise Ramona's identity as both indigenous and Chicana, in order to deconstruct the colonialist differentiation between Mexican, Chicana and indigenous women. As a means for affirming the original uprising, the song also praises the fact that she is not silent anymore, as she will speak up and defeat her enemies. When performing their songs, the Big Frente Zapatista would mobilise the *artist* strategy of encouraging the audience participate in the social movement by dancing and singing along. Although this is then strictly a 'strategy' rather than a quality of *artivism*, it has been similarly used by contemporary Mexican feminists; how it was adapted to the Mexican context will be explored in chapter four.

Given the current prevalence of the term *artivism* and its use in reference to feminist art, for the purposes of this thesis it is worth exploring the genesis and development of the term

⁷² When formulating his criticism of capitalism and the world-system, Immanuel Wallerstein, was so interested in the Zapatistas that he visited them and shared his ideas.. Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Structural Crisis in the World-System. Where Do We Go from Here?', *Monthly Review*, 62 (2010).

⁷³ Patricia Zavella, *I'm Neither Here Nor There: Mexicans' Quotidian Struggles with Migration and Poverty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 204–6. Maya Jupiter, one of the *artists* that is part of Quetzal Flores group composes feminist songs, such as 'That Ain't me'.

⁷⁴ The subcomandante Marcos and the subcomandanta Ramona were the most recognisable faces of the Zapatista movement.

⁷⁵ The women that belong to the movement wrote an internal law that promotes gender equality, opposed to colonialism and gender violence. To write this law, they invited Marcela Lagarde as a supervisor. Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, *Ley de Mujeres Revolucionarias*, 1993 <<http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/1993/12/31/ley-revolucionaria-de-mujeres/>> [accessed 2 March 2020].

⁷⁶ 'I am Mexican, indigenous / Chicana, a small-town girl / mistreated by cowards / my silence has been broken / and now no one will ever defeat me.' *Todos Somos Ramona* (Los Angeles: Quetzal Music/Cosmica Records, 2000).

in greater depth. In 2008, for instance, Chicano culture experts Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre analysed Baca's mural *The Great Wall*, a digital mural she did with UCLA students, as an *artist* project.⁷⁷ As in my own case in this study, Sandoval and Latorre applied the neologism to conceptualise the work of an artist who had begun working before *artivism* even existed. In my estimation, one of the reasons for invoking artivism *avant la lettre* in this way, and hence, tracing its origins back to such early projects, is that feminist artists strive to modify the social structure or denounce injustice, inequalities, and other adversities women face rather than seeking to accomplish an aesthetic goal.⁷⁸ In the specific case of Sandoval and Latorre's study of Judy Baca's art as *artivism*, the effect was to both disseminate and provide further clarity to the term.⁷⁹ At the same time, they highlighted how Baca's murals, just like Anzaldúa's poetry, have embraced the mestiza identity and, at the artist's invitation, have become collective projects in which members of the community intervene in her art; in fact, through the use of digital technologies, she has increased this collective community participation by designing the murals digitally. Bearing these characteristics in mind, Sandoval and Latorre concluded that the effect of Baca's *artivism* could be viewed as constituting a rhizomatic effect: 'constantly emerging, fusing together, hiving off'.⁸⁰

However, claiming that *artivism* results in a rhizomatic effect does not necessarily serve to clarify the neologism. Derived from Deleuze and Guattari's emblematic text *Mille Plateaux [A Thousand Plateaus]* (1980),⁸¹ the concept of the rhizome would imply that artivism is not a discrete action but a continuous one through the socially engaged responses, either in favour or against it, immediate or long-termed. Indeed, the rhizome is first and foremost a biological / botanical term that categorises subterranean plant stems that send out roots and shoots from their nodes, making it impossible to predict its structure. Adapted to the humanities, it acquires the significance of a human creation that has a multiplicity of different connected nodes. Ultimately, Sandoval and Latorre's appeal to the rhizomatic quality of Baca's art derives from anthropologist and Occupy Wall Street activist, Jeffrey S. Juris' use of the term to describe cyber activism. Nevertheless, even if it were possible to trace a range of

⁷⁷ Sandoval and Latorre.

⁷⁸ This characteristic of feminist art can be appreciated in the documentary *Women's Art Revolution (WAR)*. *Women's Art Revolution* (USA: Zeitgeist Productions, 2010) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyKmVo5jDdQ>>.

⁷⁹ Manuel Delgado, 'Artivismo y pospolítica. Sobre la estetización de las luchas sociales en contextos urbanas', 18, 2013, 68–80 (p. 70).

⁸⁰ Sandoval and Latorre, p. 82.

⁸¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The book was translated to English in 1987.

similarities between the Zapatistas' digital *artivism* in the 1990s, the Chicano *artist* movement and the anti-neoliberal capitalist ethos of the Occupy Wall Street movement, my intention in this thesis is not to reconstruct the history of Chicano *artivism*. Instead, I simply wish to identify the conceptualisations implicit to *artivism* that will afford greater clarity to my own analysis. Furthermore, by offering a brief genealogy of the term, it will be possible to observe how its analysis can be distinguished from traditional art criticism:

If *artivism* has a rhizomatic outcome, it should present a structure which is composed of heterogeneous nodes, each of which, in turn, constitutes a structure derived from a multiplicity of forms, thus making it impossible to determine where and when a given node begins or ends; the rhizomatic outcome would also make manifest 'a-signifying rupture' (each node supposes a semantic breakthrough), 'cartography' and 'decalcomania'.⁸² Rhizomatic heterogeneity implies that any node can be connected with any other, meaning there is no hierarchy which would posit the superiority of any one node over any other. Secondly, rhizomatic multiplicity refers to how subjects cease to have a structural relationship with others as a subject or as an object, meaning there is no original which is being reproduced. Thirdly, the a-signifying rupture presupposes that the rhizome can break, be interrupted anywhere within its branch-like form and to such an extent that every node can be reconstituted as a new entity in its own right. Hence, 'a-signifying' means that it stops reproducing an original meaning over and over again, and instead generates new ones. Lastly, cartography and decalcomania presuppose that there is no structural model or genetic axis within the rhizome. It is also for this reason that individual nodes extend without replicating the code of others since rather than constituting mimetic 'units', they are constantly changing direction and suggesting new codes.

Thirty-six years after Deleuze and Guattari proposed their theory of the rhizome, Latorre and Sandoval evoked the term in their analysis of the effect of Baca's art as they argued that her murals could be regarded as another breakthrough asemantic node of Chicana identity. This view was predicated upon the fact that the murals provoke different reactions from the participants, regardless of whether these are critical or positive reactions, and thus create a new mural or at least 'damage' the original to modify its meaning. The *Great Wall of Los Angeles* (1978) is an excellent example of Baca's *artivism* and the evocation of a rhizomatic structure; and, for that very reason, the artwork on which Sandoval and Latorre focussed. It is also worth noting that Baca's having opted for muralism as her chosen medium for expression was an

⁸² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp. 13–16.

affirmation of her Mexican origins because of the post-Revolutionary artistic movement celebrated in the country. However, rather than presenting herself as a genius and talented artist as the original muralists had done,⁸³ she invited others to collaborate with her, from experts to people from different communities so that, as a collective, they could work together to tell the subaltern history of Los Angeles. Over seven summers, Baca and other collaborators used a half-mile of the concrete retaining wall of the Tujunga Wash Flood Control Channel (San Fernando Valley) to tell the unofficial history of California throughout the 1950s.⁸⁴ Given that this was not a government commission but a communitarian action, her feminist interpretation suggested a signifying rupture with the US art scene by Mexican Muralism. Similarly, telling subaltern history instead of an official history implied an anti-systemic action, especially when the educational system in the US promoted a national identity that excluded any Chicano element. Moreover, since each scene of the mural represents the testimony of a multi-ethnic population, the work could be viewed as a mix of heterogeneous nodes.

On the other hand, the rhizome requires another condition to exist; it must result from a free flowing of human desire. Both *A Thousand Plateaus* and Deleuze and Guattari's earlier *Anti-Œdipe* [*Anti-Oedipus*](1972)⁸⁵ are two complementary volumes of *Capitalisme et schizophrénie* [*Capitalism and Schizophrenia*], a criticism of capitalism as a system that limits the flowing of human desire only possible thanks to Freudian psychoanalysis and a 'normalisation' process. The critique they make of psychoanalysis is that it is a science that supports capitalist production by seeking the formation of productive subjects through the reinforcement of the systematisation of desire to support productivity. They observe a repression of desire and, therefore, of the potential of each subject, which limits creative productivity while guaranteeing a capitalist production. The flow of desire, where creativity emerges, is infinite and therefore 'creative' production should be as well. Hence, Deleuze and

⁸³ There are various analyses of the figure of the Muralists, mostly the *Tres Grandes*, as patriarchal and sexist figures although, this does not mean that they should be reduced to these qualities. In this thesis I do not intend to trace all Mexican art history or offer a deep historical analysis of Baca's work. However, it is worth noting how, during the confrontation with the *Contemporáneos* it became clear how the Muralists 'entrenched the idea of male virility as the basis for nationhood' Adèle Greely, 'Painting Mexican Identities: Nationalism and Gender in the Work of María Izquierdo', *Oxford Art Journal*, 23.1 (2000), 51–71 (p. 56). On the other hand, the recognition and block dynamic between Rivera and María Izquierdo, or even Frida Kahlo, reveals the *machista* ideology that was part of the movement. For more information about this side of Muralism I suggest the following bibliography: Karen Cordero Reiman, 'Appropriation, Invention, and Irony: Tamayo's Early Period, 1920-1937', in *Tamayo: A Modern Icon Reinterpreted (Catalogue)*, ed. by D.C. DuPont (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2007), pp. 165–87. Jean Franco, *Plotting Women. Gender and Representation in Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

⁸⁴ UCLA Optimism Stories, 'These Walls? Can Talk: The Living Art of Judy Baca', *UCLA Stories*, 2019 <https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/referencing/mhra_footnotes.html> [accessed 5 January 2020].

⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

Guattari speak of an infinite ‘becoming’ in which there is constantly a process of ‘differentiation’ in relation to others. I will further explain the notion of ‘becoming’ linked to the Mexican discussion led by Sayak Valencia. However, in the capitalist system, Deleuze and Guattari observe an oedipization of the subject in which, through social repression, the forms that desire can take are reduced; in short, a fixed notion of desire is generated. The encoding of desire channels individual desiring flows and, at the same time, is accompanied by the fear of being segregated if one fails to channel one’s flow according to the dominant desire. In capitalism, desire is organized according to the production of capital which is only possible by the constant feeling of needing/consuming something all the time.

According to Irina Vaskes Santchez, a Colombian philosopher who explores the implication of postmodern aesthetics and more specifically, the impact of capitalism’s restrictive channelling of desire in contemporary art practices, the artist’s role is to reject the basic principles of production and boycott the idea of reality. This resonates with Deleuze and Guattari’s contention in *Anti-Oedipus* that the artist is a subject acting outside the system, living under the flowing of desire and to such an extent that any time an artist is forced to reproduce the status quo, he/she/they is actually creating propaganda.⁸⁶ Artists or *artists* are therefore potentially subjects who notice the system’s limits by opposing resistance to injustice and inequality. Nevertheless, *artivism* is different from art because it proposes an artistic speech that invites those present to contribute to the artwork’s construction; therefore, the *artivist* proposal only exists when viewers are also participants who somehow activate or complete the artwork. Even so, while it might be relevant to offer other references which elucidate the impact of Deleuze and Guattari’s project, my overarching intention is not to explore the reception of their theories by Mexican academics, but to better understand how *artivism* might be identified with a rhizomatic effect and to thereby justify the employment of the category when analysing the Mexican case.

Similarly, while recognising the valuable contribution of experts in Chicano studies, I propose to explore the notion of a rhizomatic effect promoted by Mexican feminist *artivism* rather than entering into a more detailed discussion of how *artivism* has been analysed in the Chicano cultural context. I conceive of feminist *artivism* as a form of social work that privileges a sociological over an aesthetic objective. Given the characteristics of the works that I analyse here, I posit that, when working on issues of gender violence, the projects have either a

⁸⁶ Irina Vaskes Santches, ‘The Aesthetic Axiomatic: Schizoanalysis and Rhizome’, *Praxis Filosófica*, 27 (2008), 246–67 (p. 257).

pedagogical objective, promote awareness, serve to denounce injustice or mobilise a dynamic of entertaining engagement which might result in catharsis. By affirming that the works have clear objectives, I do not contradict the idea of the rhizomatic effect, because, although the projects have goals, as I will demonstrate throughout the thesis, they are not accompanied by the imposition of a feminist agenda or the obligation to agree with the artists. On the contrary, the works analysed here encourage the ‘public’ to take ownership of their *artist* projects and transform them into another action, even if this implies their destruction. Moreover, if the work is designed, for instance, to denounce gender violence, it is not intended to be limited to this denunciation since the women who participate can identify what type of violence they suffer and why it is important to denounce it. In other words, they act on this information and thereby foment other nodes. The same happens when, for example, one of the projects aspires to report on femicide; as I will demonstrate, the last thing that is sought is that women are widely informed about a crime that could happen to them. Instead, ideally, they will know how to identify feminicidal behaviours and how to clearly demand protection or specific measures from the State. In the end it depends on the context and the situation that each participant is experiencing. It is not a case of imitating the artists; it has to do with the audience doing something different that confronts violence against women as well leading to a decalomania since they do not simply reproduce the artwork or project.

While, as I noted above, the notion of a rhizomatic effect derives from Chicano studies on *artivism*, it is equally germane to the (trans)feminist project maintained by the artists I study here, not least of all because such an effect reflects the conceptualisation of gender held by Mexican feminist *artists*. More specifically, all the artists studied here follow Judith Butler’s theorizations of gender in terms of performative identities. That said, far from trying to further develop the prolific commentary on the theoretical work of Butler as well as of Guattari and Deleuze in philosophy, psychology and other social sciences,⁸⁷ I restrict my engagement with their theorizations to a consideration of their impact on gender and violence studies in Mexico. At the same time, my commitment to understanding violence against women is predicated upon my reading of Marcela Lagarde’s work, especially because her own theorizations have been translated into effective legal actions and mechanisms to counteract such violence. Furthermore, as far as a definition of feminism is concerned, Sayak Valencia’s

⁸⁷ The following publication highlights the influence of Deleuze in Latin America: *Deleuze: Recepción y Apuesta Desde Hispanoamérica*, ed. by Patricia Castillo Becerra and Josemaría Moreno González (Guanajuato: Universidad de Guanajuato, 2018). More specifically about Mexico, Josemaría Moreno González’ essay explores the political advantages of suggesting a rhizomatic structure for Mexican democracy (pp. 99-116).

conceptualisation strikes me as the most appropriate, not only because Valencia has worked closely with the artists analysed here, but because her transfeminist proposal provides clarity on what and why feminist activism promotes a rhizomatic effect.

If feminist activism is a manifestation of transfeminism then, it will promote a non-essentialised notion of gender as a performed identity. Valencia defines transfeminism as:

una red que considera los estados de tránsito de género, de migración, de mestizaje, de vulnerabilidad, de raza y de clase, para articularlos como herederos de la memoria histórica de los movimientos sociales de insurrección. Esto, con el fin de abrir espacios y campos discursivos a todas aquellas prácticas y sujetos de la contemporaneidad y de los devenires minoritarios.⁸⁸

Each of these assumes that there are different ways to perform gender and, therefore, there is no single experience of gender. Furthermore, although Valencia is clearly stating a notion of gender performativity, the idea was already present in Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of the rhizome when they note that: 'the rhizome, on the other hand, is a liberation of sexuality not only from reproduction but also from genitality.'⁸⁹ Hence, if I observe a rhizomatic effect in the practice of feminist *activism*, this presupposes the promotion of a deconstruction of the patriarchal heteronormative order and the assertion of an individual, non-essentialised gender identity. Bearing this premise in mind throughout the thesis, I contend that gender is a state of becoming rather than an essentialised category derived from an imposed binary logic, and that, by extension, sexist violence cannot therefore be regarded as a natural behaviour inscribed in male biology. In this sense, I will observe how Mexican feminist *activism* is committed to promoting a notion that rejects biologism and allows a community 'evolution' that recognises that there are not only two genders in which one is dominant, and the other is dominated.

Crucially, there are therefore many overt similarities between the transfeminist subject of Mexican feminist activism and Anzaldúa's Chicano/a identity since Valencia herself draws this very analogy in her study of 'gore capitalism'.⁹⁰ Hence, it makes complete sense to analyse the projects I have selected in this thesis as illustrations of Mexican transfeminist activism, and also because, as transdisciplinary projects inhabiting both the social sciences and art, they promote a heterogeneous, multiple and asignifying reaction. As I will highlight, they encourage

⁸⁸ Sayak Valencia, 'El Transfeminismo No Es Un Generismo', *Pléyade*, 22 (2018), 27–43 <<https://doi.org/10.4067/S0719-36962018000200027>>.

⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 18.

⁹⁰ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 178.

each of the participants to experience the works differently and to even create their own works, even if this implies that the original authorship is displaced (as is the case in Mayer's works which have been reinstalled without her presence or without even mentioning her name). In fact, I will argue that these projects are enriched by the multiple and diverse participation of those present. The asignifying rupture⁹¹ that a rhizome provokes, or, as I argue, that these projects provoke, presupposes that there is no semantic imposition; hence there is no single way to look, receive or partake in these projects. Each participant's reaction conveys a semantic breakthrough leading to new insights which, in their turn, extend the projection of the *artist* project. This also assumes that I do not recognise transfeminist *artivism* as the original node, but as a node of transfeminism and, as such, one that generates new nodes. Finally, these projects can thus be regarded as rituals in which the work does not come to an end but continues to be projected outwards; and yet, far from suggesting that the projects are thereby being reproduced, they are actually generating new action nodes.

On the other hand, postulating that *artivism* has a rhizomatic effect implies tracing all the connected nodes to a given *artist* proposal, which would obviously be an enormous task; for example, identifying Baca's mural *Great Wall of Los Angeles* with a rhizomatic effect supposes a never-ending process of analysis of a multiplicity and potentially infinite series of nodes. Initially, there is the node of Muralism which would lead to a discussion of the Mexican Revolution and the national identity project. Then, the node linked to feminism and, since Baca belongs to the Chicana community, to the node concerned with minority movements. Furthermore, several heterogeneous nodes are connected to each ethnicity that was represented in the mural. However, Mieke Bal suggests that the concept of focalisation might be a useful frame for limiting the possible multiplicity of connected nodes.⁹² Predicated upon Deleuze and Guattari's epistemology, Bal's own theorisation of 'travelling concepts' refers to the idea that concepts in the humanities are not fixed, but travel between disciplines, scholars, history, and communities. As a result of this travelling, concepts are defined and created, but, importantly,

⁹¹ Some art students in Mexico have focused on the idea of the asignifying rupture to analyse contemporary art. To name a few, Fabián Giménez Gatto explores art and post-pornography with the notion of a semantic breakthrough. Fabián Giménez Gatto, *Pospornografías* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2015). Mario Bracamonte Ocaña explores the semantic diaspora encouraged by video art. The idea is that contemporary art allows the audience to project from the artwork instead of being forced to a hierarchical link. Mario Alberto Bracamonte Ocaña, 'Estructuras Narrativas Del Videoarte. El Bulbo Como Estructura Técnica y El Rizoma Como Semántica Del Videoarte', *El Ornitórrinco Tachado. Revista de Artes Visuales*, 11, 2020, 23–32.

⁹² Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). The book was partially translated to Spanish in Mexico by the UAM (Universidad Autónoma de México) to promote Bal's theory even before it was printed in Spanish.

can also be modified.⁹³ The rhizome itself is a travelling concept in the sense that it originated in biology but has been adapted to the humanities and the social sciences. Similarly, *focalisation* is another travelling concept which was transferred from the visual domain to narratology and back to the analysis of visual arts. Bal herself defines it simply as: ‘the relation between the subject and object of perception’.⁹⁴ Unlike the concept of perspective, Bal regards focalisation as an operative concept; hence, it is not limited by the gaze of a subject but depends on a movement, which is constituted by the different looks an artwork receives through the time-bound and the cultural frame.⁹⁵ In *artivism*, this is fundamental, as spectators are conceived as active participants, and assuming that *artivism* has a rhizomatic effect, then the different reactions of all the participants are simultaneously integral parts of the project. However, narrowing the analysis of the rhizomatic effect using the notion of focalisation implies that it would be enough, for example, to take into account which social problem was being highlighted by the artist and how the artist approached the problem. At the same time, it also implies that it is possible to discuss the reaction of a concrete group of interest and how, for instance, certain women reacted to a given activist project and under what specific circumstances.

An art critic who has been working closely with feminist artists is Cuban-Mexican anthropologist Ileana Diéguez. On the one hand, Diéguez analyses contemporary art from a theatrical perspective as the staging of a crisis which is happening in front of the spectator who is conceived of as an outsider even though the actors are aware of his or her presence. She also uses the concept of ‘liminality’ to identify art projects that do not fit into any of the more traditional art concepts. Moreover, as a reader of Deleuze and Guattari, Diéguez links the quality of liminality to the rhizomatic characteristic of art practices emerging from the margins which cannot be easily accommodated within any one category associated with current art practices.

At the same time, Diéguez’s conceptualisation of liminality is derived from the characteristics attributed to this state or condition by anthropologist Victor Turner in the 1960s. Having observed and participated in tribal rituals in Central Africa, Turner formulated a definition of ‘liminal space’ by highlighting the liminal aspects of transitional rites of passage which appeared inside and outside the structure of each rite simultaneously.⁹⁶ Turner attributed

⁹³ Bal, p. 24.

⁹⁴ Bal, p. 41.

⁹⁵ Bal, p. 39.

⁹⁶ Turner, pp. 101–2..

the liminal to rites of passage characterised by three distinct phases: separation, margin (threshold) and aggregation. The liminal is an intermediate period in which these distinct phases are ambiguous.⁹⁷ These rites offer a moment outside of time, as well as co-existing outside and within the secular social structure. The liminal rituals result on the *communitas* which only arise where there is no social structure.⁹⁸ However, there are two significant differences between Diéguez' theorization of the liminal and Turner's. Unlike Turner, who was an outsider observing the Central African traditions in his capacity as an ethnographer in the social sciences, Diéguez was most certainly an 'insider' as regards the feminist artistic community, participating in projects and contributing to the artists' work. In fact, for Diéguez, artists are not 'outsiders' precisely because art itself constitutes a liminal (threshold) rite constructed by a community pushing towards a transition. The second significant difference is that Diéguez theorization is not a finished one. She keeps developing the notion of the liminal as artists keep pushing the aesthetic boundaries. Hence, I will keep the elements Diéguez keeps of Turner; however, I will not explore Turner's social science contribution per se.

When taking into account everything Diéguez has written, it is possible to identify an initial definition of liminality which can be considered a final conceptualisation derived from a range of previous definitions that Diéguez has explored over the years. Ultimately, then, she regards liminal artistic proposals as those constructing a political discourse which is articulated from the relations with 'la vida, con el entorno, con los otros, con la memoria.'⁹⁹ It is not a matter of formulating a political discourse as such, but of shaping a collective memory in which testimonies are a fundamental part of presenting reality. Artistic elements are used as aesthetic devices that amplify the communicative and presentative qualities of these collective memories.¹⁰⁰ However, given the nature of the content of these works, reality is *presented*, not represented. They are not, and cannot be, contemplative works since building them collectively (even beyond the artwork itself) is predicated on social interaction. For instance, a seminal illustration of a liminal art practice given by Diéguez are the public protests for the disappeared by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina;¹⁰¹ therefore, it is possible to affirm that these are practices that combine aesthetic, scenic and artisanal techniques to generate an

⁹⁷ Turner, p. 101.

⁹⁸ Turner, p. 132.

⁹⁹ Ileana Diéguez, 'Escenarios y teatralidades liminales. Prácticas artísticas y socioestéticas', *Archivo Artea*, 1, 2009, p. 1 <<http://archivoartea.uclm.es/textos/escenarios-y-teatralidades-liminales-practicas-artisticas-y-socioesteticas/>>.

¹⁰⁰ Diéguez, 'Escenarios y teatralidades liminales. Prácticas artísticas y socioestéticas', p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Ileana Diéguez, 'De malestares teatrales y vacíos representacionales: el teatro trascendido', in *Utopías de la proximidad en el contexto de la globalización: la creación teatral en Iberoamérica*, ed. by Oscar Cornago Bernal (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2010), pp. 241–62 (p. 253).

estrangement from the construction of political discourse and, therefore, end up deconstructing it. For this reason, the dichotomy between artist and audience disappears, more because together ‘artistas/ciudadanos desarrollan estrategias artísticas para intervenir en la esfera pública’¹⁰²; that is, it is not only the artist planning and acting from what he/she/they perceives. That is exactly why the *communitas* is possible as there is no structure; however, it must be a spontaneous interaction.

It makes sense that as an anthropologist, Diéguez found a structure that allowed her to comprehend and explain new forms of art in Turner’s analysis. In Latin America, Turner is studied in what has been conceived as cultural or comprehensive social sciences; unlike functionalist approaches, these constitute attempts to understand the social sense of certain actions in relation to a complex cultural system.¹⁰³ Hence, when confronted by art proposals in which a sociological project, an activist action and a form of art are all imbricated, cultural social sciences provide a methodology and epistemology that might bring clarity to the analysis of the proposals. It is in that sense that Diéguez can be regarded as seeking out the same elements of liminality originally proposed by Turner. Even if I am interested in Diéguez’ conceptualisation of the liminal and not Turner’s, since she keeps the original qualities, I also keep them in this analysis. The first element listed by Turner is the purifying and pedagogical function to promote a change that ‘cures’ or restores society. The second quality is the experience of a reversal of practices whereby the dominant sectors of society must feel how the subordinated feels, making possible an empathetic reaction. The third element is the necessary linking of two worlds (public and private, social classes, reality and virtuality). The fourth and final quality is the creation of *communitas*, meaning a non-hierarchical open society.¹⁰⁴ Diéguez, like Turner, uses the term in Latin to refer to the exercise whereby the social hierarchy is inverted and not only as a secular social gathering occurring in the thresholds of sacred gatherings. Regarding feminist *artivism*, these may be present at a museum, gallery or outside any institution. For feminist *artists*, as for the tribes studied by Turner, liminality

¹⁰² Diéguez, *Escenarios Liminales*, p. 41.

¹⁰³ This social science ‘academy’ borrows a lot from Max Weber notion of social phenomenology and G.H. Mead social interactionism. They rejected the idea that society is a closed system (with feeding outputs) and instead underscored the individuals’ creativity or originality. Liliana Martínez Pérez traces the influence of this academy in the Mexican discussion. Liliana Martínez Pérez, ‘Renovar La Sociología Cultural Desde Las Teorizaciones Dde La Historia Conceptual y La Estética de La Recepción’, in *Debatir La Sociología*, ed. by Ligia Tavera Fenollosa and Nelson Artega Botello, Debate Renovado e Innovador de Las Ciencias Sociales (Mexico City: Flacso), pp. 57–70.

¹⁰⁴ Diéguez, ‘Escenarios y teatralidades liminales. Prácticas artísticas y socioestéticas’, p. 242.

was a condition forced upon them by their socio-historical context and that, by now, are enforced by the activists.¹⁰⁵

Diéguez defines liminal artistic practices as those that:

cuestionan la categoría de "obras", trascendiendo la dimensión contemplativa y proponiendo modos más participativos, configurándose también como prácticas esencialmente políticas en las que se involucran ciudadanos y creadores que utilizan los recursos artísticos para la elaboración de nuevos discursos en la protesta pública, sin buscar legitimarlas como producciones estéticas.¹⁰⁶

In this quote, she explains which artworks are liminal, while underscoring the participation of the audience as essential role players in the creative process. Opting to keep the words ‘ciudadanos’ and ‘creadores’ in the plural serves to contribute to the idea of the rhizome as each individual reaction contributes to the formation of new nodes. Moreover, the key element in this definition that relates specifically to *artivism*, is ‘utilizan los recursos artísticos’ in allusion to their use in protest speeches with little or no aesthetic concerns. To achieve a *communitas* implies that there is a horizontal organisation behind the artworks; this means that the artists are accepted and involved with the community they are working with. Only people in the thresholds of the system can achieve this as it means being outside the system’s regulation. In that sense, from a feminist perspective, I observe how women are outsiders of the system; even if they are invited to participate, as I will argue, the patriarchal social structure regards them as subalterns, not equals.

In conceiving of political art, Diéguez also abides by Rancière’s assertion that ‘suitable political art would ensure, at one and the same time, the production of a double effect: the readability of a political signification and a sensible or perceptual shock’.¹⁰⁷ This implies that the aesthetic is separated from its political message and that its social and political meaning defines the form. For my purposes in this thesis, another definition of political art worth exploring is that provided by Cuban artist Tania Bruguera. There are two main reasons why Bruguera’s definition is especially germane: in the first place, because it was evoked by Cerrucha, another one of the artists here analysed¹⁰⁸ and also because Bruguera used the term

¹⁰⁵ Turner, p. 103. Turner, p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ Diéguez, ‘De malestares teatrales y vacíos representacionales: el teatro trascendido’, p. 252.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* (Chennai: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 59.

¹⁰⁸ Cerrucha, Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer., 2020
<<https://www.instagram.com/p/CDfQurzF6O1/>> [accessed 5 August 2020].

‘political art’ to refer to her practice prior to using the term *artivism*. In her *Declaración de arte político* (2010), Bruguera explains that political art is that which extends beyond its exhibition and is more concerned with its social consequences than with the aesthetic outcome.¹⁰⁹ However, we can only hypothesise as to why Bruguera began using *artivism* instead of ‘political art’. Although she would be the only one able to actually confirm her reasons, there is a clue in her declaration that appears to elucidate her decision: ‘el arte es algo que debe considerarse disponible, un medio para otras cosas’. Clearly, she is not satisfied with her art having political contents and being exhibited in a museum or gallery; she wants her art to be used in political and social acts. Nevertheless, the definition of *artivism* is not contrary to those of political art and it seems more precise to say that *artivism* belongs to political art. However, I would argue that *artivism* is a form of political art which is ‘activated’ when part of an activist action; only then can it be said to have fulfilled its ‘political objective’ and not if the artwork remains inside a cultural institution.

Diéguez is not the only or first critic to regard contemporary art practices as liminal, nor am I claiming that her approach to liminal art is the most accomplished. However, the fact that she works with the artists I am analysing here would suggest that her approach would be the most germane to this thesis. Without aiming to completely appropriate Diéguez’s conceptualization, I will explore the extent to which these projects can in fact be considered liminal and if liminality might thus be viewed as a recurrent characteristic of (trans)feminist artivism. In that sense, I agree with Diéguez that the liminality of these projects is made manifest when they are regarded as a public ritual that marks a before and after of their initial exposure exhibition; I am also aware of how these are conceived in ‘los intersticios y márgenes de las estructuras sociales’¹¹⁰ and when she notices how it is impossible to classify the projects as either visual, plastic or performative arts. Even so, I also recognise that it is not enough to simply characterise these projects as liminal without a clear sociological or anthropological methodology; hence, my intention is to identify all the elements listed by Turner and to adopt a methodology derived from sociological research in my own analysis.

Furthermore, with the addition of the rhizomatic effect to the liminal, I propose that the artwork as temporal ritual does not reach an identifiable conclusion since, by generating a transition, these works trigger a reaction that gives continuity to the project through the independent actions of each participant. Yet, it is not that they replicate the work to infinity but

¹⁰⁹ Bruguera.

¹¹⁰ Diéguez, *Escenarios Liminales*, p. 144.

that they generate non-imitative cartography. In other words, those who are involved in *activist* projects will not be able to return to the state they inhabited before their participation and, at the same time, will be motivated to carry out actions that confront a specific type of gender violence. In this sense, a thorough analysis of the rhizomatic effect of feminist *activism* would mean a long-term observation in which all the projects, whether artistic or otherwise, that could have been derived from the original artwork are identified. It is likely that Mónica Mayer, Lorena Wolffer or Cerrucha are aware of these effects in Disidenta as they organise art laboratories which are non-hierarchical workshops where they follow up on social and art projects with a feminist purpose.¹¹¹

Finally, due to its Chicano and Mexican origins and the dialogue amongst Mexican and American feminist artists,¹¹² activist practices have enjoyed a development that parallels that of their Chicana and American feminist counterparts. Even so, it is important to note that not all of the academics, artists or art critiques exploring new forms of political art refer to it as *activism*. An emblematic example is Suzanne Lacy, one of the first feminists to take her art out of museums and galleries, who, in 1996, noted that there had been a change in public art. As editor of the essays published in the collection *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art* Lacy included many of the same artists read in Mayer's workshops.¹¹³ In the introduction Lacy explained that there was a need to find the correct public, urging the feminist message transmitted through her art.¹¹⁴ Mexican artist, Monica Mayer's initiative of working outside museums had actually started before she went to Los Angeles; however, in Los Angeles, her work changed after learning about Lacy's practices. Lippard,¹¹⁵ Raven¹¹⁶ and Baca¹¹⁷ defined the new public art as an activist action that is genuinely committed to the community; in some cases, it has a practical function, such as offering to the community a public orchard. Moreover, the performer Guillermo Gómez-Peña explained that, while artists were really influential in the

¹¹¹ However, since Disidenta was only created as recently as last year, it would probably be better to give the group more time to accumulate the necessary evidence for gauging the impact of these projects.

¹¹² According to Mayer, the relation with Chicana artists has been different. The Chicanas sought their Mexican origins and exalted what they considered 'Mexicanness', meanwhile, Mexican activists attacked those same elements of 'Mexicanness' as they found the origins of patriarchy in them. This was explained by Mayer in the course she gave for the Museo Jumex. Monica Mayer, *Workshop: Intimidades o no...*, online video streaming, Zoom <link not available> [accessed 10 September 2020].

¹¹³ Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art*.

¹¹⁴ Suzanne Lacy, 'Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys', in *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art*, ed. by Suzanne Lacy, Second Edition (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), pp. 19–47.

¹¹⁵ Lucy R. Lippard, 'Looking Around Where We Are, Where We Could Be', in *Mapping the Terrain, New Genre Public Art*, ed. by Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), pp. 114–30.

¹¹⁶ Arlene Raven, 'Word of Honor', in *Mapping the Terrain, New Genre Public Art*, ed. by Suzanne Lacy, Second Edition (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), pp. 159–70.

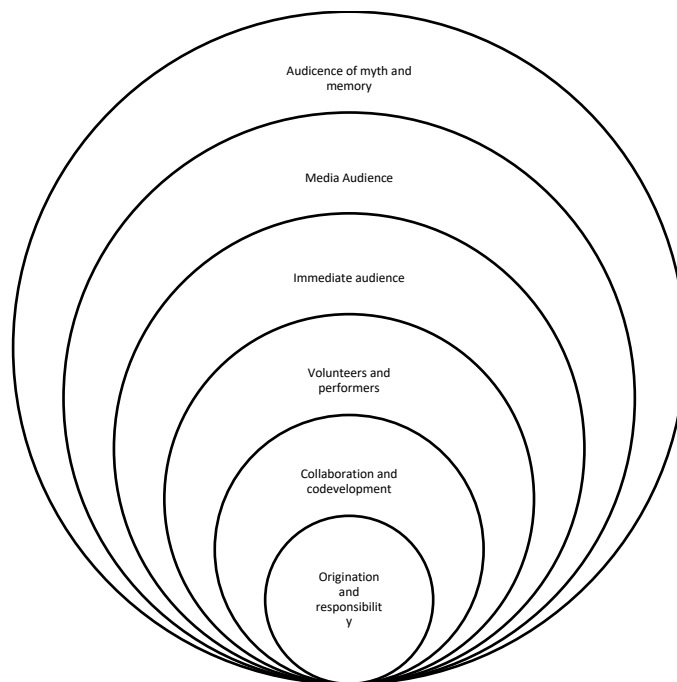
¹¹⁷ Baca and Lacy.

US in the 1970s, the impact of their artistic practice was interrupted during the 1980s by the conservative administrations. Therefore, it would only be during the 1990s that they were able to analyse Latin American *artivism* to learn the social and political evolution that this form of art had undergone.¹¹⁸ Although none of these artists referred to what they do as *artivism*, Lacy outlined the schematic patterns that confirmed the similarities between the new public art and *artivism*:

Figure 1. Suzanne Lacy's Scheme for New Public Art, (p. 173)



Figure 2. Nonhierarchical degrees of public responsibility, (p. 178)



The first figure traces the path an artist must follow to create the new genre of public art, which Lacy addressed as activism; therefore, the link between the neologism and what artists promoted as significant public art is axiomatic. The last level pertaining to the activists themselves is characterised by more social responsibility towards the community and the

¹¹⁸ Guillermo Gómez-Peña, 'From Art-Mageddon to Gringostroika: A Manigesto against Censorship', in *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art*, ed. by Suzanne Lacy (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1995), pp. 94–111.

obligation to keep track of the people they work with; nevertheless, Lacy explains that this depends on funding.¹¹⁹ The second figure illustrates the artwork's effect on the public involved and the intensification of that same effect thanks to the media and subsequent archives. The scheme may grow even more, thus supporting the idea of a rhizomatic effect; although, the concentric structure might not be the most suitable one to represent a rhizome. However, what is fundamental in the figure is that the core of the new public art is origination and responsibility. If feminist artists are to create *artivism* or new genre public art, it must come from a deep commitment and communitarian involvement. Lacy explains how this type of artist has a sociological role even though no artists have managed to measure their work's effects simply because of its exponential nature. Following the second scheme, my contention is that public art must transmit a significant meaning for the community that receives it; furthermore, it should not be an imposition, but built by and for the participants.

In the briefest terms, an *artist* is an artist that provides artistic tools for an activist action. It cannot be any activist cause; the artist must be deeply committed and involved with the cause and the advocating community. The *artist* action, a form of political art, should exist beyond its initial exhibition depending on how the participants use it or respond to it. Since, by default, the artists cannot impose an agenda, the consequences of the project would be assumed by every individual involved, thus suggesting a rhizomatic effect. The medium, material, and place are determined by the artist(ivist) according to the need he/she/they identify and the socio-political goals that he/she/they considers relevant; hence, the message or social content cannot be extracted from the artwork. Moreover, since it is a form of social work promoting a change (it can be a change of the social, cultural, political or economic conditions), it might be regarded as liminal as long as it results in a *communitas*; a non-hierarchical organisation of people working together towards a common goal. Due to these last two characteristics, it would be appropriate to undertake a sociological or anthropological research methodology that measures the impact of the *artist* projects. Usually, this has not been the case for the Mexican artists due to budget constraints; however, some of these actions have included the participation of social scientists (Diéguez, for example) to evaluate and analyse the project. That said, it would be impossible to provide a sociological diagnosis of the first feminist art (in my opinion, *artist*) projects as they were organised 38 years ago, the documentation techniques were more limited, and the social and legal conditions have changed

¹¹⁹ Suzanne Lacy, 'Debated Territory: Toward a Critical Language for Public Art', in *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art*, ed. by Suzanne Lacy (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1995), pp. 171–85.

drastically since then. Instead, I intend to identify the practices, strategies and intentions that have been inherited from the first generation of feminist artists to the latest from a sociological perspective. On the other hand, since violence against women was the first topic addressed by feminist artists, and it is commonly readdressed in recent activist projects, the analysis of violence against women will be present throughout this thesis.

As regards the artists and activist projects here, there are two conceptualisations of violence against women which are worth exploring, as I stated previously. Regarding violence against women, Marcela Lagarde coined the term *feminicidio*.¹²⁰ Her thesis, *Los cautiverios de las mujeres: madresposas, monjas, putas, presas y locas* (1990), which was contemporaneous with Bustamante and Mayer's work, and for which she was awarded the Premio Mauss for the best PhD thesis in the humanities in 1989, explored every cultural construction that subordinates women in Mexico through the metaphor of five captivities: the wife-mother, the nun, the whore,¹²¹ the prisoner and the insane. She named these constructions as captivities [*cautiverios*] and defined them as: 'la expresión político-cultural de la condición de la mujer'¹²² claiming that women are captive because 'han sido privadas de autonomía, de independencia para vivir, del gobierno sobre sí mismas, de la posibilidad de escoger y de la capacidad de decidir'.¹²³ In her thesis and her conferences, she has called for peaceful feminist strategies to free women from their captivities; yet, she has never proposed feminist *artivism* or art as a peaceful strategy.¹²⁴ The reason she has not done so is most likely the result of the situation described by the artists Carlos Arias, Maris Bustamante, Mónica Mayer and Lorena Wolffer: that there has been no articulation between feminists in academia and feminists in the arts.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, to claim that *artivism* displays a rhizomatic effect still presupposes that it enables a cultural rupture that frees the flow of the desire and, in that sense, that it produces similar effects to feminism, as theorized by Lagarde.

¹²⁰ Xenero, 'CV de Marcela Lagarde', 2020 <Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos - Información. Estudios de ...xenero.webs.uvigo.es › marcela_lagarde › cv_marcela> [accessed 06 October 2020].

¹²¹ Lagarde uses the word *puta* [whore] throughout her book. It seems likely that, using the discriminative term, instead of sex worker, was to strengthen the idea of women being captive; even without a husband who 'owns' them.

¹²² Her thesis was subsequently published as a book. Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 79.

¹²³ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 208..

¹²⁴ She mentioned this recently in two of her conferences. *Marcela Lagarde, Horizontes y Caminos Del Feminismo En Las Universidades* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2020) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ET-O3Tm3svo>> [accessed 13 August 2020]. *Marcela Lagarde: Violencia En Tiempos de COVID* (Mexico, 2020) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGsIcIaYTDY&feature=youtu.be>> [accessed 30 September 2020].

¹²⁵ This discussion was held with Marta Lamas, another feminist scholar, and published in the feminist journal *Debate Feminista*. Arias and others.

Without proposing any clear strategies, Lagarde claims that the feminism that may disarticulate patriarchy has been considered as a manifestation of delirium: ‘El delirio feminista significa la construcción del mundo en un espacio en que la vida ya no es genérica, ni clasista, ni racista, ni se funda en la opresión de los diferentes, ni existen poderes como dominio del otro, ni está basada en la especialización compulsiva que excluye y limita’.¹²⁶ Following Deleuze and Guattari, feminism is hence seen as a form of insanity because it acts as a rhizome that questions capitalism, patriarchy and any other socio-political structure that may limit the flow of the desire of women, again, as a political category. Feminist discourse ‘grows’ as a rhizome with multiple outcomes that free women’s flow of desire. For that reason, it may also reveal previously unseen links between Lagarde’s captivities and the Mexican feminist *artivism* as a peaceful strategy with rhizomatic effects that confront violence against women. If it was possible to trace the rhizomatic cartography of feminist academia and feminist art(ivism), there would be vast numbers of nodes to trace, as both are striving to respond to the same reality.

On the other hand, I will also resort to the Mexican philosopher Sayak Valencia’s analysis on gender-based violence. The key concept with which Valencia is associated, that of *gore capitalism*, links the artists, Lagarde’s work, Chicana Studies, Deleuze and Guattari’s project and Butler’s understanding of gender.¹²⁷ Underscoring the fact that the neoliberal system generates violence, *gore capitalism* represents a contemporary revision of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical critique of capitalism. Valencia observed that in the neoliberal phase of capitalism, the economic and social system has undergone significant transformations to the extent that an unfair dynamic of extractivism in the Global South now requires extreme forms of violence to achieve its exploitative goals. In countries like Mexico and Colombia, this violence is reinforced by traditional binary gender constructions that imbricate masculinity with violent behaviour. Hence, according to Valencia, the solution in these countries is a transfeminist project that would undermine the binary logic of gender relations. Yet, given that Valencia’s philosophical project was initiated in the new millennium, the identification of an analogous transfeminist proposal in the feminist art of the 1980s, may suggest an anachronistic projection. At the same time, it is still important to observe that Valencia views transfeminism as a project that might lead to free the flow of desire.

¹²⁶ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 882.

¹²⁷ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*.

Bearing this premise in mind, I will now turn my attention to the first Mexican feminist artistic projects. The year 1975 was declared the Year of Women by Mexico's former president Luis Echeverría; similarly, Mexico held the First World Conference on Women organised by the United Nations, which included three art exhibitions.¹²⁸ In her doctoral thesis, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México: una perspectiva de género* (2008), one of the first scholars to deal with feminist art in Mexico, Araceli Barbosa,¹²⁹ described the reactions to the exhibitions that took place that year. She focused primarily on what the artists said about the exhibition held at the Museo de Arte Moderno, *La mujer como creadora y tema del arte* [*Women as Creator and Art Topic*], which included artists such as Frida Kahlo, María Izquierdo, Lilia Carrillo and Hellen Escobedo. According to Barbosa, the exhibition's contrived recognition of women as artists and the idea of placing their creation amongst popular men's artworks while perpetuating the notion of women as muses from the perspective of the male gaze could only serve to undermine the apparently feminist intention of the exhibition. The criticism intensified when the museum director at that time, Fernando Gamboa, declared that women had developed a late sensibility for the arts.¹³⁰ Meanwhile, Mónica Mayer herself noticed that the organisers of the exhibitions were not concerned with promoting women but with offering a good spectacle for the visitors to the World Conference and, for that reason, the majority of the artists were men. In contrast, just as women appeared mostly as muses, there was no methodical research on their own works or inclusion of them as artists.¹³¹ Hence, women artists continue to experience exclusion, discrimination, and lack of support from cultural institutions and the government which are some of the conditions that drove feminist artists to work on liminal projects.

At the time, the interests of women artists were not the result of a single action or merely a consequence of their discontent for this lack of recognition. Moreover, before they formally considered themselves as feminist artists, they were already active in different feminist

¹²⁸ According to Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda, one of the leading feminist art historians, both massacres modified entirely the people's perception about the power of the State that may be used against them: 'The attacks against students revealed the amount of violence that the ruling party, Partido de la Revolución Institucional (PRI), was willing to unleash in order to preserve the status quo'. The first massacre took place on 2 October 1968 in Tlatelolco, while Díaz Ordaz was president, but it was commanded by Echeverría. The second one happened on 10 June 1972. Both were trying to stop the student protests. Aceves Sepúlveda, p. 65. This needs to be linked to the body text more obviously

¹²⁹ Her thesis was published as a book in 2008 by the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos. Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*.

¹³⁰ Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, p. 33.

¹³¹ Mónica Mayer, 'Un Breve Testimonio Sobre Los Ires y Venires Del Arte Feminista En México Durante La Última Década Del Siglo XX y La Primera Del XXI', *Debate Feminista*, 40 (2009), 191–219 (p. 192).

groups.¹³² In the late 1970s, it was common for artists to try to confront the cultural institutions organised in such artistic groups to the extent that the artists from the 1960s and 1970s who were not working with the Muralists are called *La generación de los grupos* [The Group Generation]. Following this logic, Víctor Lerma, Rosalba Huerta, Lucila Santiago, Luis Vidal, Tomás Caldera and Mónica Mayer created the group *Artistas Neuróticos Anónimos* [Neurotic Anonymous Artists]. In 1977, the group applied to exhibit at the Casa Lago, but after all the male artists were rejected, Mayer, Santiago and Huerta took the opportunity to present feminist artworks.¹³³ The result was *Collage Íntimo* [Intimate Collage] which was primarily focused on the construction of female sexuality and, hence, despite being purely accidental, is now considered to be the first collective feminist exhibition.¹³⁴ Considering how few opportunities women had to exhibit their work at the time and even less for feminist art, clearly, they took advantage of any such opportunity to promote and divulge their agenda. However, the public's reaction to *Collage Íntimo* was adverse and aggressive: the paintings at the exhibition were destroyed or placed upside down.¹³⁵ The negative reaction, lack of support and visibility justified the decision of these artists to conceive of their artworks as political and militant tools. In this respect, the influence of feminist artists from the USA was also fundamental. For example, emblematic texts by Judy Chicago, Arlene Raven, Lucy Lippard and Charlotte Moser were published in a 1976 special issue of the Museum of Modern Art's magazine, *Visual Arts*, dedicated to women in the arts; in their articles, they presented the Women's Building at the California Institute of the Arts in Los Angeles, the first postgraduate degree in America dedicated to the study of gender, feminism and art.¹³⁶ Although the texts in English were not translated, some feminist access their contents. Significantly, it was through her exposure to this publication that Mayer learned about the programme and decided to study her master's at the Woman's Building.¹³⁷

When Mónica Mayer returned to Mexico, she taught the first feminist art workshops and coordinated a constant dialogue with feminists in the US; both actions promoted the

¹³² Many of them were part of the *Coalición de Mujeres Feministas*. Rosa, pp. 133–34.

¹³³ Mayer, *Intimidaciones...o No. Arte, Vida y Feminismo*.

¹³⁵ Lorena Zamora Betancourt, *El Imaginario Femenino En El Arte, Mónica Mayer, Rowena Morales y Carla Rippey* (Mexico City: INBA, 2014), pp. 36–37.

¹³⁶ Many of the articles would be considered essentialist today as they tried to answer to the question: is there a feminine essence that improves or modifies art? Or, is gender equality necessary for female or feminist art? Ironically, at the end, where they listed the monthly art events, the majority of events promoted are about or for men artists. Museo de Arte moderno.

¹³⁷ Mayer, 'Un Breve Testimonio Sobre Los Ires y Venires Del Arte Feminista En México Durante La Última Década Del Siglo XX y La Primera Del XXI', p. 192.

existence of Mexican feminist artists. Thanks to Mónica Mayer, for most Mexican feminist artists, the relationship with the USA has not been a form of hegemonic imposition, but a permanent dialogue. Similarly, her master's thesis was entitled 'Feminist Art: An Effective Tool' and it included an international dialogue between artists from North America.¹³⁸ In Mayer's workshops in Mexico, women joined and created the first feminist groups dedicated to creating art that had the objective of modifying Mexican women's reality; from the beginning, their main concern was modifying women's lives. Meanwhile, accomplishing the artistic demands became secondary or not at all relevant. Although Mayer did not motivate the feminist restlessness or the refusal to conform with machismo in cultural institutions as that existed before Mayer's workshops, she did promote feminist artistic 'language'. In Mayer's workshops, they read texts by Judy Chicago, Lucy Lippard, Linda Nochlin, Suzanne Lacy, Arlene Raven, Charlotte Moser and Germaine Greer.¹³⁹ This dialogical relationship between Mexican artists and artists from the US is clear in the catalogue accompanying Mayer's retrospective exhibition, *Si tiene dudas...pregunte* (2016). The book unites feminist critics from Latin America (Karen Cordero, Sol Henaro, Andrea Giunta) with foreign ones (Griselda Pollock, Erin L. McCutcheon, Amelia Jones) discussing Mexican feminist art history.¹⁴⁰ That said, it is also important to note the problem pointed out by Amelia Jones about Mexican art: the study of Mexican feminist art is complex as archives, catalogues and theory around them are usually individual and sporadic efforts with little or no institutional or economic support.¹⁴¹

Mexican feminist artists adopted this new form of public art and the motto: 'what is personal is political', intending to show that women's issues are social as well.¹⁴² This motto is also present in Lagarde's theory when she explains that the division of genders based on public-political/masculine and private/feminine is one of the ideas supporting women's captivity.¹⁴³ Regarding the context in which the artists worked in 1983, In 2012, the Mexican Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura published a recent research on feminist artwork from the 1980s in which the author, Lorena Zamora Betancourt, explored the artworks from a genealogical perspective. Zamora studied art by Mónica Mayer, Rowena Morales and Carla

¹³⁸ From the United States she invited: Jo Goodwin, Denise Yarlitz, Florence Rosen. From Mexico: Monica Mayer, Ana Victoria Jiménez, Monica Kubli, Esther Zavala, Marcela Olabarrieta, Ana Cristina Zubillaga, Yolanda Andrade and Magali Lara. Aceves Sepúlveda, p. 100. When asked Karen Cordero about this relation as not hegemonic she said yes, but each reference has to be studied in order to explain it.

¹³⁹ Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, p. 90.

¹⁴⁰ Mónica Mayer, *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte* (Mexico City: MUAC and UNAM, 2016).

¹⁴¹ Jones and Mayer. Monica Mayer has an archive called *Pinto mi raya*.

¹⁴² Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, p. 28.

¹⁴³ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 522.

Rippey to construct the imaginary of Mexican feminist art and, in the process, managed to reconstruct the artistic scene in which these artists were active and practised. While it is not clear how the gender and feminist theory framed by Zamora are linked to the genealogy of the artists' practice, one of the book's most significant achievements is to collect testimonies from the artists themselves in which they discuss their work and its effect based on what they remember of their exhibitions or performances. When Zamora interviewed Mónica Mayer, she affirmed that her art has always been political: 'Considero que mi trabajo tiene un contenido claramente político en contra del sexismo y, además, pienso que representa una contribución para empezar a crear una cultura propiamente feminista, que se definía como la participación plena de las mujeres como mujeres conscientemente'.¹⁴⁴ Hence, feminist artists were creating art that, like *artivism*, aimed at modifying the social structure and culture; by claiming the personal as political, they intended to denounce the patriarchal order in which sexual inequality is founded.

Because it could be argued that feminist art is a rhizomatic node of feminism, it made sense that the artist dealt with day-to-day women's issues. This included dealing with gender violence since it is part of women's daily life. Even though statistics on gender violence are relatively new — ENDIREH, the national Poll focused on violence against women, was carried out for the first time in 2003 — violence is such a persistent issue in Mexico that it was the thematic focus of the first exhibitions of the feminist artistic groups. Similarly, that 60% of Mexican women have suffered violence¹⁴⁵ and that the country is regarded as the one with most feminicides worldwide¹⁴⁶ are two fundamental facts which contributed to the criteria used when selecting the artworks analysed in this thesis.

Finally, I propose to identify in what matters feminist artivism provides to the cultural and artistic spheres. How does these ideas connect logically the possible effects or outcomes that this very thesis contributes by studying feminist art as *artivism* are a) feminist *artivism* denounces violence; b) it creates platforms where the voices of the victims can be appreciated; c) it creates a (liminal) space to grieve or discuss a particular situation. These would be added to the effects listed by Mónica Mayer when highlighting the social effects of feminist art: a) it makes female artists visible; b) it represents the experiences and problems that women have;

¹⁴⁴ Zamora Betancourt, p. 38.

¹⁴⁵ INEGI, *ENADIS* (Mexico City: INEGI, 2017).

¹⁴⁶ '#Spotlight Aumentan Femicidio de Mujeres y Niñas: María Salguero', *Notimex* (Mexico City, 2019) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psUgTFtpyPs>> [accessed 6 November 2019].

c) it questions and disarticulates traditional gender concepts; and d) it develops new ways of thinking about the relation between art and politics.¹⁴⁷

I.I. Recipe for Giving the Evil Eye to Rapists, or Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies, the First *Artivist* Action by *Polvo de Gallina Negra*

My initial claim is that the three feminist artistic groups formed after Mayer's workshops promoted the feminist agenda and settled the main characteristics of contemporary feminist artistic practices in Mexico.¹⁴⁸ Their intentions were clear, starting with their names: *Tlacuilas y Retrateras*, *Polvo de Gallina Negra*, and *Bio-Arte*. *Tlacuilas y Retrateras* referred to pre-Hispanic culture while criticising it simultaneously. The Nahuatl term, *tlacuilos*, was how the Aztecs called the artists, the change of gender once in Spanish constitutes a transgression since only men could aspire to become a *tlacuilo*, and *retrateras* is a reference to the tradition in which female artists do portraits [*retratos*] instead of being the represented subject. *Polvo de Gallina Negra* [Black Chicken Dust], the group that lasted longer, referred to a popular ingredient in Mexican witchcraft. By recovering cultural referents of indigenous communities through their names, both groups place upfront a decolonial agenda: this will be present in many of their artworks. The name of the third group, *Bio-Arte*, aimed at questioning the influence of biology over gender. While *Tlacuilas y Retrateras* and *Bio-Arte* only worked throughout 1983, *Polvo de Gallina Negra* remained active from 1983 until 1993. The latter was formed by Mónica Mayer, Maris Bustamante and Herminia Dosal, who only participated briefly in the first performance.¹⁴⁹ I will explore the possibility of regarding their first artistic action, *Receta para el mal de ojo a los violadores o, El respeto al cuerpo ajeno es la paz* [Recipe to Give the Evil Eye to Rapists, or Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies], as *artivism* with a liminal and rhizomatic effect. However, I must recognise the limitation of not being present during the performance.

The performance *Receta para el mal de ojo a los violadores* differed from previous performances as it was a collective effort in which the artists broke the threshold with the audience and invite those present as performers. Performances, including Bustamante and Mayer's artistic practice, usually supposed that the artists used their bodies as the primary medium of art. For the feminist artists, the possibility of appropriation and resignification was

¹⁴⁷ Mayer, 'Un Breve Testimonio Sobre Los Ires y Venires Del Arte Feminista En México Durante La Última Década Del Siglo XX y La Primera Del XXI', p. 191..

¹⁴⁸ Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, p. 28.

¹⁴⁹ Arias and others, p. 278.

highly relevant as they were protesting a system that objectified them and conceived them solely as reproductive bodies. However, in this particular performance, the performers were the artists and any other women who wanted to get involved. All performance practice supposes a high level of vulnerability the artists inflict on themselves; so, when extended into a collective performance, there is a need to respect others and an ethical dimension in which one cannot vulnerate others. Furthermore, in a feminist practice, one needs to avoid re-victimisation. For me, it is clear that this awareness about not re-victimising other women comes from feminism. At the same time, it is what suggests this performance might be studied as a form of socio-political practice.

Mayer and Bustamante thought of this performance as part of a protest. The dynamic and context suggest the need for a transdisciplinary approach to understanding this and other *Polvo de Gallina Negra's* projects fully. Diéguez explained that she used Turner's terms of liminality and *communitas* when 'Buscando reflexionar sobre situaciones que se salían de cualquier reproducción disciplinar, acciones que oscilaban entre la performance, la protesta ciudadana, la instalación, la intervención urbana, la teatralidad, la manifestación política y la práctica activista'¹⁵⁰. The performance had a theatre element, urban intervention's qualities, a literary component and feminist content; therefore, it appears to demand a transdisciplinary approach. I aim at observing if, as an *artivist* project, it came from a deep commitment and involvement, had a social objective and avoided the imposition of their ideas. Adding to the need for a transdisciplinary perspective, it is interesting to observe that *artivism* and social work have many similarities. Social work looks for answers to social demands and 'a partir de su abordaje técnico-operativo, ser capaz de construir campos nuevos de acción e investigación para contar con la posibilidad de teorizar la realidad desde el punto de vista del actor-sujeto'¹⁵¹.

¹⁵⁰ Ileana Diéguez, *Cuerpos sin duelo. Iconografías y teatralidades del dolor*. (Mexico City: CONACULTA, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, La Coordinación Nacional de Teatro, Instituto de Cultura del Estado de Durango y la 34 Muestra Nacional de Teatro Mexicano, 2013), p. 24.

¹⁵¹ Cisneros Flores and Martínez León.

Hence, the notion of grasping the experiences or perspectives from the participants instead of should also accompany an analysis of *artivism*, but in this case it is impossible.

The fact that the performance happened during a demonstration is not the only activist quality of this work. It is necessary to identify the nodes (at least those in which they were focalising), a-signifying rupture, if the spectators were included as participants, how, through the artworks, the artists deconstructed the social hierarchy, if there is a purifying or pedagogical intention, and the possibility of *communitas*. As I will state, the performance focused on rape and sexual violence and, while protesting, taught women about what is sexual violence. Hence, I observed the artists had a pedagogical intention aside from the protesting one. I will start by understanding the name of the performance, as it is possible to identify the objective they had, the identity of the group, and the type of criticism they did.



Figure 3. Mónica Mayer, *Photography of the Performance 'Receta del grupo Polvo de Gallina Negra para hacerle mal de ojo a los violadores o el respeto al derecho del cuerpo ajeno es la paz'*, Mexico City, 1983. <https://pregunte.pintomiraya.com/index.php/la-obra/fe>

The first part of the name, *Recipe for Giving the Evil Eye to Rapists*, is related to witchcraft and includes the notion of giving agency to women against rapists. There are two reasons behind the reference to witchcraft. Firstly, it is a practice related to women taught through generations.¹⁵² Secondly, it affirms a notion of the group or the collective; the covens became an ideal form of horizontal organisation. In the United States, the connection between

¹⁵² Ana Barbosa Sánchez, 'Cerámica de Tlayacapan. Ritual y Creación de Mujeres', in *Interculturalidad Estética y Prácticas Artesanales, Mujeres, Feminismo y Arte Popular*, ed. by Eli Bartra, Elvira Liliana, and Marisol Cárdenas (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2019), pp. 76–86.

the feminist collectives and the coven was popular. In Los Angeles, where Mayer lived, women founded the first coven of feminist witches in 1972. The movement has been criticised as it is considered a white women's movement;¹⁵³ the same valid point has been made about feminist art. Even in Mexico, Monica Mayer complained that most feminist artists and critics were white and from a European family or origins.¹⁵⁴ Today the validity of all women referring to witchcraft has been questioned regarding the colonialism inheritance¹⁵⁵; nevertheless, it was not like that in the 1980s. By the time Bustamante and Mayer organised their performance, there were two main conceptions about witchcraft. One was in the USA, where artists such as Yolanda López, Betye Saar, Nancy Azara and Judy Baca were influenced by Susan Griffin's book *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978).¹⁵⁶ This publication explored different cultures and traditions that have been considered as exoteric or non-valid knowledge by the Western patriarchy in which women were revindicated and praised as powerful. Needless to repeat, those were the artists with whom Mayer had contact during her Master's. The second perspective is the one offered by Lagarde.¹⁵⁷ She explains that, due to the captive system, women have been considered as witches every time they act outside what is proper of their role; women in particular roles, either (step)mothers, nuns or professionals, were regarded as witches if they behave differently. So, actually, practising witchcraft, even if they were pretending, conveyed the idea of rebel women and embraced a powerful femininity.

Moreover, witchcraft includes a potential recovery of pre-Hispanic traditions. Although there was no witch hunt in Mexico, the Holy Inquisition punished traditional and indigenous pagan practices and in the majority of the cases, the penalised subjects were women.¹⁵⁸ Worldwide, the *Mal de ojo* [Evil Eye] is a form of hex popularly believed to have protective properties against enemies while cursing them. Departing from the premise that, in Mexico and

¹⁵³ Wendy Griffin, 'The Embodied Goddess: Feminist Witchcraft and Female Divinity', *Sociology of Religion*, 56.1 (1995), 35–48 (p. 37).

¹⁵⁴ She explored the unequal conditions that determined which population sector can study and create art. In a speech for the *I Coloquio arte y género* in 2002, 'Clase, género y arte: que no las vemos no quiere decir que no estén'. She included this in her last book. Mayer, *Intimidaciones...o No. Arte, Vida y Feminismo*.

¹⁵⁵ Ana María González Alvarado explores the validity of all women in Latin America shouting: 'somos las nietas de las brujas que no pudiste quemar'. Although the European witch-hunt murdered and condemned white women; this motto refers to the non-patriarchal knowledge that has been persecuted. Ana María González Alvarado, 'De Brujas y Colonialismo. Historias Paralelas Que No Se Cuentan', *Revista REDpensar*, 3.2 (2014), 1–22 (pp. 4–9).

¹⁵⁶ Peggy Phelan and Helena Reckitt, *Art and Feminism (Themes and Movement)* (Hong Kong: Phaidon Press, 2001).

¹⁵⁷ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI and UNAM, 2015), p. 99.

¹⁵⁸ Fray Jerónimo De Mendieta, 'The Spiritual Conquest', in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture and Politics*, ed. by Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (United States of America: Duke University, 2002), pp. 114–21.

other Latin American countries, patriarchy is originated in machismo and colonialism,¹⁵⁹ the re-appropriation of witchcraft terminology confronts both principles of patriarchy.

The second part of the performance's name, *Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies*, is a modification to a famous quote attributed to former Mexican president Benito Juárez which originally said: 'Entre los individuos como entre las naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz' [Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace]. Juárez is one of the most beloved presidents of Mexican history and the first and only indigenous citizen to have been elected. During his presidency, the *Guerra de Reforma* [The Reformation War] took place; it was fought between liberals and conservatives and ended up creating the *Leyes de Reforma* [Reformation Laws], which limited the Catholic Church's power, land and wealth. It was also the war against forming an Empire led by the foreigner Emperor Maximilian I of Mexico. His quote refers to the triumph of the Republic against the Second Mexican Empire in 1867.¹⁶⁰ Hence, it became a motto to defend Mexico's sovereignty and democracy against conservatives and international interventions. Applied to the feminist movement, it is related to the defence of female bodies against sexual crimes, and it promotes women's sovereignty to decide over their bodies. This modern definition of citizenship and rights was also linked to the place where *Receta para el mal de ojo* took place. The demonstration ended in the *Hemiciclo a Juárez* in Mexico City, a monument dedicated to Benito Juárez, next to the Palacio de Bellas Artes located in the centre.

The performance lasted 20 minutes, took place in the middle of the demonstration, and included any women who wanted to participate. As said before, it is precisely this quality that made this performance different to other performance practices. Bustamante and Mayer did not accidentally include other women; it was part of the original plan, and without them, the performance could not have existed. According to art historian Josefina Alcázar, the performance practice is an art of the *I*; she defines it as: 'una autobiografía en la carne viva'¹⁶¹. We do not have access to the artists' autobiography with this performance. However, they did have access to a shared experience of violence. Once the protestors stopped walking, Mayer and Bustamante asked them to form a circle, and, at the centre, they began 'cooking' the potion by throwing the fake ingredients into a big pit. One thousand women were able to be part of

¹⁵⁹ *Critical Terms in the Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories*, ed. by Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Sifuentes-Jáuregui, Ben, and Marisa Belausteguigoitia (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁶⁰ Luis González y González, 'Liberals and the Land', in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture and Politics*, ed. by Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (United States of America: Duke University, 2002), pp. 239–51.

¹⁶¹ Josefina Alcázar, *Performance, Un Arte Del Yo* (Mexico: Grupo Editorial Siglo XXI, 2014), p. 17.

the performance, either by reading the recipe or telling their experience around sexual violence.¹⁶² The performance changed the demonstration's nature for a few minutes. Instead of complaining about the lack of protection from the government, women were able to do something to face rapists; even if it was a hypothetical action for justice, they took the matter into their own hands. Now, the artistic action was not supposed to diminish the rest of the protest; the need for protection from the government was fundamental. However, the performance introduced the possibility of protecting each other while the institutions did not do it; a notion that remains in feminist demonstrations. Everyone knew the potion was not going to work or prevent sexual violence, but, as a dynamic, it led them to discuss the problem, identify others that had suffered the same crimes, publicly denounce a crime that remained private and collectively stand against the perpetrators. Complaining about it or pointing out that raping was wrong also meant standing against one of the forms of the mechanisms that guarantee women remain captive. Lagarde explains that violence and rape support the idea that men are more robust, powerful, and have the right to subject women.¹⁶³ The problem with rape is that the victims suffer it and the fact that, if rape is understood as a private matter and natural male behaviour, any woman can experience it and is expected to remain silenced. Fear acts as a captivity. This performance disagreed with rape as a disciplinary action and saw it as something that needed to be stopped. Finally, by promoting catharsis when inviting women to release their pain by sharing their experience, it has a purifying intention subscribing it to the liminal.

By initiating the discussion about rape, the public and the private, and later on publishing the recipe, they encourage a multiple and diverse reaction. It is possible, therefore, to claim it had a rhizomatic and liminal effect. The performance created another node that resulted from feminists answering the problem of violence against women in Mexico. The public denunciation of gender-based crimes is one of the goals of making the private political. It is not about allowing the state to control our lives; it is about pointing out how gender crimes are not a private matter which results from an unequal structural system. How and where to denounce, to guarantee access to justice and protection depends on what the female subjects need; hence, focalisation is fundamental. This performance wanted to inform and provide a

¹⁶² The event was documented by Monica Mayer's testimony. Monica Mayer, 'El Tendedero', in Mayer, *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, pp. 8–9.

¹⁶³ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 328.

protest tool, but it comes from a long tradition of making rape publicly visible. Mayer was not a stranger to this tradition; on the opposite, she had been working with the topic previously.

In 1976, while Mónica Mayer was moving to Los Angeles, she presented *El Tendedero* [The Clothesline] for the first time. The idea was to use traditional objects related to women's roles and the private sphere and transform it into a place to denounce and find freedom of speech. She collected testimonies answering the question: 'What don't you like about the city?'; she hung the testimonies over a clothesline inside a museum. Without expecting it, she received denounces of violence. Few years later, she particularly addressed the issue of rape with a *Clothesline* included in *Making it Safe*. While being a student of Suzanne Lacy, Mayer was invited to present an artwork for an exhibition commissioned by Communitas in Ocean Park, Santa Monica, California. The idea was not only to hold a feminist show but to provide the population with tools to identify and denounce rape. That led her to focalised on sexual violence for several art projects. *The Clothesline* itself is a rhizomatic work as it constantly reactivated; Mayer said it has its own life being changed according to the city, country or women who are part of it.¹⁶⁴ As a node of the inequality against women, it will continue until it does not make sense anymore; regardless of Mayer's desire, women are using *The Clothesline*. They do gather to hang their thoughts. It is a communitarian project without leaders, just women agreeing on sharing, creating *communitas*. Mayer has recently questioned how the MeToo movement has influenced the latest transformation of *The Clothesline*, currently used to denounce the rapists; for her, the work was more efficient when answering a concrete question.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the transformation of the piece could be regarded to its liminal nature; women prefer to make public the name of their rapists as they distrust the system. It could be observed as resulting from occurring in the threshold.

Mayer used traditional elements considered feminine, the pink colour and the clothesline, to provide a tool for women to denounce. There is a transformation in placing these experiences of the female private sphere into public objects. The clothesline translated into a visual installation the feminist motto: *the personal is political*. I observe a relation between this artwork and the popular proverb '*La ropa sucia se lava en casa*' (in English, it has the same meaning as 'don't wash your dirty linen in public'), which forces women to keep their problems at home, avoid public denunciation and never complain about others about their family issues. Mayer's clothesline transforms the old proverb into a new one: '*La ropa sucia se lava entre*

¹⁶⁴ Henaro.

¹⁶⁵ *Vindictas Artes Escénicas. Capítulo I: Mónica Mayer* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2020) <<http://youtu.be/5AG4J70MVXc>> [accessed 28 April 2020].

todas' (equivalent to 'We wash together our dirty linen'), meaning that only women will successfully work together modify the unequal social order. Again, I would like to state that to fully grasp the liminality and rhizomatic effect, I would have to be present during the performance or *artist* projects.

Although it is impossible for me to be part of the *Receta para hacerle mal de ojo a los violadores*, I had participated in several recent installations of the *Clothesline*. Therefore, I can share my experience while being involved. In the first one I took part in, the idea was to denounce sexual violence; without any guidance, women wrote from personal stories to the name of their offender. Others included a discussion in which we prevented naming the offenders as this might interfere with access to justice. However, whenever a group decides to publish names, it is usually because they have lost any faith in the justice system and expect other women to protect them. By the end, there is a notion of finding companionship and understanding. There are no leaders; it is a safe space where one listens and is listened to. In terms of a rhizomatic outcome, I could exemplify with two actions. The first one was the artistic project by Camila Villalobos *Demasiado cerca*, which created collages with the stories reported in the clothesline; with the consent of the participants, Villalobos visually translated the denounces with the objective of divulging the anonymous stories for other women who might identify. The second one would be the Clothesline I organised for the Universidad Anáhuac Querétaro, the objective is to identify all the conditions, situations and cases of violence that need to find justice.

Going back to the *Receta*, it is important to notice how it did not only borrow objects from the private sphere, but it was also an ironic action. The ironic elements of the performance, mostly observables on the recipe, might come from Bustamante's artistic trajectory. Like Mayer, Maris Bustamante began working in the 1970s before universities and artists called themselves feminists. After the government murdered students in 1968 and 1972, the feminist movement started actively denouncing inequalities. It emerged like a force confronting the official narrative as unions and other organisations were severely threatened. As mentioned before, artists organised in groups to confront the system. Bustamante belonged to the No-Grupo, which was exceptional in many regards, as Edward McCaughan points out (2007). It did not belong to the umbrella organisation of the *Frente Mexicano de Grupos Trabajadores de la Cultura* [Mexican Front of Cultural Working Groups]; they used humour and irony (instead of the solemn critique other groups did) and criticised the opportunism with which

groups selected the social problems that were popular instead of committing to a social issue.¹⁶⁶ Bustamante brought to *Polvo de Gallina Negra* that same irony and humour with which she worked. As a performer, she mixed visual arts and sculptures to criticise topics related to female sexuality and its social constructions. She was critical of Freud's work and how it influenced the perception of women. I decided to dedicate more research to Mayer's trajectory as she continues to work with the Mexican artists.

The verbal component of the performance, the recipe itself, resembles more a literary game than an actual magic potion. The ingredients are metaphorical elements associated with rape; the artists included objects and concepts that contributed to the patriarchal culture and those that may eradicate it. Simple instructions accompanied them.

- 2 docenas de ojos y corazones de mujer que se acepta como tal
- 20 kg de rayos y centellas de mujer que se enoja cuando la agreden
- 1 tonelada de músculos de acero de mujer que exige respeto a su cuerpo
- 3 lenguas de mujer que no se somete aún cuando fue violada
- 1 sobre de grenetina de mujer, sabor espinaca, que comprende y apoya a una mujer que fue violada.
- 30grs. De polvo de voces que desmitifiquen la violación
- 7 gotas de hombres que apoyen la lucha contra la violación
- 1 pizca de legisladores interesados en los cambios sociales que demandamos las mujeres
- Unas cuantas cucharadas de familia y escuelas que no promuevan los roles tradicionales
- 3 docenas de mensajes de comunicadores responsables que dejen de producir imágenes que promueven la violación
- 3 pelos de superfeminista
- 2 colmillos de militante de partido de oposición
- ½ oreja de espontáneo y curioso

Siguiendo cuidadosamente las instrucciones sobre el modo de preparación lograremos tener como resultado final nuestra explosiva mezcla con la cual usted podrá sorprender a los violadores que habitan su misma casa o la de la vecina, los tímidos y los agresivos, los pasivos y los activos, y los que la acechan en el trabajo o en el camión y finalmente los que se esconden en la noche que hoy venimos a tomar.¹⁶⁷

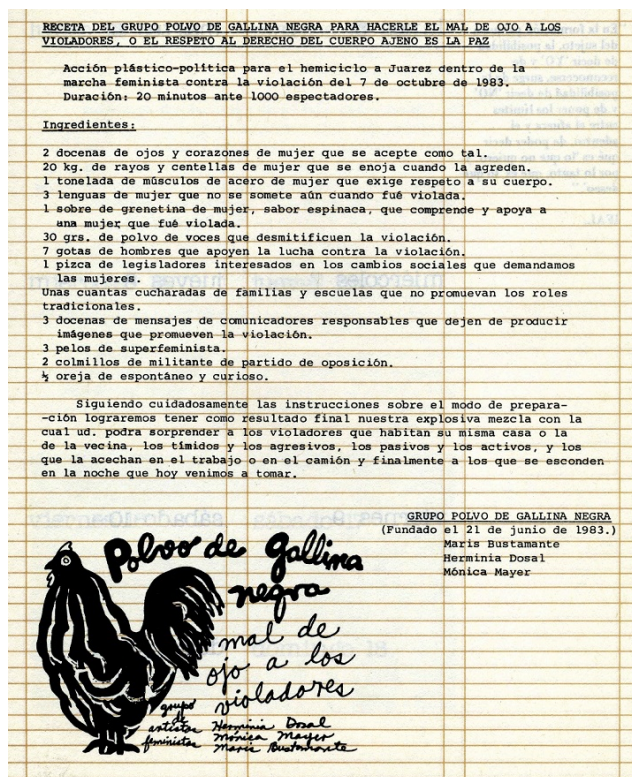
Each ingredient contributes to a better understanding of their feminist project and their artistic intentions. The first describes the women to whom they are addressing and, at the same time,

¹⁶⁶ Edward McCaughan, 'Navigating the Labyrinth of Silence: Feminist Artists in Mexico', *Social Justice*, 34.1 (2007), 44–62.

¹⁶⁷ Monica Mayer, 'Receta', in Mayer, *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, p. 60.

offers a characterisation of a woman embracing feminist precepts. Hence, their performance suggests that women should accept themselves as they are, reject violence as natural male behaviour and ask to be respected. There is a recognition that, to achieve this, one must be brave. Other ingredients refer to what is needed from institutions to eradicate rape and sexual violence. Therefore, they referenced all the spheres that need to change and contribute to the feminist project. They included the academics' role to demystify rape; men standing against violence; politicians supporting the required social changes to free women of violence; schools and families that do not promote gender roles; and media that do not objectify women and promote sexual violence. The last three are a description of themselves and their work. They are feminists looking for political equality and justice for women; however, their proposal was always playful and joyful. It was a spontaneous act calling anyone who is inquisitive or wants to find out more about feminism. The only ingredient which is harder to understand is spinach. There are no feminist referents of spinach. Hence, it is only possible to risk an assumption. It is commonly known that spinach makes you stronger since it contains iron; I can only assume that they were proposing the potion would make women stronger to confront patriarchy.

Figure 4. Polvo de Gallina Negra, *Recipe for Giving the Evil Eye to Rapists, Or, Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies*, 1983



The recipe was published in FEM magazine in 1984, expecting to reach a bigger audience than the one participating during the performance. The idea was to expand the response and invite other women to act against sexual violence. The format in which it was printed looked like a notebook page imitating the kinds of notebooks used by women to keep cooking recipes. Every action and artwork made by the group *Polvo de Gallina Negra* used conventional cultural references to what is conceived as the feminine sphere: recipes, cooking, motherhood, aprons.¹⁶⁸ Usually, in an ironical way, they invited women to question

¹⁶⁸ One of the famous actions this group did was *Madre por un día* [Mother For A Day]. It became nationally known after Mayer and Bustamante appeared on national television. Since they both were pregnant, they explored the social and cultural meaning of motherhood and dressed up like the traditional mother figure,

the private sphere while, at the same time, creating a familiar environment to make them feel included. On the other hand, they did not surprised women who might not have been expecting the recipe or could not understand it. This is probably an element that might suggest a form of social work. Without the proper preparation, pointing out an issue for a social group might be violent or revictimising. *Fem* was a magazine that promoted feminist art; hence, it was mostly read by artists or art critics interested in such topics. By giving them the recipe they included the women who could have participated but were not present. It was also a continuation of the artwork that remove Bustamante and Mayer like coordinators or the leaders; everyone was invited to perform it.

There was another reason for Mayer and Bustamante's use of 'domestic items' in their performances. Throughout their work, they denounced a condition not evident for everyone but shared by every woman artist. Both noticed that women artists were living in a more precarious way than men. With fewer opportunities than males, female artists had to find any job (teaching whatever they could, Mayer for example, taught English), kept their responsibilities at home and tried to work on their art at any time.¹⁶⁹ The issue of the feminine double work shift criticised by feminists, was even worst for artists. So, by incorporating motherhood and their household chores into their work, they condemned the conditions in which women created art. They transformed the material resources that were enslaving other artists into their artistic instruments.

The fact that the performance was organised just a few steps away from the Palacio de Bellas Artes, one of Mexico's most important cultural institutions, and that the spectators were participants are not the only qualities that made it liminal. According to Turner, liminality happens when societies are experiencing a transition making it possible to question the structure.¹⁷⁰ The performance was presented during a feminist transition. The Constitutional Article 4, which recognised that women and men deserve the same opportunities, was modified seven years before. However, rape and sexual assaults were included as crimes in the Penal Code ten years later. During these 17 years, and until today,¹⁷¹ the feminist agenda has modified

wearing an apron. Giunta, 'Feminisms and Emancipation. Mónica Mayer: Radical Aesthetics and Latin American Simultaneities', p. 97.

¹⁶⁹ Mayer, *Intimidades...o No. Arte, Vida y Feminismo*.

¹⁷⁰ Turner.

¹⁷¹ Aside from pushing the Mexican authorities to sign every International Treaty on Violence against women, including: CEDAW (1979), Belém Do Pará (1994) or Platform for Action Beijing (1995) Mexican feminist have been modifying and creating laws to protect women. Some of the most relevant are the modification of the Penal Code to include sexual violence (1991), Law to Prevent and Eradicate Discrimination (2003), Official Norm on Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women (2009), General Law to Prevent and Eradicate Human Trafficking (2010) and, probably the most important of them, the Law for Women to Access a Life Free of

women's status. Though the change has not been as fast as expected, women's social, economic, and political condition has improved, at least in legal terms.¹⁷² A second element that makes this action liminal is the obvious one. It happened during a demonstration, outside the civic system, in the margins linking it to the third and last liminal element: the political speech. The performance introduced an artistic speech into a social demonstration that involved both the artists and the audience as participants equally, all protesting to promote a social change; hence, there is a possibility for them to have achieved the *communitas*.

In conclusion, based on the social objective and the moment it was presented, *Polvo de Gallina Negra's* first performance could be considered an *artist* action taking place in a liminal space. The performance was planned up to a point; but, since it was an action that involved sporadic and unexpected responses, as any rhizome would, it depended a lot on the context and the participants. Although the artists were not looking for cultural recognition, the interpolation of their artwork into a demonstration against rape shows a greater concern in social change. Furthermore, by questioning the role of women as victims, they inverted the conventional gender roles and offered women the possibility of acting to confront the rapists, though only in a metaphorical way. From a historical perspective, it is possible to observe how feminist artists provide women with a protest tool, it could only be performed collectively, it actively promoted the idea about what is 'private becomes public' inserting the action into the feminist agenda.

I.II. The *Quinceañera* Party a Collective Feminist *Artist* Action

The Quinceañera Party was a performance event that joined the three feminist groups and produced a new form of criticism of the sexist tradition in Mexico. In 1984, *Tlacuilas y Retrateras* organised a multidisciplinary action at the Academia de San Carlos, UNAM.¹⁷³ They invited feminist artists to the event to participate in a project that looked like a party. The inspiration was the so-called *quinceañera* party,¹⁷⁴ as it will be furtherly explained. The criticism of the traditional elements of this party was at the core of the only gathering of the

Violence (2010). The latest, as it will be seen throughout this thesis, is particularly relevant for artists, activists and academics working issues related to gender-based violence as it provided the categories to analyse, classify and eradicate violence against women.

¹⁷² Gabriela Cano, 'Más de un siglo de feminismo en México', *Debate feminista*, 14 (1996), 345–60 (p. 356).

¹⁷³ Mayer, *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, pp. 64–65..

¹⁷⁴ Without trying they all settled a precedent. An example of artists criticising this tradition are: Lía García and Liz Misterio. *Artivismos Feministas, Poner El Cuerpo. Conversación Entre Mónica Mayer, Lía García 'La Novia Sirena' and Liz Misterio*, 2020

<<https://www.facebook.com/MuseodelChopo/videos/1504923319700611/>> [accessed 25 November 2020].

three feminist groups. Using the tradition as an excuse, they organised a massive event that deconstructed normalised elements involved in the existence of violence against women.

By calling only for women artists to lead the actions, the feminist artists confronted the duality existing in these parties. The traditional *quinceañera* party has two moments. In the first one, the birthday girl shows an innocent attitude. In the second, she shows a more sexualised behaviour; these moments can be seen as an initiation to ‘female hood’ and can also be considered feminine and masculine. The first one, which starts early, is the grooming, where no men are allowed, and all the female relatives participate; later, comes the religious mass. The *quinceañera* girl wears a princess-like dress representing the idea of a dream coming true. The dress is not based on any historical precedent since Mexico is a Republic but is currently mostly inspired by Disney’s fictional princesses; hence, the dress also comes with the promise of finding a prince who will save them. Halfway through the party, there is a ritual where she says goodbye to the little girl and embraces the idea of being a woman suited for marriage; it includes a father and daughter waltz, her coronation, the gift of her first high-heel shoes and what should be her last doll. The second moment suggests that the girl has finally become a woman, full of sexual connotations. She changes her clothes for a more contemporary and sensual outfit chosen according to the dance she performs with the chamberlains that belong to her court. The *quinceañera* girl gets to select her chamberlains, usually of the same age as her, with the idea that one of them may be a suitable partner. As she is promoted as being ready for marriage,¹⁷⁵ every element must indicate the wealthiness of the family and their disposition to give a substantive future dowry; thus, it is considered as the masculine part of the party as, traditionally, the father’s role is that of the provider. To afford all the expenses, the *quinceañera* girl has godfathers, relatives or friends of the family, who pay for different things; there is no limit for the number of godfathers, by the end, there could be so many godfathers that the family would not need to pay for anything. Therefore, the role of the godfathers is fundamental; it is not, however, a leading role; it may remain in secret to avoid the community knowing if the family has or not the expected resources.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Though this has changed and, by now is mostly a celebration, they continue to repeat the traditions which symbolically remit to this idea of the transformation of a girl into a woman. Karen Mary Davalos, “‘La Quinceañera’: Making Gender and Ethnic Identities’, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 16.2/3 (1996), 101–27 (pp. 110–12).

¹⁷⁶ Lorena Favier, ‘La Fiesta de Quince Años Etnografía de Un Ritual de Paso Moderno, Un Rito Por y Para Las Mujeres’, *Decires*, 13.16 (2011), 53–66.

The artists used all the elements to recreate them in a satire that criticised the sexual objectification of women. As Zamudio noticed, their result was intentionally Kitsch and settled the background for other feminist art exhibitions.

Intervinieron cerca de treinta mujeres y un hombre, Nahum B. Zenit; en ella se revaloró la temática del ritual femenino de los quince años y se mostraron diversos tipos de propuestas estéticas basadas en el Kitsch, una modalidad que poco más tarde aparecería con frecuencia entre algunas vertientes del arte mexicano de los años ochenta del pasado. Entre los performances que se realizaron, Bio-Arte presentó ‘Nacida entre mujeres’, propuesta grupal con obras que tenían que ver con los cambios biológicos de la mujer; Polvo de Gallina Negra ofreció una sátira de las relaciones de pareja con Rubén Valencia y Víctor Lerma (esposos de Bustamante y Mayer, respectivamente) que llamaron ‘Las Ilusiones y las perversiones, y el performance ‘Tres recetas del grupo Polvo de Gallina Negra.’¹⁷⁷

Since there are no recordings of the event, it is only possible to know what happened from the available descriptions. Lorena Zamudio described who was part of the event and how they organised. In the beginning, she claims that almost thirty women and Nahum B. Zenit participated; later, she mentions Maris Bustamante and Mónica Mayer’s husbands: Rubén Valencia and Víctor Lerma. The implicit hierarchy of her description suggests an explanation of how men were included during The *Fiesta de los XV años*, which is, at the same time, symptomatic of the male participation in the feminist activist movement. There was, and still is, no consensus on whether men can be an active part of both feminist activism and art. Some artists, such as Mayer, favour including them and has worked on several occasions with Lerma. However, others dissent, and it is not up to the artists but to the population with which they work. In some cases, when the work involves the participation of women who have been victims of violence, male participation is avoided under the understanding that many of the women do not feel safe in the presence of men. Another reason men are sometimes asked not to get involved has to do with the gendered experience of the world. Being embedded in a binary structure, women’s experience is radically different from that of men. As discussed with Cerrucha’s artwork, achieving feminist goals often requires men quitting the privileges they

¹⁷⁷ Zamora Betancourt, p. 39.

obtain just for being at the top of the social hierarchy.¹⁷⁸ Under this understanding, it is argued that there is an inaccessible female reality for men. However, it seems that there was some sort of agreement between those who organised *The Fiesta de los XV Años* to ensure that all parties were satisfied.

The same theme of the event allowed this organisation without being controversial simply because men do not have a fifteen-year party; they are not presented in society as marriage-ready subjects. Taking advantage of the figure of the godparents at the traditional festivities of XV years, men were invited to participate as godparents, subject to the demands and the organisation proposed by women artists. This was particularly important because, as Araceli Barbosa points out,¹⁷⁹ when the performance was presented, all the museums and galleries' directors were men, most of the resources, funds and scholarships were given to and by male artists, so the feminists needed them. For this reason, having the sponsorship of men was a support that guaranteed the realisation of the event. It could also have been decisive about the coverage by the media that provided much greater attention to artistic events of men. Mayer and Bustamante were able to include their husbands in their performance without them being the protagonists. The only reason Nahum B. Zenit is named along with the rest of the artists is because he is one of the first openly gay Mexican artist who used his artworks to denounce the sexist discrimination he was exposed to in the cultural sphere. His criticism was always ironic and not too distant from what female artists denounced. Although gays also do not have 15-year-old festivities, given their gender identity, they will also not be promoted as the perfect husband and are, therefore, never 'deserving' of the *quinceañera*.

¹⁷⁸ The recent feminist movement excludes men to guarantee women's leadership. They want to avoid at all costs that men receive more attention than women when promoting the feminist agenda. In her article 'El movimiento feminista en México en el siglo XXI: juventud, radicalidad y violencia', Lucía Álvarez Enríquez explains the characteristics of contemporary feminism including the relationship with men. Lucía Álvarez Enríquez, 'El Movimiento Feminista En México En El Siglo XXI: Juventud, Radicalidad y Violencia', *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales*, 65 (2020), 147–75 <<https://doi.org/10.22201/fcpys.2448492xe.2020.240.76388>>.

¹⁷⁹ Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, pp. 105–7.



Figure 5. Ana Victoria Jiménez, *Ensayo de la Fiesta de XV Años*, Mexico City, 1983. Retrieved from: <http://pregunte.pintomiraya.com/index.php/la-obra/feminismo-y-formacion/item/28-la-fiesta-de-xv-anos-del-grupo-de-arte-feminista-tlacuilas-y-retrateras>

The party can be described as *kitsch* because the artists used traditional decorations and motifs of the *quinceañeras*. The dresses, the waltz and decorations were copied from the actual parties; sometimes to ridicule them and, others, to recreate the environment. However, it is not free of polemic to qualify either the art event or the parties as kitsch. Zamudio does not provide a definition of the kitsch before using the term. It is relevant to explore the Mexican connotation of this term. José de Jesús Flores and César Omar Balderrama (2018), academics from the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, defined the *kitsch* by observing what has been considered as Mexican kitsch. Far from the German tradition in which authors like Broch defined the kitsch as ‘the element of evil in the value system of art’¹⁸⁰, while Adorno used it to describe the products of the cultural industries,¹⁸¹ in Mexico it has been used to categorise a cheap aesthetic. When it is associated with what is fast, inconsequential, improvised and provoking then its products ‘se posicionan en lo basto, en lo barato, lo que lo convierte, para

¹⁸⁰ Hermann Broch, ‘Kitsch and Art-with-a-Message’, in *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste*, ed. by Gillo Dorfles (New York: Universe Books, 1968), pp. 68–76.

¹⁸¹ Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

muchos, en insoportable y deleznable'¹⁸². Nevertheless, it also possible to understand what the feminists did as a rebellious action against the high art classification. For Flores and Balderrama there is a dialectic: 'En consecuencia, para la existencia del buen gusto debe, indefectiblemente, existir el denominado mal gusto'¹⁸³. The academia, art critics and cultural institutions are some of the institutions that establish good and bad taste; so, by organising a kitsch event inside San Carlos, the feminist artists challenged what is worthy of being shown inside an art academy. After all, the same institutions had been part of the patriarchal categorisation that promoted women's art as inferior to men's art.

A criticism that can be made about the *Fiesta de XV Años* is that it might be seen as a discriminatory practice. The fact that educated women mocked and ironized a popular Mexican tradition can be problematic. If they had intervened during an actual party or transmitted it on television for all the Mexicans to see then yes, absolutely. However, it is fundamental to consider their objective. By only inviting people from the arts sphere to performance without an audience it seems clear that what they wanted to free the women in the arts from a violent and discriminatory symbolic practice. When the *grupos* began working, women complained about their classmates' chauvinistic attitude. Mayer describe how in the woman's toilets men wrote: 'Compañeras, haced el amor, ayudad a mantener a los compañeros en pie de lucha'¹⁸⁴. Hence, they identified their captivity related to being seen as procreative beings and decided to criticise a tradition that highlighted that as a good and only quality of a woman. About the idea of women living in captivity, the *quinceañera* party represents many of the issues that subjugate the female gender. Although Lagarde's ideal types (mother-wives, whores, nuns, insane and prisoner) do not focus on the captivities girls and teenagers might be in, she does mention how women are prepared from childhood to accept their captivities.

There are parallelisms between the characteristics of patriarchy listed by Lagarde and the traditional party that were criticised during the event. According to Lagarde, the first characteristic of patriarchy is the 'antagonismo genérico, aunado a la opresión de las mujeres y al dominio de los hombres y de sus intereses'.¹⁸⁵ During the party, the celebrated girl is presented like merchandise that will please the male gaze and desires; this is why some of the artists of the performance compared the *quinceañeras* with a piece of meat. The second

¹⁸² José de Jesús Flores Figueroa and César Omar Balderrama Armendáriz, *La Tipología Del Kitsch. La Estética Del Mal Gusto* (Ciudad Juárez: Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, 2018), p. 15.

¹⁸³ Flores Figueroa and Balderrama Armendáriz, p. 18.

¹⁸⁴ Mayer, *Intimidades o no...*

¹⁸⁵ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 1401–1141.

characteristics is ‘la escisión del género femenino como producto de la enemistad histórica entre las mujeres, basada en su competencia por los hombres’.¹⁸⁶ The party allows for each birthday girl to eliminate competitors; for a whole night, the *quinceañera* has no competitors, she is under the spotlight to be chosen by men; the feminist artists looked for the opposite. As it was a collective event, none received more attention or was under the spotlight; to this date, there is not one artist named as the coordinator since they were all equally relevant. The third and last characteristic is that patriarchy is a ‘fenómeno cultural del machismo basado tanto en el poder masculino patriarcal, como en la inferiorización y en la discriminación de las mujeres’.¹⁸⁷ *Quinceañera* parties are linked to the age when girls start menstruating and can therefore become pregnant, but the party does not even focus on fertility; it focuses on offering her as a product that will satisfy men’s desires. Ethnic origins and social class intersect the fate of women; not all of them will become wives (Lagarde refers to them as *madresposas* since being a wife is entirely link to the possibility of becoming a mother), only the ‘lucky’ ones who are considered as promising candidates for motherhood, the obedient ones who ‘aprende la renuncia, da placer, y el intercambio desigual [...] Madresposa, para ella hombre es amado-amo’.¹⁸⁸ These parties intend to portray precisely the teenagers as suitable future wives. The whole event of the *Quinceañera party* made explicit the patriarchal motivation of these festivities and questioned how they have been portrayed.

The many *artivists* actions that took place during the event criticised social and symbolic constructions that diminish women. By now, it is clear that they were confronting symbolic violence, though it had not been defined for that moment. Among Mexican gender studies scholars, Pierre Bourdieu’s definition of symbolic violence is popular; he introduced it in his book *La domination masculine* (1998)¹⁸⁹, translated to Spanish the same year it was printed in French. Bourdieu wanted to identify the origins of the male domination in Western cultures; by studying the Berbers he found that gender inequality was founded in a symbolic construction that justifies male superiority. In a recent book where she synthesises the Mexican feminist theory, Marta Lamas, a feminist scholar that began working a few years before the feminist artists started, explains the relevance of Bourdieu’s definition according to the Mexican reality. This explanation is the source of her definition of symbolic violence as the

¹⁸⁶ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 1401–1141.

¹⁸⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 1401–1141.

¹⁸⁸ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 275.

¹⁸⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *La Dominación Masculina* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1998)..

socio-cultural construction that affirms men are superior to women. Lamas goes even further and includes the idea of a binary order as a core element of symbolic violence; the imposition of the binary order denies identities outside the heteronormativity. Lamas agreed with Bourdieu that one of the complexities of symbolic violence is that women accept and reproduce the symbolic conventions that support the unequal social order.¹⁹⁰ So, when women challenge this order and take the symbols and, somehow, answer to them, they are deconstructing gender; that is the exercise the artists did for the event. That is precisely what the artists did during the event; they recognised the symbols and deconstruct them. However, following Lagarde's argument, it is possible to agree with how women reproduce symbolic violence, but it seems like a consequence of being kept in captivity. Hence, it seems highly relevant that they organised a party. The event that was between performance, an art installation and a social gathering allowed the women to celebrate and have fun, to actually enjoy acting in freedom. Keeping the idea of the party, most of them worked with irony in the representation of women as sexual objects suited for reproduction.

Since the event was not recorded or covered adequately by the media, there are two primary sources to describe *The Quinceañera Party*: Mayer's artistic archive *Pinto mi raya* [it would literally be translated as *I paint my line*, but it means *I set my limits*, or *I keep my distance*] and the testimonies of those present. They worked with the meaning of the dresses, the dancing and the party itself and recreated them in a feminist way. To do so, they had to understand the meaning and the implications of the party in reference to gender constructions. The artists recreated the princess-like dresses traditionally worn at these parties; artists wore the dresses, but they also dressed the statues as objects dressed up nicely and, next to them, they placed banners denouncing domestic violence and discrimination against the women in the arts. It can even be stated that if women are objectified, then there is not much difference between the statue of a woman and a real woman, at least not from the male gaze perspective. They had 2000 participants (referred to as guests during the event) for the inauguration, who were included during the waltz and other actions. The group *Bio-Arte* created plastic dresses which looked like plastic wrapping transmitting the idea that, during these parties, women entered like products to the marriage market. *Polvo de Gallina Negra* presented a performance called *The Illusions and the Perversions*; it worked with the oxymoron sustained at the traditional *quinceañera* parties where the girl acts innocently during the waltz and later

¹⁹⁰ Marta Lamas, *Feminismo. Transmisiones y Retransmisiones*, Kobo Edition (Mexico City: Santillana Ediciones Generales, 2010).

performs a highly sexual dance with different partners. Mónica Mayer and Víctor Lerma portrayed the innocent romance by passionately kissing having a huge woven heart behind them; meanwhile, Maris Bustamante had a transparent dress showing her vagina, and it was torn by Rubén Valencia, making her bleed as a metaphor of how girls are over-sexualised during the dance with the chamberlains, he also splashed people with semen portraying the idea of the perfect stallion. Together, both performances criticise the common romantic outcomes for the Mexican reality: the loving couple and the violent one where a woman is a sexual object. Julia de la Fuente created collages with media images and dolls to criticise the relation between patriarchy and the phallic symbolic order; the dolls are also present in the real *quinceañera* parties as the birthday girl receives her last doll for her to say goodbye to childhood. The focus was symbolic violence; however, each invited artist had the freedom to present whatever they wanted if it was related to violence and discrimination against women.¹⁹¹ So, in terms of the rhizome, the action itself was thought of as a gathering of a multiplicity of reactions to the proposed topic. It also reunited several flows of desire or nodes which were questioning symbolic violence. Each artwork presented during the event was connected and, at the same time, acted like an independent node that generated its own different reactions.

¹⁹¹ Monica Mayer, *Pinto mi raya*, 2017 < <http://pregunte.pintomiraya.com/index.php/la-obra/feminismo-y-formacion/item/28-la-fiesta-de-xv-anos-del-grupo-de-arte-feminista-tlacuilas-y-retrateras> > [accessed 12 June 2020].



Figure 6. Ana Victoria Jiménez, *No Title-La Fiesta de los XV años*, Mexico City, 1983.

Retrieved from:

<http://pregunte.pintomiraya.com/index.php/la-obra/feminismo-y-formacion/item/28-la-fiesta-de-xv-anos-del-grupo-de-arte-feminista-tlacuilas-y-retrateras>

Most of the artworks and performances included in the event made a critique while avoiding a painful dynamic that reminded women of their victim condition. Mónica Mayer's performances usually bet for non-aggressive healing techniques that allow women (in many cases, victims of violence) to express their pain in safe environments. The feminist artworks analysed here show two trends when dealing with violence against women. If they include the victims' testimonies or participation, like *The Clothesline*, then the artists create a safe and respectful environment, usually looking for a reflexive or cathartic exercise. When the artists are trying to reconstruct a cultural aspect for which participants need to question their own history, in many cases a traumatic reality, they bet for laughter. They work like some sort of comic relief which makes the assimilation of certain problems easier. There is a therapeutic intention in both cases, which comes from the *artist's* interests and its liminal nature. For *the Quinceañera Party*, they proposed laughing and playing as therapeutic action. As with any rhizomatic project, it is expected to have a variety of reactions. The artistic community was divided between those who supported the exhibition and were part of it; those who said they

supported it and, in the end, did not show up because they were afraid of the consequences; and those who rejected it. About those who were committed but at the end did not show up, Mayer issued a press release in which she affirmed they got afraid of the retaliation by museums and galleries; however, she stated that feminists were used to these situations and were more thankful to those who were committed than angry against the traitors.¹⁹² For the artists and activists present at the event, it is still a common reference of effective feminist action against patriarchy.¹⁹³

The reaction of the critics is another evidence of the *artivists* and liminal qualities of the event. In Mayer's press release, she thanks and recognises art critic Raquel Tibol, who was invited as a godmother but ended up doing so many coordinating activities she was considered as one more artist. Other art critics were unable to identify it as art, though the event took place in an artistic institution, while others said it was a poorly performed play or a political action and not an artistic proposal.¹⁹⁴

In summary, it is possible to detect the violent events the artists were focalising on as the initial point in both artworks. In both events, artists proposed two strategies that younger artists have replicated.¹⁹⁵ The first one is to re-signify a space, the street and the university where women are exposed to violence and machismo were transformed into a gender-friendly place. The second one is to have fun while dealing with pain (which was later done by Cerrucha). They organised a performance for women to pretend to be witches (and all the critiques this implies); so, it was like role-playing for them to release the pain. But they also organised a party, and the intention was for participants to have fun and, in the meanwhile, destroy male chauvinistic symbols. It is also possible to identify the qualities of a rhizome as a reaction to the performances that were heterogeneous and multiple. Either negative or positive, each reaction was a rupture. Socially or scholarly, both performances are still being discussed, so they are not over yet. These characteristics make it possible to consider *Recipe for Giving the Evil Eye to Rapists Or, Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies* and *The Quinceañera Party* as *artivists* proposals. Concerning the liminal space, both performances

¹⁹² Maris Bustamante and Mónica Mayer, 'Ladies, Chambelanes and Godmothers in The Quinceañera Party', in *Si Tiene Dudas...Pregunte*, ed. by Mónica Mayer (Mexico City: MUAC and UNAM, 2016), p. 64.

¹⁹³ All the text referenced here about Mexican feminist art discuss the performance. Gladys Villegas, Araceli Barbosa, Karen Cordero, María Laura Rosa and Lorena Zamora described it as a turning point in the history of Mexican art.

¹⁹⁴ Rosa, p. 138.

¹⁹⁵ Monica Mayer stated that, for her, having fun is important as it makes it easier for women in pain to work with their trauma. She recently stated this again. *Artivismos Feministas, Poner El Cuerpo. Conversación Entre Mónica Mayer, Lía García 'La Novia Sirena' and Liz Misterio*.

were conceived as rituals that included the viewers as participants. Both could be regarded as liminal, occurring in the threshold and promoted a horizontal *communitas*. By being outside the artistic institutions' rules, not caring about the aesthetic cannon or the critics' reception and promoting a transition where women stand against violence, they created the *communitas*, which Diéguez described as a requirement of activities in the liminal space. They both may be seen as a criticism of some of the situations Lagarde considered as captivities. The commonly subordinated sex, the female sex, oversaw the events, controlling the discussion and acting against different forms of violence. Finally, what these artists did has settled the ground for the feminist *artist* proposals in Mexico.

Chapter II. The Rhizomatic Effect of Lorena Wolffer's Cultural Projects of Social Intervention

The rhizomatic effect I argue feminist art or *artivism* has is linked to both the artist or *artist*'s intentions and the reaction from the public, who are understood to be participants. I will evidence this by analysing *Evidencias* [Pieces of Evidence], a project created by Lorena Wolffer between 2010 and 2016, with which she proposed a platform to denounce violence. Traditionally associated with the performance genre, Wolffer changed her strategies for this installation which promoted a rhizomatic effect while enhancing the emergence of *sororidad*. Wolffer began working a decade later after Mayer and Bustamante; hence, it is possible to observe what she inherited and how she contributed to these forms of liminal feminist art. Since she has remained in contact with the first generation of feminist artists, —mostly, as explained in the previous chapter, with Monica Mayer— it is possible to state that the evolution of these practices arises from a constant dialogue. As the project resulted from Wolffer's contact with victims of gender-based violence, *Evidencias* has a sociological aspect to it; hence, I will regard it as an artistic and social project that promotes the emergence of *sororidad*.

Lorena Wolffer is a Mexican feminist who creates cultural interventions to confront violence against women. She was one of the few artists that throughout the 1990s, still called herself a feminist. During a discussion panel amongst feminist artists in 2001, she represented the young generation of artists who inherited the feminist tradition pioneered by the *Grupos* during the 1980s. She argued that, for her generation, identifying oneself as a feminist was not typical due to the widespread belief that the feminist fight was over, as their goals had already been reached; for her, this idea of the end of feminism came from the United States.¹⁹⁶ She has observed North American art's influence on Mexican art.¹⁹⁷ To her returned, she taught and organised workshops on feminist art, just like Mayer did; so, when the new generation of feminist artists began working, she was one of the few referents from the 1990s. Her work has always mixed cultural interventions, the promotion of other feminist artists and teaching. By considering the promotion and her workshops as crucial as her art, she gained the trust of different communities and became an advocate of several feminist issues.¹⁹⁸ As a recognition of her art and her communitarian role, she has held different relevant positions in the artistic

¹⁹⁶ Arias and others, pp. 280–81.

¹⁹⁷ Lorena Wolffer, 'Semblanza', *Lorena Wolffer*, 2020 <<https://www.lorenawolffer.net/00home.html>> [accessed 3 April 2020].

¹⁹⁸ *Mujeres En Acción. Lorena Wolffer*, Serie Documental de Performance 'Mujeres En Acción', 3 vols (Mexico: CONACULTA-FONCA, 2006), III.

sphere (at the National Institute of Fine Arts, the UNAM and UAM, to name just a few). In these positions, she acquired a reputation for promoting the art of minorities and discriminated-against groups. As a result of her commitment, she is seen as someone who can amplify the voices of subaltern groups, empowering them to disseminate their message to a wider audience.

With *Evidencias* it is possible to observe how she relates to the artistic sphere. Despite her extensive work with museums and cultural institutions, she has indicated a preference for working outside the mainstream.¹⁹⁹ She stated: ‘Si mi hacer es arte o no me da igual, nunca he tenido una buena relación con el mundo del arte. Trabajo en instituciones de arte cuando conviene a los proyectos que estoy realizando. No me interesa la interlocución con los sistemas del arte.’²⁰⁰ As I will come to discuss in greater depth, *Evidencias* was presented both inside and outside museums—a deliberate social strategy. Whenever she exhibits inside a gallery and museum, she works with the identity of the place to deliver a pertinent message. She does not reject funding from private and public sources; however, it is worth noting that she is trying to find alternatives to it. In 2020, along with María Laura Rosa, Mónica Mayer, Vivian Abenshushan and Cerrucha, she founded a collective called Disidenta. This independent collective is a digital educational platform where the artists teach and the projects of their students. It also aims to facilitate fundraising in a manner not bound by institutional constraints. In a way, Wolffer is a bridge between the first generation of feminist artists and the new one; hence, the selection of her work. As I will explore in Chapter 4, Wolffer has always promoted an educational and pedagogical project as part of her artistic labour. For this occasion, she worked with victims of gender violence and as with most of her installations, she sought to benefit those affected.

Wolffer’s main concern with *Evidencias* was about doing something to help the women rather than merely satisfying an artistic agenda; this would justify the search for *sororidad*. The word *sororidad* was initially introduced to the Mexican discussion by the feminist Marcela Lagarde (1989). She borrowed the term, originally in French, from Gisèle Halimi’s work on *sororité* which, at the same time, is based on Kate Millett’s idea of sisterhood. For the purpose of this study, it makes sense to keep the word in Spanish as it is phonetically similar to *solidaridad* [solidarity], a fundamental virtue necessary to achieve a ‘feminist agreement’. Lagarde defines *sororidad* as ‘un pacto político entre pares’.²⁰¹ According to her, *sororidad*

¹⁹⁹ See Addendum, interview with Lorena Wolffer.

²⁰⁰ Lorena Wolffer, ‘Historias Propias: Inscribiendo Las Narrativas de Lxs Otrxs En La Ciudad’ (Mexico: TV Universidad de Murcia, 2019) <<https://tv.um.es/video?id=141155>> [accessed 15 February 2020].

²⁰¹ Lagarde y de los Ríos, ‘Pacto entre mujeres. Sororidad’, p. 126.

has a historical aspect.²⁰² She observes that it is an agreement that existed before it was named; the minute women form a liminal or underground agreement to survive or confront any form of patriarchal institution and reject the dynamics of rivalry amongst women, then *sororidad* appears. Based on the history Lagarde tracks about the female agreement, she affirmed the concept does not mirror fraternity, the latter is an expression of patriarchy, the former an act of resistance to it. The latter excludes women; the former organises and gives agency to them. *Sororidad* is necessarily political as it seeks to modify the social, cultural and political structure that suppresses women. It implies a social responsibility for women to share their knowledge with others and to recognise every woman. Above all, it has an ethical aspect, as it affirms women's dignity. To merely gather and organise women does not automatically produce *sororidad*; it is only through empathy and recognition that an agreement might be reached, and that is where *artivism* may have an active role. The creative process of *Evidencias* promoted exactly that. By seeking to encourage women to share their experiences, it made the realisation of Wolffer's artistic vision the responsibility of the participants to realise Wolffer's vision, rather than Wolffer herself. Her creative vision was to construct a solid platform where women could share their experiences and denounce their oppressors.

By the end, *Evidencias* displayed 237 objects that were used to harm women; hence, its strength is in its multiplicity. Observing them together allows the observer to witness and understand all the possible forms of violence against women. It is because of the women's violent experiences that feminist scholars and Wolffer work the same classification of violence listed in the General Law for Women to Access a Life Free of Violence. The feminists in Mexico that began writing in the 1960s not only promoted concepts such as *sororidad* or *affidamento* [entrusting]²⁰³ but actively worked to guarantee Human Rights and equal access to opportunities for women. Therefore, in 2003, when Marcela Lagarde became one of the first feminists to be democratically elected as a federal deputy in Mexico, it represented a triumph for the feminist movement. As a deputy, she was committed to improving women's lives and reducing violence against women; her most significant success was creating the law that protects women and girls: The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence [GLWALFV]. She promoted the law along with Martha Lucía Micher, a leftist feminist politician and fellow deputy at the time. Several provisions of this Law made it suitable as a

²⁰² REMUFEVER, 'Conferencia Marcela Lagarde' (YouTube, 2020)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jG228hqYdbs&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1YQYn2beRPjdoEzZETYUtB61DWR3awNmIK1Q4QNON5GXtj0xyOSs7IV0Q>> [accessed 10 June 2020].

²⁰³ Marta Lamas has actively promoted the term, keeping it in Italian, to explain what a community needs to give agency to every girl or woman. Lamas.

theoretical framework for the analysis of violence and this artwork. As a law, it sought to confront violence not only directly, but also indirectly, putting forward a series of measures to reduce the rate of violence against women, with the overarching aim of eliminating it altogether. As stated in the previous chapter, this legislation therefore reflects the feminist agenda and considers the definitions conceived in the international treaties signed by Mexico (mainly CEDAW and Belem Dó Para);²⁰⁴ so, the law is in coherence with what scholars, experts and international lawyers have proposed to eradicate violence against women.

II.I. Wolffer's *Evidencias*. Witnessing Gender Performativity

Evidencias is in dialogue with the existing legislation as it is a manifestation of the nodes that are part of the transfeminist rhizome as conceptualise in Chapter I. In a way it demonstrates the reality of the legal categories of violence against women and justifies the notion of a law that protects women exclusively. On the subject of using the law Wolffer affirmed: 'Yo trabajo mucho con la legislación, creo que las leyes son una radiografía muy clara de quienes somos como sociedad'. Hence, I can state that *Evidencias* is also a radiography of the Mexican society. On the other hand, as will be appreciated throughout my thesis, the law is important for feminist artists or *artivists* as they are constantly pointing out how the law is not enforced. As Lagarde comes from academia and not from politics, the law is the outcome of social research. Before promoting the law, and recognising the emergency to stop violence against women, Lagarde and her team carried out, in four months, a national diagnosis on gender violence, which they used as a basis of the law. According to the law, violence against women is defined as: 'Any action or omission, based on gender, that causes women psychological, physical, patrimonial, economic, or sexual harm or suffering, or death, in both private and public sphere'.²⁰⁵ This same classification can be detected in *Evidencias*, and this is far from coincidental, as both the law and the art project save the same subject —the experiences of actual women. One of the biggest advantages of the law is that it classifies violence on the basis of where it happened, who inflicted it and the kind of violent action, settling specific preventive, restorative and punitive sentences for each type of action, also taking into account the context in which it

²⁰⁴ CEDAW was the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women which treated was approved by the United Nations in 1979 < <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>> [accessed 22 June 2020]. Belem Dó Pará was the Interamerican Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication Any Form of Violence Against Women, signed and approved in 1995 < <https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>> [accessed 22 June 2020].

²⁰⁵ Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, *General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (Translation)* <http://www.summit-americas.org/brief/docs/Law_on_access_to_a_life_free_violence.pdf>.

occurred. The government employs several mechanisms, many of them visual tools, to divulge and teach the content of the law and, in that sense, Wolffer's project has a lot of similarities.

The objects, testimonies and creative dynamic of *Evidencias* might make it a suitable tool for gender-based workshops. I particularly observe several similarities with the *Violentómetro*; while I consider the differences between the artwork and the sociological visual tool to make the former more impactful. This reminds me of one of the liminal qualities suggested by Diéguez; these are projects that question the category of artwork. Outside a museum, *Evidencias* would be like many other exercises in workshops about gender-based violence. Exactly like the *Violentómetro*, a graphic and didactic tool that represents forms of violence in a metaphoric thermometer; the objective is to provide a visual aid that illustrates how violence escalates. It was designed by the Instituto Politécnico Nacional, and it is usually distributed for free by the government and the human rights institutions. It is usually employed by social scientists to explain to women what is considered as gender-based violence and, how actions regarded as normal (insults) may escalate, culminating in feminicides. Although the *Violentómetro* is an excellent and popular tool, it differs from *Evidencias* in that it does not address the different spheres in which violence may occur. Furthermore, the *Violentómetro* does not include real female experiences, whereas the testimonies of *Evidencias* make it impossible to deny that these situations and contexts exist, and that they affect real women, thus providing women with the comfort of knowing that their experience is not unique. *Evidencias* transmits a sense of being done for women by women. Hence, while detecting many similarities with the *Violentómetro*, I would advise using Wolffer's project more often with the same social objective. After all, the artwork and the artwork's archive are available for free at the MUAC and online.

For *Evidencias*, Wolffer exhibited objects as indices of gender violence. Though the installation may be seen as a partial description of the problem of violence since she focused²⁰⁶ on the victims donating the evidence, the effect that is worth exploring is that on the women included as participants. It was partial in that, most likely, any artistic or *activist* proposal would be unable to fully encompass such a complex problem. As Marcela Lagarde stated when asked in Spain why there were so many cases of femicide in Mexico, she replied that for each county, there would be different reasons and conditions that result from the diversity with

²⁰⁶ As explained in the previous chapter, focalisation allows to simplify the identification of a rhizomatic structure.

which sexist violence becomes prominent.²⁰⁷ However, it seems clear that Wolffer's goal was not to recreate the landscape of violence in Mexico, or identify the causes of violence; but to create a safe platform for women to denounce their stories of violence freely. In the end, what results is a mosaic that demonstrates the plurality of how women survive gender-based violence and machismo in Mexico. Regarding Lagarde's argument framing women as captives, it is the sexist cultures they find themselves in that legitimise and maintain their captive statuses. Since this captivity is a cultural one, the *sororidad* offers a pact that allows women to eliminate the misogynistic structure. In this sense, Wolffer's exercise meant that women from different backgrounds arrived at a safe space to share their anecdotes and identify others like themselves, fostering empathy and this enabling *sororidad*. If *sororidad* is a pact 'basado en el reconocimiento de la enajenación y en la eliminación de los prejuicios misóginos que nos distancian'²⁰⁸ then *Evidencias* enabled it by a recognition of other women and a refusal to accept gender-based violence as something natural or immutable.

Evidencias resulted from a collective exchange of experiences; enable but not coordinated by Wolffer. According to the definition of *artivism* that I provided it would be possible to categorise it like an *artist* project. Nevertheless, during an interview in 2020, she stated that, for now, she does not consider herself an *artist* because she disagrees with the possibility of homogenising the effects these kinds of projects have.²⁰⁹ In fact, it is nonsense to assume that the effects of *artivism* can be homogenised if the outcome has a rhizomatic structure. Wolffer believes that she will always be linked to art and *artivism*, but it does not necessarily follow from this that her main concern is to comply with aesthetic or institutional parameters. Her main concern is to modify the cultural sphere with her projects; however, considering how *artivism* is defined in this thesis, it is possible to understand Wolffer's work using this neologism without forcefully framing her production. After all, when being interviewed in 2020 by the *artist* Cerrucha, she declared that she felt her work is more identified with what feminists in the USA call 'cultural projects of social intervention.'²¹⁰ Although she did not mention to whom exactly she was referring, it does not take much effort to note the parallels that exist between what she does and says and Suzanne Lacy's scheme for new public art. Wolffer terms her projects as 'participative cultural interventions', which is

²⁰⁷ She replied to this question during a conference she gave for the Grupo de Investigación Igualdad de Género [Research Group Gender Equality] and the Law Department of the Universidad de La Rioja. Later on, it was published. Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Las Leyes de Violencia de Género En México: Medidas de Prevención y Sensibilización'.

²⁰⁸ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 62.

²⁰⁹ See the Addendum 1.

²¹⁰ Cerrucha, 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.'

how *artivism* has been defined in this thesis. The participative element and the desire to work with populations from different backgrounds insert her work into the liminal space.

Wolffer's work has changed according to her interest in gender violence and her desire to increase public awareness of, and interaction with the issue. Initially, she used performance to establish an immediate and direct relation with the spectator, also rejecting the idea of the art object as something to be kept inside a museum, demanding no direct interaction with the audience besides contemplation. However, as she stated in an interview during the last exhibition of *Evidencias*, within time, she became interested in different forms of art: 'Dejé de importar mi cuerpo, lo que yo tenía que decir dejó de ser el centro, me dediqué a crear plataformas en donde se podían escuchar muchas voces'.²¹¹ The idea that the artist herself, and the body of the artist, should not be considered the most important aspect of her work relates to the North American feminist theorist Judith Butler's influence on her work. In the same interview, she mentioned Butler and Ileana Diéguez as some of her main influences.

In *Evidencias* Butler's influence is perceivable in both structure and contents. In the previous chapter I stated that I would explore Butler's proposal, as her conceptualisation of gender is shared by all artists here analysed. Judith Butler's gender theory has significantly impacted feminist art, not only in Wolffer's case. Amelia Jones²¹² and Peggy Phelan²¹³ explained how feminist artists changed their use of their bodies in performances. This shift owed itself to an increasing awareness of intersectionality, and a growing opposition to the notion of gender essentialisms. In this context, in 1990, when *Gender Trouble* was published, it seemed to answer some of the concerns about essentialism when reducing gender to a body.²¹⁴ This does not mean that all or only feminist artistic performances could be regarded as essentialist. Artistic performers looked for a different interaction with the audience while performing. The same change can be identified in Lorena Wolffer's work: moving from performance to different art proposals. For Butler, gender is a performative identity quality that results from an artificial and rigid order: 'Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being'.²¹⁵ Although Butler did not reject the body,

²¹¹ Lorena Wolffer -- *Entrevista Con María Laura Rosa* (Buenos Aires, 2018) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXpFZs2qMgM>> [accessed 28 May 2019].

²¹² Jones.

²¹³ Phelan and Reckitt..

²¹⁴ Even pioneer artists, such as Judy Chicago, has considered their own work as essentialist. She did it with *The Dinner Party*, one of the most important feminist artworks. Jonathan Griffin, 'You Have to Choose Hope - an Interview with Judy Chicago', 2019 <<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/you-have-to-choose-hope-an-interview-with-judy-chicago/>> [accessed 6 May 2021].

²¹⁵ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 33.

as she explained in the preface of the second edition (1999) of the book mentioned above, she claims that it is not the body that determines gender, but the political, social, cultural and economic interpretations of it.²¹⁶ Butler finds that the binary order of masculine/feminine only works by decontextualising genders from ‘class, race, ethnicity and the axes of power relations that both constitute the “identity” and make the singular notion of identity a misnomer’.²¹⁷ Following authors like Butler, Wolffer rejects the possibility of reducing gender identities to their genitals and affirms that gender is something imposed through performativity: ‘lo ha planteado Paul Preciado, pero también lo ha planteado mucho Judith Butler, que tiene que ver con la performatividad, en donde se confunde origen con repetición, es decir: yo soy mujer en tanto repito, como una actividad usar maquillaje o ponerme unos tacones’.²¹⁸ In this sense, the binary gender construction is violent and, as a result, inevitably begets further violence. This is also linked to the notion of how artists dialogue with the audience.

In 2004, Wolffer presented a performance called *Mientras dormíamos (El caso Juárez)* [*While We Were Asleep. (The Juárez’ Case)*]. For this performance, Wolffer painted her body with the fatal wounds of fifty femicide victims from Ciudad Juárez, accompanied by the sound of a police recording describing the corpses. It was this performance, and the questions that it raised that led Wolffer to modify her methods. Wolffer reduced the use of her body understanding it to be intersected by categories of class and ethnicity, which limited the dialogue with other women. After all, she is a white woman, and aware of how her physical appearance poses a barrier between herself and the public she is seeking to engage. When describing this shift, Wolffer employed plural than singular pronouns: ‘Me interesó trabajar con las mujeres, empecé a hablar con mujeres en un refugio y eso cambió por completo mi práctica, pasé de lo que yo llamo un singular a un plural’²¹⁹. It is harder to refute the existence of a phenomenon when several people have experienced it. However, the plurality of testimonies also attested to the fact that the experience of womanhood is not a homogenous one. Furthermore, some testimonies highlighted that women felt they had to suffer violence in silence, that being subjected to violence was an inevitability just part of their lot in life.

²¹⁶ She also published a book in 1993 called *Bodies that matter* where she discusses the relevance of the body in the gender construction. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

²¹⁷ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 4.

²¹⁸ Lorena Wolffer, Es incomprensible e inadmisible la postura de las terfs: Lorena Wolffer, 2021 <<https://monicamaristain.com/es-incomprensible-e-inadmisible-la-postura-de-las-terfs-lorena-wolffer/>> [accessed 6 April 2022].

²¹⁹ Lorena Wolffer, ‘Historias Propias: Inscribiendo Las Narrativas de Lxs Otrxs En La Ciudad’.

Therefore, the fact that they publicly denounced the mistreatment they received revealed that they did challenge the previous normative conceptions they had held about womanhood.

Evidencias suggests that several women experiences seem to point towards an understanding of gender as a performance, in which sex is not destiny. Furthermore, the different ways of performing the female gender can be witnessed once one has access to the stories of women. This is what *Evidencias* does, without disqualifying other forms of expressing performativity. Although Wolffer did not stop performing, she now conceives of her artistic practice differently, using performance as a personal exercise, rather than a collective act.²²⁰ An excellent example of her practice's evolution was her work *Fe de hechos* [Fact Statement] (2010). She used performance to relieve, according to her, all the-pain accumulated after being exposed to so many stories of violence. *Fe de hechos* was cathartic, but mainly for Wolffer. Not all forms of performance ceased or became considered essentialist in nature. Even before Butler's work, artists were suggesting performative dynamics that included the audience as active participants; after all, as observed previously, performances like *Polvo de Gallina Negra's* were organised eight years before *Gender Trouble*.²²¹ What Wolffer's platforms offer are the possibility of presenting womanhood as a political category.

There are no contradictions between holding an all-female exhibition, like *Evidencias*, and affirming gender performativity. However, it does distance Wolffer from Lagarde's feminist proposal. The difference between a feminism like Lagarde's and the transfeminism Wolffer is following will become more evident in chapter four. Claiming that gender is performative and defending a law that is exclusively for women makes sense when supporting a notion of womanhood as a political category. Lagarde's stance in this regard is not clear; however, it will become relevant later in this thesis. Meanwhile, it is important to observe that transfeminism claims that: 'la diferenciación y naturalización artificial de la desigualdad apela

²²⁰ Lorena Wolffer -- *Entrevista Con María Laura Rosa*.

²²¹ Linking the discussion to the Chicano art scene and Lacy's book, the work of artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña may provide other elements to the post-gender performativity and performance. He is one of the writers of *Mapping the Terrain, New Genre Public Art* in which he explains the migrant identity and its performative relevance. However, his concept of *ternura radical* [radical tenderness] might be more pertinent for this issue. Developed with the collective La Pocha Nostra, they use it to refer to exchange practices in which the artists, usually performers, provide the audience with artistic resistance techniques based on deep empathy and love. Feminist Mexican collectives such as ADA (Acción Directa Autogestiva) used the pedagogies of the *ternura radical* to teach cultural and physical self-defence. However, due to its implications, a deeper understanding of this concept would require a separate thesis. Gómez-Peña; Dani d'Emilia and Daniel Coleman, 'Ternura Radical es...manifiesto vivo', *hysteria revista!*, 16 July 2015
<https://www.google.com/search?q=ternura+radical+es...manifiesto+vivo&rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB886GB887&oq=ternura+radical+es...manifiesto+vivo&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160.9773j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> [accessed 28 February 2022].

al cuerpo sexuado binariamente forma parte de un proyecto de expolio'²²² in which women are reduced to their genitality and deemed to be inferior to male subjects. Denying that there is only one way of being a female subject, as the homogeneity is linked to biology, somehow exhibits the limits of the system. That is what is illustrated with the testimonies of *Evidencias*.

Evidencias shows the relation between gender performativity and gender-based violence. Judith Butler herself has discussed how these two spheres are related. Aside from her influence in the arts, Butler has been in constant dialogue with Mexican feminists, engaging in a continuous exchange of ideas with them. She has travelled to Mexico and has recognised feminist academic production. Butler, in particular, has highlighted Marcela Lagarde's work with the concept of femicide.²²³ Defining gender as performative may not be as in vogue as was once the case. Recently, gender studies centres have concerned themselves more with attempting to explain gender violence through research and analysis than with defining gender itself.²²⁴ However, it is still being discussed in more conservative and Catholic spheres, as Pope Francis became the first pontiff to include the word 'gender' in the Social Doctrine.²²⁵ In this context, Butler's ideas are rejected as they define gender as a social manifestation more than an element constrained by sex. Although Butler's definition of gender has been accepted by liberal centres and is less discussed, some academics still highlight her proposal.²²⁶ Continuing to explore it may provide some answers in the struggle against gender violence and *Evidencias* offers several examples of this.

Evidencias features the testimonies of women who began questioning the behavioural norms of their parents and grandparents, and the idea that they were intrinsic properties of to their sex, as adhesiveness is an intrinsic property of glue, for example, the stick of PVC. Others recalled the sense of violence they experienced when someone —usually one or both of their

²²² Valencia, 'El Transfeminismo No Es Un Generismo'.

²²³ Judith Butler, 'Cátedra Prima Julio Cortázar' (Guadalajara, Jalisco: Universidad de Guadalajara and Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara, 2018)

<<https://www.facebook.com/udg.mx/videos/1414010562067746/UzpfSTExMTEyNjAyNTU3MDcyMjpwSzoXMDQ3Nzg2NTk1NDI2MTk4/>>..

²²⁴ The oldest research centre on gender studies belongs to the UNAM. The CIEG [Gender Studies Research Centre], has four research areas: gender studies and feminism, contemporary inequality, identities and subjective studies, representations and cultural practices and, gender in science and technology. Hence, it can be appreciated that none of them are working towards a definition of gender.

²²⁵ The Encyclical Letter *Amores Laetitia* was the first document to discuss an idea of gender inside the Catholic Church. Although it calls for equality it distinguishes gender studies from gender ideologies. However, it accepts that there is a biological sex and a sociocultural one called gender. Pope Francis, *Amores Laetitia*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html> [accessed 31 August 2021].

²²⁶ Gabriela Cano at COLMEX is a good example of feminist academics promoting Butler. *¿Por qué importa Judith Butler? Por Gabriela Cano* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, A.C., 2015) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eE3h-QhOFU>> [accessed 20 May 2020].

parents— tried to reinforce the idea that there was only one proper way to be a woman. Taking the binary order as the norm, they insulted women for not being thin or feminine enough (some complained about being called *machorras*, meaning ‘butch’). Although some may criticise that something accomplished by the artist but the women giving their testimonies; however, curating collective testimonies allow Wolffer to observe the relation between performativity and violence. Since Wolffer knows and agrees with Butler’s theory, then it was not accidental.

Evidencias revealed the relation between capitalism and violence; hence, it can actually be considered as evidence of gore capitalism. As I started to describe in Chapter I, this concept reveals another link between Butler and the Mexican discussion, as Sayak Valencia defined it in her book *Capitalismo Gore* (2010). In conversation with Cerrucha, Lorena Wolffer has made reference to Sayak Valencia’s work,²²⁷ claiming that feminist artists are trying to confront contemporary Mexico’s sky-high levels of violence; hence, gore capitalism. Valencia’s theoretical project consists of the actualisation of academic concepts to adapt them to the Latin American realities. In doing so, she brings to the Mexican discussion authors such as Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Baudrillard, Derrida, Butler and other post-structuralists. She adapts Simone de Beauvoir’s famous phrase (‘One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’ (1971, p. 301)) and states: ‘no nacemos mujeres, sino que devenimos en ello’.²²⁸ The term she uses, ‘devenir’ [translated to English as to become],²²⁹ comes from Deleuze’s and Guattari’s philosophical project and supposes that, when the flow of desire is free, one is always becoming. The verb *Devenir* conveys an actualisation of the latent potentials an individual possesses. These potentials emerge from the free flowing of desire, so every actualisation results in a rhizome.²³⁰ Taking all this into account, Valencia might have been better off saying that ‘no nacemos mujeres, sino que debemos devenir en ello’ since hers is an ideal of a gender project inserted into transfeminism. This precise idea is what Butler defines as a performative act. Gender identity is not something static, but fluid, the product not of nature, but nurture. Valencia advocates for a queer construction of society that frees masculinity from violent qualities.

So, if Wolffer is actually trying to confront gore capitalism, she should produce projects that aim at deconstructing gender. Again, following Deleuze and Guattari, Valencia observes that Capitalism, especially Neo-Liberalist Capitalism, reinforces the link between masculinity and violence. She therefore advocated for a rhizomatic cultural structure that adds nuance to

²²⁷ Cerrucha, ‘Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.’

²²⁸ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 183.

²²⁹ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 183.

²³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 35.

the notion of gender, expanding its definition beyond the barriers imposed upon it by heteronormative societies. Under a dichotomic understanding of gender, men consider themselves the sole breadwinners and act violently because that is what they understand masculine behaviour to be. And given the mutual exclusivity of male and female characteristics, whenever a woman performs what are traditionally considered to be 'masculine' roles, she is punished for her transgression. The five of them, Deleuze, Guattari, Butler, Valencia and Lagarde, identified the mechanisms of imposition employed by capitalism that limit, or suppress altogether, the actualisation of free gendered identities. The already analysed *quinceañera* parties are a good example; they suppress the performative transformation of girls and force them into the captivity of suitable wives. In *Evidencias*, there are some testimonies that subtly reveal the relationship between the capitalist economic system and gender-based violence. The testimony, accompanied by a dollar bill, tells the story of a mother who was humiliated, held captive and abandoned the minute she started making her own money, challenging the role of the father as the only breadwinner. Another testimony, accompanied by a broom, consists of a woman explaining why it does not matter that she never got married since she has a successful career and financial independence without the help of a man. In listening to the testimony, one gets the sense that she feels the need to list everything she has accomplished to validate being 'man-less'. One final testimony I would like to use to prove this point is number 147, which consists of a picture of a pension receipt belonging to a woman that paid for the land where her house was built, and everything within it. However, when her and her partner separated, he insisted that everything belonged to him, claiming that he was the breadwinner and, as a result, the owner of everything in their possession.

The collective quality of *Evidencias* makes it an excellent visualisation of the plural identities of Mexican women. Even if there are multiple ways an artist can express a notion of gender performativity, as it has been done with performance and plastic arts, the gathering of several experiences might be a more successful means of making a case for gender performativity. At the same time, it also offers the possibility of observing how being yourself and performing your own gender role can be regarded as a challenge to the system. In other words, it is a visual representation of how the heteronormative order keeps the flow of desire captive. Consequently, it is possible to agree with both Lagarde and Valencia. Women are captives, and men act as their captors by perpetuating the violent mechanisms of misogyny. Following Valencia, I can state that this captive dynamic limits the flow of desire and the performance of gender identities. Violence is necessary for the neoliberal economic system, reinforcing the mechanisms that stop the flow of desire. There is no freedom nor actualisation

of potentialities where there is a hegemony concerning the ideas of masculinity and femininity. Gender violence therefore cannot be understood as a rhizome; despite being a highly complex phenomenon in any society, it is possible to trace its origins to the social, political and economic structures of that society. I would like to delve into one particular testimony that illustrates this —that of the woman who donated the CD and LGBT Pride bracelet— which tells the story of how once her brother, the patriarch of the family, lost his job, he insulted her for being a lesbian, and for being a deviant, ugly woman who had brought the gay disease to her family. Her testimony implies that, once he lost the status of main breadwinner —a bastion of his masculine identity— he instead expressed his masculinity through violence towards the sister who posed a threat to his rigid conception of appropriate gender norms. Valencia tries to explain these sorts of reactions by means of developing a theory about gore capitalism. Hence, I would like to further explore the concept of transfeminism. Valencia claims that only transfeminism, by defending gender as performative quality, frees the flow of desire: ‘Es necesario que las anudaciones y agenciamientos de los sujetos que buscan ofrecer una crítica a la resistencia ante el sistema dominante pasen por la conciencia del *devenir mujer, devenir negr@, de devenir indi@, devenir migrante, devenir precari@*’.²³¹ It supposes an acknowledgement of the intersectionality of the socio-economic system to construct a social hierarchy. This can only come in the form of a rhizome as none of the features of identity is intrinsic (class, ethnicity or gender) or, more important, binary; one should be free to perform who he/she/they is without being forced to behave according to cultural and economic expectations. Men are not naturally violent, but they are forced to act male, and therefore violently. Affirming that violence against women is a manifestation of patriarchy implies that it relies upon the cementing of masculinity at the top of the socio-cultural hierarchy. It is not inscribed in the biological identity of men and women, but men constantly perform a dominant role (that of the captor) while women are forced into submissiveness (that of the captive). If feminist *artivism* has a rhizomatic effect, it can be proposed as a mechanism to escape the patriarchal, binary impositions in which gender violence is founded. This also explains why feminist *artists* invite the spectator to become a participant; this ‘devenir’ can only be achieved through active involvement that recognises everyone’s role inside the system that seeks to deconstruct it. There are several testimonies in which women realise that what they experienced is not normal and should not be regarded as such. Wolffer’s project pushed women into a transitional stage of not accepting violence as normal and disregarding the idea of there

²³¹ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 180.

being only one way of being man or woman. The transitional aspect is what inserts *Evidencias* into liminality; however, there are two ways in which this happened, and I shall explain these in greater depth.

II.II. *Evidencias*. Building Liminal Sororidad

Where it was shown is part of the liminal quality of the work. *Evidencias* was firstly exhibited inside MUAC (a Contemporary Art Museum that is part of the UNAM) in 2010. She invited women to own the museum. The exhibition could be described as a display of a series of ready-mades; however, the use of the ready-made concept implies that the artist decontextualises an object and introduces it to a museum with a new meaning. Wolffer has declared that was not the case, since women arrived at the exhibition to donate an object or weapon used to harmed them and decided by themselves how to curate them.²³² In Wolffer's case, the object is exhibited with its context and the meaning given by the spectators; so, there is no semantic distortions in the descriptions of the donated objects. What was decontextualised were the museums where she presented the installation; those spaces became, simultaneously, a forum for women to tell their story, the cultural area holding the exhibition, and a sort of storage unit for the instruments of violence.

Itineration was part of the strategy that guaranteed the accomplishment of Wolffer's goals. Both in acquiring new objects and in finding more women that were affected by *Evidencias*, it extended the invitation for numerous women to join the political pact that produces *sororidad*. It was also a way of finding more women who could join forces against gender violence resulting in other nodes of the rhizomatic effect. The exhibition was presented from 2010 to 2016 in different locations. In Mexico City, besides MUAC, it was also shown at the Alameda Central (a park in central Mexico City next to the Museum of Bellas Artes) and the Parque España (located in la Condesa, a zone in Mexico City famous for its coffee shops, galleries and libraries; it is close to the main square and, gained widespread notoriety for being one of the central neighbourhoods not affected by the 1985 earthquake). In the city of Querétaro, it was presented at the Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro. Nestled in an old, central convent; the museum is an open space dedicated to promoting any artistic expression relevant for the city. In Tijuana, it was shown at the Centro Cultural Tijuana, the first and only institution of the Secretariat of Culture outside the capital, built to promote the national identity on the

²³² See Lorena Wolffer's interview in the Addendum.

northern border. Finally, in Guadalajara, it took place at the Museo de Arte Raúl Anguiano, a public institution that specialises in modern and contemporary art. When exhibited inside museums, it displayed the contributions of women who did not necessarily believe they had any place within these institutions. When the gathering was outside, it became an informal exchange meeting, reaching people who may not have come into contact with the exhibition had it been restricted to the interior of museums. The posters and the archive images were rendered the colours black, red, and white. Wolffer uses these three colours for all her projects. In 2019, while giving a conference at the Universidad de Murcia, she explained that she likes working with these rendered in the colours, due to their close associations with social and political activism, including strikes.²³³ In Mexico, the colours were initially used in workers' flags to oppose capitalist exploitation in Europe in the Nineteenth century. According to the worker and historian Jacinto Huitrón (1978), the first registered appearance in Mexico of a red and black flag during a workers' strike was in 1912 at the Casa del Obrero Mundial.²³⁴ Since then, other groups, such as the EZLN or Antorcha Campesina, have used these colours to convey anti-establishment sentiments. This makes sense since all her projects, including her performances, are a protest. Wolffer is striking against patriarchy through her art.

By the time Wolffer presented *Evidencias*, the GLWALFV had been in circulation for almost four years. During an interview in 2020, Wolffer declared that she considers the law an outstanding achievement; and noted that, despite this, it has been nearly 30 years since the firsts feminicides took place, and nothing has been enough yet to stop them. She acknowledges that the situation is actually getting worse since *violences* —because she discusses the issue in the plural as having different manifestations— are on the rise. Seen in this context, *Evidencias* becomes a permanent reminder of the violence(s) and the fact that they are suffered by actual women. By now, feminicides are not limited to Ciudad Juarez, but are now being committed all over the country. Her concern regarding the unacceptable lack of legal mechanisms for helping women suffering the realities of gendered violence suffused her artwork.²³⁵ *Evidencias* denounced violence from the victims' perspective. Wolffer did not have control over the type of *violences* she was going to exhibit; after all, the denunciations were not hers. By the end of the event, domestic violence was the most common one; both the Mexican law (even in the English translation) and Wolffer, named it *violence in the family sphere* for two reasons: it is

²³³ Lorena Wolffer, 'Historias Propias: Inscribiendo Las Narrativas de Lxs Otrxs En La Ciudad'.

²³⁴ The Casa del Obrero Mundial, was a socialist and anarcho-sindicalist worker's organization founded on 22 September 1912. It was in Tepito, a downtown neighborhood. Jacinto Huitrón, *Orígenes e Historia Del Movimiento Obrero En México* (Mexico City: Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 1978).

²³⁵ See Lorena Wolffer's interview in the Addendum.

not only a domestic issue, and it may happen outside the domestic sphere. The Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs translates it as follows:

An act of power abuse or intentional omission in an effort to dominate, subject, control or attack women, within or outside the family domicile, in a physical, verbal, psychological, patrimonial, economic or sexual way, when the aggressor is or has been related by consanguinity or affinity, by matrimony or common-law marriage, or maintains or has maintained a de facto relationship.²³⁶

Violence recognised legally as a manifestation of power confirms the idea of the traditional patriarchal family as a cell of masculine power; this conception of power justified the motto: ‘what is private is political’, linking this project with the first feminist artistic events. Claiming that such violence is domestic reduces the issue to the private sphere. Wolffer stated (2020) that she is creating a platform in which what may be considered a private issue is publicly presented. *Evidencias* did precisely that, although it would be more accurate to state that it promoted women publicly presenting their own experiences.

By exhibiting various forms of violence, *Evidencias* works in a pedagogical way. The pedagogical aspect of liminality appears in the fact that the donors of the objects and testimonies understood the relevance of sharing their stories and helping to teach others about the wrongs that were done to them. They do not seek to prove their superiority over those yet to notice that they are experiencing violence—they recognise the difficulties inherent in doing so. The law has another peculiarity relevant for the Mexican panorama: it specifies any form of relationship that may suggest a family connection. With bloodline, it covers brothers, parents, grandparents and uncles. Regarding partners, it includes any kind of relationship (past or present): marriage, concubinage and any other form of partnership. Classifying violence into types and modes does not mean that each of them is a different form of violence. They should be understood as an individual manifestation of patriarchy. As shown in the testimonies, violent events—encompassing everything from jokes to insults to femicide—are all an expression of women understood as the subaltern Others, as something that belongs to men. Women are captive of violence and are violently captive. In her book, Lagarde explains how each captivity comes with a form of violence (husband against wife, institutional violence against nuns or the insane, pimps against whores and the police against women prisoners), and women endure it for five reasons: fear of being lost without a man, concern at being singled out as the cause of violence, inability to recognise that they are victims, lack of trust in the police to do their job.

²³⁶ Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, p. 7.

The fifth factor mentioned by Lagarde is not attributable to women but to the authorities and the high levels of impunity in Mexico.²³⁷ So, it should be added that women perceive that there is nothing they can do when witnessing the failures of the institutions that are supposed to protect them. In this sense, it is pretty obvious that *Evidencias* helped women come to terms with the fact that they were suffering some sort of violence. Furthermore, besides giving agency to women to recognise violence, *Evidencias* also had other emancipatory effects upon women.

The fact that *Evidencias* ended up denouncing violence in the family sphere was not a specific intention of Wolffer, although she may well have been expecting the topic to emerge. Her focus was to create a platform for women to denounce the violence they faced, in lieu of adequate legal mechanisms to protect them. Based on statistics, the outcome of the collection of objects could have been predicted. Mexico's government had carried out a national survey about gender violence before Wolffer's installation. The 2006 ENDIREH (National Survey on the Dynamics and Relationships at Home) included the definitions provided in the GLWALFV. According to the results, 60.6% of women had suffered violence; of those, 41.1% had been victims at home.²³⁸ Before *Evidencias*, Wolffer had witnessed this issue when working at secret refugee homes for women; however, merely knowing the statistics was not enough to eradicate violence or even have a clear idea of what is needed to diminish it.²³⁹ *Evidencias* materialises the results of the poll while avoiding reducing the women involved to mere statistics. For the purposes of analysis, I have counted and classified the objects according to the classifications of the poll.

Since the women decided how and where to display their objects, Wolffer did not classify the objects herself. The pieces of evidence were presented in what seemed to be a completely disorganised manner —some inside glass display cases, some hanging from the wall, with beer bottles and knives scattered around the exhibition. Sometimes, what linked the objects were the testimonies, other times spatial limitations forced Wolffer to place the exhibit in a certain way. However, since the intention was to provide a spectrum of violence against women, I classify the objects into the kinds of violence classified in the law as this allows a better understanding of the Mexican panorama based on *Evidencias*. It is important to highlight that Wolffer did not modify or correct the grammar and spelling of the testimonies; for her, this would have been an imposition as having access to a good education in Mexico comes

²³⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 325–65..

²³⁸ INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional de Dinámica En Los Hogares*.

²³⁹ *Evidencias de Lorena Wolffer-Gobierno de Guadalajara* (Guadalajara, Jalisco, 2017) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwlug75M61k>> [accessed 28 May 2019]..

from privilege.²⁴⁰ Out of the 237 objects gathered in *Evidencias*, 180 corresponded to violence in the family sphere. The forms of violence that victims denounced were physical, psychological, sexual, and economical, they even included human trafficking; the most common were physical (104) and psychological (82). Four women stated that their partners attempted to murder them, and three had the denunciation made in their names as they were murdered. In terms of offenders, partners were the most frequently mentioned (138), followed by fathers and mothers (38). For Wolffer, it is fundamental to know their stories and create platforms where women get to tell them; such platforms give them a sort of agency and, by writing their stories in the first person, testimonies are linked to real subjects instead of becoming statistics. Also, if empathy is fundamental for establishing *sororidad*, it is essential to know the stories behind these women to understand them.

With *Evidencias*, and all Wolffer's projects, there is an intention of modifying the violent culture. If there is no cultural change—a 'hearts and minds' change—to accompany the legal reforms, then violence will not be eradicated. Marcela Lagarde shares with Wolffer the preoccupation about the lack of articulation between the Mexican legal frame and the violent context women experience. Although many elements explain why the GLWALFV is not working, it is interesting to consider Lagarde's hypothesis, bearing in mind that it was she who wrote the law in the first place. On 19 February 2020, Lagarde was invited by the Instituto Nacional Electoral [National Electoral Institute] to give a conference on gender violence. For Lagarde, the problem has to do with a lack of sensibility and knowledge from the authorities, mostly men.²⁴¹ As long as men continue to fulfil the expectations laid out for them by their masculinity, and consider violence an immutable and inevitable part of it, then violence against women will continue. There is a chance that if authorities and justice administrators have access to *Evidencias* they might contribute better to the eradication of gender-based violence. Each piece of evidence is a synecdochal representation of a crime scene. Still, some apparently do not make sense without the testimonies as they are not commonly seen as objects related to violence. For example, a hammer and a knife were displayed, accompanying a story of a woman who got her hand cut in a struggle against her husband, who was trying to cut her head. Even without the testimony, the evidential objects are easily associated with a violent scene. However, other objects, such as the bunch of coins and a bottle of urine are harder to understand

²⁴⁰ Lorena Wolffer, '*Historias Propias: Inscribiendo Las Narrativas de Lxs Otrxs En La Ciudad*'.

²⁴¹ *Conversatorio Con La Dra. Marcela Lagarde y de Los Ríos 'La Violencia Feminicida y El Femicidio'* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional Electoral, 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vT_PhjERVUY&t=6957s> [accessed 19 February 2020].

in their relation to violence, hence the testimonies' relevance. In the Mexican context, the testimonies still seem to be fundamental—a fact showcased by the case of Abril. In November 2019, a judge dismissed a case she had brought against her male partner, instead of choosing to advocate for a settlement between the two. He did not consider her to be a victim of violence since she was beaten with a bat which, according to him, is a toy and not a weapon. Eight months later, Abril was murdered by that same partner.²⁴² In *Evidencias*, there are other cases like Abril's—women on the receiving end of institutional violence, or denied the necessary information to denounce their abusers. Like the bat in Abril's story, it is not the object itself that is harmful, but the way it is used. I wonder what would have happened if the judge had seen *Evidencias* before Abril's case? The ability to regard an object as violent or non-violent becomes impossible and, at the same time, it encourages an understanding of the risk women are experiencing in all the contexts. That is why itinerance is so relevant for a project like as *Evidencias*, as it is not supposed to be seen only by common museum visitors.

On all the occasions it was exhibited, *Evidencias* had the same objective as a safe and anonymous platform; it worked as part of the healing process for sufferers of violence. In the aforementioned 2020 interview, Wolffer explained the dynamic that followed the arrival of the objects.²⁴³ As will be explained in greater depth, it was only during the first exhibition of *Evidencias* that Wolffer collected the objects at the museum; right there, the things were gathered and set up in a co-curatorship with the donors. She created a poster, also in red, white and black, calling for all women at UNAM to donate the objects with which they were harmed—an initiative that was supported by the museum and the PUEG [University Programme on Gender Equality]. The poster did not mention her name, nor the name of the exhibition, clearly stating the secondary role Wolffer assumed. In the poster she explained why it was important to denounce violence against women. In many cases, women came with their object, but not with their written testimony; hence, they had to tell their story while it was captioned publicly. To credibly claim it promoted the *communitas* I would have to have been there; however, I trust the artist's claim that she observed a cathartic horizontal organisation between the artists who were installing the pieces and the women donating the pieces and testimonies. As Diéguez notices of other projects, it is not easy to regard *Evidencias* as an artistic project as answering the question of who the artists is, as what makes her projects art might not be clear. Her art

²⁴² Carmen Aristegui, 'Así asesinaron a Abril Pérez Sagaón en la CDMX', *Aristegui Noticias* (Mexico City, 28 November 2019) <<https://aristeguinoticias.com/2811/mexico/asi-asesinaron-a-abril-perez-sagaon-en-la-cdmx/>> [accessed 7 April 2020].

²⁴³ See Interview with Lorena Wolffer in the Addendum.

contains elements of collective performance (during the donation), a therapeutic session, an installation, a public denunciation and a disposition of evidence. Consequently, it is safe to use liminal as an adjective to describe the work following Diéguez work. As stated before, Diéguez uses this category to analyse artworks of uncertain discipline and had the intention of answering a social need. Lorena Wolffer was present for the process of installation, assisted by student volunteers, and, in the case of MUAC, a psychologist who oversaw the entire process. Ideally, the psychologist would have accompanied all the installations of *Evidencias*, but due to budget issues, this proved impossible. The women present got the opportunity to share their own stories and hear those of their fellow victims—a painful but cathartic process. There was no specific protocol detailing how to donate the objects; the women donating were able to do so as they liked. Some wandered around the installation before finally handing over their objects. Others, upon arrival, saw pieces of evidence like their own or read testimonies analogous to those they had.

Evidencias could be interpreted as proof that women are not responsible for the violence they suffer. Lagarde mentions that among the problems faced by women victims of violence is that they are held responsible for it. Women are held accountable for gender-based violence when they are deemed to be bad or absent mothers, or if they fall under the category of emancipated woman: ‘Y, para colmo, se señala que los violentos tuvieron a la vez madres violentas, débiles o locas’.²⁴⁴ Lagarde also observed how women are regarded as more hostile than men behind claims affirming cannot organise gatherings to support each other or confront violence. Gendered violence arose as a punishment for women who acted in ways that did not conform to traditional gender norms, or as a mechanism to cement the dominance of men. Mothers pushed their daughters into captivity of marriage, desperate to avoid their daughters being ostracised or being labelled insane or a whore. Meanwhile, men dished out physical punishments in response to the perceived disobedience of their partners, or for daring to build a life of their own, outside their relationship. The stories presented by Wolffer allow participants to differentiate between victims and perpetrators of violence. Recognising how each woman is inserted into the captive structure is the first step along the path to freedom. So, in this sense, the effect of Wolffer’s installation is quite rhizomatic, her fight for a performative gender identity, which would allow women to escape from captivity, and for men to cease acting as captives, allowing for the flow of desire necessary for Wolffer’s installation to have the desired effect.

²⁴⁴ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 38.

Considering this, it seems like one of the consequences triggered by Wolffer's proposed dynamic was a demystification of the idea that women are responsible for the same violence to which she is subject. No woman reacted violently to the denunciations or narratives of the others; they understood each others' struggles and tried to support each other through them. Wolffer (2020) recounts that while their reactions varied —some crying, others showing anger— they all listened and discussed their experiences with one another, becoming aware that the experiences they had survived were not situations they should have had to endure. None of them were considered responsible for instigating the violence they suffered.²⁴⁵ In other words, they found themselves as allies and survivors of sexism. *Evidencias* had a restorative or healing quality that does not appear to be accidental if you follow Ileana Diéguez's hypothesis about the liminal art. Diéguez herself exemplifies this quality of the liminal with Wolffer's work.²⁴⁶ By proposing a meeting or dialogue between those who have been marginalised, or held captive, by the system, and inviting them to question the mechanisms that kept them in a state of liminality, there arises a rationalisation that allows them to stop blaming themselves and begin to understand how they can stop the violence to which they are subject. However, as mentioned above, to ensure that this effect is permanent and goes beyond the exhibition, it would have required the participation of a psychologist and a legal adviser. Eventually, Wolffer did insert her work into a formal psychological and legal process. Nevertheless, she never took her art exhibition to the authorities; it was always clear that this project was by and for the victims of violence and not a log of denunciations to be reported.

²⁴⁵ This can be observed when reading the testimonies. It was also mentioned by Wolffer during the interview. See Addendum.

²⁴⁶ Diéguez began discussing some projects of feminist art as liminal before Wolffer shifted from performance to the collaborative cultural project. The first time Diéguez mentions Wolffer was to explain how she achieved the liminality even inside formal cultural institutions by transgressive them when bringing reality into the room. Diéguez, 'De malestares teatrales y vacíos representacionales: el teatro trascendido', pp. 246–47..

Orina

Esa tarde llegué feliz a la casa, no podía estar más orgullosa. Por fin había terminado las pinturas de la exposición, mi primera exposición. El maestro me había halagado muchísimo y yo ya no podía esperar el momento para mostrárselas a mi novio. Tenía tantas ganas de que se sintiera orgulloso de mí, por primera vez. Ahí estaba, se las empecé a enseñar. Él sólo me dijo que yo no era una artista, que no me atreviera a compararme nunca con él, que eran una porquería y que de una vez asumiera que no servía para nada, que siempre iba a ser una artista chafa, que cómo me pensaba atrever a exponer eso. Enojada me fui al cuarto. Él extendió todos mis trabajos y se orinó en ellos, en todos. Nada quedó.

Anónima



Figure 7. Lorena Wolffer, 'Orina', *Evidencias*, 2010, <<http://museodemujeres.com/matriz/expos/evidencias/evidencias.htm>> [accessed 7 October 2020]. Creative Commons Attribution Attribution 4.0.

Lagarde's legal work is relevant if one is to appreciate *Evidencias*. If *Evidencias* is pointing out the types of violence women suffer in Mexico, then understanding the legal classification is fundamental. However, it is aiming at a different feminist agenda. In this sense, the expression of violence escapes the logic of gore capitalism. Since every object is accompanied by the victim's testimony, they resist what Valencia observes as a glamourisation of violence.²⁴⁷ There is no justification for men's violent behaviour nor recognition of it as exemplary masculine conduct. Unlike 'necropop' cultural products, such as TV shows depicting the rich lives of narcos, *Evidencias* brings the other side of the story; it is those of the victims that refuse to accept the price of the binary order. Following Valencia's argument, this gore violence is learnt through pedagogies of violence.²⁴⁸ I have identified the pedagogical aspect of *Evidencias* —that which teaches women about experiencing violence, and the audience/participants about the reality of such violence, in all its multiple forms. Again, advocating for the notion of rhizomatic effects, Wolffer encourages the audience/participants

²⁴⁷ Luis Martínez Andrade and Sayak Valencia Triana, 'Entrevista a Sayak Valencia', in *Feminismos a La Contra* (Cantabria: La Vorágine, editorial crítica (Otramérica), 2019), pp. 215–27 (p. 222).

²⁴⁸ Martínez Andrade and Valencia Triana, p. 227.

to come up with their own response to the information she presents. This thesis, for example, is my own way of doing so.

It seems pertinent to ask why Wolffer, wanting to help women, exhibited such objects, evidence of criminal activity, instead of taking them to the police and making a proper denunciation. Aside from being motivated by what Wolffer notices of a lack of coherence between the legal and the social reality, her work has another quality that inserts it into the liminal and feminist struggle. One of the common mottos in any feminist demonstration is: ‘la policía no me cuida, me cuidan mis amigas’ [police do not protect me, my friends protect me] since the police are usually of little help in preventing and punishing crimes against women, sometimes even exacerbating the problems women face. This idea was also described when explaining how *The Clothesline* works. Hence, there is a notion of women themselves collectively protecting women, a true manifestation of *sororidad*. For friends to protect each other, they need to know who they stand against and what are they protecting other women from. Wolffer (2020) has described how women interacted during the installation; according to her, they found each other, identified as equals and found comfort in each other, forming what might be called the bonds of *sororidad*.²⁴⁹ For Wolffer (2020), the events of 2019 reflect the disarticulation between the law and Mexican women’s experiences of violence. The year of 2019 was dubbed ‘the year of the feminist’ in Mexico, due to a series of mass demonstrations in the country that denounced violence against women. While it was certainly a good year for women’s activism, it was not a good year for women’s safety, with feminicides increasing from the previous year.²⁵⁰ It is not the government or the police who will end violence against women, but women themselves. For this to happen, it is fundamental to create a strong sense of community—a community held together by the bonds of empathy that bind its members, and their shared agreement to confront patriarchy in all its forms. In this sense, Wolffer agrees that *Evidencias* promotes *sororidad*: ‘hay un reconocimiento mutuo: yo valido tu experiencia y tú validas la mía’²⁵¹. Through her work, women were able to find other women who had endured and survived experiences similar to their own.

²⁴⁹ See Addendum, interview to Lorena Wolffer

²⁵⁰ See Lorena Wolffer’s interview in the Addendum.

²⁵¹ See Lorena Wolffer’s interview in the Addendum.



Figure 8. Federico Stengel, *Recreation 'me cuidan mis amigas, no la policia'*, Mexico, 2021

What would have happened if the objects of *Evidencias* had been taken to the police? Ideally, according to the law, they would have been used to investigate a crime and guarantee the victims' safety. However, according to some testimonies, they would have been stored and their testimonies filed. In this utopian world in which the law is actually enforced, any weapons—or any sharp or blunt object used as such— would be confiscated and impounded, police would enter the house where the victim was attacked and remove her personal belongings, which would be kept safe, and considered potential evidence against the attacker. The safety of the victims would be protected at all costs, and they would have easy access to immediate, expeditious and impartial justice.²⁵² However, reading the testimonies of *Evidencias*, it quickly becomes clear that the experience of the featured victims was nothing like this. The artwork's objective was not to attain access to justice for the women victims, or deliver belated punishment to the male perpetrators. Her aim was not even to raise awareness of the scale of violence against women to its victims—that was a side effect to the exhibition once opened to the general public. As its name suggests, the exhibition highlights the quality of the objects as pieces of evidence; it is not an impartial judge who determines the significance of these objects,

²⁵² Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, p. 13.

but the victims themselves who have the crucial role in the exhibition. By handing control of their own narratives back to the women victims, Wolffer achieves an inversion of patriarchal hierarchies. For this reason, her work can be considered responsible for the emergence of a *communitas*.

During the exhibition of *Evidencias*, there were no hierarchies; in fact, Wolffer's role could be interpreted as less relevant than those of the women donating their stories and objects. It was the victims who decided how, and where, the pieces of evidence were to be displayed. Wolffer thereby avoided organising the exhibition around a hierarchy, of which she would have been the leader. The inversion of hierarchies is also needed to achieve liminality. Nevertheless, the original dynamic proposed by Wolffer had to change. When she took the installation to Querétaro, her call for exhibits received no response. Wolffer received no objects; so, for the opening of the exhibition, she displayed white paper sheets with the legend: 'there should be an object here'. During the inauguration, some women told her that they wanted to donate objects, but they dared not do so, for fear that they might be identified and subjected to ridicule or worse.²⁵³ The city of Querétaro is quite conservative and, historically speaking, feminist ideas have gained little traction there. As it will be explained when analysing the focus groups, women from Queretaro were not surprised that Wolffer got no objects here. They identified a lack of *sororidad* amongst the women of the city, and a lack of awareness—overcome only recently—as to why feminism was necessary. Another issue that was also discussed during the online discussion sessions highlighted how Querétaro might also have problems appreciating *artivism* and these kinds of projects as many of the artists and exhibitions in the area still produce and display only traditional forms of art. After this experience, Wolffer made her appeals to donate objects through NGOs working with victims of violence, so as to guarantee not exposing any their anonymity. By modifying her method for collecting these objects, she inserted *Evidencias* into the institutional healing process, coordinated by the NGOs, and accompanying the psychological and legal process women go through in the wake of being victims of gendered abuse, she inserted *Evidencias* into the institutional healing process.

Since Wolffer was more interested in producing a healing effect on the women sharing their testimonies than the satisfaction of museum visitors, her artwork is in fact rendered more effective, as it becomes part of the healing processes of these women. Consequently, one common critique of Wolffer's work—namely, that her exhibitions are unable to carry out the

²⁵³ Lorena Wolffer -- Entrevista Con María Laura Rosa.

goals she sets for them due to the lack of psychologists and legal advisers associated with them, is comprehensively refuted, as the relationship of the artwork to NGO-subscribed aid programmes made it a direct part of the healing processes available to victims of gendered violence. However, all of this was made possible only because she voluntarily removed herself from being the coordinator of *Evidencias* and allowed the participants to decide how their objects were to be exhibited. This decision was also borne out of her desire to respect the psychological healing processes of these women. Today, the 237 are part of the artistic archive of the MUAC with the objective of making these contributions available to anyone who wants to consult the artwork, either with activist or academic interests. Another reason for which they are there is that they formally do not belong to Lorena Wolffer. The pieces of *Evidencias* still belong to the victims and, if they want to, they can ask for them back. If a woman was to work through her healing process to come to terms with her trauma and reconcile herself with her own story, and therefore the piece of evidence, she could ask for it to be returned to her. This has only happened once; a girl asked for her kitchen battery. Wolffer (2020) sees this event as part of the natural course *Evidencias* can follow and evidence that control of that course does not rest with her.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ See Lorena Wolffer's interview in the Addendum.

Cuchillos de cocina y espejo roto

Ali Dessiré Cuevas vivía en el DF, estudiaba Letras Clásicas en la UNAM y estaba realizando su tesis de Licenciatura sobre la Filosofía de Epicuro; era poetisa y feminista activa. Mantuvo una relación sentimental con Oswaldo Aristóteles Morgan Colón a lo largo de año y medio, dos semanas después de terminar su relación de noviazgo, el 19 de septiembre del 2009 con el motivo del cumpleaños 24 de Ali, Oswaldo organizó una fiesta en su casa. Esa noche, la fiesta se realizó con normalidad, extendiéndose al día siguiente. El 20 de septiembre, cuando los dos se encontraban en la cocina, alrededor del mediodía Ali se despedía llevándose todas sus cosas en su mochila y él le asestó 26 puñaladas con un cuchillo de cocina. El cuerpo sin vida de Ali fue encontrado destrozado en medio de la cocina y el asesino con el cuchillo de cocina en la mano.

Anónima



Figure 9. Lorena Wolffer, 'Cuchillos de cocina y espejo roto', *Evidencias*, fotografía digital de objeto, 2010 <<https://museodemujeres.com/es/artistas/index/237-wolffer-lorena>> [accessed 07 October 2020]. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

Thus far, I have argued that *Evidencias* both actively promoted, and organically resulted in, the emergence of *sororidad*, according to Lagarde's traditional definition of that term. However, *sororidad* has another peculiarity —namely, that it arises from acts of resistance. In 2019, Angélica García Estrada analysed the conditions of *sororidad* experienced in collective feminist artistic groups. She explored the case of *Invasorix*, a protest musical group whose work I will explore on Chapter IV. Due to how the exhibition was achieved, she noticed that 'Se crea una sororidad con la que se cuidan y apoyan mutuamente, donde definitivamente para ellas lo más importante son los lazos afectivos que se tienen dentro, más que el trabajo que se tenga por delante'²⁵⁵. Now, García Estrada dealt with a group entirely integrated by artists; meanwhile, *Evidencias* was somewhat different. The women that contributed were not necessarily artists, but by contributing, they acted as such. Having their testimonies and objects

²⁵⁵ Angélica García Estrada, 'Sororidad En Los Procesos de Resistencia a Las Prácticas Artísticas Precarias', *AusArt Journal for Research in Art*, 7.2 (2019), 1–24 (p. 19) <<https://doi.org/10.1387/ausart.21149>>.

exhibited unified them, as they jointly became the artists behind the artwork. So, yes, they are resisting violence while being recognised as equals. Artistic *sororidad* dealing with gender violence implies the creation of safe space that offers creative solutions for adapting to a challenging reality, while avoiding forms of revictimization. Claiming that it results in *sororidad* is not contradictory with the rhizomatic effect. *Sororidad* is the pact, or the agreement women have to stand against patriarchy; exactly how they go about confronting the patriarchal structure is up to each collective.

Because of its liminality it is hard to determine how to judge *Evidencias*. The traditional elements of visual arts are insufficient or irrelevant since the form, shape and coloration of the objects is not a fundamental element of the project. However, the objects were exhibited inside showcases like any other artistic object; just like a ready-made would have been shown. Although, Wolffer did not decide how to display the *evidence*, either it was up to the women or depended on the characteristics of the exhibition space. The text accompanying the objects could in theory be criticised on the basis of their graphic design. Wolffer used the Expressway Condensed SemiBold typography, which is clear; nevertheless, with some distance it becomes hard to read as the typographic stain is denser. When seen through the eyes of a graphic designer, this might be a major issue, when we consider the typeface in the context of *Evidencias* we might conclude that the unsuitability of the typeface for distance reading is deliberate, forcing the reader to come closer to the objects; to perceive them close-up, to accept their existence, to truly confront them and, consequently, to do something about them. The texts were justified which is usually not recommended as it increases the space between letters differently to guarantee the justification. This might be related to the fact that the name of the project appears on the left, which might be an effort to engender feelings of familiarity with the text. From the perspective of a social scientist, the success of *Evidencias* would hinge on the presence of a social researcher, which Wolffer managed to attain after working at refuges for victims of gender violence. However, due to the lack of information or the existence of a social report it is impossible to fully regard it as social work or intervention, even though it does offer what feminist social work looks for in a project: a criticism of patriarchy, a collective project, the politicisation of the private sphere, and the questioning of gender stereotypes.²⁵⁶ Instead of looking at these as faults of the artwork, one should always keep in mind that Wolffer

²⁵⁶ Lorena María Guzzetti and others, 'Aportes Del Feminismo al Trabajo Social ¿qué Significa Pensar Un Trabajo Social Feminista?', *Zona Franca. Revista Del Centro de Estudios Interdisciplinario Sobre Las Mujeres, y de La Maestría Poder y Sociedad Desde La Problemática de Género*, 27, 2019, 16–35.

main objective was to help women to collectively denounce their abusers, making visible the different forms of violence they faced.

Before concluding, it is worth wondering if it is possible to claim *Evidencias* was a liminal artwork resulting in the *communitas* without being one of the women donating an object. There is a possibility, especially once it was adopted as part of the psychological healing process at women's refuges, that it was liminal; this information is and should remain confidential. However, I may extrapolate my experience participating in Mayer's *Clotheslines* to affirm that collective denouncing results in the *communitas* when women recognise the experiences of the others and become inspired by their collective experience to organise an alliance against patriarchy. These artworks promote a ritual in which subjects change how they think about violence. On the other hand, it is plausible to consider the spectator experience to add to the notion of liminality. For the audience visiting the exhibition, there is an undeniable pedagogical quality in which people learn about violence. Unlike an event like a conference about the content of the laws, *Evidencias* provides real cases as examples; and since its testimonies are those of actual women, it becomes impossible to reject the existence of violence against women. With the law, there is an encouragement for an intellectual appreciation while, with *Evidencias*, there is an experience of emotional appreciation. Even in the case of Querétaro, the exhibition in which Wolffer was forced to exhibit merely sheets of white paper—an exhibition I visited—, there was a pedagogical effect. Regarding the idea of a rhizomatic outcome, the first thing to bear in mind is that the contents of the exhibition differed city to city. The rhizomatic interpretation is also bolstered by the fact that, in March 2022, the project was exhibited again in Querétaro, implying that some kind of change had occurred since the initial exhibition there. While demonstrating this hypothesis would require interviewing each participant and keeping track of them, the possibility of the rhizome will be explored in the upcoming focus groups.

Finally, the objects and testimonies collected by Wolffer came from a variety of environments, differing in areas such as ethnic origin, socioeconomic status, source of violence, creating a sort of cabinet of violence against women. Therefore, Wolffer managed to avoid wobbling the exhibition through the prism of her own perspective: that of a white Mexican woman. The secondary effect, the one experienced by the visiting public, is required for this installation to achieve its goals. Especially when looking for peaceful ways to free women from their captivity, one cannot propose a war to defeat the capturers. The capturers need to set free the captive women, but captive women need to be free from the shackles of patriarchy if they are to know what they need to demand to achieve true freedom and escape

their captivity. Following Marcela Lagarde's notion on *sororidad*, a multi-ethnic dialogue and an appropriate recognition of intersectionality needs to accompany any debate on gender violence; in that sense Wolffer's platform offered visibility to women from different ethnicities, backgrounds, and social strata; the recognition of the differences between women according to these three metrics being fundamental to the achievement of *sororidad*.²⁵⁷ Although Lorena Wolffer considers her work successful in achieving *sororidad*, her personal opinion is that, as of now, it remains insufficient. There are so many testimonies describing violence that they have become a normality in different institutions: 'los testimonios claramente no tienen el poder político que sí tuvieron en otro momento, porque ya han sido tantas las narraciones de violencia que hemos escuchado que, como tantas otras cosas se ha normalizado'.²⁵⁸ Her recent projects usually include more interaction with the participants, conferences or interventions in different locations related to gender violence. However, *Evidencias* understood as a rhizome is just one node from which new ones may emerge according to the participants' contexts. Last August, Wolffer said that she expects her art to provoke a reaction, sometimes an immediate one; sometimes longer —maybe five years or more.²⁵⁹ *Evidencias* offered a secure platform for women to denounce violence, and its effectiveness might still be up for debate. However, it is also necessary to consider what must come next in order to modify the adverse culture that enables violence against women.

²⁵⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Pacto entre mujeres. Sororidad', p. 132. Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Pacto...', pp. 123-135, (p. 132).

²⁵⁸ See Lorena Wolffer's interview in the Addendum.

²⁵⁹ Lorena Wolffer, *Entrevista En Dos Partes*, 2019 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDB45jEWwpA>> [accessed 30 March 2020].

Chapter III. Cerrucha's *In/Visible*, Making Stereotypes Visible

A number of different factors are involved in consolidating the gender-cultural constructions that reinforce what Marcela Lagarde called women's captivities.²⁶⁰ Gender roles and stereotypes are some of the cultural constructions that reinforce inequality between men and women. This was stated by Marta Lamas (2011), an academic whose theories have been instrumental in shaping the national conversation around gender discrimination. Lamas described how gender stereotypes reinforce genders as opposites and validate the dominance of men over women through the repetition of oppressive behaviours.²⁶¹ Following Butler's argument explained in the previous chapter, the repetition of such behaviours consolidates heteronormative, binary, and hierarchical gender structures. Advertising, friends, family, and mass media are some of the elements present in the gender-based culture that perpetuate the reproduction of orthodox gender roles. The Mexican *activist* Cerrucha offers an artistic approach for confronting those gender roles and stereotypes. Her street art proposal, *In/visible* (2010), encourages people to question those constructions that determine their identity and therefore take part in reducing the effects of gender stereotypes. Like Lorena Wolffer, her work is pedagogical in intention; however, due to the aesthetic qualities of Cerrucha's, she aimed at a general population instead of a specific group.

Cerrucha (1984) is a Mexican *activist* who questions social norms surrounding gender through a variety of social and artistic projects. Her *activist* pseudonym is an ironic word that mixes the Spanish word *serrucho* [hand saw] and in ironic Latin *cer* [to be/exist], conveying the idea that she exists as a hand saw—an object that she considers analogous to her mission as an activist. In her own words, she aims to: “‘cerruchar’ las mentes ajenas, ruptura de preconceptos, siembra de cuestionamientos’.”²⁶² In 2010, while finishing her bachelor's degree in Canada, she held the aforementioned *In/Visible* exhibition. It took the form of a street art installation, consisting of four different posters that questioned the culture of machismo and gender stereotypes in Mexico. Each poster included a digitally modified photograph. Read as one term, the installation title refers to the invisible, usually imperceptible, social labels created

²⁶⁰ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 80–81. Lagarde, *Los cautiverios...*, pp. 80–81.

²⁶¹ Lamas.

²⁶² Cerrucha, 'BIO/CV', *Cerrucha. Artivista Feminista*, 2021 <<https://www.cerrucha.com/bio-cv>> [accessed 28 February 2022]. There is another saying in Latin America which is 'serruchar el piso' which refers to how someone sabotages another one by destroying the ground in which he/she/they stands. Carlos Villalobos and Francisco Alejandro Méndez, 'La Zorra y El Gallina: Variantes de Género En El Insulto Costarricense', *Abrapalabra: Revista de Literatura*, 38, 2005, 81–93.

around the gender binary social construction. However, she divided the word separating the negative prefix: In-Visible aims at making some of those labels visible.

It is probable that Cerrucha's *artivism*, compared to the other proposals analysed here, presents more parallelisms with Judy Baca's. It is not only about creating street art proposals or a public mural but rather about conquering the public space with a significant message. Diéguez explained the importance of this type of work stating that those artists: 'utilizan dispositivos estéticos para la elaboración de nuevos discursos en la protesta pública'.²⁶³ Cerrucha's art has the same effect Suzanne Lacy claimed Judy Baca's has. Both Baca and Cerrucha, following Lacy, use art to 'emphasise their roles as communicators to speak to the people'²⁶⁴ including those who have little or nothing to do with the world of art. Cerrucha uses artistic photographs with different objectives: to make stereotypes visible and to lead people to question whether they are, at that moment in time, following, reproducing, or supporting them, or whether they are supporting feminist protests, denouncing abuses against women, and always trying to live up to feminist ideas.

In *In/visible*, and other projects by Cerrucha, the influence of JR —the French street artist — is manifest. Street artists are not limited to a single technique; they use graffiti, vinyl, posters, photography even plants to impose themselves in the public sphere. The presentation of their work is not entirely up to the street artist but depends to some extent on the nature of the place where they are exhibiting their art, and the message they are trying to get across. Both JR and Cerrucha are trained photographers, and usually use photographic material for their artistic interventions. Although Cerrucha has expressed admiration for JR, she has also acknowledged that she does not have the resources at her disposal to replicate all his strategies.²⁶⁵ Hence, if one is to understand what kinds of projects Cerrucha would be carrying out if properly funded, it is worth exploring JR's *modus operandi*. After all, even though she is unable to emulate his works perfectly, the end result of her artistic projects is remarkably similar to JR's.

Given that it is impossible to fully understand *In/Visible* without considering its feminist message, I will briefly explore one of JR's project with a similar intention. JR will enter a community and photograph people he interacts with within it. His work is somewhat ethnographic in nature, aiming to capture and exhibit photos that represent and capture the plight of those communities. For example, for *Woman are Heroes* (2008-2014) he recognised

²⁶³ Diéguez, 'Escenarios y teatralidades liminales. Prácticas artísticas y socioestéticas', p. 3.

²⁶⁴ Lacy, 'Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys', p. 26.

²⁶⁵ Cerrucha, 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.'

the need to highlight women's roles inside a community (he held this exhibition in eight cities around the world); while also identifying the material needs of the communities in question. *Women are Heroes* consisted of a series of photographs of women from a range of communities, assuming poses they considered important and impactful. In 2008, he printed these images and pasted them on the roofs and walls of houses in cities like Monrovia, Liberia. Part of what makes JR's interventions significant is the degree of interaction he achieves with the public. However, such interactions require a preponderance of time and resources not enjoyed by artists such as Cerrucha. In time, as I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter IV, Cerrucha has found that greater access to resources improves her activism. In this sense, it is relevant to analyse *In/visible* as one of the first projects where her feminist agenda becomes visible. In doing so, we can determine how effective it is, and how her social objectives and the participants impact her practice. Nevertheless, even with the budget and time constraint difference between JR and Cerrucha, what Visconti, et. al observed in JR works is also identifiable in Cerrucha's art.²⁶⁶ There is a sense of reappropriating the public space against mass media and market visual production, a questioning of what is public art and a clear social intention privileged over the aesthetic aspirations of the artists. As I will point out, her *In/visible* has qualities of street art, photography and commercial posters that provide a different sense to Cerrucha's work.

Since Cerrucha's *In/visible* is a street art installation, it has a social message linked to the medium and the materiality.²⁶⁷ The medium refers to the platform through which the art is expressed (today, the intervention of social media with memes is considered as an act of *activism* due to the similarity of intentions). In street art, the selection of the medium is never accidental and can usually be related to a liminal intention. Cerrucha wheat-pasted²⁶⁸ 2000 copies of the four posters along 8.5 km of Mexico City's Avenida de los Insurgentes Sur and in the surroundings of the underground stations Salto del Agua and Tacuba. While the segment of Insurgentes Sur she chose is a touristic route that begins downtown and covers famous points of the city such as Teatro de los Insurgentes and the Polyforum Cultural Siqueiros, the underground stations, both in the central area of the city, are used far more often by the city's working-class population. Salto del Agua is in the middle of a working-class market — Mercado de San Juan—, and Tacuba is surrounded by unlicensed markets and bazaars. During

²⁶⁶ Luca M. Visconti and others, 'Street Art, Sweet Art? Reclaiming the "Public" in Public Place', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37.3 (2010), 511–29 <<https://doi.org/10.1086/652731>>.

²⁶⁷ Luca M. Visconti and others, 'Street Art, Sweet Art? Reclaiming the "Public" in Public Place', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37.3 (2010), 511–29 <<https://doi.org/10.1086/652731>>.

²⁶⁸ This old technique takes its name from the wheat paste adhesive made of flour and water.

an interview in 2018, Cerrucha explained that her ideal audience belongs to the working class; however, to achieve a change in gender constructions, it is important to adopt a pluralistic approach; to engage with as diverse a socio-economic range as possible.²⁶⁹ The impact of feminism and the inclusion of women in the public sphere differs depending on socioeconomic conditions. The intentions of street art should be, *per se*, rhizomatic, there is no museum text guiding the reading or walking tours with explanations; street artists are aware of how the reception of their message depends on the viewer's perspective and usually take advantage of this.²⁷⁰ When interviewed, Cerrucha agreed that there is a centralisation of artistic efforts; all the art projects I analysed were organised in Mexico City. She has not designed or created an intervention for a different urban landscape. Wolffer has tried to work in other cities, as was the case with *Evidencias*, but this is not always possible; nevertheless, as feminist art becomes more popular, there have been events and exhibitions of their work in other cities. Mexico City is a particularly advantageous location for exhibits, due to its 22 million inhabitants, maximising the potential audience of any installations.

The streets picked for *In/visible*, especially Insurgentes Sur, guaranteed that public workers saw the exhibition. In that part of the city lie 15 government buildings, and the headquarters of Televisa San Angel —the biggest media company in Mexico— are not far away. Her choice of location suggests some highly strategic thinking on her part, as those involved in politics and media are some of the most potentially influential in the world when it comes to the power to change gender stereotypes. Those working in the media have the power to eradicate any content that reproduces harmful gender stereotypes, and politicians themselves have the power to regulate media content—as well as being influential in their own right. Like JR's,²⁷¹ Cerrucha aims that her poster act as mirror with which any viewer can identify. Nevertheless, identification with the content depends on the person viewing. The act of viewing may furnish spectators with an increased awareness of their role in living according to, perpetuating, and creating stereotyped content that reinforces gender stereotypes. The delivery of the message to a plural audience requires that as many areas of the city as possible are

²⁶⁹ See interview with Cerrucha, Addendum.

²⁷⁰ This street art quality of highlighting the viewers' perspective, rather than the artist's one is also described by Glăveanu. Vlad Petre Glăveanu, 'Art and Social Change: The Role of Creativity and Wonder', in *Street Art of Resistance* (UK: Awad and Wagoner, 2017), pp. 19–38.

²⁷¹ JR is a French street artist who promotes equality, justice and gender equality using photographs to intervene the cities. In 2011 he received the Ted Talks Awards and gave a conference on how he intends to improve social life through art. *JR. My Wish: Use Art to Turn the World Inside Out*, 2011 <https://www.ted.com/talks/jr_my_wish_use_art_to_turn_the_world_inside_out> [accessed 20 July 2020]. In her interview, Cerrucha mentioned him as an influence.

‘bombed’²⁷² with it. Now, to guarantee the rhizomatic effect of the artwork, the materiality is as important as the medium.

Cerrucha opted for newsprint paper to print *In/visible* as a means of maximising the familiarity —and therefore identifiability— of the art. In terms of photography quality, that paper and pasting technique are not the best, as the colour ink was absorbed by the paper and soon lost its colouration. She printed 2000 copies of each of the posters in offset. The photographed subjects were friends of the artist who agreed to take part in the exhibition. She later photoshopped tattoos onto the model’s bodies —the only digital modifications Cerrucha made— that carried quotidian sexist phrases. Cerrucha did not come up with these phrases herself—she simply chose pre-existing ones, according to what she thought suited each picture best. By producing as many copies of these images as she did, she conveyed just how deeply embedded such phrases are in Mexican culture. By reproducing each image so many times, she made them part of daily life for the city’s inhabitants —something accepted without question, just like the phrases they carry and the attitudes behind them. Therefore, Cerrucha manages to fight fire with fire. Besides what she described about the materiality, ‘todo el mundo sabe qué hacer con un periódico: el periódico se toma, se lee, se hojea’,²⁷³ it is a highly popular printing technique for commercial posters. Her posters were wheat-pasted next to other posters on which the same technique was used. She created a contrast over the wall: the music shows’ advertising placed next to the artwork. The oxymoron made her proposal even more visible. It is common to find posters for concerts, products and events in the streets of Mexico City using the same materials and type of visuality Cerrucha used for her posters. Hence, in her work, there is also a statement about how one can use an accepted medium to propagate what are, on some level, unacceptable truths.

²⁷² *Bombing* is a street art technique consisting in the re-appropriation of a relatively large area of a city in a short timeframe by pasting or painting as many posters as possible.

²⁷³ See Addendum Interview with Cerrucha.



Figure 10. Cerrucha, 'Mi marido sí me deja trabajar', in *In/Visible* [online]
<<https://www.cerrucha.com/invisible-i?pgid=k9adka70-642b143e-1483-47cd-9202-fc492ebc2b08>>
[accessed 23 September 2020]

Each poster of *In/visible* has a particular message. Dealing with them as commercial posters means identifying a clear purpose (its interpretation is not accidental), it has a denotation (a description of each element on it) and a connotation (how people read it). Now, while she replicated some of the marketing strategies, she inserted it into the artistic sphere and there are therefore some differences. Since she is not trying to sell anything, but lead people to

question the stereotypes, her purpose is clear, but the connotation remains open. The first one analysed here shows a woman viewed from behind, the studio photograph was taken with a black background; the American shot only reveals the woman's back and her blue skirt that seems to emerge from the shadow. Her digital tattoo says: '*Mi marido sí me deja trabajar*' [My husband does let me work]. This phrase, like the others featured in Cerrucha's work, is an example of what feminists call a quotidian sexist phrase, that serves to perpetuate gender violence and becomes increasingly conventional and accepted the more it is used by Mexicans. She is representing women who find it necessary to ask for permission from a male figure (the father, partner or husband) to join the workforce. The model is facing backwards, and the tattoo covers most of her back. The photographic frame cuts her head, so just half of it is visible. It is worth noting that the stereotypes Cerrucha chose to employ were those she considered most relevant to a Mexican audience. I will therefore explain the social relevance of each 'tattooed' sentence. This sentence is the product of stereotypes and situations that are commonly faced by Mexican women. The stereotype to which this phrase refers is that of women as belonging to a male-controlled private sphere. Wives are considered "good wives" when they accomplish their housework. Following Lagarde, it could be stated that women who ask permission from their partners live under the captivity of the *madresposa* [wife-mother].²⁷⁴ After reading the chapter dedicated to this captivity, it is clear that Lagarde uses this term to highlight the perception that a woman's role as a wife is always linked to reproduction and taking care of others. In this logic, stereotypes and roles are not captivities themselves; just like any other forms of violence, they reproduce the patriarchal order and guarantee women cannot escape from their captivity. In this particular case, she is not only her husband's captive, but she believes to be freer than other women because she has the permission to go out and pursue a career.

Her identity, like her face, remains hidden from the general audience. The photographed woman, and the rest of the models, were Cerrucha's acquaintances. As I will explain in greater depth, works of art like these carry significant revictimization risks, and by employing only models that she knew, Cerrucha minimised these risks. Nevertheless, the fact that they are anonymous for the spectators may have a dual effect. Since Cerrucha is replicating the language of advertising, it is important to observe that, in publicity, the model usually does not matter as much as the product being advertised. In this street art, what matters is for people

²⁷⁴ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 439–543.

to think about the general stereotype, affecting all women, not the specific women being used as a model. Unlike the digital tattoos, stereotypes are not a lie that can be easily demystified; they can be explained as exaggerations of an everyday context. Gender stereotypes are founded on gender roles. Marta Lamas defined gender roles as the norms and prescriptions that delineate feminine and masculine behaviour.²⁷⁵ In several aspects, the plight of Mexican women has improved (give some idea of timescale in recent decades). However, as Teresa Incháustegui²⁷⁶ explains, their inclusion in the workforce is not the result of feminism. The rising number of women working is due to the endemic economic issues the country has been facing since the 1980s. Following Incháustegui's hypothesis, it is possible to understand why the rise of women working did not significantly modify the preconceptions surrounding their gender. In Mexico, the growth of the female workforce is still seen as indicative of a dire economic situation, and not the success of the feminist agenda. Olga Lorena Rojas, an academic at COLMEX, conducted a study in 2016, highlighting that among the working population, both rural and indigenous, there is significant resistance to the idea of accepting the social changes promoted by the feminist agenda. Higher-earning women often aspire to have a career as part of their life project, considering it just as relevant as starting a family. In these cases, women opt for professional development and delay the age of marriage and family formation.²⁷⁷ While this may be true, the author's generalisation of rural and indigenous peoples suggests an incomplete picture of the conditions in which women live in these communities. According to the National Survey on Time Use (2019), non-indigenous women work 43.9 hours per week in the public sphere, and indigenous women 40.4; however, indigenous women spend 2.3 more hours on farming and livestock.²⁷⁸ The Survey does not differentiate these results according to the social strata to which the women surveyed belong. As further explained, indigenous women belonging to the Zapatista Army, as explained in Chapter I, have a law that promotes equality between women and men. It is important to recognise that Cerrucha's work was not targeted at indigenous communities. Had this been the case, she would have risked making her artwork a form of imposition, given that it resulted from a dialogue between herself and women in Mexico City, rather than indigenous women.

²⁷⁵ Lamas.

²⁷⁶ Teresa Incháustegui Romero, 'Sociología política del feminicidio; algunas claves interpretativas a partir del caso mexicano', *Sociedade e Estado*, 29.2 (2014), 373–400 <<https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69922014000200004>>.

²⁷⁷ Olga Lorena Rojas, 'Mujeres, Hombres y Vida Familiar En México. Persistencia de La Inequidad de Género Anclada En La Desigualdad Social', *Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios de Género*, 3 (2016), 73–101.

²⁷⁸ INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional de Uso Del Tiempo* (Mexico: INEGI, 2019) <https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/programas/enut/2019/doc/enut_2019_presentacion_resultados.pdf> [accessed 19 May 2021].

Cerrucha's image is an 'incomplete' portrait, that presents, instead of represents, a reality for several women in Mexico, which might lead to a debate on the invisible conditions that limit the development of women. According to a report by INMujeres [Mexico's National Women Institute], 12.8% (3.8 million) of women in Mexico ask for their husbands or fathers' permission to work. Furthermore, 47.6% of women believe that working would necessitate neglecting their children.²⁷⁹ So, even those not asking for permission are hesitant about working. The assumption that women belong to the private sphere and men to the public is a cultural problem. According to Ana Martínez-Collado, Hispanic-Catholic countries like Mexico have inherited two stereotypical female role models: 'mujeres fatídicas o mujeres concebidas como encarnación del mal, mujeres a las que por tanto hay que negar; y mujeres ideales, mujeres puras'.²⁸⁰ The fatal woman is inspired by Eve, embodying the idea that women are inextricably identified with sin and the fall of man; meanwhile, the idea of the pure woman comes from the Virgin Mary, who exemplifies the purity expected of married women. Women must be good mothers and wives, and they must oversee every household chore. Her posters enact Mayer and Bustamante's belief in making public the problems women face in the private sphere from the glare of public scrutiny, dictate that if a woman feels the need to ask permission from her husband to work, then that is a private agreement between husband and wife, over which the state has no jurisdiction. Cerrucha, however, is introducing this problem back into the public sphere through her artwork. The idea behind the headless woman is that any woman might identify with her.²⁸¹ Regardless of social class, any woman who has asked permission to work or feels guilty for having to work can identify with Cerrucha's poster.

The second poster shows a headless man with a tattoo saying: 'Todos los hombres son iguales' [All men are the same]. Keeping the background in black, this image is a medium shot of a man who appears to be emerging from the shadows behind; his legs are almost invisible, and his chest is highlighted by subtle lighting ticks possible only inside a photographer's studio. For me, it seems clear that Cerrucha chose this line because recognising a heteronormative masculinity will be fundamental in deconstructing sex hierarchies. This phrase reflects the ridiculous belief that all men in Mexico adhere to the macho stereotype, thus disqualifying the possibility of reforming gender norms. The concept of male superiority and the impossibility of men changing is part of a sexist culture. There are different definitions of machismo. Some

²⁷⁹ INMujeres, 'Boletín', *Boletín*, 2.10 (2017)

<http://cedoc.inmujeres.gob.mx/documentos_download/BoletinN10_2017.pdf> [accessed 16 July 2020].

²⁸⁰ Ana Martínez-Collado, *Tendenci@s, Perspectivas Feministas En El Arte Actual* (Murcia: Ad Hoc, 2008), p. 36.

²⁸¹ This was confirmed by Cerrucha herself. See Cerrucha's interview, Addendum.

define it as a form of hypermasculinity that justifies the male gender as superior to the female gender.²⁸² However, claiming that machismo is an expression of hypermasculinity implies that it is only an *exaggeration* of masculine characteristics, which might imply that *machismo* is somehow natural. It is important to understand that machismo, in the Mexican context, is a cultural construction generated and perpetuated through the country's political, social and economic system. Culture establishes the male gender to be superior, and prescribes masculinity as the display of violent and oppressive behaviours; bravery, promiscuity, and the suppression of all emotions except anger. Sexism and machismo are not synonymous; instead, the latter is a symptom of the former. Chicana feminists, such as Sosa Riddell, have rejected the notion of machismo as a source of cultural pride; as a defiant expression of resistance to Anglo-colonialism, instead advocating for a definition that intersected racism and sexism as manifestations of machismo understood as physical, emotional, social, political and economic oppression.²⁸³ As it will be furtherly explained, the intersection of ethnicity, social class and sexism is also vital for the understanding of sexism in Mexico. Now, thanks to international pressure and the feminist movement, explicit manifestations of machismo are less common. Nevertheless, as the image and the name of Cerrucha's exhibition suggests, it persists in different forms.

Cerrucha's choice of this phrase suggests she was highly involved in contemporary feminist debates. If machismo is perceived as a natural element of a binary and immutable notion of masculinity, then it is impossible to eradicate altogether, leaving only the option of tempering it. This new kind of machismo is known as micro-machismo or invisible machismo. Designating it to be 'invisible', rather than 'micro', would seem the more appropriate option, as the prefix 'micro' implies that the phenomenon has reduced in potency, whereas 'invisible' implies that machismo is as strong as ever, and has either become something to which we are accustomed and desensitised or has become less identifiable; more insidious. As soon as one gives a moment's thought to the alarming femicide rate in Mexico, it becomes impossible to claim that machismo has lost its potency and atrophied into micro-machismo. The foundation of machismo is beliefs, attitudes, and conduct that reinforce the idea of men as superior to women and, while violent actions against women are illegal, the foundation persists. It is present in everything men and women do: 'El machismo está tan profundamente arraigado en

²⁸² Katia Cecilia Uresti Maldonado and others, 'Percepción Del Machismo, Rasgos de Expresividad y Estrategias de Afrontamiento al Estrés En Hombres Adultos Del Noreste de México', *Acta Universitaria*, 27.4 (2017), 59–68 <<https://doi.org/10.15174/au.2017.1273>>.

²⁸³ Alma M. García, 'The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse', *Gender & Society*, 3.2 (1989), 217–38 (p. 224).

las costumbres y en el discurso que se ha vuelto casi invisible cuando no despliega sus formas más flagrantes [...] No obstante, sigue presente en casi todos los aspectos de la vida cotidiana de hombres y mujeres'.²⁸⁴ To eradicate this, men must question their behaviour and beliefs and the privileges they have access to just because they are male. Cerrucha herself said as much in a 2018 interview.²⁸⁵ The implied meaning of the poster is open to interpretation. From a feminist perspective, the poster represents an opportunity to have an honest discussion about the notion that all men are, or ought to be, machos. From a male perspective, it might encourage viewers to question gender roles, and the part every man plays in perpetuating them.

Keeping in mind that this is a photographic portrait, it is important to recognise that, as with the aforementioned woman, the man remains anonymous and unrecognisable. While it does not fulfil the criteria for a portrait, given that the head is incomplete, this was a conscious decision made by the artist, and as such it would not be fair to deem it a failed artwork. By anonymising the portrait, Cerrucha is taking care not to blame any particular man. This seems like another consequence of Cerrucha's involvement with the feminist movement as she was responsible for the introduction and unpopular yet widely-discussed line of thought. In answer to the different feminist protests and public denunciations, some men answer: 'no todos los hombres son iguales' [not all men are the same]. That is how they defend themselves by claiming not all of them have raped, violented, assaulted, harassed or murdered a woman. The fact that they believe that a public denunciation or naming of a man who harmed a woman is stating 'all men are the same' shows how useful this poster was. Naming the aggressors recognises that not all men are the same; nevertheless, men need to recognise how they might be supporting a patriarchal system that privileges them. According to Marisol Suranyi and Francisca Rosas, members of the Centro de Salud Mental Feminista in Chile, men are reacting with this motto which should be accompanied by a recognition of their privileges.²⁸⁶ They observed this in 2022, while Cerrucha exhibited *In/visible* in 2011.

²⁸⁴ Marina Castañeda, *El Machismo Invisible* (Mexico City: Taurus, 2010), p. 27.

²⁸⁵ See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

²⁸⁶ Marisol Suranyi and Francisca Rosas, 'No todos los hombres son iguales': el cuestionamiento masculino sobre violencia de género, 2022 <<https://www.elmostrador.cl/braga/2022/03/18/no-todos-los-hombres-son-iguales-el-cuestionamiento-masculino-sobre-violencia-de-genero/>> [accessed 29 March 2022].



Figure 11. Cerrucha, 'Todos los hombres son iguales', in *In/visible* [online]
<<https://www.cerrucha.com/invisible-i?pgid=k9adka70-45bbcb70-2aae-4238-bda5-8f2ef7461d40>>
[accessed 24 September 2020]

So far, I have analysed two images, both of which are addressed to a differentiated public. They can be understood independently, but, when displayed together, they illustrate a social dynamic. There are no submissive women without men who are machos. They are both products of patriarchy. Marcela Lagarde defines patriarchy in line with the definition offered

by Kate Millett explaining it as the foundation of every form of women's captivity: 'La opresión patriarcal de las mujeres es genérica, es decir, las mujeres son oprimidas por el hecho de ser mujeres, cualquiera que sea su posición de clase, su lengua, su edad, su raza, su nacionalidad, su ocupación. En el mundo patriarcal ser mujer es ser oprimida'.²⁸⁷ Under patriarchy, the relationship between the male and female genders is reduced to one of constant confrontation; encouraging members of both to act within the narrow, mutually exclusive parameters it prescribes, conceiving them as individually opposite in character yet jointly complimentary. Both these images aim to encourage us to question the patriarchal system that sets these prescriptions.

Although the exhibition sought to address the population as a whole, *In/visible*, as suggested previously, aims to provoke different reactions from women and men. If Cerrucha was aiming at revealing the stereotypes imposed by patriarchy, then there should be two reactions. The women's reaction ought to engender a recognition of an imposition that limits her, while for him, it ought to lead to an examination of his own privileges, and the structure from which they are derived.²⁸⁸ In her thesis, Lagarde does not explain patriarchy's effects on the male sex, although she does characterise them as eternal captors, and constrained from deviating from this role. The fact that she does not primarily concern herself with the male condition makes sense, given her complaints about the nature and providence of ethics and the social sciences, pointing out that before the 20th Century, they neglected the female gender, and that men should therefore be sufficiently equipped to take notice of their condition of privilege and dominance.²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, considering not all the male population has noticed how they are inserted into patriarchy, exhibitions like *In/visible* may be helpful to integrate the male gender into the construction of a more equal and peaceful society.

The physical appearances of the woman and the man are instances not of representing, but of presenting. Photographic portraits give the illusion of objectivity; how the represented subject looks do not depend on the artists technique or ability, but on who the subject is and how they look. This is not entirely true, as a photographer can leverage lighting and perspective to alter the appearance of the subject, and Photoshop can be used to manipulate images with varying degrees of subtlety. Hence, the sense of trust in the photograph remains. Therefore, it is relevant to observe the physical aspect of *In/visible*'s subjects. Cerrucha's woman is thin,

²⁸⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 146. Lagarde, *Los cautiverios...*, p. 146.

²⁸⁸ This idea was supported by Cerrucha as well. See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

²⁸⁹ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 895.

with a well-defined waist, and she is wearing a skirt. Standing in a three-quarter stance, the man is a little overweight and slightly hairy-chested: for me, his chest hair embodies the famous Spanish saying *hombre de pelo en pecho* (which means that a man with a hairy chest is more manly). The popular phrase has a similar meaning to the English word He-man: men with more testosterone have more hair in their chest.²⁹⁰ This is founded in the notion, yet to be entirely tested, that increased testosterone has been shown to bear some correlations with heightened male aggression.²⁹¹ The calligraphy chosen for each tattoo is also related to these two confronting stereotypes. The woman's tattoo is inscribed in a cursive font, characterised by delicate strokes, while the male's uses Gothic. Her is adorned with a delicate flourish, his bears no decorations.²⁹² The typography is also related to how women and men are stereotyped. For feminine products in Mexico, from sanitary pads to *quinceañera* invitations, cursive font is used. Meanwhile, the convention about 'male typography' is not straightforward; however, many male-oriented products do use the Gothic font, such as the *Black* perfume by Paco Rabanne, which was sold in Mexico. Both images reproduce, even exaggerate a little, socially shared ideas of femininity and masculinity.

The binary relation established between these two posters by Cerrucha is a representation of the Mexican reality. However, it is not a representation of reality if it is inserted into liminal speech given that, according to Diéguez, liminal art should present, not represent, fragments of reality.²⁹³ In this sense, Cerrucha's *artivism* presents real stereotypes that take place in an unequal reality. By reproducing gender binary constructions, they become normalised, and, despite their overwhelming statistical backing, people may be unaware of them. For example, according to the *World Father's Report*, in Mexico, the daily female-to-

²⁹⁰ The phrase was brought by the Spanish conquerors. Before the XVIII Century, when the French kings started ruling over Spain, the ideal man was described like a heroic soldier with hairy chest. In 1796, Zamácola described the transformation of masculinity: 'eran hombres ordinarios de pelo en pecho y, como tales engendrados para sufrir semejantes fatigas (referring to battles); pero hoy, nuestros Señoritos de ciento en boca, son finos, dulces, halagueños'. Referenced in Álvaro Molina, 'De Caballeros de Pelo En Pecho a Señoritos de Ciento En Boca. Miradas de Lo Masculino En La España de Los Borbones', in *Miradas Disidentes: Géneros y Sexo En La Historia Del Arte* (Madrid: UNAM, 2007), pp. 241–73 (p. 251).

²⁹¹ Scientists are still researching the relation between testosterone and violence. In 2012, scientists from the Universidad Veracruzana analysed the levels of testosterone and estradiol present on male corpses who committed suicide or died during a violent confrontation. Their results pointed out that men who committed suicide had more testosterone, equal to the levels of testosterone in criminals. However, those who died during a violent confrontation had the same testosterone levels as any other healthy man. Based on their results, the scientists find a relation between depression and anxiety with testosterone, but they did not risk any conclusion as their findings were not determinant. Magda Pérez-Vázquez, 'Perfil Hormonal, Violencia y Suicidio: Estudio Exploratorio', *Revista Médica de La Universidad Veracruzana*, 2021, 7–13 (pp. 7–13)..

²⁹² Mariana Pittauga, 'El Estigma de La Gótica. Belleza y Fealdad de Un Alfabeto', *Zincografía. Revista de Comunicación y Diseño*, 4 (2018), 95–112.

²⁹³ Diéguez, 'De malestares teatrales y vacíos representacionales: el teatro trascendido', pp. 249–50..

male ratio of hours spent on unpaid domestic work is 2.74.²⁹⁴ However, less than half of the men surveyed agreed that it is a woman's sole responsibility to take care of a baby,²⁹⁵ suggesting that policies, campaigns, and art may have had some impact on the stereotypes surrounding traditional gender roles. A law regulating media content concerning gender equality was approved three years after Cerrucha's installation.²⁹⁶ Without claiming that Cerrucha's artwork is responsible for this law (there is no available proof to back up such a statement), it is safe to say that the situation in Mexico is changing. Some disparities are narrowing, and, maybe, the images would have looked different if Cerrucha were exhibiting her work today. Art may have a crucial role in making invisible structure visible. The existence of reports on gender issues in Mexico are necessary, mainly for academics; however, to have an impact on the Mexican reality on the ground that the general population needs to be aware and informed about these issues. One of the challenges of evaluating the rhizomatic effect of street art is that there is no record of who actually sees the artworks. Maybe people working in media or politics saw the exhibition and came to understand gender stereotypes differently; however, it is impossible to be sure of it.

²⁹⁴ N. van der Gaag and others, *State of the World's Fathers. Unlocking the Power of Men's Care* (Washington D.C.: Promundo-US, 2019), p. 15.

²⁹⁵ van der Gaag and others, p. 45.

²⁹⁶ *Ley de Telecomunicaciones y Radiodifusión*, 2014

<https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/346846/LEY_FEDERAL_DE_TELECOMUNICACIONES_Y_RADIOFUSION.pdf> [accessed 13 March 2022]. In relation to gender, Articles 2, 3, 67, 71, 191, 222, 256 regulate gender violence and the portrayal of stereotypes in media.

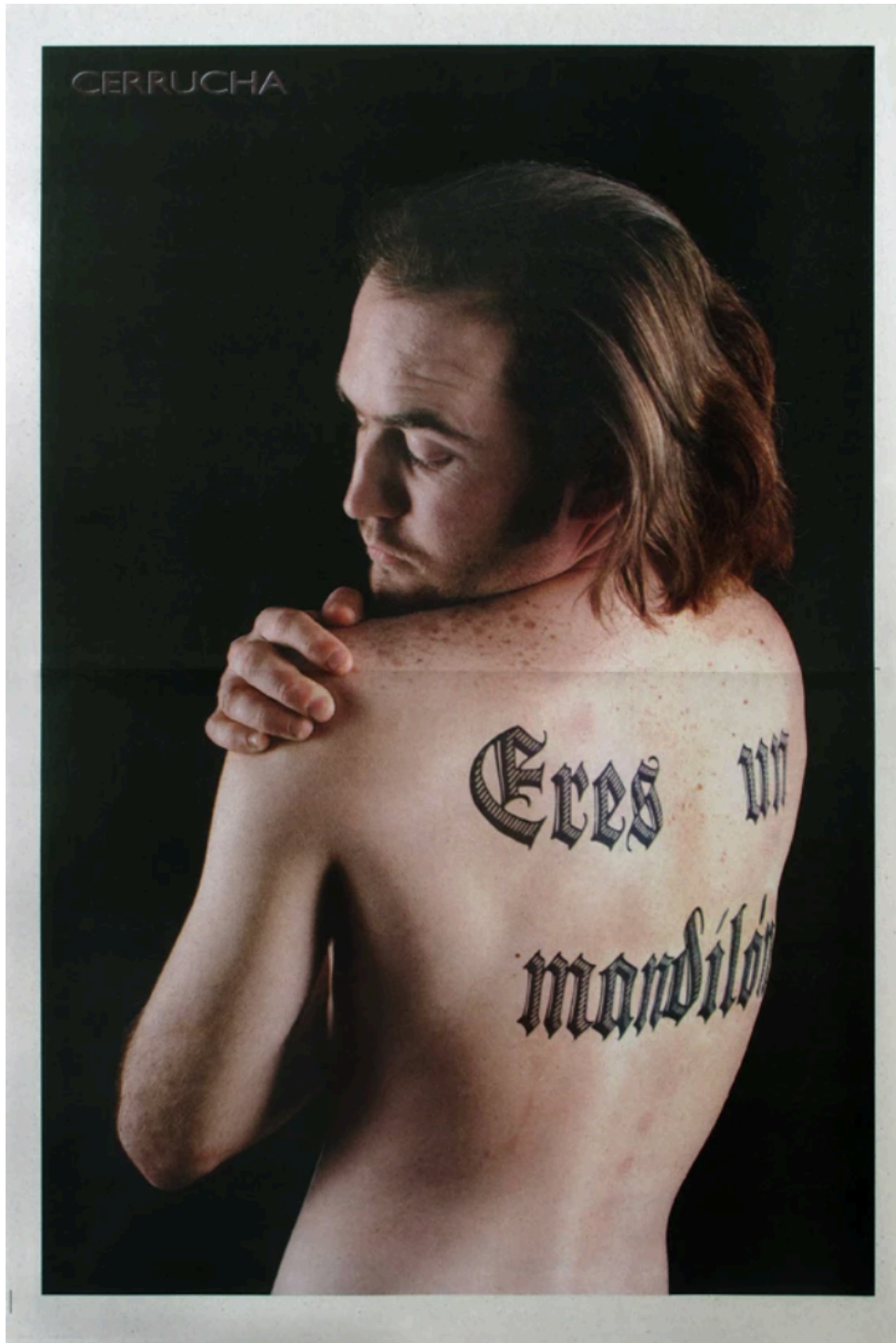


Figure 12. Cerrucha, 'Eres un mandilón', in *In/Visible* [online]
<<https://www.cerrucha.com/invisible-i?pgid=k9adka70-af746201-0344-4cc4-9f30-daece114f07d>>
[accessed 24 September 2020]

The third poster shows a man seemingly trying to read the fake tattoo on his back. This image might be considered to have more merit as a portrait, given that his face is almost entirely visible. However, with a portrait there is always a communication exercise in which the subject of the portrait actively aims to transmit a certain aura: power, solemnity and beauty being just

a smattering of examples. In this case, the subjects knew they were going to be part of an artistic project aimed at confronting gender stereotypes; therefore, they willingly became a means of transmitting a certain message. The digital tattoo consists of the colloquial expression: *Eres un mandilón* [You are a Henpecked Man].²⁹⁷ A man receives this nickname when he is perceived to perform activities stereotypically related to the female sex, especially homemaking duties, such as childcare or housework. When designing the poster, Cerrucha translated the term for her Canadian classmates with the vulgar expression *pussy whipped*.²⁹⁸ In Spanish, the term comes from *mandil* [apron], an item of clothing usually worn by stay-at-home housewives. The apron has been a popular trope in Mexican feminist *artivism* since the 1980s. As explained in Chapter I, Bustamante and Mayer used ‘feminine elements’ to confront gender constructions; often wearing aprons as a symbol of the gender roles imposed upon them. In one notable instance, a televised performance of *Polvo de Gallina Negra* featured Guillermo Ochoa, the host of the TV show *Nuestro Mundo*, wearing an apron. Looking beyond the giggles this provoked, *Polvo de Gallina Negra*’s intention was to make visible the arbitrary social constructions surrounding motherhood.

The man’s posture is quite ‘feminine’, reminiscent of many commercial representations of women in marketing: he appears to be naked, yet not in a way that directly connotes sexuality. He has a defined waist, and only his face reveals he is a man. When compared to some fashion advertisements, the similarities are apparent, with one such similarity being the placement of his hands. The pose adheres to conventual representations of intimacy and self-exploration, which draws the eye of the voyeur and places the male body as an object of the so-called ‘male gaze’.²⁹⁹ According to Barbosa, the stereotypes feminist artists reject —those imposed on women as a whole— can be described as: ‘mujeres sumisas, abnegadas, pasivas, modelo ideal del ama de casa, esposa y madre’.³⁰⁰ However, when this ideal role model for women is imposed on men, it is seen as a defect and a weakness instead of a virtue.

A discussion that previously seemed to be binary changes the minute one adds this third poster to the discussion. Looking at the three posters together reveals the complicity of gender stereotypes and the relationships between them, thus affirming the notion of gender

²⁹⁷ In English, the term firstly appeared in a poem attributed to Robert Burns, known for writing poems addressed to men that were ridiculous and ludicrous. In the poem he describes a man controlled by his wife, similar to how a *mandilón* is understood in Mexico. Originally published by Thomas Stewart in *Poems Ascribed to Robert Burns the Ayrshire Bard* (1801). Robert Burns, *The Poems of Robert Burns* (Chiswick: C. Whittingham College House, 1822), II, p. 36..

²⁹⁸ See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

²⁹⁹ Sylvia Holla, ‘Aesthetic objects on display: The objectification of Fashion models as a situated practice’, *Feminist Theory*, 19.3 (2017), 251–68 (p. 255) <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700117734730>>..

³⁰⁰ Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, p. 23..

performativity explained in Chapter II. As said before, the first couple complement each other, the submissive woman and the macho man, before the third poster sees the introduction of a second male figure, who embodies the opposite of the macho. However, being the ‘anti-masculine’ does not make him the ideal; there is a catch to it. When men are called *mandilones* they are perceived as weak, with no spine and no job outside the private sphere; therefore, they are a social failure, unable to accomplish the socially defined male responsibilities. The calligraphy used for this last man is gothic, like the other man’s tattoo, but it is built-up calligraphy, like that of the woman. His back displays characteristics of both the masculine and the feminine; he appears to be more feminine than masculine. Unlike the man of ‘pelo en pecho’, his skin is smooth and with no strong muscles; even if he has some facial hair, in comparison, he seems more feminine. Cerrucha’s images allow the viewer to appreciate the power of labels and stereotypes have to influence human behaviour. Masculinity and femininity are shown to be binary categories that constrain their victims and prescribe their behaviour, forcing them to engage in the performance of their gender. These posters therefore showcase the erroneousness of this dichotomy, exposing masculinity and femininity as arbitrary constructions based on a superficial reading of one’s genitals. This links Cerrucha’s art with the transfeminist project followed by Mayer and Wolffer. *In/visible* evidences that ‘la masculinidad (como ficción política viva) es un dispositivo de implementación y conservación de un proyecto de modernidad/colonialidad y nación que en su transformación está ligado al surgimiento y actualización de la economía capitalista’³⁰¹. Therefore, pointing out the arbitrariness of defining masculinity narrowly might contribute to a reduction of violent, gore-capitalist behaviours in men, derived from a validated by a heteronormative, binary understanding of gender roles. It is the tacit acceptance of this framework that leads women to accept their captivities, and men their role as violent captors.

The position of the tattoos in *In/visible* were also intentionally chosen. The woman’s tattoo is on her back, and, unlike the man with the *mandilón* tattoo, she seems unaware of it. Through failing to acknowledge her tattoo, she is representing the nature of the private agreement she has with her husband —she knows it is there, but by turning her back on the viewer, she is refusing to engage in any debate about this agreement. In the case of the macho-man, his tattoo covers his ribs, recalling the passage in the book of Genesis in which God created woman from the rib of Adam, further implying that all women are the same. Both figures act passively in relation to the spectator, who may identify either with her or him as

³⁰¹ Valencia, ‘El Transfeminismo No Es Un Generismo’.

they are faceless. Why, then, is the *mandilón* man different? Why is he looking over his shoulder, twisting himself in knots to read his tattoo? Self-questioning is necessary to break free of the first two stereotypes portrayed in Cerrucha's posters. While such self-questioning is easier said than done—especially for women who may become victims of domestic violence if they 'disobey' their husbands and need to develop agency, the female gender must reflect on how they ought to be treated, and which acts qualify as violence. Meanwhile, the *mandilón* man is drawing attention to a label given to him, this expressing resistance to the idea that it is acceptable for society to insult and shun men committed to performing their fair share of housework.

Some stereotypes in *In/visible*, such as that of a man of 'de pelo en pecho', reaffirm the idea of biological determinism. Others, such as the 'mandilón', criticise those who fail to fit the biological mould. The case of women is more complicated, while being submissive in the private sphere she accesses the public sphere. The working woman or the 'housewife man' are considered to contradict the heteronormative, binary and patriarchal system. However, if gender is understood as a performative quality, biology can be separated from destiny, and the understanding of gender can become more nuanced than the binary opposition that underpins patriarchy. The possibility of performing gender suggests that there is nothing fixed about identities and, therefore, that the stereotypes are arbitrary and baseless. The idea that there are roles, tasks or activities specific to certain genders is rendered a nonsense when defining it as an act both intentional and performative, where: 'an "act", as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where "performative" suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning'.³⁰² We can also discern another intersection with the captivities explained by Lagarde. According to Lagarde, gossip has a dialectic meaning for women in captivity. Through gossip, they have some sort of freedom to share knowledge amongst other women; it may even teach some morality and prevent others from acting erroneously.³⁰³ However, being the object of gossip is a punishment, and can have the effect of ridiculing the person, thus carrying significant destructive power.³⁰⁴ Conversation becomes gossip when something private is revealed about someone, and everyone talks about it. Cerrucha's woman asks her man for permission, turning her back on gossip. He helps at home and is called a *mandilón*, so

³⁰² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 177.

³⁰³ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 418..

³⁰⁴ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 419.

he tries to erase the label or the gossip. So, the reactions to the three posters are supposed to be differentiated from how Cerrucha conceived them.

Another Cerrucha portrait —arguably her most accomplished— displays a young girl. She is the only model whose face is visible, and the only one who stares straight down the camera, at the viewer. She has a tattoo covering both arms, which reads: *Ese juego no es para niñas* [That game is not for girls]. Her gaze challenges the viewer, showcasing a competitiveness that appears to challenge the stereotype propagated by her tattoo. In discussing the popularity of Barbie dolls, Araceli Barbosa explains that young girls today are far less willing to accept the traditional stereotypes propagated by that toy.³⁰⁵ The message of this portrait is one of hope, the portrayed girl a representative of a generation of young girls less inclined to accept subordination to men as their natural condition. The calligraphy used for her tattoo is gothic, —like that used for the men in Cerrucha’s other posters. However, the typeface used on the girl’s arms is thinner than that of the men, so according to the calligraphic conventions employed by the artist, the font is neither fully masculine nor fully feminine. The question of whether the girls of today are indeed less willing to accept the ‘Barbie stereotypes’ is an important one, which I will discuss when revisiting my discussion of this poster in conjunction with another, as yet unseen one.

³⁰⁵ Araceli Barbosa, *Barbie, Un Estereotipo Tóxico* (Cuernavaca: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos and Editorial Itaca, 2018).



Figure 13. Cerrucha, 'Ese juego no es para niñas', in *In/Visible* [online]
<<https://www.cerrucha.com/invisible-i?pgid=k9adka70-4342bfbe-9d4f-4628-b00a-566fdc285aa7>>
[accessed 24 September 2020]

The *In/Visible* exhibition did include a fifth poster, but due to budgetary constraints it was included only in the second phase of the installation. The design of the poster is very similar, and this time the subject is a young boy, staring sadly at the tattoo artist inscribing the words *Lloras como niña* [*You cry like a girl*] onto his body. This tattoo makes reference to the

expectations conferred on young boys through their education. From a young age, they are taught to behave in a ‘manly’ way, suppressing all behaviours that fall foul of these restrictions. Like the posters of the adults, which together recreate a social reality, the two posters portraying children appear to be in a dialogue. The boy’s gaze challenges the stereotypes affecting him. However, instead of looking down the camera, he is staring directly at the tattoo artist (who is visible only in his portrait), his expression one of sadness anger and defiance. Gender roles, and the importance of conforming to them, are impressed on children at home (by mothers alone, where the father is absent), in school, and in the media. As part of an effort to reduce gendered violence and promote equality between sexes, teachers in Mexico are trained in gender perspective, and are given free access to teaching resources that aim to reduce gender violence.³⁰⁶ Cerrucha’s message with these two last posters is clear: even if children are still having traditional roles inculcated within them, it seems like they are less willing to accept the gender binary order. According to the artist herself, the younger population has been exposed to more content questioning the stereotypes than older generations.³⁰⁷ The fact that *In/visible* was conceived as street and feminist art partially defined the effect of these posters.

³⁰⁶ The main resource is a manual printed in 2008 which is still used today. Juan Escámez Sánchez, *Educación En La Igualdad de Género. Cien Propuestas de Acción* (Mexico City: Brief Ediciones, 2008).

³⁰⁷ See interview with Cerrucha, Addendum.

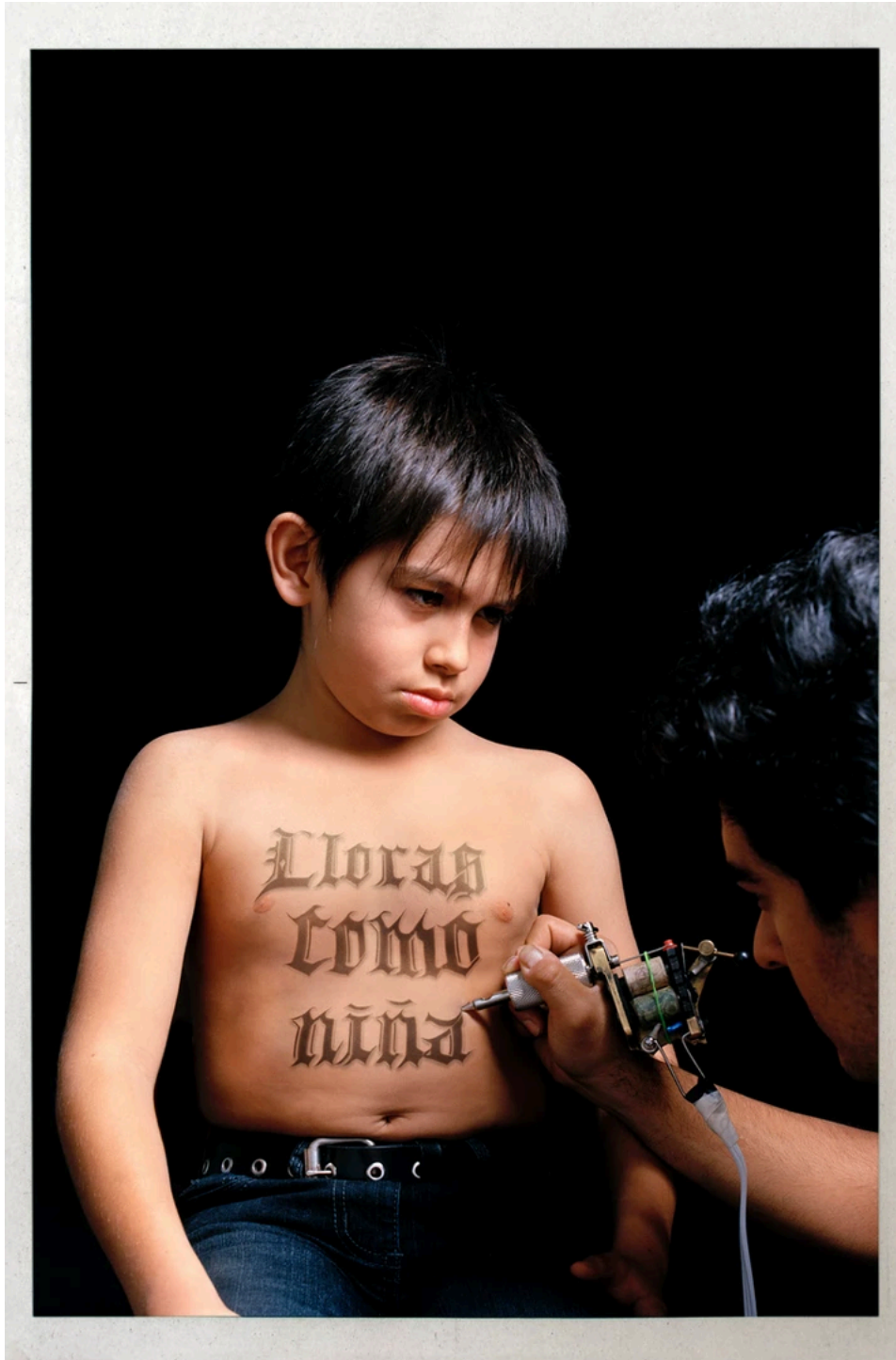


Figure 14. Cerrucha, 'Lloras como niña', in *In/Visible II* [online] <<https://www.cerrucha.com/in-visible-ii?pgid=kb1bwbfu-dddc90c4-f315-427d-8e42-657e2139aef7>> [accessed 24 September 2020]

Cerrucha, like any other street artist, was not expecting *In/visible* to be a permanent installation. In fact, many were damaged soon after she installed them. Since the material can be easily damaged, and the message may have generated unconformity, it is possible to identify some sort of reaction. Temporality is another characteristic linked to street art. Artists are aware

that their work has a limited lifespan, constantly at the mercy of weather and public backlashes. Street artists even expect people to intervene in their artworks; to react to (and against) them (again, another rhizomatic quality). Through the digital documentation of the installation, it is possible to observe that the most damaged poster was that of the little girl. Although some of the damage can be attributed to weather, the scratches around the girl's face and eyes can only have been intentional. Lack of witnesses notwithstanding, it seems more than reasonable to suggest that some viewers disagreed with the new generation's rejection of gender roles. During a conference organised by the UNAM's Museo Universitario del Chopo as part of the activities to commemorate November 25, the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women, where Cerrucha was present, and after observing the damage done to the girl's poster, it was possible to ask her about it. She agreed that the defacing of her posters was indicative of how large sections of the public would have reacted to her artwork, and that such reactions were part of a wider pattern: 'Sí, creo que justamente en mi experiencia cuando pongo imágenes de mujeres en espacios públicos, lo primero que hacen es arrancarles los ojos y es muy significativo, o sea en el espacio la gente piensa que tiene el derecho a violentar nuestros cuerpos, ¿no? Quitar los ojos es una manera de quitar la identidad, de borrarla, entonces sí, definitivamente creo es indicativo'.³⁰⁸ If she is right, and the scratching out of women's eyes on her posters is indeed a product of men feeling free to inflict harm upon women in the streets, to erase their identities and the artworks in which they appear, then such actions justify the need for a massive cultural shift, geared towards reducing violence against women. If passers-by continue to feel comfortable scratching out women's eyes, then more must be done to change the sexist social order that permits such acts. In addition, having a feminist message inserts Cerrucha's work into another discussion.

³⁰⁸ *Mesa 2: Gabriela Huerta, Karen Cordero y Cerrucha: ¿Cómo Se Construyen Las Visualidades Feministas y Disidentes Sexuales?* (Mexico City, 2020) <<https://www.facebook.com/MuseodelChopo/videos/861508864597218>> [accessed 25 November 2020]. This museum in particular has been promoting feminist art.



Figure 15. Cerrucha, *In/Visible* [online] <<https://www.cerrucha.com/invisible-i?pgid=kb9yqqk6-21aabc62-ab6f-11ea-8c85-12879e2400f0>> [accessed 24 September 2020]

The fact that the Cerrucha's subjects are digitally tattooed endows the artwork with another significance interwoven with the messages and the portrayed subjects. Since the spectators did not know that the tattoos were digitally created, and that what they were observing were photographs, it is safe to believe they assumed they were real. Even if tattooed adults are culturally more accepted than previously, tattooed children are more polemic. In a sociological study conducted in Coyoacán and Iztapalapa between 2009 and 2010, Querales Mendoza³⁰⁹ discovered that tattoos are more socially accepted than in previous years. She also observed how each tattoo represents a subjective element of the inked individuals. Even if adults can consent to modifications to their body, there is a confrontation when marking their bodies with demeaning messages. In this sense, kids are not mature enough to pick a phrase or an illustration they would like to have in their skin forever; hence, in Mexico it is illegal to tattoo or pierce minors (except for ear piercings on baby girls —another means of perpetuating gender roles).³¹⁰ Furthermore, tattoos are permanent scars; getting a tattoo harms the body, and therefore the recipient must be exercising their own free will in deciding to get it. The possibility therefore remains that some spectators believed that Cerrucha actually had these children tattooed. Why, then, did Cerrucha choose to present these messages in a way

³⁰⁹ May-ek Querales Mendoza, 'El tatuaje en el mundo contemporáneo: un recurso significativo para la subjetividad individual', *Estudios de discurso*, 5.1 (2019), 1–24 <<https://doi.org/10.30973/esdi/2019.5.1/1>>.

³¹⁰ This is stated in article 268 of the Health General Law. Cámara Federal de Diputados, *Ley General de Salud*.

that connoted an act of implicit violence against the children involved? Why not present the messages in a more uncontroversial format —perhaps with the text merely accompanying the images of the children, rather than appearing as if tattooed on their bodies? For me, she was provoking; people should react as adversely to gender stereotypes being forced on children (or adults) as they do with tattoos. These gender structures Cerrucha is criticising may be permanent emotional, psychological and social scars; so, in a way, they are tattoos.

With *In/visible*, Cerrucha was confronting the role of advertising and mass media in promoting gender roles. In an interview in 2018, she claimed: ‘por supuesto, es reapropiarse de los espacios que ha tomado la publicidad y también es el lenguaje, el lenguaje de la publicidad es hablar el mismo idioma que está hablando tu consumidor’.³¹¹ Considering that Cerrucha studied art and has been actively participating in the feminist discussion, she is highly conscious of the role feminist art in scrutinising the role of advertising in the perpetuation of the patriarchy. Ever since the emergence of feminist art, its relationship with advertising has been one of confrontation. This is why Aracely Barbosa described this quality of feminist artworks when studying its origins:

El carácter violento de las imágenes difundidas por los medios de comunicación masiva se expresa en la creación de múltiples estereotipos femeninos que proyectan las imágenes maniqueas, ya sea de mujeres sumisas, abnegadas, pasivas, modelo ideal del ama de casa, esposa y madre o bien de mujeres sumamente sexualizadas complacientes, mujeres codificadas cuyo cuerpo ha sido genitalizado, utilizado para vender todo tipo de publicidad y vuelto a su vez objeto de consumo.³¹²

Barbosa observed this train of thought in the works of feminist like Monica Mayer. Hence, there is an awareness of the visual confrontation between feminist art and advertising, and it seems like this discussion is taking place through the medium of images. Barbosa explains the aforementioned dichotomy that women are exposed to through media: either the good and submissive wife or the sexualised and evil one. There is a continuation of the criticism showed in works like *La Fiesta de los XV Años*. However, Cerrucha was more subtle in her criticism as she was addressing her project to women not necessarily aware of why this might be problematic. If they are to halt the perpetuation of gender roles, women need to see female

³¹¹ See Addendum Interview with Cerrucha.

³¹² Barbosa, *Arte feminista en los ochenta en México. Una perspectiva de género*, p. 23.

characters acting in defiance of these stereotypes. Diversifying how women are represented and moving away from the monopoly enjoyed by ‘traditional’ representations of women, is fundamental for the eradication of sexism in culture, and art is one of the mediums in which this shift can happen. To this end, Lacy supports Chicana artists portraying real Chicana women in defiance of their stereotypical representations in the products of mainstream culture.³¹³ However, there is a crucial difference between how artists are confronting the media and how advertisers are doing it. When publicity campaigns is inclusive, there is always a suspicion about pink capitalism —the inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community, a diverse range of ethnicities, and a wide variety of body types in advertising campaigns, with little understanding or care shown for the issues that affect these groups, and a lack of concern for changing the production of the products in question in order to guarantee fair trade and zero discrimination across the supply chain.³¹⁴ However, when an artist like Cerrucha, with no profitable intentions, places posters or images that contradict or confront orthodox representations of gender, her aim is purely to change the conversation around gender roles, and her message is not subject to manipulation by profit incentives, media companies, the private sector or the government.

Cerrucha considers *In/visible*, and indeed all her other works, as political art. The definition she referenced to explain her art is precisely Tania Bruguera’s aforementioned *Declaración de arte politico*. It is therefore possible to observe how her strategies and the evolution of her art are influenced by this. In 2021, during a workshop, Cerrucha explained that her art is political, as defined by Cuban artist Tania Bruguera.³¹⁵ Artists ought to have no concern about what happens to their artworks, as long as they fulfil a social and political role. Nevertheless, art does not seek to impose its ideas on people, merely to encourage the assimilation of the message, reflect upon it, and react to it according to their own context. This is similar to the idea of a rhizomatic effect; both convey a notion about the artwork’s lasting beyond its exhibition. It is an experience and an act of resistance that only makes sense if the participants can do something with the artwork.

After installing *In/Visible*, Cerrucha recognised that the artwork had some faults. It victimises those portraying the tattoos, and there was no active interaction between herself and the spectators.³¹⁶ Like other feminist artists, her *artist* strategies have changed, in line with

³¹³ Lacy, ‘Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys’, p. 27.

³¹⁴ Since the 1960s, the members of LGBTQIA+ community and feminists have described the phenomenon of pink capitalism after some companies claimed to be friendly towards different minorities with the objective of having more clients. Lorenzo Yeh, ‘Pink Capitalism: Perspectives and Implications for Cultural Management’, *Prospetiva I Anàlisi de Projectes Culturals II*, 2015, 1–26.

³¹⁵ Cerrucha, *Workshop Arte, arma de construcción masiva*, (Mexico City, 2021).

³¹⁶ See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

her intention to become more aware of the effects of her work. The evolution of *artist* language and techniques depends on the social needs the *artist* is addressing, their access to resources and their interaction with the community that receives the project. As I will observe in Chapter 4, Cerrucha's dialogue with other feminist artists has led her to find other ways of intervening in the public space. By studying one of her first installations, it is possible to identify her agenda and understand how *artists* are not bound to a particular artistic technique, instead adapting their practice and process according to their objective. It was also relevant to recognise how the younger generations of feminist artists are operating. By way of an example, we can see that after Wolffer interacted with Cerrucha, she started proposing projects of street art like *Historias Propias* [Their Own Stories] (2020). Without claiming that street art belongs to the young, it is clear for me that they have mutually enriched the practice of it. On the other hand, Cerrucha has also looked for methodologies that generate more interaction with the audience and, by the same token, granted access to their reaction. For this reason, the subsequent phases of *In/visible* produced a different dynamic in which she was in contact with the public, who acted as participants. However, the analysis of this phase implies an understanding of feminism, encapsulating the indigenous perspective, as she worked inside a Tzotzil-Mayan community.

III.I. Texō, an Interactive Performance to Deal with Invisible Labels

Before delving into how Cerrucha organised a social intervention inspired by her work on *In/visible*, I would like to briefly explain how *In/visible II* was done. It has not featured in my research thus far, as I was aiming at exploring *artist* projects focusing on the Mexican context. However, the modifications she made to her own project showed her interest in having more contact with the audience. The subjects of *In/Visible II* were international. To avoid the revictimisation that came with digitally tattooing her acquaintances, she allowed the photographed participants to choose the stereotypes they wanted to challenge. Hence, the exhibition carries expressions from different countries, and in different languages. People voluntarily submitted their images and gave their permission to Cerrucha to digitally manipulate those images. As a result, the problems Cerrucha identified with the first installation of *In/Visible* were remedied, as she was now giving her subjects a say in her artwork. In a way, that small change produced a big shift in Cerrucha's strategy. She was now an ally who worked for people, rather than speaking on their behalf. She gave them the photograph (as a protest tool) with which they could stand against the stereotypes they wanted

to confront. However, even with this modification, Cerrucha still lacked the desired access to her audience's reaction to her project, and as a result she took her ideas even further.

Building on the message of *In/Visible*, between 2016 and 2017, Cerrucha created an intervention that produced a direct interaction with the public. She took this performance to Canada, Mexico City, and a Zapatista community in Chiapas. Considering that this research focuses on the Mexican case, the focus will be on the two Mexican performances. Though both experiences are archived under the name *Texō*, which is the Latin present infinitive of the verb *to weave*, the performance at the Zapatista community was given an expanded title, with the subheading *Que la boca se te haga chicharrón* [literally translated as 'May your mouth become pork scratchings', but semantically similar to the expression 'Bite your tongue']. The original name refers to the idea of weaving a sort of solidarity through the exchange of ideas. Meanwhile, the Chiapas' version is a popular saying used when someone is predicting a future negative outcome, hoping that their prediction is wrong. The sense of the phrase is similar to that of 'touch wood' as a means of preventing bad luck. From the artist's perspective, it vocalises her wish for everyone expressing a stereotype to bite their tongue. Cerrucha transformed her photographic exercise into a performance, proving that feminist *artists* are more committed to their social intention than to the aesthetic medium, abandoning her customary means of expression—photography—in favour of a more interactive medium. The creative process of these kinds of projects is always ongoing and adapting as the artist gains experience. For this performance, Cerrucha approached people who had been on the receiving end of common Mexican sexist phrases, and temporarily tattooed these participants. By interacting with them, she was able to observe whether, through her work of art, she was creating the *communitas* necessary for the liminal space.

Both performances of *Texō* displayed the kind of strategies she now uses as part of *Disidenta*. Although in this it is possible to see a progression of her social practice, I will explore it more in Chapter IV in discussions concerning her collaboration with Wolffer and Mayer. Recently, Cerrucha has been organising and participating in a recurring project where she interviews artists. Notably, these interviews have gone out as Instagram live streams, staying faithful to her principle of using as accessible a medium as possible in the transmission of her art. She calls this project: *Arte, arma de construcción masiva* [Art, weapon of mass construction] (2020) in opposition to the existence of modern weapons, with their colossal destructive power. For this, in October, she interviewed Bruktawit Tigabu. Although the transmission failed, Cerrucha explained the difference between art and activism: 'Veo un problema y voy para atrás para ver cómo resolverlo. Tenemos un bien mayor al que llegamos

a través del arte. El proceso es importante. Me interesa conectar más que el producto final'.³¹⁷ In another interview in 2018, she spoke of her experiences of 'bombing' the city during *In/Visible*; how she witnessed the reactions of the public and felt the need to modify her strategy in order to engage on a deeper level with the participants.³¹⁸ However, in this case, the process and the *artist's* finale product happened simultaneously. As part of the activity, participants, if they considered themselves able to challenge the stereotypes expressed on them, had the chance to modify or erase the tattoo before the ink dried. It was a collective performance with plenty of commonalities with those organised by *Polvo de Gallina Negra*; after all, Cerrucha is inheriting the history of Mexican feminist art.

Texō was liminal in that its existence depended on the public's participation—a claim I make in line with Diéguez' work on liminal and political art. She states: 'Numerosas producciones escénicas, visuales y performativas se han estado construyendo con materias, cuerpos, objetos reales y/o cotidianos que exponen trazos de memorias, que proyectan una carga aurática cultural [sic], produciendo relatos, situaciones y acontecimientos reales.'³¹⁹ As explained in Chapter I, following Diéguez, I understand that liminal artistic proposals may be regarded as a transitional rite. In this sense, if a feminist is looking to produce some kind of change, they create a transitional rite in doing so. However, for it to actually encourage a transition, they should provide tools that allow or enable individual people to change. With this in mind, we can say that Cerrucha's performance was not restricted to the day of the exhibition, as the temporary tattoos remained imprinted on the bodies of the subjects for a while after the exhibition, thus continuing to convey its messages. In a departure from *In/Visible*, Cerrucha does not seek to *represent* stereotypes with her tattoos; instead, she is presenting, discussing and encouraging the questioning of real stereotypes, as experienced by her subjects. The art project consists not of her tattoos, but the reactions she fomented, which are real and unadulterated, not a representation or a metaphor.

Since these reactions were what mattered to Cerrucha, the basis of her performance is plurality, thereby producing a rhizomatic effect. Comparing it with the performance *Receta para hacerle mal de ojo*, her tattooing exercise was completely open-ended and followed no specific plan of hers—although there may have been a determining factor in the insults she chose, she could not anticipate the participants' answers. It is clear that this is inspired by how

³¹⁷ Cerrucha, 'Entrevista a Bruktawit Tigabu', *Arte: Arma de Construcción Masiva*. <@Cerrucha> [accessed 7 October 2020].

³¹⁸ See addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

³¹⁹ Diéguez, 'De malestares teatrales y vacíos representacionales: el teatro trascendido', p. 249.

gender stereotypes are a form of gender violence, but they affect their victims differently, depending on the interplay between their multiple intersectional identities; therefore, Cerruchas's *artivism* acted like a node of the transfeminist project against sexist culture. Every answer she received was heterogeneous and supposed a new node related to the roles or the stereotypes. Furthermore, it may well be the case that, while the tattoos faded away, the discussions they initiated did not, and later translated into other forms of protest. This is the 'decalcomania' quality of the rhizome. Unfortunately—for my research at least— she kept their reactions private, sharing them only with the people who participated in the performance (like Wolffer has done). Those who were unable to formulate a response to the stereotype had to keep the corresponding tattoo for two weeks before it naturally faded, giving them two weeks to ruminate on the stereotype itself, and how to respond to it. The challenge of analysing these *artist* projects is that they exist between the realms of art, activism and social work, displaying characteristics of all three disciplines without being a straightforward member of any of them. If it was purely a sociological intervention, she could have respected the anonymity of the participants while creating a diagnosis or a report to quantify the impact she had. However, as things are, the only thing available is the archive, includes pictures and a brief text.

Cerrucha did not choose her participants; she arrived at both events in which people already interested in art and gender studies were participating. In Mexico City, the performance took place in 2017 at the Centro Cultural España³²⁰ and was part of a workshop on gender violence; it was one of a series of planned events, aiming to raise awareness about the societal structures responsible for encouraging gender violence. For this, Cerrucha worked together with the collective *Lxs cirujanas*, a group dedicated to promoting gender diversity and fighting machismo through peaceful interventions, inspired by the Guerrilla Girls.³²¹ During the workshop, besides getting the tattoos done, participants listed common insults with gender connotations, a helpful exercise in the understanding of symbolic violence. Some of the unanswered tattoos were: *malcogida* [you need a good fuck]; *lloras como niña* [you cry like a girl]; *chinga tu madre* [fuck your mother]; *me lleva la chingada* [fuck me sideways]. Meanwhile, some of the tattoos that got erased read: *palabra de hombre* [a gentleman's word]

³²⁰ The centre is located in downtown in Mexico City, it is dedicated to promoting culture and art. It belongs to the AECID (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development) which has 13 cultural centres around the world. 'Sobre El CCEMx', *Cooperación Española Cultura/México*, 2020 <<https://ccemx.org/sobre-el-ccemx/>> [accessed 21 July 2020].

³²¹ *Lxs cirujanas666*, 'Sobre CIRUJANAS', *Lxs Cirujanas666*, 2015 <<https://lascirujanas666.wordpress.com/mision-vision-objetivo-filosofia-y-valores/>> [accessed 21 July 2020].

or *tu puta madre* [your mother is a bitch]. It might be worth reiterating here that the phrases to which the participants were unable to effectively respond remained tattooed on the participants.



Figure 16. Cerrucha, *Texō* [online] <<https://www.cerrucha.com/texto?pgid=ka4lo5ph-2b417ed3-1a94-4efb-a4fe-7739415cb24e>> [accessed 24 September 2020]

For *Texō*, Cerrucha worked not only with stereotypes but with insults linked to gender inequalities and violence. The first of the non-erased tattoos listed is *malcogida*, an insult to describe women who show a bitter attitude, attributing her lousy mood to having an unfulfilling sex life, thus assuming that that women need a man to be happy and satisfied. Meanwhile, it is possible that the man bearing the tattoo with the phrase *lloras como niña* could not provide an answer to this insult because of its iniquitousness, and the fact it remains a deeply-embedded feature of Mexico's culture of machismo. As stated previously, the fact that men and women cannot entirely fulfil their gender roles backs up the idea of gender as a performative rather than biologically determined. Those tattoos, including the word *chingada*, are quite complex, as the term itself is. The word is common in the Mexican vocabulary; however, depending on how it is used, it can have any number of different meanings, and may be used as an adjective, noun, or verb. The etymology of the term is not clear, due to its multitude of implications and uses. Moríngo suggests the term comes from the Quechua *chincay* [fail]. According to the Corominas dictionary, it is derived from the Gypsy word *chingarar* (fight or bother) or from

singular [navigate].³²² In Cerrucha's work, it is used with two different connotations. The first one is *chinga tu madre*, which means something like 'go and rape your mother' or 'motherfucker'. This expression is one of the most offensive insults available in Mexico. Until today, the most accepted explanation on why it is so aggressive is found in Octavio Paz' essay *Los hijos de la Malinche* (1950). In this essay, Paz rejected the romantic idea of Mexico being a proud nation of mestizos, as a mixed-race identity of many Mexicans is the direct result of rapes committed by conquerors against indigenous women. Even feminist like Lagarde, when explaining the colonial captivity that resulted from being the bastards, used Paz' work.³²³ In this context, *chingada* means 'a raped woman'. All the *chingada*'s children are bastards; hence, it is shame what Mexicans feel and not pride.³²⁴ The other expression, *me lleva la chingada*, is used by those undergoing a bad experience, experiencing bad luck or feeling angry. The fact that that particular word retains its insulting connotations supports La-Fountain Stoker's hypothesis, which posits that the post-colonial identity of the Mexican people is shaped to some degree by the unsolved issues deriving from their status as the descendants of raped women and rapist men.³²⁵

³²² Juan Clemente Zamora, 'Lexicología Indiarrománica: "Chingar y Singar"', *Romance Notes*, 14.2 (1972), 409–13.

³²³ Marcela Lagarde is explaining how the symbolic idea of the Mexican mother is highly linked to her raped [*chingada*] nature.

³²⁴ Octavio Paz, 'Los Hijos de La Malinche', in *El Laberinto de La Soledad* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992), pp. 27–36 (pp. 27–36).

³²⁵ Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes, 'Gender/Género in Latin America', in *Critical Terms in the Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories*, ed. by Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, and Marisa Belausteguigoitia (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 193–206. This book explores different projects that offer alternatives for a decolonising process in Latin America.



Figure 17. Cerrucha, *Qué la boca se te haga chicharrón* [online]
 <<https://www.cerrucha.com/texto?pgid=ka4lo5ph-2b417ed3-1a94-4efb-a4fe-7739415cb24e>>
 [accessed 24 September 2020]

The second performance, *Que la boca se te haga chicharrón*, is unique in its own way. By working with the Zapatistas, Cerrucha inserted her *artivism* into the feminist dialogue that indigenous women have been sharing through press releases, conferences and podcasts since 1994. She presented the performance as part of the activities offered during a Zapatista Festival. Zapatistas organise festivals about different topics: art, gender, and social liberation theology are some of the themes, and these events are open to people outside the community. Cerrucha was part of the 2017 *Festival CompArte Zapatista*, an *artist* activity that the coiners of the term created to encourage artistic protests and the development of creative resistance techniques. This links Cerrucha's practice to that of the original *artists*, and in Chapter IV, I will analyse an artwork that actually uses the same *artist* techniques as the Big Frente Zapatista. It is relevant to mention this, because for me using the same techniques is not an accident; it shows how involved is Cerrucha with feminist art and with the history of *artivism*. The tattoos she used were: *hijo de puta* [son of a bitch], *feminazi*, *seguro te está bajando* [you must be on your period], *date a desear* [play hard to get], *nopaleiro* ['harvester of cacti leaves', a derogatory term used in Mexico to discriminate against wearing ethnic clothes or speakers of an indigenous language].



Figure 18. Cerrucha, *Qué la boca se te haga chicharrón* [online]
<<https://www.cerrucha.com/texto?pgid=k9ad8pgp-98e542fa-0155-45b2-9a0b-ac21039caf77>>
[accessed 24 September 2020]

The fact that every tattoo got erased on this occasion should not come as a surprise to followers of the Zapatista's feminist agenda. One of the first actions of the Zapatista Army was the creation of the Women's Law, which consisted of seven articles, and sought to protect indigenous women. Marcela Lagarde was invited to advise on it.³²⁶ The law promotes equality, protects women from violence, and enshrines in law the rights of women to use contraceptives and enjoy bodily autonomy.³²⁷ Since the Zapatista territories are the only ones free of feminicides, they have become attractive and interesting for feminists and local *artists* (aside from the Chicano/a *artists*). Cerrucha has participated in several Zapatista festivals, as they present an opportunity to get in touch with a form of a subaltern speech. In this sense, her *artist* proposal in Chiapas could be considered less of a public-facing pedagogical exercise, and more of a form of individual enlightenment. She had the opportunity of knowing how they have been dealing with stereotypes, while remaining far outside mainstream culture and the reach of the media.

³²⁶ Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Las Leyes de Violencia de Género En México: Medidas de Prevención y Sensibilización'.

³²⁷ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Identidad Femenina e Insurrección En México (Las Zapatistas Del EXLN-1994)', *Revista ABRA*, 14 (1993), 23–34.



Figure 19. Cerrucha, *Qué la boca se te haga chicharrón* [online]
<<https://www.cerrucha.com/texto?pgid=k9ad8pgp-6920ee05-88af-4c03-8ac3-7b7072384a6a>> [accessed 24 September 2020]

Although Cerrucha witnessed the Zapatistas subaltern speech, it cannot be said that *Que la boca se te haga chicharrón* is a subaltern artwork or *artist* proposal. After 1994, when the Zapatista army formally rose, women and men embarked on a simultaneously anti-colonialist, anti-capitalist and feminist process. For them, recovering their indigenous traditions was inextricably intertwined with the feminist effort. Similarly, the members of the Big Frente Zapatista aim to identify means of showing resistance to the capitalist system. They resisted the use of mass media to propagate symbolic violence and reflected on the fact that, before Catholicism, they had believed in a intersex god, and had given Mayan women the opportunity to become communitarian leaders They observed that the hierarchies resulting from colonial

and capitalist ethnic exclusion were an obstacle to equality.³²⁸ Following Gayatri Spivak's theory on subaltern speech, one can relate these issues to the principle that only women located outside the hegemonic structure, like the Zapatistas, can express subalternity.³²⁹

While Cerrucha's *artivism* was not invasive, Zapatistas themselves have promoted agency among their women to encourage the expression of the subaltern speech. One of the advantages of their artistic production is that they seek to communicate in a kind of universal language, guaranteeing widespread access to, and comprehension of, their message. A variety of Zapatista cultural hubs, such as la Universidad de la Tierra, where Cerrucha performed, have collective murals to share part of their history. They also publish poetry in Mayan and Spanish. Amongst their output is a well-known project called the Chiapas Photography Project which encourages indigenous women to learn photography and express themselves through photos. According to the feminist art critic Deborah Dorotinsky, the project grants agency to indigenous women, and invites outsiders to appreciate the transformative effect this has on their lives.³³⁰ Juana López, an indigenous woman involved with the project told her story of violence and discrimination through photographs of shadows, inspired by the experience of herself and her family who were expelled from their Catholic community after converting to Protestantism. In these series of photos, two subaltern elements require further explanation. The first element concerns the question of why she chose to photograph shadows. Many Mayans Tzotzil believed that photography stole their soul, and while they have abandoned this belief, they still resist being 'captured' by cameras. Their discomfort at the idea of their image being taken and used for unknown reasons leads them to be cautious about who photographs them and why. This discussion has been ongoing in their community ever since the first cameras arrived in Mexico and has become increasingly relevant with the advent of the internet and social media.

The fact that Cerrucha, as a trained photographer, did not undertake a photographic exercise shows a deep respect on her part towards the indigenous population. It is also important to acknowledge that she did not use Mayan Tzotzil for the tattoos. I noticed that, whenever Cerrucha, Wolffer or Mayer want to work with a population to which they do not belong, they find allies inside these communities to design and coordinate the projects. This will be clearly visible in the fourth project, *Estado de emergencia*. As part of her workshop

³²⁸ Rovira.

³²⁹ Gayatri Spivak, 'Seven ECO 1993', in *The Spivak Reader*, ed. by Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean (New York: Psychology Press, 1996), pp. 203–36 (p. 212).

³³⁰ Dorotinsky Alperstein.

‘Retrato de identidades periféricas’, the artist invited the participants to evaluate their projects from an intersectional perspective to avoid *artist* projects resulting in imposition or colonialist practices. Hence, it is safe to assume she did the same with her project. However, ensuring that *artist* projects remain ethical is about more than just obtaining consent from the people or the population involved. In photographic projects, the issue of consent and control over how subjects are portrayed is also a factor to consider when photographing them. In highly touristic places, such as San Juan Chamula in Chiapas, indigenous people allow others to photograph them. However, they maintain a measure of autonomy over the image, deciding how and where to pose, and charging a fee for the privilege of taking a photograph. The second element is that, although they are shadows, it is possible to recognise the indigenous garments and their gender. According to Juana, who sympathises with Zapatista feminism, it was necessary to distinguish both elements because indigenous people suffer discrimination due to their ethnic origins, and women are more vulnerable than men. She said: ‘men usually inflict the violence. Being vanished and forced to move is not the same for women and men’; women are more vulnerable when experiencing forced migration —a fact that it is absolutely essential for people to be aware of.³³¹ Cerrucha did not intend to speak on behalf of indigenous women; she wanted to identify another way of dealing with gender stereotypes. Therefore, her work cannot be regarded as an indigenous expression. In comparison to indigenous art, such as Juana’s, it is clear Cerrucha is not telling their history but encouraging a discussion, which she witnessed taking place.

The *artist* proposal of Cerrucha were not the tattoos she designed but the dialogue they encouraged. It was closer to a performance, in that what mattered the most was the interaction she had. It is also a reminder that feminists have adapted their performances, as discussed in the previous chapter. Another reason to consider the performance as liminal is it that had a pedagogical quality, as she led people to question the stereotypes that somehow ruled their lives, but she did not impose her own ideas on those discussions. If she had offered her own answer to the stereotypes, all the tattoos would have been erased or modified. Instead, she encouraged a heterogeneous exercise where men and women could freely express how they felt about the gender-based social constructions. The fact that she decided who got which tattoo might be considered somewhat contradictory, implying an exercise of some form of hierarchy, but one must remember that the performance was about the audience’s reactions. Cerrucha’s intervention is a mere precursor; a means of encouraging multiple people to become involved

³³¹ See Addendum, interview with Juana López López.

in the art project. Even so, if the performance was about their reactions, Cerrucha's intervention becomes secondary, and she becomes one more person involve in the art project.

In conclusion, both dynamics proposed by Cerrucha's *artivism* challenged gender stereotypes. It is impossible to bet for a more efficient dynamic as the reaction to the first one was not recorded. However, interacting with the public through the medium of tattoos allowed Cerrucha to understand how people live in a gender-stereotyped society. As will be discussed when analysing the focus groups, she also had access to their bodies. There was a trust dynamic amongst those involved, which can only happen in *communitas*. In an act of consent, participants let her act upon and label their bodies. She continues to produce street art projects similar to *In/Visible*, the last one being *Trinchera* [trench], an intervention in Mexico City's underground train network. She is convinced that intervening in the cities with images that confront gender constructions has a positive effect. However, as this project is more recent, it is interesting to observe two things she did differently. In her records of the *artivist* project, she included the testimonies of the participants, as a kind of social research methodology material. The second one is that she included her picture amongst the others. She broke the barrier between the represented and the representative, joining the women in a pictorial resistance representation. According to Cerrucha (2018), the notion of understanding how an *artivist* project is received was important. She explained she would have liked to gather more testimonies after an incident during the installation of *In/Visible* in the underground, where she asked a woman (who did not know she was talking with the artist) what she thought about it, and she said: 'Pues muy mal, ¿no? Me parece fatal, estas mujeres ahí y con la falda, yo estoy muy bien en mi casa y a mí me gusta, y no me gusta que me estén diciendo otras cosas';³³² even if the reaction is negative or adverse, as was the case here, she has an obligation to her *artivism* to challenge conventions. Nevertheless, Cerrucha has also organised different forms of interventions that involve direct contact with the participants. This mixture of *artivist* dynamics suggests that Cerrucha is looking for other channels that may improve women's lives and reduce violence.

³³² See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

Chapter IV: *Estado de Emergencia*, a Collective Artist Proposal Against the Femicides

In 2018, for the commemoration of the 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women), the Centro de Cultura Digital [Centre for Digital Culture]³³³ hired Lorena Wolffer to create an artistic project about femicides. Wolffer accepted, on the condition that the project could be a social work one. It ended up lasting four days, from November 10th to 13th, and consisted of a transdisciplinary action that used artistic techniques to discuss femicides in Mexico. The project was called *Estado de Emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* [State of Emergency: Pain Points and Flashes of Resistance] since all aspects of the project dealt with the issue of femicides in Mexico, understanding them as a security, socio-political and health problem in urgent need of a solution. Although, on an individual level, all the elements were markedly different, they all ultimately focused on securing a platform for women to securely express the hopelessness and desperation they felt. Wolffer retained the use of her customary colours —red, white and black—for the posters and images shared by the artists across all the events. Nevertheless, while she was responsible for coordinating the intervention and inviting other artists into it, each artist was granted individual freedom of expression, and could design their own materials and use their own colours in their works. The whole event was a protest against femicides. By making visible the despair women felt over femicides in Mexico, *Estado de Emergencia* had a rhizomatic effect that granted women the agency (a pluralistic, heterogenous term that means different things to different people) to stand against this crime. Since the artwork included works by Cerrucha, Lorena Wolffer and Mónica Mayer, it is possible to identify the extent to which their art strategies have evolved, and why they have done so.

³³³ The institution is located in Mexico City and was founded in 2012. It is dedicated to digital arts and, to the promotion of expressive forms of digital arts. Secretaría de Cultura, 'Centro de Cultura Digital', *Website of the Secretaría de Cultura*, 2020 <http://sic.gob.mx/ficha.php?table=centro_cultural&table_id=2709> [accessed 27 August 2020].



Figure 20. López García, V, Rosa, M.L. and Wolffer, L. *Registro del Proyecto: Imagen del evento*, Estado de Emergencia, 2019, p. 0, Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

The action was coordinated by the artist Lorena Wolffer (Mexico), art historian María Laura Rosa (Argentina), and gender and queer studies expert Jennifer Tyburczy (USA). Wolffer has expressed disdain at the apparent date-dependency of support for women artists and female problems on the part of politicians and institutions. Exhibitions, conferences and other activities aiming to support women and combat the problems they face tend to coalesce around 25th November and 8th March and go largely ignored and unsupported for the rest of the year.³³⁴ As a result, Wolffer sought in this case to create a social intervention with long-term consequences; to force politicians to be less selective in their support for women's issues. Parallel to the events of the project, the coordinators used the cultural institutions' facilities (Centro Nacional de las Artes y Centro de Cultura Digital) to offer free legal counselling and self-defence workshops for women. One of the conditions Wolffer had was that none of the artistic social interventions would take place inside museums in line with Ileana Diéguez' idea of liminality.³³⁵ Through their own artistic strategies, women were invited to re-signify places in Mexico City with links to feminicides. For this reason, every location used for the project was known as *Punto de dolor* [Point of pain], but also as *Punto de Resistencia* [Flash of

³³⁴ Cerrucha, 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.'

³³⁵ See Addendum, interview with Lorena Wolffer.

Resistance]. Each event acted as a sort of transitional ritual, where points of pain were reclaimed and resignified as flashpoints of resistance —a change which required the participants to transform their own perceptions. By standing there, reflecting upon and confronting the social structures that produce femicide, they transformed their own pain into resilience. This process, taking place at each location, was known as an activation.³³⁶ Diéguez herself was involved in creating *Estado de Emergencia* and put forward that femicides can only be understood in a liminal space, as that is where they take place.³³⁷ Another reason to display one's art outside a museum is offered by Tyburczy, who hypothesises the influence these places have over the viewer; according to her: 'art museums and galleries hinge more on the concept of taste and the "good eye" of the bourgeois or middle-class subject'.³³⁸ Tyburczy arrived at this opinion on the back of a 'queer analysis' of the idea of a museum, during which she concluded that the appreciation of art shows a clear sex bias. By the end of the project, these places came to be defined not as 'points of pain', but as spaces that actively represented the resilience of women to gender violence.

The whole event used art and activism to conduct social interventions. As explained before, Wolffer prefers to refer to her work as 'cultural projects of social intervention';³³⁹ whereas Jennifer Tyburczy has not expressed an opinion on *artivism*, but defines herself as a performer and activist. Meanwhile, María Laura Rosa is an art historian, who she did recently participate in a debate with Andrea Giunta where they analysed feminist art as *artivism*. One of the conclusions they reached was that what matters with *artivistic* work is not its aesthetic quality, but its social effectiveness.³⁴⁰ On the other hand, Julia Antivilo, an art historian and performer heavily involved in the organisation of the event, has no problem with calling what she does and studies *artivism*. In 2020, Antivilo gave a conference about feminist artivism, in which she explained how this practice has stronger links to activism than to traditional art. When asked if she considers whether *artivism* to have a rhizomatic effect, Antivilo answered that it does, and exemplified the rhizomatic effect by referencing the Chilean piece *El Violador*

³³⁶ Alexandra Rodríguez de Ruiz, 'Estado de Emergencia: Un Grito Colectivo', in *Catálogo Estado de Emergencia: Puntos de Dolor y Resiliencia*, ed. by Vanessa López García, María Laura Rosa, and Lorena Wolffer (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura, CENART, La Duplicadora and Centro de Cultura/E-Literatura Digital, 2020)..

³³⁷ *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 1: Puente de Alvarado V2*, 2018
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJKw5sKoK4Y>> [accessed 27 August 2020].

³³⁸ Jennifer Tyburczy, 'Perverting the Museum: The Politics and Performance of Sexual Artefacts', in *Negotiating Sexual Idioms: Image, Text, Performance*, ed. by Marie-Luise Kholke and Luisa Orza (New York: Brill, 2008), pp. 145–65 (p. 152).

³³⁹ She recently confirmed this idea, again, while being interviewed by Cerrucha. Cerrucha, 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.'

³⁴⁰ *Mujeres Artistas: Perspectivas e Imágenes de La Historia*.

eres Tú [You Are the Rapist] by Las Tesis.³⁴¹ Cerrucha, Mónica Mayer, Invasorix, Lia García and Natalia Lane were all invitees at the event. They all proposed artistic acts that aimed to grant participants control over spaces in which they might have felt vulnerable and ‘conquered’ them.

As it was a collective, transdisciplinary and complex project, the analysis of *Estado de emergencia* recalls many of the arguments presented throughout this thesis. It also allows me to observe the evolution Wolffer, Cerrucha and Mayer’s projects have gone through to increase interaction with the public and create a platform where women from different backgrounds and ethnicities can speak up. The four artistic interventions included a preliminary conference that gave the participants enough information to ‘access’ the work of art. The educational quality Diéguez’ considers fundamental for the *communitas* was therefore not achieved accidentally, but actively promoted. Even when inviting participants from the USA and South America, they insisted on keeping the term femicide (in some countries of South America and the USA, they use femicide) to promote Lagarde’s understanding of the crime when she coined the term. The events were open to anyone who wanted to attend, both men and women, and they took place in open spaces close to institutions or government offices, aiming to generate a heterogeneous rhizomatic effect. As I will come to address in greater detail their events aimed to inform, and raise awareness amongst the general public, as well as to provoke a specific reaction from government officials.

Two of the events that were part of *Estado de emergencia* use the *artist* strategies proposed by the Chicano/a *artist*. Actually, some elements of the *artist* projects are linked to the history of the term and its Chicano origins, which was explored in Chapter I. Through the event, the participating academics and *artists* were clearly expressing their opposition to femicide, deeming it to be a manifestation of the complex patriarchal structure of society, in which violence has drastically increased due to the ‘gore capitalist’ element of neo-liberalism. During the event, several participants cited Sayak Valencia’s transfeminist proposal as a guiding principle of theirs. This queer and transfeminist proposal defines transfeminism, inspired by Anzaldúa’s work, as ‘una articulación tanto del pensamiento como de Resistencia social que es capaz de conservar como necesarios ciertos supuestos de la lucha feminista para la obtención de derechos’.³⁴² Like the Big Frente Zapatista, they found in Anzaldúa’s poetry a

³⁴¹ ‘Ponencia Arte Feminista-Julia Antivilo’ (presented at the Arica Barroca, Zoom Video Conference, 2020) <https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=309352116722356&ref=watch_permalink> [accessed 27 May 2020].

³⁴² Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 178.

conceptualisation of feminism as a movement of resistance. Considering these elements, the following analysis proposes *Estado de emergencia* as an example of a feminist collective *artist* project —and that which may have made the best, most efficient use of rhizomatic effects to raise awareness of violence against women.

Estado de Emergencia took place in 2018 when the average number of feminicides per day was hovering between 7 and 9, thus justifying the exhibition's name. These numbers, 7 and 9, would be present throughout the event. Ironically, the statistics, considering what they demanded in *Estado de Emergencia*, were not the official government numbers but the ones given by María Salguero, a geographer that keeps a record of all the feminicide cases using an online interactive map. Recently, Salguero explained in a conference that the government does not have accurate statistics on feminicides because prosecutors often withhold this information from the public.³⁴³ The idea behind her map was the same as that of the project; to show that feminicides are not specific to a particular time or place. In Salguero's map it is possible to notice how there are cases in public places (parks or universities) or private ones; the timed of day at which they took place are also quite varied. Hence, and this is one of the messages of *Estado de emergencia*, there is no safe space, time or profession for women. In Wolffer's words, during an interview she gave in 2020: 'Estado de emergencia es una respuesta al Estado'.³⁴⁴ The proposal not only describes the urgent need to eradicate feminicides, but also makes an open call to those obliged to improve the conditions of women's lives. The title itself —*Estado de emergencia*— also connotes an urgent call. Valencia did not define the state of emergency; instead, she quoted Giorgio Agamben's definition of such a state of affairs, during a crisis, the State increases its power, suspends human rights, and introduces repressive laws to guarantee population safety and preserve the social fabric of that society.³⁴⁵ Valencia explains that Mexico is simultaneously experiencing two different kinds of emergencies. As the violence levels rise, the government suspends more human rights and increases the police and military power.³⁴⁶ In the midst of all this, Valencia advocates and end to the violence, while there is still a social fabric to preserve.

In order to understand *Estado de emergencia*'s goals, one must understand women as a political group. Anything related to 'femininity' as an idea, may serve as a motivation for a

³⁴³ Lucy Sanabria, '¡Ni Una Menos! Las Cifras de Femicidio En México En 2018', *Sopitas*, 28 December 2018 <<https://www.sopitas.com/noticias/femicidios-en-mexico-cifras-2018/>> [accessed 27 August 2020].
María Salguero (Mexico City, 2020).

³⁴⁴ See Addendum, Interview with Lorena Wolffer.

³⁴⁵ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 139.

³⁴⁶ In Spanish the emergency state is called the exception state. So, Valencia plays with both terms.

femicide. In this sense, it is clear that the whole event served to unveil the paradox in which Mexican women find themselves trapped. On the subject of gender violence leading to feminicides Valencia states: ‘las mujeres, junto a todxs aquellxs sujetxs entendidxs como subalternxs o disidentes de las categorías heteropatriarcales y cis-sexuales, hemos vivido en la violencia explícita’. For the heteropatriarchal subject, anyone performing gender outside the ‘norms’ or ‘femininity’ renders themselves disposable. As I go further with this analysis, it will become clear this was the political stance taken during *Estado de emergencia*, hence the need to include artists from different backgrounds. While Mexico has one of the strongest legal frameworks in the world when it comes to protecting women, violence against women is increasing continually, due to a variety of factors. Many of these were explored during this project, including collusion between the state and the media regarding their responses to gender violence, a feeling of male impunity, and widespread ignorance amongst victims concerning the protective legal framework. The artwork questioned the lack of articulation between the social reality, the political sphere, and the legal and scholarly work. Wolffer focuses on the problem of feminicides; but, instead of viewing the problem on a general, more abstract level, she invited others to work with particular cases of feminicides in Mexico City. Aesthetic concerns were non-existent as their primary objective was to help women and ‘activate’ scenes of feminicides by intervening with artistic strategies.

Estado de emergencia could fill a gap between academia and the artistic sphere. Although the conceptualisation of femicide has proved a useful hermeneutical tool for women, the lack of dialogue between these two spheres continues to hinder eradication of the problem. Lagarde’s legal project saw her coining the term ‘femicide’, as a modification of Russell and Radford’s concept of femicide. The term ‘femicide’ attributes causal power to a victim’s gender as a reason for her murder, as opposed to ‘femicide’, which denies the victim’s gender such causal relevancy, and instead acts as a more specific description of a homicide.³⁴⁷ Russell and Radford conceptualise femicide as the category that should be used when the victim of a murder is a woman. They employed the term simply as means of differentiating statistics by gender, not as a means of tracking gender violence specifically. Femicides could therefore be motivated by factors extraneous to the gender of the victim, while this is not the case with femicide. The two can be further distinguished by understanding that, while all feminicides are femicides, not all femicides are feminicides, and it should be pointed out that

³⁴⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, ‘Del Femicidio al Femicidio’.

even Russell herself approved of the distinction introduced by Russell and Radford's term.³⁴⁸ The conceptualisation of femicide was considered the first major step in tackling femicide at a national level. Ten years passed between the phenomenon's inception in Ciudad Juárez and an international trial against Mexico's government,³⁴⁹ but Lagarde was finally able to provide a mechanism to confront the systemic murder of women. As I mentioned in Chapter II, this is not the first time Wolffer worked with the topic of femicides; a performance related to it is what motivated her to modify her artistic practice.

All the cases of femicide victims that were recognised and honoured during *Estado de emergencia* were complex and controversial and could only be designated as femicides thanks to the straightforward definition that has now been made available. The concept was also introduced to the Mexican Penal Code by Marcela Lagarde in her role as deputy. Another difference between Russell and Radford's project and that of Lagarde is that, by initially defining femicide, Russell and Radford managed to bridge the gap between feminist academia and art. Their book included an essay by Suzanne Lacy, who hypothesises the possible outcomes of feminist art dealing with femicide.³⁵⁰ As I will later explore, Lacy organised an event bearing several similarities to *Estado de emergencia*, of which Monica Mayer was also part. However, unlike Russell and Radford's project in the USA, no such 'bridge' between art and academia exists in Mexico, although there have been occasions where academia and the arts have arrived at the same conclusions simultaneously. In the law, Lagarde listed seven legal classifications that help to distinguish a homicide/femicide from a femicide. This classification was fundamental during the events of *Estado de emergencia*; therefore, it is important to acknowledge how femicide is defined:

1. The victim presents signs of sexual violence of any kind.
2. Inflammatory or degrading injuries or mutilations, before or after the deprivation of life, or acts of necrophilia, have been inflicted on the victim.

³⁴⁸ Lagarde y de los Ríos, 'Del Femicidio al Femicidio'.

³⁴⁹ This trial, called *Campo Algodonero* [Cotton Field] took place between 6 and 7 November 2001. In 1993 they discovered eight female bodies were found in a cotton field; among them, were: Claudia Ivette González, Esmeralda Herrera Monreal and Laura Berenice Ramos Monárrez, the mothers of these three women started looking for justice until they found it in 2001 thanks to the Inter American Human Rights Court. Mexico's government was sued for denial of justice in relation to the disappearance and murders in Ciudad Juárez, detecting a lack of prevention of femicides, of responses by authorities when facing the disappearances, of seriousness in the investigation and of adequate reparation to the victim's family. Santiago José Vázquez Camacho, 'El Caso "Campo Algodonero" Ante La Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos', *Anuario Mexican de Derecho Internacional*, 11, 2010..

³⁵⁰ Lacy, 'In Mourning and in Rage'.

3. There is a history or record of any type of domestic violence, violence at work or school environment from the perpetrator towards the victim.
4. There had been a sentimental, emotional or trust relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.
5. There are data that establish that there were threats related to the criminal act, harassment or injuries from the perpetrator towards the victim.
6. The victim was held uncommunicated whatever the time prior to the deprivation of life.
7. The victim's body has been exposed or displayed in a public place.³⁵¹

Adding to the definition of the term, *Estado de Emergencia* also made an explicit complaint about the context that leads to femicide. When analysing Wolffer's work, it seems possible to claim that she was, somehow, dialoguing with the available legislation to protect women in Mexico. As stated in Chapter II, Wolffer usually works with existing legislation that prevents violence against women.³⁵² Her objectives are not merely the dissemination of the law; most of the time, Wolffer wants to show how it is not being followed or enforced. One can argue that the fact that she has never stated this in Mexico shows that she considers that the dialogue she has with the law is already apparent. In the four cases honoured during *Estado de emergencia*, which will be discussed later, women were victims of femicide and other forms of violence. They also had in common the fact that, when the investigation began, the police tried to classify them as murders instead of femicides; therefore, this law was fundamental in proving such a classification wrong. It has been pointed out that there is a tacit collaboration between the police, the media and men who commit femicides, which is why the artists also reference Sayak Valencia's work to explain why there are so many cases of femicide.³⁵³ Valencia's 'gore capitalism' (2010) provides a good explanation of why Mexico (and Colombia) has such high levels of violence. For her, the problem is not that there are a few evil actors dedicated to the crime in and on itself. According to her, the causes for violence are an idealisation of wealth, coupled with a lack of good working opportunities, and the fact that illegal activities generate so much money. As a result, no attempts are made to stop it; indeed, it is positively encouraged. The link to gender violence and femicide becomes

³⁵¹ The English translation of the Mexican Penal Code is available in the San Diego University's and MacArthur Foundation's website dedicated to the promotion of Human Rights in Mexico. Justice in Mexico, 'Exploring the Legal Context of Femicide in Mexico', *Justice in Mexico*, 2014 <<https://justiceinmexico.org/legal-context-femicide-mexico/>> [accessed 23 June 2020].

³⁵² Lorena Wolffer, '*Historias Propias: Inscribiendo Las Narrativas de Lxs Otrxs En La Ciudad*'.

³⁵³ Cerrucha, 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.' ...

relevant when masculinity encourages violent, dominant and hegemonic behaviour, while femininity prescribes passive subordination to the masculine gender, again identifying the origins of violence in a heteropatriarchal order.³⁵⁴ Again, finding the origins of violence in a heteropatriarchal order. In this sense, it could be inferred that feminicides are the maximum expression of male domination as an affirmation of the gore capitalist structure.

Before exploring each event that was part of *Estado de emergencia*, it is interesting to mention Lacy's project *Making it Safe* (1979).³⁵⁵ By doing so, I aim at justifying why it is worth exploring other projects in order to comprehend what other feminist artists are doing. When Lacy was contacted by *Comunitas* in Santa Monica, California, to raise awareness on violence against women, she decided to coordinate multiple efforts to tackle the issue. She included artistic events (installations, interventions, performances, film projections, photography and poetry), workshops on self-defence and academic conferences, all of which would take place around the neighbourhood over a period of two months. Instead of imposing her own agenda, she was careful to respond to the demands and needs of the community. She took advantage of already being an artist and feminist figure of some renown to call upon other, less well-known personalities to join her. At the end of the project, her own name was almost entirely irrelevant to it, as she did not hold a single event for herself. Mattered were the exhibits and the events. Mónica Mayer was one of the invited artists, exhibiting the already-discussed *Clothesline*; so, she probably provided Wolffer with her insights, having already been involved in similar projects. However, it is clear that Lacy enjoyed access to more funds than the Mexican artists, as she was able to keep the project running for two months, and usually employs sociologists as part of her projects. It is therefore worth considering how far Mexican artists might go with more funding. Nevertheless, both projects exist as something between an artistic intervention, an installation of interactive public art and a social intervention. An advantage of *Estado de emergencia* is that the artists involved dealt with particular instances of gender violence, opening the door for a deep exploration of these events.

IV.I. *Punto de Dolor 1: Puente de Alvarado*

The first *Punto de dolor* [*Pain Point*] made a clear statement about the artists' political stance in one of the contemporary feminists' debates in Mexico. This point, located in Puente de

³⁵⁴ Valencia Triana, pp. 72–74.

³⁵⁵ Suzanne Lacy, 'Making it Safe 1979', *Artist Website*, 2022 <<https://www.suzannelacy.com/making-it-safe-1979/#:~:text=Lacy%20was%20commissioned%20by%20Comunitas,against%20women%20in%20the%20ar ea.>>.

Alvarado, a street near the centre of Mexico City, known for being a hub of prostitution, was dedicated to two trans women victims of feminicide. Wolffer has expressed her rejection of trans-exclusionary radical feminism, believing it to be irreconcilable with other trans-inclusive feminist movements.³⁵⁶ However, in the exhibition itself, the artist made no reference to the trans debate, perhaps hoping for a temporary truce with trans-exclusionary feminists. The artists may have refrained from expressing their opinions on the wider trans debate out of a desire to stay on-message. Discussing the big-picture issues surrounding the role of trans women in feminist ideology would have shifted the focus away from the victims themselves, thus betraying the underlying goal of the exhibition; to honour, and to draw attention to victims of feminicide. Despite this, it is relevant for my study to understand why the artist hold trans-inclusive views on gender, given that they are protesting a gender-based crime.

The event in Puente de Alvarado included testimonies about two particular trans-femicides. Wolffer had been involved with similar cases in the past—in 2016, after the Conservative protest against LGBTTIQA+ rights and legal abortion, Wolffer noticed how trans femicides increased.³⁵⁷ For *Estado de Emergencia*, in line with her *modus operandi* and the wider aims of the project, she did not put together any specific artistic action herself, instead inviting trans women to denounce those two specific cases. The first case was that of Paola; a sex worker shot by a prospective client. Kenya Cuevas, an activist acting in defence of the LGBTQIA+ community, witnessed the event, reporting that she was murdered in broad daylight in the middle of the street. Her murder was the first to be classified as a trans-femicide in Mexico, but having the murder legally recognised under that definition only came about because of a strong action by the Commission on Human Rights. The suspect was not arrested during the trial, and the police refused to respect the victim's identity, referring to Paola as a male and using her deadname.³⁵⁸³⁵⁹ The second victim honoured was Alessa, whose body was discovered in a hotel, bearing marks of physical and sexual violence. After denouncing her murder, the police constantly discriminated against Alessa's friends, and her case remains unsolved.³⁶⁰ For trans-inclusive feminists, these cases demonstrated that trans

³⁵⁶ Cerrucha, 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva. Entrevista a Lorena Wolffer.'

³⁵⁷ Lorena Wolffer, 'Historias Propias: Inscribiendo Las Narrativas de Lxs Otrxs En La Ciudad'.

³⁵⁸ The deadname refers to the name a person holds before *transitioning*. It has been accepted as a verb, as well: '(being called by one's previous "birth" name). Saoirse Caitlin O'Shea, 'The Girl's Life: An Autoethnography', *Organization*, 25 (2018), 3–20 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508417703471>>.

³⁵⁹ *Testimonio de Kenya Cuevas sobre Paola* (Mexico City, 2018) <<https://estadoemergencia-mx.blogspot.com/p/testimonio-de-kenya-cuevas-sobre-paola.html>> [accessed 27 August 2020].

³⁶⁰ *Testimonio de Lia García Sobre Alessa*, 2018 <<https://estadoemergencia-mx.blogspot.com/p/testimonio-de-lia-garcia-sobre-alessa.html>> [accessed 27 August 2020].

women are subjected to similar forms of violence as those born biologically female, and sex workers are even more vulnerable to them.

The event at Puente de Alvarado included trans women artists and sex workers. The location where *Estado de Emergencia* and the feminicides took place is a red-light zone, meaning that the first transformation of the site was due to the trans-feminicides. Having been an area associated with male pleasure, or an erotic one, it was transformed into a spot of pain where trans women feared for their lives. Nevertheless, sex workers who continued to work with their clients kept soliciting them in Puente de Alvarado. The re-signification of this spot involved sex workers taking back ownership of their workspace. According to Lagarde, prostitution is one of the captivities suffered by women under the patriarchal structure, and instead of describing those concerned as sex workers, she uses the word *puta* [whore], as a means of illustrating the stigma surrounding sex workers. Although she did not mention trans women in her thesis, as the issue was not that visible when she wrote it, she recently has defended trans women as women (this has been more problematic, and it will be explored further in due course). Therefore, the same social stigma can be observed in trans women who are sex workers. Lagarde states: ‘la prostituta se dedica al mal, al pecado, al erotismo, por consiguiente, es descalificada; sin embargo, simultáneamente es altamente valorada (codiciada, envidiada) en la cultura que fetichiza, idealiza y sobrevalora el erotismo de manera absoluta’.³⁶¹ The problem with prostitution is that it detaches sex from reproduction, which is the only way to validate eroticism inside a patriarchal system. And, although pornography (and other media content) also presents women erotically, there is no physical access to her in pornography, at least not for the general public. With sex workers, there is an assumption of ownership governing the relationship between herself and a male client, as issues of reproduction are abstracted out of the picture, and she is considered a mere means for fulfilling any sex dream her client might have.

In Puente de Alvarado, what mattered was how trans women have experienced gender violence and transfeminicides. Whether feminists classified them as women or not was secondary, which was why none of the organisers expressed their opinion on the issue. However, for the purposes of our analysis it will be important to address this issue; specifically, the opinions of the activists For Tyburczy, Wolffer and María Laura Rosa, the inclusion of trans women is an expression of solidarity; confirmation that trans women face the same forms

³⁶¹ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 677.

of violence as biological women. Tyburczy identifies herself as queer and has dedicated her career to queer studies. Wolffer also belongs to the LGBTTIQA+ community—in fact, María Laura Rosa is the only cis organiser of the event, and she agrees with Wolffer’s views on the issue, stating that: ‘Yo no entiendo cómo es que alguien se siente con el permiso, con el poder público-político, de anunciar como una persona no existe como se concibe y tiene que ver con la genitalidad.’³⁶² Meanwhile, for her thesis, Julia Antivilo, who was not a coordinator but did work to guarantee the event took place, has been exploring Judith Butler’s theory.³⁶³ Aside from understanding gender as a performative quality of one’s identity, this means that the four of them identify the hetero-binary system as a hegemonic order which forces subjects to identify themselves as male or female, which comes from Butler’s queer theory.³⁶⁴ The normativity ruling the hetero-binary system excludes any subject who acts differently, but nobody can fully abide by the binary norms, resulting in a totality of identities obliged to reject who they are, caving to social and cultural norms. However, as time goes by, the protection of trans women under the law is becoming more complex than previously expected, hence the wider relevance of this event.

The performance consisted of a poetry reading and a celebration of trans identities as a form of resistance accompanied by cake and other party elements. Before judging the *artist* proposal, it is essential to consider who were they addressing with this event. As it will become apparent, not all the participants during the focus groups enjoyed this artwork; some stated that it was not relevant and not artistic. However, this criticism is a product of ignorance—of not knowing the artists themselves, and not understanding whom they were addressing with their work. First, the artwork was by trans women for trans women; the main idea was for them to share their reality and fears and give them a safe platform to express their speech. At the same time, it meant an opportunity to celebrate their identities. It was an opportunity for the other participants to get to know this community, and to come to understand them better—although the education of non-trans participants was not the primary goal of the event. Secondly, it is important to consider this performance in light of other *artist* proposals by Lía García, who uses the pseudonym ‘La novia sirena’. Her performances always imply using her trans body to express the trans identity and, for her, this identity is linked to creating a poetic or metaphorical speech. Her academic background is in pedagogy and visual arts, and this shines through in her work, which usually has an educational aspect to it. In this performance, by expressing

³⁶² Wolffer, ‘Es incomprendible e inadmisibile la postura de las terfs: Lorena Wolffer’.

³⁶³ Antivilo Peña.

³⁶⁴ Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On Discursive Limits of Sex*.

their fear and sharing their testimonies in a poetic voice, the participants performed their trans identity. The other organiser was Natalia Lane, a media expert whose work bias championing trans identities is more linked to activism than art; she works at the NGO *Casa de las Muñecas Tiresias*, which promotes access to human rights for young people who identify as trans. The fact that one of the creators came from the arts and the other from activism increased the *artivist* intention of the project. In the context of trans women being included in a feminist project with absolute freedom, using the voice is an act of freedom of speech.

The trans women event included a conversation, the reading of testimonies and a performance in which they expressed how they felt concerning violence. As a resistance motto, they all shouted: ‘estamos vivas, vivas estamos’³⁶⁵ to convey the idea that the mere act of staying alive within a system that rejects, discriminates against and murders them is a rejection of the *status quo*. The event was called *El Anti-cumpleaños* [The Anti-birthday] because the idea was to celebrate being alive as an act of defiance and resistance to a system that promotes the eradication of those considered to hold a divergent identity. They also expressed the sense of community amongst them: ‘no quieres ser la siguiente por la cual tus hermanas tengan que juntar dinero para un ataúd, si me pasa algo, si le pasa algo alguna de ellas ahí vamos a estar todas’.³⁶⁶ Some of them cried while talking; others expressed anger, and, during the final part, they expressed pride in being part of a community. There is no way to know what makes someone more vulnerable because, as they have pointed out, it is the socio-political system that murders them.

Despite the fact that the artists refrained from commenting their personal opinions on the trans debate, the fact that they closed the event with a birthday cake and called it the *Anti-cumpleaños* reveals a subtle confrontation with trans-exclusionary feminism. Giving the occasion the feel of a birthday offered a sense of catharsis to the participants as, after they cried and denounced the patriarchal, heteronormative system under which they remained oppressed, they could celebrate their identities. However, the notion of an ‘anti-birthday’ reflected the trans-exclusionary view that these women are somehow ‘anti-female’. The recent discussion about the topic exemplifies why they consider their murders and exclusion to be rooted within the social, cultural, and political system. Within two months, Marcela Lagarde changed her opinion about trans-femicides. On 10 July 2020, she gave a conference about *sororidad*³⁶⁷, at which she was asked about the issue of protecting trans women against femicides. In her

³⁶⁵ *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 1: Puente de Alvarado V2*, p. 1.

³⁶⁶ *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 1: Puente de Alvarado V2*.

³⁶⁷ This concept was defined in chapter II based on Lagarde’s definition.

response, Lagarde said that there was nothing to discuss; trans women are women, and can therefore be victims of femicide, entitling them to protection under the same law.³⁶⁸ On 13 August 2020, when asked the same question, she expressed a different opinion, arguing that trans women were in urgent need of a new law, aimed specifically at their protection and resulting from the pressure being exerted by trans-exclusionary feminists on fellow activists, urging them to reject trans women.³⁶⁹ This is due to the pressure some feminist activists who reject trans women are putting on other activists to reject trans women. To guarantee only biological women are protected, they have asked that the word ‘woman’ be replaced by terms such as ‘menstruating bodies’ or ‘pregnant bodies’, the idea being to reduce the concept of womanhood to some biological quality, determined at birth, excluding all trans women. Aside from other forms of exclusion implied by these terms (such as biological women who do not menstruate —postmenopausal women for example — or women unable to achieve pregnancy), Lagarde noted several other problems with this proposal. One of the main problems surrounding discussions concerning the legal protection of trans women is that trans women themselves are rarely invited to such debates; indeed, Lagarde advocating for the recognition of transfemicides was done so without her engaging with the women she sought to help by employing the term. Therefore, first and foremost, *Estado de emergencia* was notable in that it included trans women on the debate panel, and, by ‘anti-celebrating’, they were recognising this fact.

The entire performance could be regarded as a demonstration. When shouting ‘Vivas estamos’ trans women were channelling the feminist motto ‘Porque vivas se las llevaron. Vivas las queremos’. Neither of them is being naïve, when honouring victims of femicide, they are well aware of the impossibility of resurrecting them. However, they highlight the fact that the system they live in systemically marginalises, harms, and discriminates against them. In that context, their mottos amount to a demand to continue living. When Lagarde proposed the law, it was tough to justify legislating only for women as some claimed it was discriminating against men. She argued that it was a triumph to specify women as the subject of the law; but, since the reality for the female sex has not changed, it may not be a permanent triumph. Demanding a modification in this sense may push the law backwards. Finally, she pointed out the obvious: it reduces women to a uterus, an idea that took many years for feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir to change.³⁷⁰ The idea that women are relevant only insofar as they hold reproductive

³⁶⁸ REMUFEVER.

³⁶⁹ Marcela Lagarde, *Horizontes y Caminos Del Feminismo En Las Universidades*.

³⁷⁰ Marcela Lagarde, *Horizontes y Caminos Del Feminismo En Las Universidades*.

potential works as a form of symbolic and psychological captivity; however, Lagarde could not predict that there would come a time when some feminists would reduce themselves to a uterus just to exclude trans women. The exclusion is based on the idea that trans women previously enjoyed full access to all the male privileges, until they took the free and conscious decision to reject their own biology and surrender those privileges, meaning that they have not experienced a lifetime of inequality, as biological women have. Feminism in Mexico is now asking for the eradication of gender violence and, therefore, trans women should be included as they are victims of the same hetero-patriarchal system. Lagarde is by no means looking to exclude trans women (although, recently she did in an event in 2022) —she recognises that they are vulnerable to the same sexist culture— but highlights the need to protect them without hindering past and present efforts to protect biological women. It is, however, problematic for her to express the needs of trans women without dialoguing with them. Therefore, this project promotes a straightforward position about trans women from their own perspective.

During the event, the trans women sex workers highlighted the parallelisms between their identity and the streets. Lia García wrote the following free-verse poem, called *La calle* [The Street], to express how trans women feel about the street.

La calle by Lia García³⁷¹

Hoy la calle vuelve a ser *testiga*
Aquí, la calle vuelve a absorber
La memoria de las nuestras.
Aquí, la calle vuelve absorber
La memoria de las nuestras.

Las que van de un punto a otro,
Las que existen,
Las que aún despiertas sueñan,
Y las que una y otra vez
Siempre volverán
Porque la calle
Siempre será nuestra primera arma.

Ahora, la calle vuelve a sentir el dolor.
La herida punzocortante
Que de mi centro a mi garganta,

³⁷¹Lia García, 'La Calle', in *Catálogo Estado de Emergencia*, ed. by Vanessa López García, María Laura Rosa, and Lorena Wolffer (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura, CENART, La Duplicadora and Centro de Cultura/E-Literatura Digital, 2020), pp. 25–27..

La digestión.
Hasta la planta de mis pies
Llega al asfalto, se entrega,
Lo besa, lo recuerda,
Porque la calle siempre fue nuestra.

Nosotras, navegantes del asfalto.
Nuestras grietas nos respaldan
Y el tiempo nunca pasa.
Nosotras, aún sintiéndonos vencidas
Estamos, están, estoy, estás, están
VIVAS.

Ellas que enseñan vida
Cuando el sol ya no ilumina
Y la luna se despoja,
Se desnuda,
Para ser partícipe de sus vidas.
La calle, la calle nunca olvida.

El asfalto que ustedes pisan no tiene vida,
No tiene memoria.
¿A dónde hemos llegado?
¿A dónde hemos llegado?
Para saber que lo que ustedes pisan
Nunca olvida.
Sangre-herida,
Herida-sangre,
Pero muchas vidas vividas.

La calle siempre será *testiga*
De quienes todos y cada uno de los días
Gritamos con furia y rebeldía:
AQUÍ ESTÁ LA RESISTENCIA TRANS.

La calle.
Ésta es la calle.
En la calle,
Vidas en transición,
Vidas apagadas,

Vidas solas.

En la calle,
Vidas en resistencia,
Vidas en transición,
Vidas que, a pesar de haber sido silenciadas
Por la hipocresía,
Viven en este corazón.
LUB-DUB-LUB-DUB-LUB-DUB.

Ésta es la calle y ésta es su memoria.
La calle hoy vuelve a ser *testiga*.
La calle hoy vuelve a evidenciar
estas vidas.

En la calle,
Nuestras heridas,
Nuestros dolores,
Nuestros miedos,
Nuestra memoria.
En la calle también la rebeldía.

La calle siempre será *testiga*.
La calle siempre será *testiga*
De lo que significa la vida,
Porque nosotras parimos vida,
Enseñamos vida:
Somos la vida.

Aun siendo despojadas de nuestra propia vida,
La calle siempre será *testiga*
De lo que significa la vida,
Porque la calle
Siempre será nuestra primera arma.

For trans women, the street is, at the same time, the place where they live and work, but also where they are more vulnerable. For them, the event meant re-owning the street by

those called ‘navegantes del asfalto’ [asphalt sailors].³⁷² By claiming the streets absorbs trans memories but not heteronormative memories, García is clearly stating that the streets belong to them. This claim, rather than signifying that the streets are owned *exclusively* by them, is more of a recognition of their own significance —of the unique value they derive from this public place. With the importance of the street for trans people in mind, García created a metaphor to link the two: ‘nuestras grietas nos respaldan’ [our cracks back us up].³⁷³ The analogy likens cracks in the tarmac to the wounds that have been inflicted upon trans women by the heteropatriarchal system. Describing trans women as night creatures has two senses. The first one is a literal one as they have more presence during the night, and the second refers to how, when pushed to the margins, they become shadows, rendered almost invisible. Rhetorical devices such as metaphors, analogies, and metonyms are employed as part of their artistic exercise. The poem expresses in several forms how living, staying alive and defending the lives of trans women is a form of resisting the murderers and the system itself. García presented the street as a witness to the lives and to their transfeminicidal deaths, as their working space, and as their weapon. She considers it a weapon because, in the poem, the street is the ultimate resource by which everyone can recognise and remember the trans women. By transforming their pain into a poetic speech, they sought to reflect the experiences of trans women and inspire the empathy of the participants.

With the second poem, ‘The Pearls’, and the last part of the performance, Lia García proposed public mourning for victims of trans-femicide:

Las perlas by Lia García³⁷⁴

Quiero contarles una historia, un recuerdo que me enchina la piel
 cada vez que le pongo voz, cada vez que cierro los ojos. Una noche
 tuve un sueño: solé que una mujer que caminaba por la playa me
 tomaba entre sus brazos y que después me abría los ojos para
 mirarme fijamente. Era una noche fría y mis pies tocaban el agua.

El mar y su inmensidad, así como el reflejo de la luna sobre él, se
 hacían presentes en nosotras. Derramábamos lágrimas por aquel
 encuentro entre las olas, nuestras lágrimas caían en nuestras bocas
 y junto al mar nos hacíamos una sola. La noche nos abrazó y esa
 mujer, con su espejo que eran sus propias manos, nunca dejó de
 mirarme y me dijo con su voz profunda:
 Sirena, el dolor hay que sembrarlo.
 El dolor atraviesa la piel y desgarrar la memoria.
 Para hablar del dolor, Sirena, no hay que abrir
 Las ventanas:
 Hay que romper los cristales.
 Tienes que saberlo:
 Una perla es la memoria de lo que dolió,
 Una perla es resultado del dolor.

³⁷² *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 1: Puente de Alvarado V2*, p. 1. ...

³⁷³ *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 1: Puente de Alvarado V2*, p. 1. ...

³⁷⁴ Lia García, ‘Las Perlas’, in *Catálogo Estado de Emergencia: Puntos de Dolor y Resiliencia En La Ciudad de México*, ed. by Vanessa López García, María Laura Rosa, and Lorena Wolfffer (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura, CENART, La Duplicadora and Centro de Cultura/E-Literatura Digital, 2020), pp. 25–27.

Una perla tarda diez años en nacer.
Una perla duele y después brilla.
Las perlas son producto del dolor.
Las perlas son cicatrices.

Nosotras hemos resistido desde lo que duele,
Hemos florecido nuestro dolor.
Nosotras hemos sembrado el dolor:
¿qué hacemos con el dolor?
¿Qué hacemos con lo que nos lastima?
¿Cuál es la historia que cuentan las lágrimas?
¿A dónde va el grito de nuestras llagas?

Nos han quitado tanto que nos están quitando
El miedo.
Y lo que no saben, lo que no pueden escuchar,
En este mundo que les ha enseñado a oír,
Es que nosotras
ESTAMOS VIVAS,
ESTAMOS VIVAS.

Having a collective poetry reading accompanied by the testimonies intended to join all voices into one. During the event, and using fake pearls, García ‘showered’ all the trans women that were present. As the poem reveals, they thought of the pearl as a metaphor for their pain. Molluscs produce pearls as a defence against external threats; they are their self-preservation mechanism. García observed how these animals responded to violence and hurt by manufacturing something beautiful and valuable and drew a link to the trans community. Trans women transformed the pain and fear of discrimination and murder into their performance — in the words of the poem, their wounds were ‘a scar that eventually is transformed into something beautiful that shines’. Ultimately, the pearls fell, laid over the asphalt and decorated the street. So, by the end, the pearls were not only their wounds but a representation of the trans women walking and standing on that same ground. The performance also solidified the notion that, if one of them is wounded or murdered, the rest will always speak up on her behalf—in this case through *artivism*— making sure their existence is not forgotten; that they are not erased from history.

The last part of the performance included a cake, and it should be pointed out at this stage that the connotations of celebration this brought does not contradict or invalidate the act of denouncing transfemicides. As with the last performance of *Estado de emergencia*, the artists recognised the importance of denouncing these issues and rendering them visible. However, there is also a need to escape from the pain this process entails. Meanwhile, surviving a discriminatory system is also a cause of celebration. This event was therefore highly important—not only due to the catharsis and fun it provided for the trans women present, but also in the informative function it provided to the external audience. The phenomenon of transfemicide is quite a complex expression of gender violence in Mexico. It is therefore worth exploring some of the ideas surrounding this issue, and how they relate to the phenomenon of violence against women, as it has been discussed in this thesis. This notion of

understanding violence against women as a manifestation of the heteronormative and patriarchal system was supported by Butler in Mexico. In 2018, when she received the *Honoris Causa Doctorate* awarded by the Universidad de Guadalajara, Judith Butler stated that it is necessary to examine what leads to transfeminicidal crimes to deeply understand the sexist society that has so many cases of femicide.

In no instance —this one included— did the artists identify a particular man as responsible for a femicide —possibly in response to contemporary hypotheses as to why their levels are so high in the country. Instead, the explanation of femicides could be synthesised as the result of the social and cultural constructions that support violent masculinity and a climate of terror for women.³⁷⁵ There has been a confrontation between Mexican feminists and the Argentinian scholar Rita Laura Segato on this point. While Mexican feminists tend to consider environmental factors as the primary cause of femicides, Segato advocates for understanding the individual circumstances of the perpetrator, and the conclusion she draws is quite different from that of the Mexican feminists. On the one hand, some Mexican feminists, the ones here referred, conclude that violent men are mere vessels for the culture of violent masculinity in which they grew up. On the other hand, Segato concludes that violent men are victims of the unequal social organisation and the injustices of the socio-economic order.³⁷⁶ In her interview, Lorena Wolffer stated that there are many aspects of Segato's explanations of femicides with which she disagrees, and this is the one to which she is most opposed.³⁷⁷ It is clear that, for her aforementioned conference, Butler took into account the Mexican discussion, and incorporated many of its claims into the criticism she makes of the hetero-binary order. As Butler explained: 'To become a man is to exercise the power of life and death over women; to kill is the prerogative of manhood'.³⁷⁸ As I explained in Chapter II, the identification of manhood with violent behaviour seems to be a factor explaining the prevalence of male violence towards women. Hence, it makes sense that artists standing against violence are also standing against the economic system and the binary order as these are the foundations of violence.

Anti-cumpleños leads us to wonder whether femicides and transfemicides share a cause. Following Valencia and Butler's theorisation, these crimes imply that a man murdering

³⁷⁵ Valencia Triana, pp. 72–74..

³⁷⁶ Segato describes this confrontation with Mexican feminists in her book: Segato. Though she does not explain the Mexican perspective. The Mexican hypothesis can be identified in Valencia's work and Lagarde's, especially in the book Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Bejarano.

³⁷⁷ See Addendum, Interview with Lorena Wolffer.

³⁷⁸ Butler, 'Cátedra Prima Julio Cortázar'.

a woman is just obeying the social norms imposed on the masculine gender. In this social structure, trans women are vulnerable not only on account of their gender, but because ‘they are targeted, in part, because they are feminine or feminised, and they are punished, not only for refusing the pathway of masculinity but for the open embrace of their own femininity’.³⁷⁹ In other words, they have betrayed manhood by rejecting it and accepting the opposite gender’s identity in a system based on the binary dialectic idea of men and women. This idea, put forward by Butler, would also justify the creation of a specific law to protect trans women from transfemicide, as their rejection of the pathway of masculinity is a feature of their lived experience that they do not share with the victims of femicides. When trans-exclusionary feminists claim that defending trans women is defending men, they are, actually, affirming the hetero-binary order that subordinates one gender under the other. Understanding the vulnerability of trans women and supporting them in their struggle against the forces that oppress them, must come from listening to their experiences. *Estado de emergencia* created a safe space to listen to testimonies concerning transfemicides. The trans women involved felt their voices had been amplified through the process, and that they had been given greater agency.

The testimonies included in *Estado de emergencia* revealed how the binary, heteronormative system renders trans women vulnerable. It was not the gender or profession of Paola and Alessia that left them vulnerable; it was the social reading of their identity. As sex workers, they were voluntarily objectifying themselves —presenting them as sexual products to be acquired. While the discussion around sex work is immensely complex and appears a long way from any kind of resolution, understanding it as a manifestation of female captivity may help to clarify the issue somewhat. For Lagarde, prostitution is just another expression of the idea that women are sexual objects to be possessed and dominated by men. However, while both may be expressions of captivity, there are certainly differences between the roles and statuses of sex workers and wives. The wife is a man’s possession for life, and any erotic behaviour ought to be linked to her reproductive function. Meanwhile, while the sex worker is also to be possessed by the male, the period of ownership is only brief, and there are no higher motives around erotic behaviour —sex can be enjoyed for its own sake. As Lagarde explains: ‘la prostituta se dedica al mal, al pecado, al erotismo, por consiguiente es descalificada; sin embargo, simultáneamente es altamente valorada en la cultura que fetichiza, idealiza y

³⁷⁹ Butler, ‘Cátedra Prima Julio Cortázar’.

sobrevalor el erotismo de manera absoluta'.³⁸⁰ In summarising the conditions of prostitution, she explains how it is a form of captivity founded on the same principles as modelling, pornography and marriage; that women exist to satisfy the sexual impulses and desires of men. Following her analysis, it could be stated that the only difference between a wife and a sex worker is the reproductive potential; with the wife, reproduction is the overriding objective of all sexual behaviour, whereas with the sex worker, reproduction is irrelevant to the sexual desire; in fact, reproductive potentialities are actively ignored, excluded and curtailed. Nevertheless, Lagarde does not explore what happens when trans women are sex workers. I posit a sixth captivity; namely, that which is imposed by a binary order, which forcefully links identity to the subject's genitals. In this sense, encouraging women to challenge what might be a captivity engenders a form of liberation.

The event was a continuation of Lia García and Kenya Cuevas' communitarian roles. Kenya Cuevas and others have invested great personal effort into agency projects, aiming to achieve an improvement in the reality of sex workers, in which prostitution does not necessarily entail captivity. However, as will be explained further in this chapter, understanding gender as performativity determined what they took to mean by agency, and accounts for how it can be rhizomatic. Up to this point, it is possible to observe how, thanks to the event, it may indeed be worth wondering whether, if gender is indeed a social construct, femicide and transfemicide ought to be considered one and the same. However, given that the trans victims were murdered for reasons related to their gender, it may be possible that the men who hired them and murdered them did not think this way—that they thought transfemicide to be a less serious crime than femicide—something that could, somehow, be justified. Like women, Paola and Alessia were owned by the men, on the basis that they had paid for sexual favours, but if Butler is correct, they themselves were examples of men who refused to be the owners and decided voluntarily to be the owned object. They decided to be captives, not captors. Machismo is also related to a rejection of any gay desire and, if men refuse to recognise trans women as women, hiring them supposes a gay act.

³⁸⁰ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*.



Figure 21. López García, V., Rosa, M.L. and Wolffer, L. *Registro del proyecto: Las perlas*, Estado de Emergencia, 2019, p. 92. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

During this event, Diéguez recognised the liminality these trans women lived in and claimed that they could express their fear freely in the liminal space. In terms of rhizomatic effects, as in any other event that was part of *Estado de Emergencia*, there would be a different effect depending on the type of public. In this spot, the rhizomatic effect amongst trans women—as they were given a place to speak, share their stories, and denounce the violence they suffer publicly—was achieving agency and a sense of freedom of speech. For those outsiders listening, it might have served to enlighten them of how trans women and women are victims of the same socio-cultural, political and institutional problems. The event has another advantage observable in this thesis; it brings the subject of transfemicides to the debate. As it has been shown, the objective of this thesis is to consider how feminist *artivism* is answering to violence against women; hence, the focus was to explore the feminist proposals of their art. Since I have not had enough contact with the trans women population, speaking on their behalf might be regarded as invasive. However, due to how Mayer, Cerrucha, Wolffer and Rosa include them, it becomes necessary to include their realities when discussing gender violence; even more so when claiming gender is performative. This is not a complete analysis of the artistic trajectory of trans women; it should be considered as an initial step towards another research.

IV.II. Punto de Dolor 2: UNAM

The second *Punto de dolor* [Pain Spot] took place inside UNAM [the National Autonomous University of Mexico]. On May 3 2017, the perception of the school's environment changed completely for women enrolled there. In the early hours of the morning, the corpse of a woman was discovered next to a phone booth, with the telephone cord wrapped around her neck. She was soon identified as Lesvy Berlín, a student at UNAM. Once the authorities had picked up the body, they posted a tweet from the official FGJ [*Fiscalía General de Justicia*, or Attorney General's Office] account, ruling her death a suicide. This statement generated a discomfited backlash, as questions abounded around how she was supposed to have strangled herself. Responding to this public pressure, the FGJ posted a follow-up message, stating that there were elevated levels of alcohol and recreational drugs in her system at her time of death, and that she had dropped out of her course and was living with a romantic partner. By releasing this information, it seemed that the police were trying to sow the narrative that she was responsible for her own murder; that it was her own 'misbehaviour' that brought it about. Lesvy's parents went on to publicly denounce these claims, calling out the police for spreading misinformation about their daughter. Meanwhile, feminist groups organised a demonstration inside the university. The hashtag #SiMeMatan [#IfIamMurdered] trended nationwide as women tweeted out profiles of themselves, contrasted with alternative profiles the police might provide to perpetuate the narrative that they were somehow to blame for their own murder. On a broader level, the wider trend of authorities appearing to justify feminicides on the basis of the victim's past immoral behaviour was highlighted and called into question. Five months later, after ceaseless public demonstrations and tireless activism by her family, police finally began investigating Lesvy's murder as a feminicide. Although the activists achieved their immediate objectives in this case, the scene of her murder retained a certain accursed quality; haunted by the ghost of feminicide and female repression. As a result, the idea of holding an event next to that phone booth, in order to reclaim that spot for female students, was a popular one.

The pedagogical element usually present in *artivism* was made especially explicit during *Estado de Emergencia*. The *sala pública* of this scene was unique in this case, in that the participants felt personally connected to this case, in a way they may not have done with the cases behind other pain points. Since most of them were academics, the knowledge that they could be murdered inside their place of work due solely to their gender was a fundamental part of the discussion. Hence, students and professors expressed the fear they felt in their

universities and their indignation towards authorities. The conversation started with the testimony of Lesvy's parents, from which experts drew a number of conclusions. Tamara Ibarra, a feminist artist, explained how gender violence inside universities has always existed. However, the protocols to stop it are useless since the universities' authorities have no contact with the victims, focus on a punitive system and list actions to deal with cases but not to prevent them. On the other hand, Mariana Berlanga, a feminist scholar, explored the cultural difficulties that prevent crimes from being recognised as feminicides. All the experts present agreed that the problem of feminicide—which has to be seen as a public problem—is not that of a series of individual men killing women but, as Lagarde and Valencia explained, a cultural problem in which the values of machismo are put on a pedestal as exemplary masculine behaviour. It is therefore not simply the case of a few bad apples spoiling the barrel, but of the barrel itself being rotten. Finally, María Laura Rosa, who coordinated the conversation, expressed the objective of the event: 'lo que queremos es que este sea un espacio de memoria en tanto y en cuanto también nos ayude a vivir mejor'.³⁸¹ The task of suitably honouring Lesvy at the site where she fell victim to feminicide was entrusted to Monica Mayer. Her *artist* proposal was a strategy to modify the significance of the site. However, considering the conversation they held before Mayer's contribution, their actions themselves stood as a monument to female solidarity; to women standing together against machismo.

³⁸¹ Redacción, 'Estado de Emergencia En CU Recuerda a Lesvy', *El Universal* (Mexico City, 13 November 2018), Cobertura de Estado de Emergencia: Puntos de Dolor y Resiliencia edition <<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/video/cultura/estado-de-emergencia-en-cu-recuerda-lesvy>> [accessed 31 August 2020].



Figure 22. López García, V., Rosa, M.L. and Wolffer, L. *Registro del proyecto: Estás en mí*, Estado de Emergencia, 2019, p. 95. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

The first characteristic of Mayer's intervention I wish to highlight is the secondary role she took within it. For *Estado de Emergencia*, Lesvy's parents were central to that conversation that took place. Listening to the relatives of the victims has several consequences worth considering when raising awareness about feminicides. For those in attendance, knowing their stories on an intimate level increases empathy and provides a trustworthy account of who the victim actually was, immune to the potential spin and distortion of the police profile. Lesvy's mother praised the support she enjoyed from women she had never met and who never questioned the profile she provided of Lesvy.³⁸² On the other hand, there are some cases, like Lesvy's, where their statement also offers a synecdoche of the institutional violence that

³⁸² *Pan y Circo* (Mexico City: Amazon Prime, 2020)
<https://www.primevideo.com/region/na/detail/0MRYHB8YSQ3YUWOR7F04N5LRQI/ref=atv_hm_hom_1_c_8pZiqd_2_3>.

underpins feminicides. When the police tried to classify Lesvy's case as a suicide, the family and activists used the law to prove them wrong. They asked for a second autopsy, which revealed that her body bore marks consistent with sexual violence. They gathered testimonies from thousands of people attesting that Lesvy had consistently been subjected to domestic violence by her romantic partner. It is worth clarifying that this is another factor counting against the police's ruling of suicide. This event allowed Araceli Osorio, Lesvy's mother, to find allies in her battle to have Lesvy's death classified as a feminicide. It is fundamental to reiterate here that the feminist activists are not offering their own voice in the discussion, as the families have their own. They are simply taking advantage of the platform they already enjoy, extending it to those with testimonies to give but no means of delivering them publicly.

A good way to describe the event would be to classify it as an unplanned mourning and collective performance. Participants mourned not only Lesvy herself, but also decried the wider structural factors that perpetuate violence against women. The fact that Lesvy's relatives were forced to use the law against the police to contradict their allegation of suicide showcases the lack of communication Wolffer notices between public discourse, the legal mechanisms at women's disposal, and the reality they face on the ground.³⁸³ According to Gabriela Amores (2020), a lawyer who works exclusively with cases of feminicide, these kinds of omissions committed by authorities are not innocent acts but complicit actions. In direct defiance of these obstacles, Amores now acts as an educator, teaching the population how to act in the wake of feminicide, bearing in mind that the authorities and police may well do everything in their power to hinder the process of getting justice for the victim.³⁸⁴ The media also plays a role, in Mexico, if the name of an aggressor is published, it is considered as a violation of his right to privacy, thus reducing the criminal sentence as his rights have been violated. In this sense, it is productive that the feminist activists create projects to remember victims instead of exposing the men who have harmed or murdered women.

³⁸³ See interview with Lorena Wolffer, Addendum.

³⁸⁴ *Sesión 1: Femicidio En México. La Invisibilidad Como Nueva Violencia* (Mexico City, 2020).



Figure 23. López García, V., Rosa, M.L. and Wolffer, L. *Registro del proyecto: Estás en mí*, Estado de Emergencia, 2019, p. 93. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

Having studied Mónica Mayer’s art, one could argue that it always caters to the needs and sensibilities of the public. She usually proposes a dynamic sort of project —a frequent strategy in feminist activism’ to use art strategies to amplify the impact of the activism. According to the artist, doing so has been the most challenging experience of her life.³⁸⁵ Though she prefers to work with fun and joyful strategies, she did not feel she had the freedom to do so on this occasion. Of course, it was her who put together the intervention in the phone booth, comprised of t-shirts and other materials, but her role was just that —to *display* the materials, and allowing others in the university to intervene. Instead of taking charge of coordinating the event, she became a secondary participant, allowing Lesvy’s parents to conduct the conversation and the *artivism*. Lesvy’s parents therefore led the activity. Her mother, Araceli Osorio, is now an anti-femicide activist, claiming that every murder like her daughter’s, must produce its own movement to fight future feminicides.³⁸⁶ Mayer’s action became everyone’s action as she promoted the intervention of the shirt she designed.

Her proposal, named *Estás en mí* [You are in me], confronted what the authorities said about Lesvy. The shirts she provided to the participants were purple —a colour often worn by

³⁸⁵ *Artivismos Feministas, Poner El Cuerpo. Conversación Entre Mónica Mayer, Lía García ‘La Novia Sirena’ and Liz Misterio.*

³⁸⁶ *Pan y Circo.*

women protesting against gender violence— and they carried Lesvy’s name alongside an illustration of her profile, as described by those close to her, in contrast to the profile put out by the police. The profile also, fittingly, resembles the chalk outline drawn by police at crime scenes. Taking into account how hard the family worked to confront the official narrative about Lesvy’s life, Mayer created the silhouette using words that friends and relatives describe her. The idea that Lesvy is in her, or any other woman in Mexico City, is that her case has been used to denounce institutional violence, the lack of gender perspective of the authorities and the urgency to design mechanisms that guarantee women’s safety. Meanwhile, those present, especially those who were closer to Lesvy than Mayer, personalised their t-shirts with messages for Lesvy. Hence, Mayer’s work became more significant due to the active role played by the public in delivering it. Afterwards, the participants wearing the purple shirts intervened in the phone booth.

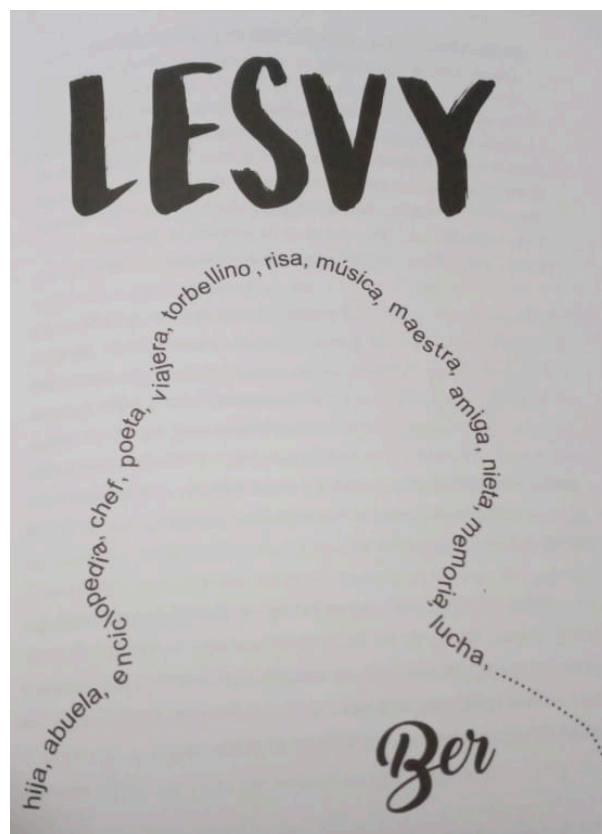


Figure 24. Mónica Mayer, ‘T-shirt designed by Mayer’, in *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*, Catálogo Estado de emergencia..., p. 43. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

Where Berlín was murdered became a monument or a form of *new genre public art*. As discussed in Chapter I, Lacy has been a consistent influence on Mayer’s work. Even if it seems like Mayer only made a small intervention it is possible to claim otherwise. By promoting an

activity to increase empathy, and by standing aside and taking a back seat, she allowed the ‘history construction’ that motivates new genre public art to take shape. Lacy stated that the ‘construction of a history of new genre public art is not built on a typology of materials, space, or artistic media, but rather on concepts of audience, relationship, communication and political intention.’³⁸⁷ Mayer had the freedom to do whatever she wanted, and yet, rather than construct her own narrative, she chose to organise a conversation in which history emerged organically, from a multiplicity of voices rather than simply her own. Today, the phone booth is simultaneously a reminder of the feminist movement, a denunciation of violence, a safe spot for women and a memorial to Lesvy’s life. It became what María Laura Rosa announced as the event’s objective: a memory, and a reminder to create mechanisms to guarantee women’s safety. Mayer invited the participants to intervene in the phone booth and the university.

In these kinds of projects, it becomes harder to name the artist. They got the resources, the places and the audience because of Mayer, but the participants did most of the intervention. Hence, the artist could be regarded as an instigator of the art, rather than its creator. What was left of the performance was the resignificance of the haunted location. Women left messages for Lesvy, placed two pink crosses on the floor (today pink crosses are placed where victims of feminicide are discovered; specifically, by their mothers) and, on top of the booth, they put a pink board with Lesvy’s image, her information and the motto: ‘NiUNAMenos’, mixing the name of the Latin American movement against feminicides and the acronym of the university: UNAM. Thereafter, using street art techniques, women continue to re-signify the university. Unlike street art, where an artist uses the social meaning of a place to denounce an injustice or point out a fact that society should recognise, the artists participating in *Estado de Emergencia* had something of a say in selecting their locations. Participants chose places in the different spots where the events happened and pasted circular, red stickers that said: ‘Aquí una mujer fue violentada’ [a woman was harmed here]. Women living in such a violent context are forced into liminality; somehow, they inhabit the margins unnoticed, so this action made their liminality visible. By remembering and denouncing the violence they are forced to live inside the university, women decided how the buildings looked; they had a sort of agency and freedom of speech as a rhizomatic effect to the artwork while visibly modifying the place they study.

IV.III. Punto de Dolor 3: Supreme Court of Justice

³⁸⁷ Suzanne Lacy, ‘Introduction’, in *Mapping the Terrain, New Genre Public Art*, ed. by Suzanne Lacy (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), pp. 19–47 (p. 28).

The third *punto de dolor* took place in front of the offices of the *Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación* [National Supreme Court of Justice]. In choosing the last two spots, instead of returning to the sites of specific feminicides, the artists chose to target the institutions that have failed to guarantee women's access to justice. Bear in mind that, for this project, each spot chosen for an installation represented a place of emotional pain for women, as the scene of a part feminicide. Furthermore, the term *punto de dolor* carries a second connotation; specifically, a medical one. When seeing a doctor, one might be asked to highlight the source of one's discomfort —the *punto de dolor* where the problem is manifesting, and specific treatment is needed. Viewing the *puntos de dolor* through the lens of the medical metaphor, the first two (Puente de Alvarado and UNAM) are incurable, as the victims are already dead, but treatment for those affected by the killings certainly serves a painkilling purpose. On the other hand, the last two points (The National Supreme Court of Justice and the Attorney's General Office) are instruments of the state, and 'alive' in the sense that they continue to operate and can be 'cured' of their faults —something which the *artists* believe to be necessary if they are to become fit for the purpose. The action, or remedy, at the National Supreme Court of Justice was called 'La justicia tiene caras' [justice has faces]. This name served two purposes; to recognise those striving to achieve justice for every feminicide victim, and to denounce all those who are paid to make women safe but fail to do so.

Invasorix coordinated the artistic intervention, but to truly understand their proposal, it will be necessary to consider what the experts had to say about this location. The conversation was led by Jennifer Tyburczy, and held between the activist Lulu Barrera, the lawyer Andrea Medina, and the historian Soledad Novoa. Lulú Barrera criticised bureaucratic barriers that prevent women from accessing justice, positing that the imposition of these obstacles might have been deliberate strategy. Meanwhile, Soledad Novoa denounced the institutional violence suffered by women inside the Supreme Court of Justice: 'cuando nos enfrentamos a instituciones no sólo es violencia simbólica, sino real y con Funcionarios [sic] y funcionarias que no prestan la asistencia y cumplen con sus obligaciones son agresores'.³⁸⁸ Finally, Andrea Medina, who has actively been working inside the Supreme Court of Justice to develop and maintain legal mechanisms to combat feminicide, explained the debt the Court owes to women:

³⁸⁸ The word *funcionarios* [male officers] having an initial capital letter and *funcionarias* [female officers] not might be a typing mistake from the journalist, but it could also be read as a manifestation of symbolic violence. Kevin Aragón, 'Entonan corrido de indignación', *El Universal* (Mexico City, 1 September 2020) <<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/cultura/entonan-un-corrido-de-indignacion-en-la-scn>> [accessed 1 September 2020].

‘tiene una deuda con todas nosotras de exigir que realmente haya justicia’.³⁸⁹ This discussion highlights the deep reluctance of authorities to recognise feminicides, as well as the wider problem of gender violence, in Mexico. The Human Rights Interamerican Court of Justice has mandated Mexico’s government to create specific legal mechanisms to combat feminicide. In the 1990s, when the first feminicides took place in Ciudad Juárez, three women found the corpses of their daughters in a cotton field, and it was this incident which gave its name to the famous international case the *Inter-American Court Human Rights Caso Campo Algodonero* [The Cotton Field Case], which set the precedent for dealing with feminicides in Mexico. After finding no support from the authorities, the mothers ended up filing a legal claim against the Mexican Government in the Inter- American Court of Human Rights. In 2001, the Court issued a condemnation of Mexico’s government, finding it to have been negligent and to have impeded access to justice. It therefore seems to be the case that the authorities wish for there to be no cases of feminicide, for fear of being accused of negligence or complicity. However, rather than taking proactive steps to reduce the number of feminicides that take place, they seem to have chosen to simply acknowledge as few of them as they can, ordering the police to classify as few cases as possible as instances of feminicide, in order to tamper with the statistics. This is why, in many cases, the activism of relatives and the pressure they have exerted on the police and the courts, has led to legal adjustments that increase the protection of women.

Invasorix is a group of feminist musicians who composed lyrics with feminist messages. The group consists of women artists (though they described themselves as *womenix artistix*, as many identify as genderqueer or non-binary)³⁹⁰ living and working in Mexico City, with a particular interest in queer feminist protests. It is precisely because of how they compose their music and answer to social needs that, in Chapter II, I mentioned Invasorix as an example of how feminist activism enables *sororidad*. The genre of the music they compose depends on the public and the context they are seeking to address. Their commitment is not to any musical genre, but to the population they are addressing with their art. For this occasion, Invasorix opted for *corridos*. As highlighted by the artists themselves, they oppose the ‘cult of the heroic man’, to whom *corridos* are ordinarily composed,³⁹¹ and instead subvert the genre, reappropriating it to honour the victims of feminicide and denounce their lack of access to justice.

³⁸⁹ Aragón.

³⁹⁰ Invasorix, ‘Invasorix’, *Invasorix*, 2020 <<https://invasorix.tumblr.com/about>> [accessed 1 September 2020].

³⁹¹ Aragón.

By appropriating a patriarchal marketing strategy, and turning it to feminist ends, Invasorix transformed a highly chauvinistic musical tradition into a protest genre. *Corridos* are a popular kind of music, and a hard one to define, as they vary in accordance with the place, environment and history of their composition. The most accepted conceptualisation of *corridos* is that of Vicente Mendoza: ‘un género épico-lírico-narrativo, en cuartetos de rima variable que relatan aquellos sucesos que hieren poderosamente la sensibilidad de las multitudes’.³⁹² The form and rhymes are not fundamental as they vary from one song to the other, while the social function remains. Their origin is unknown, though it is associated with the identity of a Mexico in the period immediately following their 1810 War of Independence. It became highly popular during the Mexican Revolution (1910), helping revolutionary heroes gaining recognition across the country. Lira-Hernández (2013) notes that according to the social and cultural context, *corridos* have different social functions. Many of the ‘Independence *corridos*’ had nationalist objectives. During the Independence campaign, and the Revolution a century later, others poked fun at Mexico’s enemies (Spaniards, Americans and *hacienda* owners). Throughout the XIX and XX Century, some *corridos* used satire to make fun of traitors or anti-heroes. Finally, others describe how some men were forced to live outside the law and ostracised from wider society; some becoming famous criminals, while others led tragic lives. However, what is common across the many variations of *corridos*, is that most of them present male figures as leading roles.³⁹³ Considering their popularity and the qualities *corridos* have—addressing multitudes, being part of the Mexican identity, and acknowledging Mexican heroes—the need to revisit *corridos* from a gender-critical perspective, and to question the sexist characteristics of the genre, becomes apparent, due to their role in diminishing women. Invasorix focused on the relationship between *corridos* and the construction of heroes as they presented the mothers of femicide victims as heroes.

There is something Invasorix did not mention about *corridos* which their song also opposes. Theirs is not the first song about the murdering of a woman; nevertheless, in the traditional songs, the death of women is presented quite differently. After listening to the *corridos* that tell the stories of murdered women (i.e. Rosita Álvarez,³⁹⁴ Güera Chabela,³⁹⁵), Gabriela Nava concludes that their deaths are justified in these songs by the deviant behaviour

³⁹² Alberto Lira-Hernández, ‘El Corrido Mexicano: Un Fenómeno Histórico-Social y Literario’, *Contribuciones Desde Coatepec*, 24 (2013), 29–45 (p. 30).

³⁹³ Lira-Hernández, pp. 32–37.

³⁹⁴ Zapatista39, *Antonio Aguilar, Rosita Alvarez.wmv*, online video recording, YouTube, 24 March 2012, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRasrvS8Ki8>> [accessed 01 September 2020].

³⁹⁵ Luis Peres, *Antonio Aguilar – La Güera Chabela*, online video recording, YouTube, 22 July 2013, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5Ai2WXWOJE>> [accessed 01 September 2020].

of the women in question —by their refusal to submit and obey. These anecdotes are used as warnings for other women.³⁹⁶ When men die in *corridos*, it is because of their heroic feats. The deaths of women, however, are either accidental deaths of secondary characters or deserved punishments. In this sense, it is essential to review the content of one meaningful extract of the *corrido* sang by Invasorix:

Spanish Version³⁹⁷

En pleno siglo XXI,
Mariana Lima Buendía,
una abogada nuestra,
su esposo la mató.

Julio Hernández Ballinas
a todos les engañó,
judicial de Chimal,
sobre su esposa mentía:
un suicidio él armaba;
un gran teatro montó
para salir liberado
de un crimen que él cometió.

La justicia tiene caras,
no te hagas que no entiendes.
Estás viendo y no ves la mentira que es.
Estás viendo y no ves, la mentira que es.

‘Nos quitaron la fuerza,
nosotras la recuperamos.
Aliadas trabajamos
de la mano caminamos.
Si tocan a una, nos les vamos todas.

Explicitly mentioning the 21st Century, and situating the problems the poem describes within it, is significant, reflecting the amazement Mexican feminists feel at the violent environment that women continue to find themselves mired in. It is hard to understand how, despite Mexico’s government having signed international treaties such as CEDAW, the Convention of Belem Do Pará, and the Platform for Action Beijing;³⁹⁸ in addition to having a

³⁹⁶ Gabriela Nava, ‘Pongan Cuidado, Muchachas, Miren Cómo van Viviendo’, *Revista de Literaturas Populares*, 2.III (2003), 124–40.

³⁹⁷ During the event they sang this short version. However, the original was longer, and it includes the cases of Lesvy Berlin, Paola, Alessa and Norma Andrade. They also included everything that Irinea Buendía did to guarantee her daughter’s access to justice. Invasorix, ‘Corrido “La Justicia Tiene Caras”’, in *Catálogo de Estado de Emergencia: Puntos de Dolor y Resiliencia*, ed. by Vanessa López García, María Laura Rosa, and Lorena Wolffer (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura, CENART, La Duplicadora and Centro de Cultura/E-Literatura Digital, 2020), pp. 56–58..

³⁹⁸ After the reform of 2011, in which Mexico changed the writing of the Constitutional Article 1 (changed the words ‘personal guarantees’ for ‘human rights’), the government agreed to sign every Human Rights treaty without any reservations. This means that the Mexican government has to abide by the treaties, including the recommendations and preventive actions mandated therein. Mexico, *Article 1 2011*, <<https://www2.juridicas.unam.mx/constitucion-reordenada-consolidada/en/vigente>>. United Nations Human

specific law to protect women, and the fact that The Interamerican Human Rights Court has repeatedly condemned Mexico's government for the violence and discrimination women continue to face the country (in 2002, 2003 and 2009),³⁹⁹ violent feminicides are still commonplace. Therefore, the fact they sang about the case of Mariana Lima Buendía from the front entrance to the Supreme Court was highly significant, since she was the victim of the first femicide case ever processed there. In an act of subversion of traditional *corridos*, Invasorix's song does not justify her murder but condemns the actions of Mariana's partner.

Rights, *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* (New York: United Nations, 2020) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx>> [accessed 1 September 2020].

Department of International Law OAS, *Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women 'Convention of Belem Do Para'* (Belem Do Para, 1994)

<<https://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>> [accessed 1 September 2020]. United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (Beijing: United Nations, 1995)

<https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf> [accessed 1 September 2020].

³⁹⁹ Mexico's Government is the Latin American administration with more sentences related to gender violence at the Interamerican Human Rights Court. The one in 2002 referred to the high levels of violence experienced by women and the lack of freedom of speech, while the 2003 was about the violence and discrimination suffered by women when accessing to justice. The 2009 justice sentence was the one already discussed: Campo Algodonero. OEA, *Campo Algodonero. Informe Anual 2002. Informe de la Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión*, Doc. 44, 2002

<<http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/expresion/docs/informes/anales/Informe%20Anual%202002.pdf>>. United Nations ECOSOC, *Report on Violence Against Women, Its Causes and Consequences, Addendum, Mission to Mexico*, 2006 <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/441182020.html>>.



Figure 25. López García, V., Rosa, M.L. and Wolffer, L. *Registro del proyecto: La justicia tiene caras*, Estado de Emergencia, 2019, p. 100. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

Invasorix did not limit their actions to song writing. Not only did they sing the song themselves, but they also invited the participants to sing along. Those present were given the necessary lyrics to sing along with the chorus, the subject of which was Mariana Lima Buendía. As I explained in Chapter I, the same strategy was used by Big Frente Zapatista. Lima Buendía's corpse was discovered on 29 June 2010. Her partner, Hernández Ballina—a federal police officer from Chimalhuacan, Estado de México—, had called the police and claimed that his wife had just committed suicide. When the police arrived at the scene, Mariana's body had been placed in bed, and Hernández Ballina claimed that he had placed it there after finding her hanging from the curtain rail in the bathroom. This alteration to the crime scene was glossed over and went uninvestigated. The crime scene was not properly handled; for starters, her own husband was assigned to investigate the case, and it is genuinely difficult to imagine a clearer conflict of interest in any context. Furthermore, the names of the forensic experts who picked up her body were missing from her file, and the two forensic reports they produced contradicted one another. Despite all this, the Attorney General's office ruled her death a suicide on

September 9th 2011. Mariana's mother, Irinea Buendía, refused to accept this verdict, as she knew Mariana had been a victim of gender violence several times, and had resolved to leave her husband on the day of her death. Therefore, with the support of the National Femicide Observatory, Irinea asked for a second investigation. After facing significant bureaucratic obstacles, obstructionism, and institutional violence, she filed a complaint against the authorities of Estado de Mexico at the Supreme Court of Justice. It took her more than five years, but on 25 March 2015, Mexico's Supreme Court issued an order declaring a lack of gender-sensitivity in the way the investigation was handled, in a ruling that also scrutinised the proceedings of the investigation.⁴⁰⁰ The fact that cases like Mariana Lima's and Lesvy Berlin's continue to arise despite the Supreme Court's scathing rulings on the matter suggests that these declarations alone are not enough to enact real change. It was precisely this last point that Invasorix wanted to highlight.

The message offered by the intervention is that justice is not only blind, but it has faces, in that there are judges who ought to be held responsible for certain decisions regarding feminicides. As a result, the *corrido* suggests that said judges are trying to ignore the evidence of their own eyes-wilfully rendering themselves blind to what is happening right in front of them. In an extended version of the piece, other cases of femicide are mentioned: Lesvy Berlín, Alejandra Andrade, Itzel Doran and Pao Ledezma, to name a few. Like the *corridos* from which they took inspiration, the band end their song with a warning. However, unlike the *corridos*, the warning is not addressed to misbehaving women, instead affirming that, should more women be harmed, other women will respond through music and *artivism*. The lyrics of the song concluded with a list of femicide victims. Notably, the band omitted their surnames, de-specifying the victims and thereby stressing that any woman can become a victim.

⁴⁰⁰ Karla I. Quintana Osuna, 'El Caso de Mariana Lima Buendía: Una Radiografía Sobre La Violencia y Discriminación Contra La Mujer', *Cuestiones Constitucionales*, 38 (2018) <<https://doi.org/10.22201/ijj.24484881e.2018.38.11878>>.

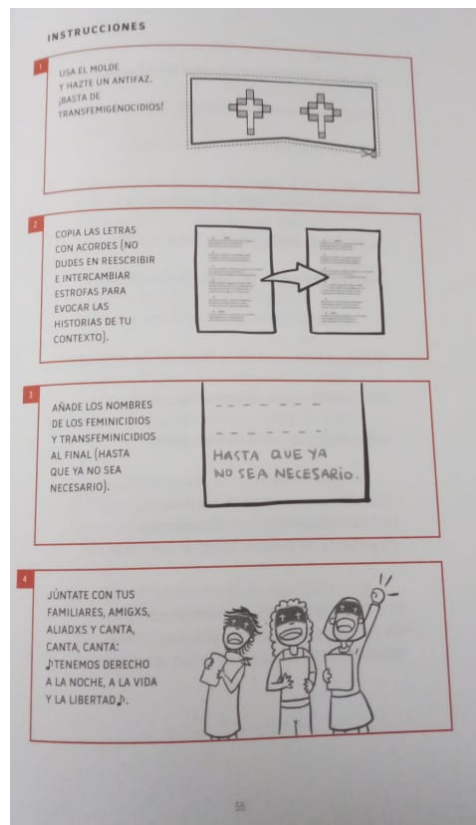


Figure 26. Invasorix, 'Instrucciones', in *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia, Catálogo Estado de emergencia...*, p. 55. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

Violet, green and pink were extensively employed by the band; both in the posters advertising the performance, and in the performance itself. Across the world, these three tones are employed during feminist protests. However, there is no consensus regarding how this came to be so. This use of colour has garnered little attention from academics, but they are used by feminists in almost all of their demonstrations. In the English-speaking world, these colours recall the flag used by Pankhurst's suffragettes in 1908. This flag bore the colours purple, white, and green; purple for the royal blood that ran through the veins of every suffragette, white as an expression of personal purity and green as an expression of hope.⁴⁰¹ In the United States and Mexico, these colours relate to a legend surrounding the events that determined March 8th as International Women's Day. On 8 March 1911, 146 working women died after their boss burned down the factory as a strike-breaking measure. The factory was dedicated to

⁴⁰¹ Sarah Waldron, 'International Women's Day: Wear Your Colours with Pride', *Irish Times*, 8 March 2016 <<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/fashion/international-women-s-day-wear-your-colours-with-pride-1.2557420>> [accessed 30 July 2021].

textile production, especially violet shirtwaists.⁴⁰² In Mexico, they used both explanations to justify the use of the colours. Although, rather than explaining their use of the flag, it seems as though they have adopted these colours without question, due to the social convention surrounding the use of said colours.

Although Wolffer was the head coordinator, she did not force Invasorix to use red, black and white. Instead, for the promotional poster they used three tones. The Faux-pearly Purple is used by the feminist movement, mainly to protest violence. The Faux-dark Pastel Green is related to abortion and freedom, positing that no woman is free until abortion is legal; a connotation shared with Latin American feminism, as the feminist movement fighting for the legalisation of abortion across Latin America calls itself *la marea verde* [the green tide], who identify themselves by dressing in green during their demonstrations. The Faux-Light Deep Pink may be easier to track as its inclusion is relatively recent. Instead of defending purity as the suffragettes did with the white, feminists using pink with the other two colours support the idea of including trans women in the feminist movement. In Mexico, this also connotes to the pink crosses used to signal locations where a feminicide took place. Furthermore, the colour gained additional popularity recently when, in August 2019, a girl was raped by four policemen. After the family tried to report this crime, the Mexico City's Attorney General leaked the girl's information for anyone to see online. In response, the feminist movement organised a massive protest and, during the dialogue with Jesús Orta, Security Secretariat of Mexico City, a feminist threw pink glitter at him. Orta considered the act highly provocative and suspended the negotiations.⁴⁰³ The feminist reaction was to cover the city with pink glitter, while using a social media filter decorated with pink glitter and accompanied by the hashtags #NoNosCuidanNosViolan [TheyDon'tProtectUsTheyRapeUs] and #MásBrillantinaMenosViolaciones [MoreGlitterLessRape].

Invasorix's performance did not end that day, as they subsequently issued instructions to their followers to create masks like the ones they had been wearing while singing. The original masks they wore were silver, imitating a mirror, thereby encouraging the spectator to look at themselves when trying to catch the singers' eyes. In front of the eyes, as if blocking

⁴⁰² Sandra Arbat, 'Por Qué El Color Violeta Es El Verdadero Símbolo de La Marcha Feminista Del Día de La Mujer', *La Vanguardia* (Mexico City, 7 March 2018) <<https://www.lavanguardia.com/moda/feminismo/20180306/441315715416/dia-mujer-8-marzo-huelga-feminista-color-violeta.html>> [accessed 30 July 2021].

⁴⁰³ Redacción, 'Bandera Feminista 2021. ¿Qué Significan Los Colores Violeta, Verde y Rosa?', *El Universal*, 30 July 2021 <<https://imagenzac.com.mx/sin-categoria/brillantina-rosa-sabes-lo-que-significa/>> [accessed 30 July 2021].

their gaze, they placed two pink crosses, again referencing those used to mark the locations of feminicides. By leveraging their masks to get an artistic message across, it is evident that the band were riffing on the idea of blind justice. Due to their cut, they were able to see through them, as they left a space between the mask's eye-holes and the crosses adorning it; however, at a glance, it seems as though the crosses are covering their eyes, and obscuring their view entirely. These masks also convey a further message. The cases of feminicide, the crosses, and all the countless labours endured by the families of the victims are right in front of the eyes of those in charge with meting out justice, and yet they refuse to do so. Justice is denied to the families of the victims not out of the impossibility of doing so, but out of the conscious negligence of those charged with ensuring it. The band also invite other participants to sing, and even to modify their song to honour other cases of feminicides. They invite others to join the musical revolution under the motto: 'until our murder is not normal!' and 'we have the right to the night, to live and freedom'⁴⁰⁴.

Besides remembering Mariana Lima Buendía's murder, the performance had other rhizomatic effects. In a collective effort, women finally managed to lobby the Supreme Court to act in accordance with its duty; to fulfil the obligations required of it to protect women. The question of what might happen after the event, and how the masks might be used going forward, is beyond the scope of the organisers. Invasorix gave the lyrics to all the participants, offering them the chance to sing along as a means of realising their anger. Subverting a traditionally *machista* genre, and leveraging it to celebrate rather than denigrate women, granted women unprecedented ownership of a cultural product strongly associated with Mexican identity which until then, had acted as a vehicle for the perpetuation of violence against them. Another rhizomatic effect is that all the participants who did not know about Buendía's story learned about it. A final rhizomatic effect, inaccessible even for the artists, was that on the public officials who listened to the song. Though in some photographs it is possible to see female workers looking outside their windows, showing concern, no such concern was expressed from within their offices. One could only hope that they listened, and they understood the role they have in eradicating feminicides.

IV.IV. *Punto de Dolor* 4: Procuraduría General de Justicia

⁴⁰⁴ Invasorix, 'Corrido "La Justicia Tiene Caras"', p. 54.

The last location for *Estado de Emergencia* was across the premises of the *Procuraduría General de Justicia* [Attorney's General Office]. This is the department responsible for processing complaints and investigating cases of violence against women, and they are also charged with dealing with the victims. As an institution, they are the first point of contact for dealing with feminicides, and are consequently constantly accused of institutional negligence, discrimination and violence. Cerrucha organised a flash mob⁴⁰⁵ on this spot. Instead of focusing specifically on one or two victims, this event sought justice for all victims of femicide, whether mentioned in *Estado de emergencia* or not.

Cerrucha's performance sought to encourage women to have fun; after all, she was closing the event. It also exemplified a method of organising feminist resistance, but to understand why this is so, it will be necessary to refer briefly back to a previous discussion. This final conversation was coordinated by Julia Antivilo, and participated in by Cristiane Brandao (Brazil), Ileana Diéguez (Cuba-Mexico) and Luana Saturnino (Brazil). As they were surrounded by police officers, it is pertinent to observe how the conversation clearly stated it is up to women to protect each other; something already introduced in Chapter I and II. Lorena Wolffer was also present and expressed the idea behind the whole project: 'desmontar las violencias tanto en el interior de nuestras instituciones, comunidades, familias, escuelas e iglesias, como dentro de nosotras mismas; al mismo tiempo que denunciemos la impunidad, la corrupción, las inacciones y los silencios'.⁴⁰⁶ Antivilo explained: 'normalizar la violencia y los feminicidios'.⁴⁰⁷ The conversation also reaffirmed that the problem with the police regarding feminicides is not merely their failure to carry out their role effectively, but their role as instigators; their role in allowing feminicides is not merely passive, but active. This partially accounts for why Mexico is such a terrifying environment for a woman; not only must they live in constant fear of being murdered, but they must live with the knowledge that, should this occur, their murder may well avoid justice.⁴⁰⁸ The experts in the conversation agreed that the only thing left to do is to resist collectively from the liminal space; that feminism is the only

⁴⁰⁵ In the Coursera and Duke's University course Art of the MOOC. Artists Pedro Lasch explains that artists sometimes use different forms of political and social resistance that look like fun, with the idea of offering participants a good time while protesting. *Flashmobs* are inserted into that tradition. They were invented in 2003 in Manhattan, New York. Defined as an 'unusual or pointless act', they are similar to a happening and include music and dancing from the participants. MjrClayton.99, 'History and Origins of the "Flashmob"', *Art of the MOOC*, 2018 <<https://artofthemooc.org/wiki/history-and-origins-of-the-flashmob/>> [accessed 1 September 2020].

⁴⁰⁶ Laura Gómez Flores, 'Colectivo Exige a La PGJ CDMX Resolver Casos de Feminicidios', *La Jornada* (Mexico City, 14 November 2018) <<https://www.jornada.com.mx/ultimas/capital/2018/11/14/colectivo-exige-a-la-pjg-cdmx-resolver-casos-de-feminicidios-8250.html>> [accessed 27 August 2020].

⁴⁰⁷ Gómez Flores.

⁴⁰⁸ Monárrez Fragoso, Fregoso, and Bejarano.

instrument women have to stand against structural violence.⁴⁰⁹ Diéguez noted approvingly that the actions organised for *Estado de emergencia* were markedly different from traditional demonstrations or art exhibitions, quoting Butler: ‘la resistencia y la vulnerabilidad operan juntas, algo que el modelo paternalista no puede hacer’.⁴¹⁰ Considering Butler, Diéguez questioned traditional forms of resistance, wondering whether they might in fact perpetuate patriarchy, rather than fight it. For her, resistance must therefore derive from liminality and creativity. The *artists* who participated in *Estado de emergencia*, and who we have already mentioned, cite the ideas of Ileana Diéguez and Sayak Valencia in support of their own work. Both authors identified an opportunity to deconstruct patriarchy in Judith Butler’s theory on gender being performative. Therefore, it is possible to identify either an affirmation of gender’s performativity or a statement about queer identity. Hence, even if they have modified their strategies, they have provided continuity to their gender project.

As stated in Chapter III, Cerrucha has been adapting her art to facilitate greater public interaction. Which explains why, when Cerrucha was interviewed about *In/Visible* in 2019, she was more eager to discuss her participation in *Estado de Emergencia*. Though she continues to use the same street art strategies as in *In/Visible*, she prefers *artivistic* strategies that allow her to interact with the participants more.⁴¹¹ The rhizomatic effects of *artivism* have also worked on the *artists* themselves. The fact that Cerrucha today works in closer proximity to the public may be seen as a function of her expanded sense of social responsibility. From *In/visible* to *Estado de Emergencia*, it is possible to identify in Cerrucha Suzanne Lacy’s progression scheme of the evolution of public art—that which I discussed in Chapter I.⁴¹² Her aim is not to enhance her artistic reputation, but to provide tools and mechanisms to confront the sexist culture.

Cerrucha’s flash mob was spread over two instalments. The first part included an open telephone line. People were invited to phone in and pretended they were talking to the Attorney General’s Office, and to tell the police officers everything they would like to say to them but were afraid to do so. Although the lines were open to both men and women, no men used it.

⁴⁰⁹ *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 4: Procuraduría General de Justicia de la Ciudad de México V2* (Mexico City, 2019), p. 4 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4B8UPFN4ncw>> [accessed 27 August 2020].

⁴¹⁰ Ileana Diéguez, ‘A Propósito de La Vulnerabilidad, La Resistencia y Los Afectos’, in *Catálogo Estado de Emergencia: Puntos de Dolor y Resiliencia En La Ciudad de México*, ed. by Vanessa López García, María Laura Rosa, and Lorena Wolffer (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura, CENART, La Duplicadora and Centro de Cultura/E-Literatura Digital, 2020), pp. 76–81 (p. 76). The Butler’s quote she referenced comes from a conference Judith Butler gave at the UNAM; it was called *Repensar la vulnerabilidad y la resistencia* [Rethinking about vulnerability and resistance].

⁴¹¹ See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

⁴¹² The scheme was presented in chapter I.

Given the prevalence of complaints against the police over their complicity in feminicides, the outcome was pretty unsurprising: all the women who phoned in were angry and used this opportunity to berate the imagined police officers for neglecting to do their job properly.⁴¹³ This problem has a common thread running through femicide investigations ever since the first cases in Ciudad Juárez, and is in fact one of the reasons why femicide rates are. Adriana Carmona López explained the behaviour of the police as follows: ‘retardo injustificado y ausencia de las diligencias necesarias para la adecuada investigación. Fabricación de pruebas falsas para desviar las investigaciones. Negligencia en las comparencias de los probables responsables...ocultamiento de pruebas’.⁴¹⁴ Using the contents of the calls as inspiration, Cerrucha collaborated with a musician to turn their complaints into a salsa song, to which the participants danced during their flash mob.



Figure 27. López García, V., Rosa, M.L. and Wolffer, L. *Registro del proyecto: Azúcar Rabiosa*, Estado de Emergencia, 2019, pp. 102-103. Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.

Cerrucha is no musician, and her work does not usually contain musical elements; the musical piece served only to accompany the lyrics. However, choosing salsa as the genre has a meaning linked to Cerrucha’s objective. Salsa music appeared as a form of ethnic resistance in the USA, recovering rhythms from Africa and the Caribbean. Latin American artists in New York and San Francisco composed cheerful, polyrhythmic music that celebrated their origins

⁴¹³ The recordings and the flash mob can be accessed for free through Cerrucha’s website: <https://www.cerrucha.com/azucar-rabiosa>.

⁴¹⁴ Adriana Carmona López, ‘La discriminación de género en la impartición de justicia en Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua’, in *Violencia sexista*, ed. by Griselda Gutiérrez Casteñada, 2019, pp. 190–121 (p. 113).

while confronting the imposition of mainstream culture.⁴¹⁵ To this day, salsa as a genre eludes straightforward classification. Some music experts claim that salsa music is just the name given to traditional Cuban songs —once prohibited in the USA due to the Cuban Revolution— interpreted with modern instruments. Nevertheless, salsa composers still defend salsa as a genre that showcases their multi-ethnic origins.⁴¹⁶ This is why Quintero Rivera promotes the idea of understanding salsa as a music practice rather than a genre.⁴¹⁷ According to the same author, salsa musicians conceive their music as interactive and tailor it to each specific crowd, making it a musical, social protest.⁴¹⁸ On the subject of salsa, Cerrucha has this to say: ‘Este género musical tiene sus orígenes en la denuncia social, convirtiéndose en una plataforma que amplifica la voz de las participantes a través de una politización del goce’.⁴¹⁹ These same qualities were observed by the original *artists* who used salsa, and other Latin musical genres, as a vehicle for their activism.⁴²⁰ The fact that she identifies as an *artist*, and employs salsa in her *artistic* projects, links this artwork with the philosophy of the Big Frente Zapatista. For Cerrucha’s song, interaction between the participants and the musicians themselves was impossible because the music was recorded; however, she managed to retain the sense of interacting organically with the public by transforming real complaints into lyrics.

Azúcar Rabiosa (Spanish)

¿Qué se siente no servir para nada?

¿Qué pasa cuando no se puede confiar en quienes se encargan de impartir justicia?

¿Qué pasa cuando para la mitad de la población de un país volver a casa siempre se empieza a volver un golpe de suerte? ¿Queremos respuestas ya!

No está bien que cada que salga de mi casa me sienta insegura; que cada vez que salga de mi casa piense en quién me vio por si desaparezo sepan qué ropa usaba; no está bien que me preocupe por mis amigas, por mi mamá, por mi familia, por otras mujeres; no está bien que una salga de la casa y no sepa si va a regresar; no, no está bien que yo me pueda sentir segura en una ciudad —que se supone que es mía también— sólo porque sé defenderme; no, no está bien que diario mi corazón esté roto gracias a que asesinan como si fueran nada a mujeres.

Coro:

En México hay nueve feminicidios diarios porque ustedes lo permiten.

Pinches ineptos de mierda.

Los feminicidios me provocan mucha rabia y me hacen tener miedo del mundo en el que vivo.

Saber que en México hay siete hombres asesinos de mujeres, siete feminicidas al día sueltos por las calles me hace vivir con inseguridad permanente y desconfianza. Ni perdón, ni olvido. ¡Vivas nos queremos!

⁴¹⁵ *Hour 1: Bridges-Hour 2: The Salsa Revolution* (USA: PBS, 2009), p. 1

<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/latinmusicusa/home/>>.

⁴¹⁶ Ángel G. Quintero Rivera, *¡Salsa, Sabor y Control! Sociología de La Música ‘Tropical’* (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2005), p. 100.

⁴¹⁷ Quintero Rivera, p. 97.

⁴¹⁸ Quintero Rivera, pp. 337–39.

⁴¹⁹ Cerrucha, ‘Azúcar Rabiosa’, in *Catálogo Estado de Emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia en la Ciudad de México*, ed. by Vanessa López García, María Laura Rosa, and Lorena Wolffer (Mexico City: Secretaría de Cultura, CENART, La Duplicadora and Centro de Cultura/E-Literatura Digital), p. 68 (p. 68).

⁴²⁰ Shannon Dudley, Berrios-Miranda, and Habell-Pallán.

Coro:

¡Hagan su pinche trabajo ineptos de mierda! ¡Dejen de ser cómplices de feminicidas y violadores, carajo!

Como mujer me siento vulnerable, me siento impotente ante tanta violencia hacia nuestro género y, al mismo tiempo, siento una gran indignación y rabia frente a tanta indiferencia de quienes están obligados a protegernos; a quienes les pagamos para eso. No es un obsequio de la oscuridad, es para lo que está la autoridad, para dar seguridad y respeto a la sociedad. De combatir la violencia y el crimen para protegernos y ¿qué ha hecho? No tomar en serio las denuncias de mujeres en riesgo, ni minimizar sus brechas, hacerse de oídos sordos a las alardeas de género. ¿Cuántas mujeres han muerto después de que se les ha negado o simplemente ignorado sus peticiones de ayuda o protección? ¿Cuántas mujeres han desaparecido y las autoridades ni siquiera las buscan? Y si llegan a encontrarlas es porque aparecen muertas, mutiladas, en pedazos, arrojadas en algún lugar como si fueran basura.

With this project, it was not the quality of the music that mattered, but the act of protesting and helping women. The lyrics convey a sense of cynicism and anger on the part of women towards the instruments of justices. The song describes how women outside of judicial institutions can appreciate problems related to feminicides that seem invisible to the police. The joyful rhythm plus the angry lyrics generates an oxymoron. The name itself, *Azúcar Rabiosa* [*Rabid Sugar*], mixes the notion of something sweet with something bitter. The format of the oxymoron allows the song to perform two dramatically different yet closely intertwined functions; to voice the collective anger of women, while providing them with the relief of catharsis as a result of finally being able to express their demands. The dancing was not choreographed, as the act of rehearsing presupposes the notion of control —something at odds with the intended message of the music; that despite the oppressiveness of their environment, women have freedom. Inheriting the idea of a show of resistance from salsa was also intended to convey the notion that women were resisting.

After four days of protesting feminicides, *Azúcar rabiosa* seems to be the perfect way to have fun. Dealing with these topics can be painful, so it is vital that women can enjoy some emotional relief. Diéguez explained that this performance was highly liminal as it allows the subject/victims excluded from patriarchal power structures to give meaningful expression to their anger; to transform it into an act of resistance: ‘este arte de organizar la rabia y de convertir el dolor en una potencia de acción, en una potencia de resistencia. Y este organizar la rabia no es un saber académico, es una práctica que viene de quienes están luchando’.⁴²¹ This quote refers to the act of taking a bad situation and, through one’s own personal agency, using it as a

⁴²¹ *Estado de Emergencia | Punto 4: Procuraduría General de Justicia de la Ciudad de México V2*, p. 4.

basis for resistance. It is, however, critical to understand that, since Diéguez is explaining Butler's performance 'agency' is not defined as a sovereign defensive attitude. In this sense, 'agency' means something like identifying who we are, recognising the effects of the patriarchal structure, and offering the liminal resistance to it. This is why agency should be understood rhizomatically —it promotes a distinct, individual and highly personal reaction, recognising oneself as a means of standing against the system. As a result, this agency, linked to the performance of gender is the goal of transfeminism and risks an actualisation of potential. In a 2019 interview, Cerrucha explained that her dance performance aimed to celebrate life, as being a woman who is alive and free enough to dance is an act of defiance against a system in which women are constantly being raped and murdered.⁴²² One might argue that the dance also had a rhizomatic effect on the policemen it targeted; they may have been offended by it, they may have been upset, and they may even have cried. Cerrucha, however, was not concerned about them but about the women participating. All at once, she gave them the opportunity to express their anger freely, a therapeutic means of dispelling it, and a way to enjoy themselves. It is worth mentioning, as a possible rhizomatic effect of the event and the Human Rights' Commission agenda, the *Fiscalía General de Justicia* (Attorney General of Justice) itself appointed Cerrucha to create a memorial for Lesvy Berlín right in their reception hall a year later.⁴²³ The memorial includes testimonies of the victims and relatives of the victims to remind police officers why eradicating feminicides is a fundamental part of their job.

The last two events also used music, and spectators were invited to participate in it, either by dancing or by singing along. These events were devoid of hierarchy; they were simply an open call to denounce and resist against the patriarchal system. Their ultimate objective was to enact fundamental change, but since an informed populace is necessary for such a change to take place, the pedagogical purpose of these events enjoyed particular privilege. An effective resistance can only happen in the *communitas*, organised as a flat, hierarchy-less system, in which every member is of equal importance. Plenty of the materials were translated into English, mainly due to the participation of Tyburczy. These characteristics linked *Estado de Emergencia* with the *artist* techniques used by the Chicano/a artists described in Chapter I. Furthermore, it is worth noting that *corridos* and salsa have also been used by the Chicanxs. All these events sought to denounce the inaction of the authorities —to make their negligence visible and raise awareness of the violence women are forced to endure, day in, day out.

⁴²² See Addendum, interview with Cerrucha.

⁴²³ 'Portafolio---Memorial Para Lesvy y Las Víctimas de Feminicidio 2019', *Cerrucha*, 2020 <<https://www.cerrucha.com/memorial-feminicidio>> [accessed 1 September 2020].

Nevertheless, all of them included activities aimed at granting women greater agency, and to recover spaces besmirched by the ghosts of feminicide. The act of ‘activating’ these spaces referred to giving them a new significance, transforming these areas from ‘pain points’ into memorials —places where the families and friends of the victims could congregate and associate, enjoying the freedom to express their grief through speech and finding new allies in the fight against gender violence. The process of activating these spaces also ‘mapped’ the experience of violence in Mexico City. An idea present in all the events is that all women will react if any woman is harmed. Like in the movement NiUnaMenos, participants pledged never to forget a single victim, and to never leave a case unsolved or a perpetrator unpunished.

Estado de emergencia brought together several artists, including the three analysed in this thesis, but, above all, invited the public to be active participants. It somehow erased the barriers between the artists and the audience; in some cases, the role of the artists was relegated to that of a mere enabler. In their interventions, it is possible to observe how they adapted their strategies not in accordance with a preconceived artistic objective, but according to the needs of the participants. While I affirm that it promoted the expression of female agency, this did not constitute the imposition an agenda; on the contrary, it involved activities in which the participants could react as they wished. It is likely that the most appropriate way to describe what they did is to state that they provided tools for protest: stickers to make street art, songs to demonstrate with masks to make a collective statement, shirts carrying denunciations of patriarchy, and so on. How participants chose to use them —if, indeed, they chose to use them at all— was entirely up to them. The artistic, social and activist trajectory of each of them demonstrates what Wolffer seeks; namely that ‘Desde el arte, cuestionar y buscar otras formas de encarnar y vivir el género’⁴²⁴. Being consistent with the notion of performative gender, none impose their gender identity as an ideal, but promote that each woman (cis or trans) find out for herself.

⁴²⁴ Wolffer, ‘Es incomprendible e inadmisibile la postura de las terfs: Lorena Wolffer’.

Chapter V. Research Methodology: Discussing Mexican Feminist *Artivism*

Considering that the objectives of *artivism*, or participatory cultural projects (as Lorena Wolffer calls them), have similarities with sociological projects, it seemed pertinent to evaluate the possible rhizomatic effects using a sociological methodology. The research gathering the analysis that comprise this thesis therefore form part of a wider project that addresses the impact and implications of *artivism*; specifically, the raising of awareness for their cause, the denunciation of patriarchal power structures, and the pedagogical function of activist works. In lieu of a brand new, self-created *artivistic* project, I intended to hold focus groups with women from the state of Queretaro in order to observe the impact of *artivism* on women. I selected this city in particular because little feminist *artivism* has taken place there, thus allowing me to observe the immediate impact feminist *artivism* has on women. It is worth remembering that, while *Evidencias* was exhibited in the city, Wolffer was unable to source any objects for it, instead choosing to display the message ‘there should be an object here’ where the exhibits were supposed to be. Observing how women from the same city would react to the same exhibition ten years later was there for an interesting prospect. Another reason for my visit was that having conducted a study of human trafficking in the same state, I was well-acquainted with the region’s demographics.⁴²⁵

What did I learn from these focus groups? Well, I observed that feminist *artivism*, especially the artworks I have been discussing, bear strong similarities to social work projects. Once named ‘social interventions’, these projects sought to help a population overcome a particular social problem. Feminist social scientists have sought to adapt the methods of social work to promote women’s rights, reduce levels of gender-based violence, eradicate discrimination and encourage a non-invasive practice. In this sense, I will highlight the similarities between feminist *artivism* and social work based on two definitions of feminist social work and the one I suggested for *artivism*. The first is that of Ana Alcázar Campos⁴²⁶, a social scientist who has been working with victims of gender-based violence for more than 12 years. She emphasises that, for social work to be feminist, it must be carried out by and for women. In that sense, works such as *Evidencias* certainly qualify as social work projects, as they aimed to provide a safe platform for participants to denounce patriarchy —and, crucially,

⁴²⁵ Natalia Stengel Peña and others, *Diagnóstico Situacional de La Trata de Personas En Querétaro* (Querétaro: CISAV, 2013) <<https://www.scribd.com/document/263270817/Diagnostico-situacional-de-la-Trata-de-Personas-en-Queretaro>>.

⁴²⁶ Alcázar Campos.

this platform was open to everyone. At the same time, projects such as *Evidencias* posit that the private is political—a philosophy that aligns with that of Mónica Mayer throughout her career. Their main objective is to encourage a social transformation, and bring about a necessary change; however, the social scientist alone is powerless to enact these changes. These are problems that the wider population must identify and acknowledge, and for a problem to be remedied said population must organise organically to bring about the necessary change; it cannot be imposed from above. Those who produce the remedy must work with the afflicted population to implement it; therefore, the transformation must occur in a liminal. Space. I observed this effect with *Estado de emergencia* in particular. Finally, regarding Alcazar Campos’ definition, it is pertinent to mention that this implies understanding the female population to be a non-homogenous entity. This is a notion that has been revisited time and time again in this thesis; that gender is not an innate, clear-cut dichotomy, and that *artivistic* projects promote the recognition of their subjects as a heterogeneous group of multifaceted individuals.

It is precisely this idea of the plurality of female identities that unites the work of feminist activists with that of social scientists. Elena Zunino and Lorena Guzzetti,⁴²⁷ a pair of Argentine anthropologists whose work focusses largely on feminist social sciences, claim, in line with Judith Butler, that all social contact is rooted in the heterosexual imperative. In the case of Mexican feminist activists following Valencia’s definitions of gender, this heterosexual imperative is also deemed to be the foundation of gender violence. Therefore, the act of seeking to deconstruct the prevailing sex-gender narrative through projects that encourage the participants to question this binary imperative falls comfortably into the category of feminist social work, even if art is employed as the means to that end. Finally, the authors emphasize that gender involves a reappraisal of the tasks traditionally associated with the feminine. In this sense, the way in which Mayer and Bustamante proposed the ironic resignification of ‘feminine’ elements is easily presentable as a form of social intervention that encourages women to question the nature of orthodox gender roles.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the consequent restrictions around travelling and multi-person gatherings, I was forced to modify my original methodology. Instead of focus groups, I organised online conversation sessions from 19 to 28 October 2020. In the city of Querétaro, the calling was done through Facebook and Instagram. Women interested in

⁴²⁷ Elena Zunino and Lorena Guzzetti, ‘La Intervención Social En Clave Feminista. Aportes de Las Teorías Feministas Para La Intervención En Lo Social’, *Revista Debate Público. Reflexión de Trabajo Social*, 8.15 and 16, 49–57.

feminism or art were encouraged to apply, and their applications were processed over a two-week period. The application process was designed in line with the focus group philosophy of David L. Morgan, who posits that: ‘Focus groups work best when what interests the research team is equally interesting to the participants in the groups.’⁴²⁸ The reason I sought out only women interested in these fields was that only women in the habit of visiting museums and attending exhibitions would have participated in the original projects, and I was hoping to emulate their reactions as much as I possibly could within the focus I was building. Ideally, I would have advertised on posters in galleries, museums and cultural institutions, but, again, thanks to COVID lockdowns, all these sites were closed to the public at this stage. I therefore placed an advertisement in the Facebook group *Feministas Querétaro*, which brings together and organises women living and around the city. I was expecting the participants to be well-informed about a wide variety of feminist cultural products, but in fact they displayed little knowledge about feminist art or activism. As expected, the application process revealed a strong understanding of gender violence, but the participants were largely unaware of Mónica Mayer, Lorena Wolffer and Cerrucha, with the exception of two older members who worked in academia.

The question of whether one should carry out qualitative research relates both to the objectives of the research itself and to the resources available. Had I been present during the exhibitions, an on-the-spot survey could have provided immediate and wide-ranging insight into how the works were received. Focus groups, on the other hand, are generally more useful for ‘exploring people’s experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns’⁴²⁹. That was precisely what I aimed at exploring with the participants which should not be more than ‘five or six, or even as few as three’⁴³⁰. Furthermore, some feminists favour qualitative research. Qualitative methods resist falling into the trap of assuming homogeneity, or reducing the views and experiences of an entire population of women to those of a single, potentially unrepresentative, sample. Since I was hoping to facilitate a discussion, I did not come armed with a list of specific questions; instead, I came with broad objectives that I used as a loosely-structure group questionnaire. I wanted to know the following: what the participants thought about the artworks, how they evaluated the projects in relation to feminism (both academic and *artivistic*), whether they felt they gained knowledge upon being exposed to the artworks —and whether the proposals of the *artivists* would provoke a discussion around gender violence within the group. Another reason

⁴²⁸ David L. Morgan, *The Focus Group Guidebook* (California: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 10.

⁴²⁹ Barbour and Kitzinger, p. 17.

⁴³⁰ Barbour and Kitzinger, p. 19.

that I chose to work through focus groups was that they are conducive to group discussions and the generation of ideas, and offer a welcoming, non-intimidating environment for the participants. In the words of Clare Farquhar: ‘the fact that focus groups can facilitate, rather than inhibit, discussion may come as no surprise. By foregrounding inherent power differentials between researchers and research participants, feminist critiques of one-to-one interviews anticipate the more recent finding that people can feel relatively empowered and supported in a group situation, surrounded by their peers or friends’.⁴³¹ I would therefore advise that any other future attempts to evaluate feminist activism employ qualitative research methods wherever possible.

It will be necessary to evaluate the social effect of *activism*, but it is worth stressing that there is not much precedent for doing so, and little convention regarding how to go about doing it. In her workshop *Arte: arma de construcción masiva*, Cerrucha did attempt to teach her students certain metrics by which they might evaluate the social effects of their *activism*, nevertheless acknowledging that doing so depends on the level of resources available to the artists, as well as their knowledge of the social sciences. Personally, I think it is worth considering the possibility that enacting social change through activism without furnishing artists with the methodologies to measure their impact might become irresponsible at a certain point. As stated before, Giunta claims that the most important aspect of feminist *activism* is its social effectiveness, but she makes no mention of how to evaluate this. This thesis might therefore be regarded to be filling a certain void, since there is little pre-existing literature concerning success-measuring methodologies in this field. Previously, in Chapter II, I referenced an ethnographic study that analysed the work of Invasorix, but this study interviewed the artists instead of focusing on the participants.⁴³² Other researchers of feminist *activism*, like Julia Antivilo, owe their analyses to archival material and the historiography of feminist expressions. Antivilo herself, along with Katnira Bello, recently published a selection of documents from Mónica Mayer’s archive.⁴³³

This research could be inserted into the relatively recent created sociology of art. The field is quite new in comparison to other fields of sociology, and has not necessarily had strong historical links to feminism. According to Ana Bugnone and Verónica Capasso (2020), the sociology of art emerged as a field of study after the Second World War with Heinrich’s

⁴³¹ Clare Farquhar, ‘Are Focus Groups Suitable for “Sensitive” Topics?’, in *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 52–66 (p. 53).

⁴³² García Estrada.

⁴³³ Mayer, *Intimidades...o No. Arte, Vida y Feminismo*.

aesthetic sociology, which proposed that art can never be fully understood outside of its social context.⁴³⁴ Without wishing to weigh in on the historical discussion surrounding what ought to be included in the discussion around the sociology of art, I have looked into what some of the Latin American feminist art sociologists have offered on this issue. On the one hand, we have the Chilean writer Nelly Richard, who observes in the practice of transdisciplinary feminist art criticism a potential to analyse the realities women face, and on the other we have Andrea Giunta's sociology of art. On the other hand, I would like to bring back Andrea Giunta's sociology of art. It is important to observe that both scholars approach feminist art as sociological powerful manifestations. However, they did so before the term *artivism* gained traction, and before the emergence of what Lorena Wolfffer called the 'feminist boom' in Latin America. Consequently, while recognising the value of their hypotheses, I must also acknowledge that I am aiming to understand a recent phenomenon; one that, thus far, has resisted straightforward categorisation.

Richard's insights are useful to appreciate the role of studies such as this thesis. In the first instance, they demystify the notion of 'women' as a symbol, while introducing them as a political category.⁴³⁵ This is something I have sought to emulate throughout this thesis and, in Chapter IV, I explained the importance of conceiving of women as a political category, as opposed to a biologically-determined reduction of the subject of feminism. In this sense, it is fundamentally important to take note of how feminist proposals advocate for the deconstruction of binary gender norms; something observed in all the works analysed thus far. Furthermore, Richards observes how feminist cultural criticism demands that the transdisciplinary approach to these projects recognises the transdisciplinary origins of the projects themselves, stating that: 'conocimiento [que] vaya acompañado de nuevas formas de decir para desajustar con ellas los parámetros de comunicabilidad dominante del conocimiento garantizado'⁴³⁶. Since they are confronting a deeply-entrenched established order, they employ a number of mechanisms, ranging from the arts to social sciences, to expose the machinations of the patriarchy. Finally, this form of sociological feminist art criticism embraces the plurality of identities that are included in the feminist agenda: 'la crítica cultural feminista ya no se limita a que el sujeto marginado del reparto sexual hegemónico coincide realísticamente con la categoría de

⁴³⁴ Verónica Capasso and Ana Bugnone, 'Capítulo 2 El Campo y El Mundo Del Arte', in *Estudios Sociales Del Arte. Una Mirada Transdisciplinaria*, ed. by Verónica Capasso, Ana Bugnone, and Clarisa Fernández, Sociales (Buenos Aires: Editorial de la UNLP, 2020), pp. 33–52.

⁴³⁵ Richard, pp. 76–77.

⁴³⁶ Richard, p. 79.

marginalidad'⁴³⁷. This coheres with the fact that, as I mentioned in Chapter II, artists are seeking to use their platforms to find, broadcast and appreciate the perspectives of others, and could also be linked to Diéguez' affirmation about liminal art: it does not present, it represents; hence, it is not the voice of an artist but that of a community.

Giunta, on the other hand, argues that the sociology of art must take into account the entire environment that bestows an artwork with its value. She explains that it is not only the piece's 'materiality', the talent (subjectively understood) that went into its creation, or the meaning of the piece that matters; the sociology of art must also take into account critiques of the work, as well as how it was received by gallerists, in the art market (amongst buyers and the sellers) and by academics, and how it was exhibited and promoted.⁴³⁸ All the art historians I have referenced, including Giunta, have studied how sexism in the cultural sphere affects how feminist art is appreciated. They have effectively pointed out how the lack of proper archives, funds and exhibition spaces limit the reach of this kind of art. Rather than simply repeating what these critics have already stated, I will instead make my own contribution to this discussion by examining how feminist *artivism* is perceived and received—a discussion rooted in Giunta's theory about the sociology of art. Given that the sociology of art is a discipline that: 'busca poner en correlación las obras y el medio en el que se producen'⁴³⁹, seeking to unify the medium with the audience and participants, the nature of the medium is of paramount importance to the creative process behind the art.

Neither Richard nor Giunta paired their theory with a specific methodology. Instead of considering this an omission, I would suggest that this was a sound strategy on their part. I do not claim that the method I used in my research should be used for every form of artivism since, as stated before, it is not a homogeneous practice. Each project should have its own bespoke methodology, order to best measure the impact of their intervention, according to the specific context of the intervention in question. The methodology should be agreed with the artists. On the other hand, this part of the thesis should not be regarded as independent of the previous chapters. On the contrary, this chapter aims to gauge the impact of art projects that might be regarded as instances of *artivism*, due to the paucity of methodologies available for exploring their sociological outcomes.

⁴³⁷ Richard, p. 84.

⁴³⁸ Andrea Giunta, 'Arte, Sociología Del', in *Términos Críticos de Sociología de La Cultura*, ed. by Carlos Altamirano (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2002), pp. 1–7 (p. 5). Giunta, 'Arte, Sociología Del'.

⁴³⁹ Giunta, 'Arte, Sociología Del'.

A closer approach to mine would be the social research projects about *artivism's* pacifist qualities. It is worth noting that Wolffer refuses to consent to the idea that these works are examples of *artivism*, as they have a specific, homogenous goal in mind, whereas *artivism* is pluralistic and heterogeneous in nature. Several of these studies, many of which were conducted in Colombia, studied street art projects that promote urban intervention in highly vulnerable communities. Examples of this in Mexico could be the *Frente Blanco* project in Jalisco⁴⁴⁰ or Luis Rubén Díaz Cepeda analysis of street art in Ciudad Juárez.⁴⁴¹ These studies observed how, in communities suffering from high rates of drug addiction and violence and a dearth of socioeconomic opportunities, *artivism* has armed local populations with memory devices, protest tools, and a deeper understanding of their own environment. However, their findings too often amount to weak generalisations, and they offer no detailed descriptions of their methodologies. Furthermore, none of these studies was conducted with any kind of gender perspective. Finally, the already cited Ileana Diéguez, evaluates artworks, mostly those for and by the families of victims of forced disappearances. She highlights their liminal quality and how useful they are as a way of grieving those who remain missing, or whose bodies were never found; useful to protest, to demand justice, and to raise awareness and generate empathy.⁴⁴² Her research has proved the most influential in inspiring my own sociological work. I therefore co-opted her definition of the liminal in analysing my own projects; nevertheless, she does not provide a research methodology. My thesis is therefore the first social research project to suggest that feminist *artivism* bears closer resemblance to social work than it does to traditional art.

Initially, I did not arrange a similar call in Mexico City; the conversations I had with women there were organised only after students and professors from the Universidad Panamericana saw my Queretaro advertisement on my Facebook, before reaching out to me and expressing their interest in participating in the project. Students and professors' members of the Universidad Panamericana saw the banner on my Facebook profile and expressed their interest. Therefore, I assumed that they were *all* highly interested in the topic. I agreed to hold the event because all the participants came from the same university, producing a degree of

⁴⁴⁰ Laura Iveth López Marin, 'Arte Como Herramienta Para Construir Una Cultura de Paz' (presented at the Aportes de la acción cultural a la agenda 2030 del desarrollo sostenible, Mérida Yucatán: 3er encuentro Nacional de Gestión Cultural en México, 2018), pp. 1–14.

⁴⁴¹ Luis Rubén Díaz Cepeda, 'Artivismo y Liberación: La Función Del Arte Urbano En Procesos de Pacificación En Contextos de Violencia Extrema', in *Reflexiones Sobre La Violencia Desde América Latina*, ed. by D. Pérez Nava and C. Burbano García (Cali, Colombia: Universidad Santiago de Cali y Fundación Universitaria de Popayán, 2020), pp. 83–108.

⁴⁴² Diéguez, *Cuerpos sin duelo. Iconografías y teatralidades del dolor*.

homogeneity comparable to that of the Querétaro cohort. After all, most of the Querétaro participants had also studied at a private Catholic university similar to the Universidad Panamericana. Since inhabitants of Mexico City will have had greater exposure to feminist art and *artivism*, the differences between their conversations and those of the Querétaro residents may prove revealing in many important aspects. Before seeing their responses to the application form, I had expected them to be aware of the artists in question, due to the extensive body of work each artist had exhibited in Mexico City. However, to my surprise, none of the participants—most of whom were young women enrolled in the university—were aware of the artists. As pointed out by Lorena Wolffer, the widespread engagement of Mexican women with feminism is a relatively recent phenomenon, and the growing interest in the cause is visible in the growing engagement with feminist events and demonstrations.

While the participants in both cities generally belonged to the upper-middle class, and attended expensive universities, it is worth exploring the differences between the two groups. The main difference to note is that all the works discussed in the focus group project had been exhibited in the city, whereas in Querétaro, the only exhibition that had been attempted there ended up devoid of exhibits, as stated in Chapter II. This difference is an expression of an absolutely crucial fact to remember in this context; Querétaro is considered one of the most conservative cities in Mexico. This is no lazy generalisation or urban myth—this is a fact, and one that has held true since the nineteenth century. During the *Guerra de Reforma*, Querétaro was one of the only states that issued local laws to protect the Catholic Church, was a bastion of support for Emperor Maximilian, and that was ruled by a governor who openly promoted conservative Christian values.⁴⁴³ Historian Ramón del Llano, one of the greatest experts on the *Cristeros* War in the twentieth century, observed how Querétaro was one of the few states that confronted the federal government and protected the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁴⁴ Even today, the contrast between Mexico City and Querétaro remains stark, and in few areas is it more visible than in their different approaches to feminism in their legislation.

In 2016, both states were among the five with the highest rates of violence against women. Querétaro was one of the areas with the highest rate of gender violence at school and in the workplace, whereas Mexico City held first place for intimate partner violence.⁴⁴⁵ The legislative differences between the two have their historical roots in the fact that the feminist

⁴⁴³ Querales Mendoza.

⁴⁴⁴ Ramón Del Llano Ibáñez, *Lucha Por El Cielo: Religión y Política En El Estado de Querétaro, 1910-1929* (México: Miguel Ángel porrúa, 2006).

⁴⁴⁵ INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional de Dinámica En Los Hogares*.

triumphs recognised by the historian Gabriela Cano occurred in Mexico City.⁴⁴⁶ In Mexico, abortion and same-sex marriage are legal (since 2009), while in Querétaro, the former is still criminalised in most cases, and the latter was approved while I was writing this. Mexico City has a population of 9,209,944 inhabitants of which 52.2% are women and 47.8% are men, the median age is 35 years, the average length of school enrolment is 11.5 school years (the national average is 9.7 years) and 75.9% of its population identifies as Catholic.⁴⁴⁷ On the other hand, Querétaro has 2,368,467 inhabitants, 51.1% of whom are women and 48.9% men, the average length of school enrolment is 10.5 years (1 year less than Mexico City), and 85.5% of the population identifies as Catholic.⁴⁴⁸ Because Mexico City is the capital, feminist demonstrations and protests have seen higher levels of participation than in the city of Queretaro.

The participants connected through Zoom and were familiarised with the *artist's* proposals through digital slides. Before the discussion sessions, participants were required to fill out a form, asking for their consent and asking them to express some initial thoughts on Mexico's high levels of gender violence. After participating, they filled out a second form answering three open questions. Taking into account all the obstacles an online discussion might present (lack of interest, distractions, poor internet connection), the analysis of their responses included studying participant's opinions about violence. The forms were analysed using the feminist critical-narrative methodology as a reference tool.⁴⁴⁹ This methodology posits that feminist narratives bear the scars of violence and inequality; this methodology is more concerned with the content of the statement than with its grammatical or academic merit. My objective in analysing these forms was to observe whether the participants were familiar with the concepts surrounding gender violence. If they were not, I hoped to observe whether they learned something over the course of the discussion, thanks to the *artist's* proposals. I therefore contrasted their 'before' and 'after' answers, looking out for any change in their perception of violence. Each *artistic* proposal provoked a different reaction. It is worth bearing in mind that the participants in the Mexico City session were more familiar with Cerrucha and Wolffer's work; knowledge which seemed to influence their opinions about *Estado de emergencia*.

⁴⁴⁶ Cano.

⁴⁴⁷ INEGI, *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2020* (Mexico, 2020).

⁴⁴⁸ INEGI, *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2020*.

⁴⁴⁹ Beiras, Cantera Espinosa, and Casasanta García.



Figure 28. Lucía Molatore. *Calling for the Online Conversations Sessions*, 01 October 2020

Before delving into the findings, there are a few aspects of my methodology worth noting. Firstly, none of the participants actually visited the exhibitions, instead looking at images and videos of them in conjunction with information that allowed them to understand and contextualise the *artivistic* proposal. While the act of giving the participants information about the *artivist* proposals and the wider context of gender violence in Mexico might be seen by some as an imposition, there was nothing in this that the artists did not themselves do, and all the additional information came in the form of quotes by Lorena Wolffer, Mónica Mayer and Cerrucha. Each of the six artworks prompted a separate debate, and it was the artworks themselves, rather than the wider *artivistic* proposals, that dominated these conversations. Only two of the participants knew of the *artists*, both of whom had organised activities aimed at fighting gender violence. They were therefore already familiar with most of the prompts used during the discussions. Meanwhile, the participants who were unaware of the artists came to consider them as an inspiration of sorts.

The second aspect of my methodology worth bearing in mind is that most of the participants in these debates were young, for whom the most recent public feminist demonstrations had been their first feminist action. Therefore, they were particularly interested in discussing street art and protest strategies. In Mexico, there has been an adverse reaction to

the material damages that have resulted from these demonstrations. Some feminists have justified them as a way to gain attention; while many mothers of disappeared victims have deemed them an inevitable and understandable result of the anger they have towards the political and judicial system.⁴⁵⁰ Thirdly, during the organisation of the sessions, Netflix released a documentary on the case of Marisela Escobedo.⁴⁵¹ Escobedo, a woman from Ciudad Juárez whose daughter was a victim of femicide, worked tirelessly to get justice for her daughter, even finding evidence revealing the location of her daughter's murderer, before she was murdered while protesting in front of the Government Palace in Chihuahua. During the discussion sessions, participants watched the documentary, which provoked a great deal of anger. Since the murder of Escobedo, women in Mexico were confined to their houses by the COVID-19 lockdown, and yet even there they were no safer than they were before —the femicide rate remained steady over lockdown, demonstrating that women are not safe even inside their own homes.⁴⁵²

Since the participants were exposed to images from the archives of the works rather than the works themselves, the material underpinning the discussion could be considered something other than art. In methodological terms, it is possible to affirm that what they saw was evidence of violence in Mexico, pictures and videos of feminist protests and archival images. In the end, these are all materials that generate some form of knowledge and, therefore, it is possible to understand them as epistemological material. With this in mind, the definition of epistemological objects offered by Reinhard Pekrun, Elisabeth Vogl, Krista R. Muys and Gale M. Sinatra (2016) was a useful one, as it was accompanied by a methodological tool. They define epistemological objects as those that generate: 'knowledge and the generation of knowledge are the objects for epistemic emotions'.⁴⁵³ In accordance with this definition, I used the Epistemically Related Emotional Scale (henceforth known as the ERE scale) to quantify participants' emotional reactions to the artworks. In the original experiment, the scale was

⁴⁵⁰ Mónica Arellano, 'Mujeres Restauradoras Se Pronuncian Ante Las Pintas de Los Monumentos En La Ciudad de México', *ArchDaily*, 9 March 2020 <<https://www.archdaily.mx/mx/924586/mujeres-restauradoras-se-pronuncian-ante-las-pintas-del-angel-de-la-independencia-en-la-ciudad-de-mexico>> [accessed 17 November 2020].

⁴⁵¹ *Las Tres Muertes de Marisela Escobedo* (Mexico: Netflix, 2020) <<https://www.netflix.com/watch/81002192?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2C043236bf546d81480604d64c83d6d4ae84f925db%3Ab1895b20880b6d24a588db4491e20eab9de24781%2C043236bf546d81480604d64c83d6d4ae84f925db%3Ab1895b20880b6d24a588db4491e20eab9de24781%2C%2C>> [accessed 17 November 2020].

⁴⁵² Ian Cavazos, 'En Cuarentena: La Omisión Sistemática Para Erradicar La Violencia Contra Mujeres', *Verificado* (Mexico City, 11 November 2020) <<https://verificado.com.mx/en-cuarentena-la-omision-sistemica-para-erradicar-la-violencia-contra-mujeres/>> [accessed 17 November 2020].

⁴⁵³ Pekrun and others.

employed on the participants after they had been given some reading material. The scale follows the structure of the Likert scale by attributing values intensely and emotion was experience, with (1) signifying zero intensity and (5) to extreme intensity. At the end of the exercise, these points were then aggregated. It should be clarified that a high score on the scale does not necessarily entail a positive reaction; a strong emotional response could equally signify a negative or a positive emotion. Since feminist *artivism* intends to inform the population about different topics, it can be considered an epistemically illuminating force. The scale has never been used in Mexico but, since no research on the effect of feminist *artivism* has yet been conducted, this widely-validated tool is an excellent initial approach. The emotions the scale considers are as follows.

Table 1. Epistemically-Related Emotion Scales. Reinhard Pekrun, Elisabeth Vogl and Krista R. Muys and Gale M. Sinatra (2016)					
Epistemic emotion	Cero demonstration	Little demonstration	Moderate demonstration	Strong demonstration	Very strong demonstration
Curiosity					
Boredom					
Confusion					
Surprise					
Interest					
Anxiety					
Frustration					
Inquisitive					
Distraction					
Astonishment					
Preoccupation					
Happiness					
Dazed					
Irritation					
Monotony					
Emotion					
Stupefaction					
Dissatisfaction					
Nervousness					
Fun					
Conflictive Attitude					
	Cero demonstration	Little demonstration	Moderate demonstration	Strong demonstration	Very strong demonstration

Table 1. Epistemically-Related Emotion Scales.

The scale was the only form of quantitative analysis, and the reason for employing it was to give statistical substance to the reaction participants had to the artwork. Holding these focus groups gave me a valuable insight into how women generally interact with these kinds of projects. It allowed me to observe the pedagogical and awareness-raising qualities of the

projects, as well as the role they play in giving women a platform to criticise patriarchy. The idea behind employing this scale was not to simply confirm my own hypothesis, but to give a concrete numerical dimension to the participants' experience of being exposed to *artivism*. Regarding the qualitative methodology, aside from the narrative exercise, I used visualisation tools prior to the qualitative analysis. The transcriptions of the two conversation sessions were visually analysed and compared using Voyant Tools. The visual outcome from both cities was compared, especially the most common words used, and the correlations of those words. I interpret the correlations considering what each group prioritise and how they explain their appreciation of the projects. All the information and data collected during the conversation sessions was analysed, taking into account the research done on each individual activist, or on specific cultural products of social intervention. It was necessary to take into account individual features of the participants' life experiences when interpreting their answers. After all, rhizomatic effects occur precisely because every individual has different referents and contexts. Hence, I paid particular attention to any examples or other artistic sources named by the participants during the conversations.

Before delving into the contents of the conversation, I will present a brief overview of the participants profiles, while making sure to protect their privacy. In Querétaro, the average age was 23, being the age gap between 19 the youngest and oldest of 41. The fact that 54.5% of the participants were not local explains why the local population were widely deemed to be especially conservative. The majority were cisgender, —only 3 were transgender or non-binary. Four either had postgraduate degrees or were studying for one, and the rest either had undergraduate degrees, or were studying for one. They expressed particular interest in feminist art and gender studies; only three of them had not formally studied anything related to these topics. Most of them —58.3% to be precise— visited museums once every four to six months. More than half of the participants worked in something related to feminism or women's rights. Since some of them learned about my conversation sessions through Facebook and Instagram, they would have known me beforehand, in some capacity or another. Four of them were former students of mine in courses about fashion history, design history, sociology and contemporary political thought (however, in none of my courses did I teach about feminist art or *artivism*, as much of the content would likely have been censored, considering the university's profile). On the other hand, I had never met two of the youngest participants. As for the older ones, we had often rubbed shoulders at a variety of feminist and academic events, but in no instance did I have a close relationship with them.

Meanwhile, Mexico City's participants presented the following profile. The average age was 31.66, being the age gap of 30 years. All of them were originally from Mexico City. Two of them identified as cisgender and one answered 'other'. Two of them were studying for their undergraduate degree and one was studying a PhD in philosophy. All of them had studied topics related to feminism. The majority were interested in feminism, gender violence and feminist art (only one claimed not to be interested in the last one). Half visited a museum once a month. Finally, all worked in something related to feminism or gender studies. Concerning my relationship with them, I had met one of them previously through mutual friends, and she invited students of hers that had shown interest in feminist art to participate in the study.

V.I. Conversation Session: Lorena Wolffer's *Evidencias*, 19 and 26 October 2020

The first cultural project of social intervention discussed during the conversation sessions was Lorena Wolffer's *Evidencias*. For some participants, this was the first time they came into contact with a social project of cultural intervention; for two of them, the older ones, this was the first time they recognised these kinds of projects as *artivism*. Before starting the presentation of the objects and the testimonies, the concept of artivism was explained to them, as were the reasons for Wolffer denying her work that label. *Evidencias* generally provoked greater interests from the participants, as it was easy for them to identify with the testimonies. My objective with this session was to identify whether Wolffer's project successfully engenders *sororidad*, and whether it resulted in an effective denunciation of violence.

Evidencias also provoked the deepest empathy and the strongest emotional reactions. Participants saw 6 of the objects Wolffer had on display. Following my analysis in Chapter II, I selected objects that bear features typical of the 237 testimonies. For example, the knife and the hammer are obvious instruments of violence; the photograph serves to highlight and denounce psychological violence inside traditional families; while a sample of urine, among other fluid samples, bore little direct association with violence; a bottle of beer illustrated the relationship between alcohol and violence. Also showcased were a testimony of a femicide, and an account of patrimonial violence. The participants from Querétaro scored 62 points on the ERE scale, the most common emotions being curiosity, interest, frustration, astonishment, concern, and irritability. Meanwhile, the group from Mexico City scored 68 points, experiencing all the same emotions bar two. Notably, one of the participants in this group was constantly smiling and laughing, which I initially interpreted as evidence of happiness, until

she explained that she uses laughter as a defence mechanism and was actually feeling very anxious and nervous.

In Querétaro, the most senior participant squeezed a stress ball repeatedly as she read through the testimonies. As observers, the chief objective of engaging with any artwork is to increase personal awareness of the issue. The artwork led the participants to think of how they would have contributed with objects for the exhibition. Most of the participants mentioned that, while looking at the testimonies and the evidence pieces, they wondered which objects they would have donated if they had the chance to contribute to the display now. I could therefore observe that the opportunity for denunciation remains, even though Wolffer is no longer collecting objects. When one of the participants dare to share her story, the others expressed empathy and showed support for her. Once again, and without even needing to re-stage the exhibition, *Evidencias* produced *sororidad*, encouraging women to listen to and identify with one another's stories-some of which, especially those concerning feminicides, caused participants' eyes to visibly widen in shock.

During the conversation sessions about *Evidencias*, the words *violencia* [violence], *mujeres* [women], and *ejemplo* [example] came up frequently in both groups. It makes sense that these were common words as Lorena Wolffer's project exhibits women's testimonies about violence, which participants considered a real example of the problem lived by Mexico women every day. However, participants in Querétaro discussed the culture of silence after learning what had happened to Wolffer in their city. As they saw it, the problem in their city was the power of the prejudices that prevented women from denouncing gender-based violence. Meanwhile, among participants in Mexico City, the verb *pienso* [I think] was one of the most common words; this may be attributable to their philosophical background (all of them were philosophers) rather than their geographical context. These participants would have been more reticent to express an opinion as fact without having all the necessary information to do so.

In Querétaro, it was important to discuss the role of the museum itself in her exhibitions, and how, even though they constitute an important institution, projects like *Evidencias* ought to be exhibited outside their four walls. Unlike Mexico City, it is more uncommon for people to visit museums in Querétaro as there are fewer artistic events and institutions. As stated when introducing the participants' profiles, even in the application forms, Mexico City participants frequently visited museums, unlike those from Querétaro. What is more, most museums in Querétaro operate on a small budget, meaning they generate little, if any, publicity. Furthermore, political authorities are highly unlikely to visit exhibitions, especially if they take

place in the Museo de la Ciudad, the most liberal of museums, where artists can propose any form of art or *artivism*. Since participants in the conversation sessions denounced the culture of silence, it is logical that the verb *hablamos* [we speak] was deployed frequently by them, due in part to its correlations regarding the defiance of silence. In Querétaro, these kinds of exhibitions represented an opportunity for them to raise their voice and avoid being victims of violence.

In contrast, in Mexico City’s session, the two words most deployed with more correlations were *psicológica* [psychological] and *caso* [case]. Participants showed particular interest in the objects of psychological violence, since this crime is a particularly difficult one to denounce. They were struck by the testimony of a woman who was beaten after dropping some coins and who considered this a quotidian situation. They credited Wolffer’s exhibition with providing the epistemic terminology necessary to denounce violence, thus making women more aware of the environment to which they had fallen victim. The second word, *caso*, mainly referred to how generous and brave women were being by offering their testimonies. Though many of the cases would not have been possible to denounce, integrating them into the artwork made them a powerful tool against violence.

Table 2. Visual outcome of the conversation session about Lorena Wolffer’s *Evidencias*

Querétaro

Mexico City

Cirrus



<https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=be25ef54a04cc9d922ff0e91228078b5>



<https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=2d9af75a311dc6c12d39bb45321e9255>

Correlations

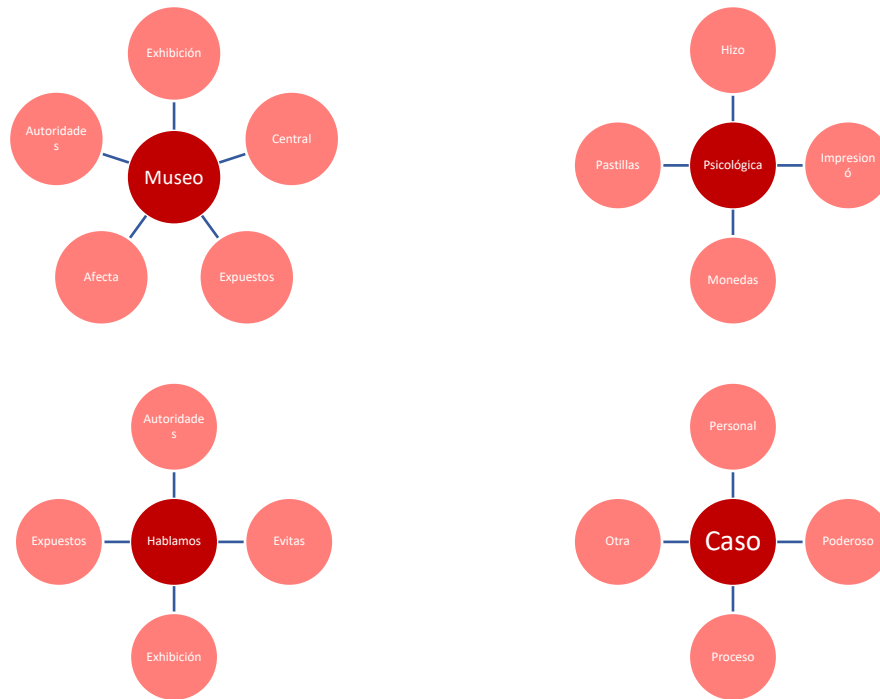


Table 2. Visual outcome of the conversation session about Lorena Wolffer’s *Evidencias*

As one participant pointed out, the efficacy of *Evidencias* relies not only on granting the participant access to personal stories of violence, but on Wolffer’s wider objective. As the artist explained, the primary objective of her work was to help the women who donated the object —any effect the exhibition had on the attendees was simply a by-product, an incidental benefit. One of the young women, who took part in the conversation sessions in Mexico City, was the only participant to observe this quality in her work. For her, feminism offers women the chance to give their testimonies. Furthermore, this has to take place in a safe space, free from the threat of re-victimisation to allow women to express their testimonies; however, it should happen in a safe space free of re-victimisation, censorship, and violence. Hence, it could be stated that, although not everyone identified the original objective of Wolffer’s *Evidencias*, some might appreciate the installation for precisely this reason. As for the specific effects, *Evidencias* had on the participants, the main ones I identified were increased awareness of the issues involved, the promotion of the practice of denouncing gender violence and the creation of safe space where this might take place, the provision of testimonies with political, narrative and hermeneutical functions, the stitching together of a general panorama of gender violence in Mexico, illustrating how it is experienced, the deconstruction of deeply-rooted sexist tropes, the encouragement of discussion around the notion of feminist iconoclasm and the justification of that movement, and the encouragement of collective action as an effective tool against gender violence.

Regarding *Evidencias* as a political tool, participants disagreed with Wolffer's statements about her own work. While Wolffer has previously stated that she doesn't consider testimonies to be an especially potent political tool,⁴⁵⁴ participants from both groups considered those testimonies valuable. Wolffer has explained her view on this to be the product of her experiences —along with those of her feminist *activist* friends— of being in contact with the victims of violence and taking their testimonies. For them, having been present at some of the first events where such testimonies were made public, and having seen femicide rates remain consistent ever since, they have lost faith in their strength as a political tool. However, for younger generations of women recently involved with feminism, these testimonies have retained their novelty. All the participants agreed that testimonies were relevant, but they were not necessarily gauging their value from a political perspective. For them, testimonies have social roles, such as generating empathy and finding allies; they clearly saw the possibility of the installation increasing or promoting *sororidad*. It may be that the view of the participants is compatible with that of Wolffer. Perhaps all parties believe that the testimonies have social, but not political, value. It may be the case that generations of feminists to come will need access to such testimonies as a means of generating *sororidad*. It is worth noting that, in Wolffer's installation, the audience had access to 237 separate testimonies. The participants in my discussion saw only six of these, yet even this small number clearly had a profound effect on the women present —some cried, one laughed nervously, and one needed a stress ball to remain calm. Bearing this in mind, it may be the case that Wolffer's statement is still valid. On the other hand, the experience of facing so many testimonies might be overwhelming. For participants from Mexico City, the testimonies presented by Wolffer were important for the same reason the participants from Querétaro noticed and something else. One of these participants stated that the exhibition provided them with the narrative and hermeneutic tools required to express the violence they had suffered; without the right words, it would have been impossible to construct a denunciation. They recognised the pedagogical function of such testimonies in providing epistemic terms through which to speak about violence against women. However, they also acknowledged a degree of risk that the women who had shared their testimonies might have their identities reduced to the violence committed against them, becoming eternally defined by their victimhood. This happens regularly for women who join the MeToo movement as a means of denouncing violence against women. Nevertheless, since

⁴⁵⁴ See Addendum, Interview with Lorena Wolffer.

Wolffer kept the contributions anonymous and, eventually, inserted her work into the psychological healing process, she managed to negate this possibility.

For the participants, *Evidencias* would also work to eradicate or modify ideas rooted in the social structure. They celebrated that Wolffer presented it both inside and outside museums. A participant from Querétaro joked that she would like *Evidencias* to be exhibited outside churches to confront the more conservative sectors of society. For them, keeping *artists* proposals inside museums results in people who already agree with their ideas discussing the topic repeatedly. With *Evidencias*, it becomes impossible for anyone observing it to deny the existence of violence. One of the academics noted two things about the exhibition. First, it authentically reveals personal stories and puts them in the public sphere. Second, the collection of objects creates a bridge between academia and social reality. She has been working with testimonies through narrative exercises, so she has observed how academics trying to explain the context of violence can appreciate reality only when in contact with actual victims of violence. For her, this was what Wolffer provided with *Evidencias*. She then went on to highlight another aspect of the installation that had provoked a discussion amongst the group.

As well as deeming *Evidencias* to be a useful denunciation tool, the participants noted how the exhibition questioned the notion of machismo as a natural social order. This was particularly relevant for the Querétaro participants —notably, informing of Wolffer’s experience in Querétaro provoked a great deal of ironic laughter and little surprise. Participants from Mexico City had little to say about what happened in Queretaro, but those living in Queretaro itself seemed unsurprised by what happened to Wolffer there. According to one participant, the attitude of Queretanos themselves is one of complicity —they act as partners in crime for the city’s conservative values enabling the silence of its victims. The participants then began describing their own experiences with the city’s conservatism, at which point all levity disappeared from the conversation. One of the academics referred to the small size of the city, pointing out that communities there are quite tight-knit groups in which everyone knows everyone, thus increasing both the possibility and the power of gossip. As explained before, Lagarde believes that gossip is vitally important for women’s agency, granting them a degree of freedom of speech and giving them a means of transmitting their ‘secret’ knowledge; however, when gossip is mixed with patriarchy, the subjects of rumours can be destroyed.⁴⁵⁵ The younger participants described their upbringings within this conservative, traditional

⁴⁵⁵ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, pp. 418–19.

educational model, which they came to reject thanks to feminism. Exhibitions such as these would have allowed them to notice machismo earlier and start acting against patriarchy from a younger age. They were therefore unanimously in favour of promoting more *artist* projects in the city as they believed it could really help young women in the city shake off these beliefs and stereotypes at a young age. In this sense, a sense of ownership over the art developed—a sense that, if one participates and contributes, the project belongs partially to them.

In recognising *Evidencias* as an important account of violence against women, both sets of participants argued that it performed a vital social function and ought to be seen by everyone—men and women alike. However, the participants highlighted that, the nature of male participation must differ from female participation; for one thing, since women’s engagement with the exhibition involves witnessing—and sometimes recounting—stories that might be traumatic for them, every step possible should be taken to ensure they feel safe, and sometimes the presence of men can negate this possibility. Nevertheless, since many of the testimonies are those of family members—fathers and brothers included—of victims of femicide, the partial inclusion of men in the exhibition is unavoidable. Regarding the role of the spectators, women from both cities agreed that it was important that both genders make to attend the exhibition, albeit for different reasons—for women, to educate themselves about feminism and femicide and to be inspired to act, and, for men, to raise awareness of the issue amongst their own gender, to examine their own behaviour, and to encourage empathy for women.

For all the participants, Wolffer’s work illustrated how any object could be used as a weapon. However, one of the scholars introduced the concept of *the abject* when discussing the body fluids included in the installation. After she pointed out that the urine and saliva had a different effect to the other objects on display, and the rest of the group agreed. They experienced what Julia Kristeva described as a consequence of the abject (1980). For Kristeva, the abject describes objects that exist ‘across’ the inside and the outside of the body (across the internal and external). The distinction is extended to the personal and the public, to subjectivity and objectivity. It also relates to the question of which parts of the body are in the public domain and which are not, which are shown off and which remain personal. The effect of the fluids on the observer is similar to that of disease or expired food; it reminds us of human nature, of our morality.⁴⁵⁶ These fluids therefore present a dual threat—they are threatening both intrinsically and instrumentally; as a result of their nature and of the way in which they were used. Transforming the secretions into a weapon therefore produces a double transgression. It makes

⁴⁵⁶ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 3.

explicit something private that is not commonly shared but cast away, showcasing its destructive power. The conversation on the abject took a bad turn when one of the participants shared having had a similar experience: her artwork had been destroyed by one of her former partners.

Participants involved in feminist movements found that *Evidencias* somehow justifies their actions. After reading some of the testimonies of *Evidencias*, participants from Querétaro started to believe that feminist demonstrations are justified. For them, the fact that Wolffer used real testimonies to show how commonplace violent stories are proves the existence of machismo. In order to understand this reaction, it is important to bear in mind the environment the Querétaro participants found themselves in at the time. On September 28th 2020, —just few days before our discussion— a feminist demonstration was held in the city, advocating the legalisation of abortion. This was obviously an important topic for them, as it came up in every one of the three sessions. Many of the participants had attended the demonstration and had witnessed varying degrees of adversity and violence. One described how a driver threatened to run them over, apparently without appreciating the irony of threatening to kill them as a means of expressing his pro-life credentials. The local debate went on for several weeks before fading somewhat. There is a possibility that the discussion about feminist iconoclasm was motivated more by their own experiences than by the artworks, as the topic arose in every session. Feminist iconoclasm refers to those practices of modifying the public sphere, monuments and national symbols with feminist messages or images. Since the topic is complex and not key to my thesis, I will limit my discussion of the concept to what the participants had to say about it.⁴⁵⁷

Evidencias highlighted a shift in Wolffer's artistic *modus operandi*, and she has continued evolving as an artist since then and has now moved on to working with other non-official manifestations of feminist speech. The discussion about feminist iconoclasm has been viewed through multiple lenses, including an *artivistic* one. A good example of this would be the digital exhibition mentioned in Chapter II (Esta Ciudad será para+de+con nosotras o no será); for this, Wolffer invited the contributions of photographers who have documented feminist protests. The fact that she, once again, looked for any means to engage with this discussion, supports the idea that feminist *artivism* seeks to engage with social concerns rather

⁴⁵⁷ Zyanya Isabel Hernández Moreno introduces the ongoing discussion about feminist iconoclasm, some of the key moments and arguments and certain historic events related to these feminist protests. Zyanya Isabel Hernández Moreno, 'La Iconoclasia Feminista En México: Impacto, Historia, Valor Artístico y Político', *Horizonte Histórico*, 11.23 (2021), 63–73.

than artistic mediums. Therefore, it would probably have been more appropriate to introduce more recent artworks into the discussion —artworks with a more contemporary connection to the audience. Nevertheless, as the Querétaro abortion protests were unfolding during the course of my research, I did not incorporate them, due to the impossibility of following every feminist protest. Even so, *Evidencias* led the participants to introduce the matter. During the demonstration, feminists graffitied the city’s famous aqueduct and nearby walls, and they graffiti tagged some of the statues, which had a polarising effect on the public. In response to the backlash, demonstrators argued that while buildings can be restored, victims of femicide cannot. They justified graffitiing the aqueduct due to its status as a central landmark in the city, thus maximising the number of people who would see their message. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, pro-life and conservative movements organised an entire campaign against the feminist demonstrators in response.⁴⁵⁸ Led by local deputy Elsa Méndez (a self-styled conservative), whose name came up during the three conversation sessions in Querétaro, the pro-life movement orchestrated an online hate campaign against the feminist demonstrators, and even tried to take legal action against them. The INAH (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia) rejected the legal claim filed by Méndez and restored the buildings, Méndez also ‘doxed’ a number of women she considered guilty, publishing their names and photographs — images which, on a couple of occasions, included minors— on her Facebook account without their consent or evidence of their guilt. During Méndez’ campaign, many of her followers denied the existence of femicides —outright, in their attempts to discredit the feminist cause. Needless to say, the demonstrators were furious about this —furious that, even when faced with overwhelming evidence of oppression, expressed partially through demonstrations and *artist* projects— many people express such a dismissive attitude to gender violence, or, worse still, refuse to consider it a problem at all.

The demonstrators also explained that exhibitions like Wolffer’s are a more efficient means of helping to fight gender violence than looking for police support, or publicly denouncing the problem. In doing so, they first mentioned the importance of having exhibitions that promote collective actions. For them, feminism must work as a collective endeavour, uniting as many women as possible in a safe environment —something that only become possible once there is a high degree of understanding and solidarity between those women.

⁴⁵⁸ Edgar Flores, ‘Exige Elsa Méndez a Pancho Domínguez Que Se Sancione a Feministas Que Pintaron El Acueducto’, *Criptico* (Querétaro, 30 September 2020) <<https://www.criptica.com.mx/noticia/exige-elsa-mendez-a-pancho-dominguez-que-se-sancione-a-feministas-que-pintaron-el-acueducto.xhtml>> [accessed 19 November 2020].

They also dismissed the usefulness of taking the objects to the police, with one young feminist citing the motto: *'la policía no me cuida, me cuidan mis amigas'* [the police do not protect me, my friends protect me]. So, for them, it is useless to look for police support when, unlike the police, their female friends will actually listen to their stories and seek to help them. None of the participants in either of the two cities trusted the police. Many of their testimonies would never have been admitted as evidence; as the participants explained, the police will usually investigate only when a woman's testimony is corroborated by physical evidence (usually clear evidence of a struggle or a rape). The police are also widely perceived to be useless (at best, and actively negligent at worst) merely taking statements and making no effort to investigate them. The testimonies of several women, and the case of Marisela Escobedo, also provided evidence for this belief.

To conclude, *Evidencias* empowered its participants to understand and justify feminism. It gave them proof of violence against women being a systemic problem that has been normalised. The participants affirmed that Wolffer's work would be an excellent tool, even today, to help them explain to others why feminism is necessary. The proposal led participants to think about their experience and determine whether they had been victims of violence as well. It reaffirmed the collective quality that characterised the feminist movement, generating *sororidad* among the participants and spectators. Due to this 'feminist awakening' and the fact that younger women are still joining the feminist movement without having had access to these types of testimonies, Wolffer's artwork is as important now as it was back in 2010. Without denying Wolffer's idea of testimonies no longer being politically useful, upcoming generations of feminists still need to be able to contact fellow victims of gender violence, because doing so will help them better understand what it is that they stand for.

V.II. Conversation Session: Cerrucha's *In/visible*, 20 and 27 October 2020

In the second session of the conversations, participants were invited to discuss Cerrucha's *In/Visible*. Due to the different profiles of the participants, a variety of reactions were expected. First and foremost, a different response to that in Querétaro was expected from participants in Mexico City, given that it is the country's capital city and *In/visible* was exhibited there. The age of individual participants was another factor that might have influenced their responses. It is also worth mentioning that feminist demonstrations have historically taken different forms in each city. I was particularly interested in observing if

socioeconomic status, age, and location affected the reaction. Understanding the different metrics influencing the responses of the participants will help clarify whether certain sectors of the population are more receptive to *artivism* and offer insight into the curatorial challenge facing those who wish to maximise the impact of these projects. Their differences notwithstanding, all the participants enjoyed engaging with Cerrucha's street art, confirming that they learned a lot from it and would be applying that knowledge at future feminist demonstrations.

I showed the participants the four images that made up the first phase of *In/Visible*, also including the fifth image, which Cerrucha could not include in her original exhibition due to budgetary constraints. I recognised that any experience with street art removed from its original context might change the reaction altogether. So, my objective was not to observe how participants interacted with the posters. Instead, I sought to understand what participants thought of the stereotypes portrayed. It was therefore necessary to include the five portraits that Cerrucha has originally created for the exhibition —each of which, remember, contained a stereotype tattooed onto its subject. The main objective of this discussion session was whether, as I have previously claimed, *In/visible* does indeed raise awareness of sexist stereotypes.

Based on the observation exercise, one important difference between the two cohorts was that participants from Mexico City showed more enthusiasm for the artwork. This may have been because they could relate more closely to it, as it was pasted on the walls of streets they were familiar with. Many even identified as being fans of Cerrucha. To make Cerrucha's work more relatable, participants were required to react to some of the tattoos included in *Texō* and *¡Qué la boca se te haga Chicharrón!* Women in both groups engaged heavily with the material—they remained silent, in a state of high concentration, and even asked for more time to craft their responses to the tattoos. This exercise was inspired by Cerrucha's desire to use her artivism as a means of generating greater interaction with the public. It was with this goal in mind that I used the same insults and stereotypes as she did and challenged the participants to answer them. Recreating this exercise allowed me to register how certain women react to the insults. Following the ERE scale, the emotional reaction in Querétaro obtained 46 points; meanwhile, in Mexico City, it got 43. The three-point difference resulted from participants in Querétaro being less enthusiastic; therefore, there is a less extreme difference between the positive epistemic reactions and the negative ones.

The visual outcome of the conversation about Cerrucha's art presented more similarities between the two cities. Aside from the words used during the exercise where participants reacted to different tattoos, two words were frequently mentioned during the

conversations. The first one was *hombres* [men] because some of the subjects of Cerrucha’s posters are men, resulting in a discussion about how these stereotypes affect men. They also debated how men should participate in the feminist movement, and the consensus was that, at times, men ought to show their support through absence —specifically, when women-only spaces are considered necessary to achieve a feminist goal. However, when it comes to the deconstruction of patriarchy, and resistance to harmful media stereotypes, men must be present and active in the movement. The second word was the verb *creo* [I believe] use mostly to express their opinions about the effect of the artwork.

Regarding the correlations of frequently-used terms, the results were quite different. In Querétaro, only one word correlated with more than two terms. The word in question was *revuelta* [revolt], as the participants wanted to know more about the street art techniques employed by feminist *artists* to bomb a city during demonstrations; therefore, they found the technique as a viable support for the revolt. They also complained about the attitude shown by detractors of feminism who criticised and mocked the feminist movement. On the other hand, in Mexico City, two words bore correlations to multiple terms. The first such term was *alcance* [scope], which was used in relation to both how many people might have seen the artwork, and the array of reactions people might have had to the posters. The second one was *aproximación* [approximation], which they used to describe Cerrucha’s action as a personal approximation that established a functional relationship between the content of the posters and the viewers, meaning that they considered Cerrucha’s *artivism* efficient in delivering a message opposing machismo.

Table 3. Visual outcome of the conversation session about Cerrucha’s *In/visible*
 Querétaro Mexico City



Correlations

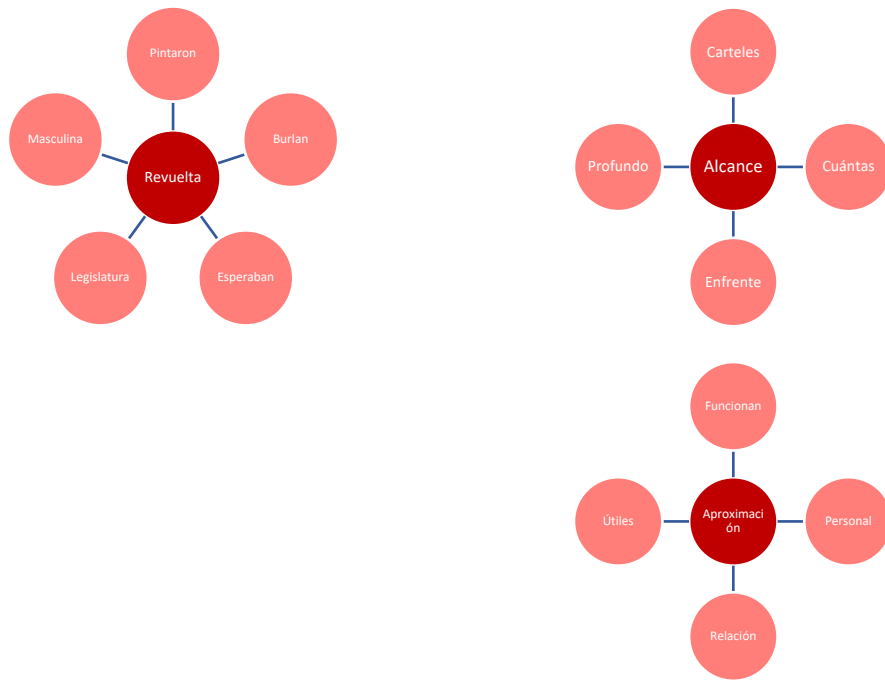


Table 3. Visual outcome of the conversation session about Cerrucha's *In/visible*

Both groups considered the artwork interesting. Nevertheless, the group from Querétaro focused more on the typography and the dynamic of the tattoos concerning the issue of consent, while in Mexico City the location of the posters was discussed, as was their impact on a public who found them pasted by Cerrucha in locations where one would usually expect to find advertising. Based on these discussions, it is unclear whether *In/Visible* is effective as a pedagogical or awareness-raising tool, although it is possible to claim that discussions about the exhibition produced a questioning of the binary gender dynamic. The exhibition also provoked discussions surrounding the nature and significance of public art, iconoclasm, and monuments. It also saw the participants discuss the impact of the male gaze, and the wider issue of male inclusion in feminist art. Finally, it encouraged women to think about, and come up with responses to sexist stereotypes and insults (see the Addendum). I will now illustrate these results by presenting an analysis of the discussions that took place.

Querétaro's participants showed particular interest in Cerrucha's bombing approach to installing the artwork. This was also highlighted by the Mexico City group, albeit in a more critical light. They pointed out that, as residents of the city, and being accustomed to turning out some aspects of the urban landscape, they often fail to even notice street advertisements, making Cerrucha's artistic works more liable to be missed. They nevertheless agreed that, had the exhibition taken place recently, they would likely have been alerted to its presence via

social media. In any case, participants from both cities seemed to attribute a lot of the effect the artwork can have to the strategies used by Cerrucha. For both groups, discussing the artwork in the context of recent demonstrations, in which graffiti was frequently used as a means of protest. During mass protests in Mexico City on March 8th 2020, some feminist demonstrators vandalised public buildings, notably including the doors of the National Palace, where the president lives and works. Public reaction was divided between those who believed such actions to be valid means of expressing grievances, and those who considered the actions criminal, and therefore not a valid means of expression.⁴⁵⁹ Meanwhile, compared to what happened in Mexico City, the demonstration in Querétaro on that same date was more peaceful. However, as explained before, a later protest, taking place in Querétaro on September 28th 2020, also employed the graffiti strategy, sparking a lively local debate, as discussed in the previous section. The fact that the demonstration in Querétaro was peaceful may result from the comparison with the one in Mexico City. There are some local feminists explaining that it was a massive demonstration which used every protest technique. See the addendum to consult an anonymous testimony.

Cerrucha's art provokes significant debate around the nature of public art and feminist iconoclasm. If street art is installed with permission, it becomes public art. Meanwhile, as Mónica Mayer explained,⁴⁶⁰ feminists damaging public artifacts are criticising the symbolic violence and discrimination that these objects represent. There is a possibility, as Suzanne Lacy explored,⁴⁶¹ that if public art is meaningful to a population, then they will not damage it. However, as explained in Chapter III, it is normal for certain men to be offended by feminist street art. Unfortunately, it seems that there is often less scrutiny cast upon men who damage artworks such as *In/Visible* than there is of the women protesting. The existence of the graffiti ensured sustained discussion of the protests, which continued for days or even weeks after the protest itself, whether in Mexico City or Querétaro. One such example of the public debate these protests —and accompanying graffiti— provoked came in the form of a viral video. The footage showed Yesenia, the mother of a femicide victim who has participated in several demonstrations. In it, she explained how she had exhausted every legal procedure without finding any justice, going on to say: 'Y la que quiera romper, que rompa; y la que quiera

⁴⁵⁹ It is possible to observe both reactions in the comments section of the article. David Fuentes, 'Feministas lanzan consignas contra la violencia de género en la CDMX y realizan pintas', *El Universal* (Mexico City, 16 August 2020) <<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/metropoli/cdmx/comienzo-marcha-de-feministas-en-el-angel-de-la-independencia>>.

⁴⁶⁰ Mónica Mayer, Entrevista a Mónica Mayer, 2021 <<https://www.chilango.com/chilanga/#>> [accessed 13 April 2022].

⁴⁶¹ Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain. New Genre Public Art*.

quemar, que queme; y la que no... ¡que no nos estorbe!’ [If you want to break something, break it; if you want to burn something, burn it; and if you don’t...then get out of the way!].⁴⁶² Her reaction is also pertinent to the discussion surrounding *Estado de Emergencia*. However, it also seems relevant to address the question of whether the graffiti constitutes the actual feminist agenda, or whether such as are mere so-called vandalism. Considering that both groups agreed that by analysing Cerrucha’s *artivism*, they might learn techniques to make the visual demonstrations more effective, it is worth further discussing this topic.

The dialogue between the artwork and the site became more apparent when one of Querétaro’s participants wondered why people were offended by the works of graffiti on the city’s Aqueduct and not those on the local congress building. For me, this is due to how the graffiti on the walls of the congress building addressed those responsible for, and with the power to clamp down on, violence against women. On the other hand, the aqueduct is simply a historical site—it is not an instrument of oppression in the same way that the congress building is. It is worth noting that many of the same citizens who complained about the works of graffiti on the Aqueduct actually justified those painted on the congress building, out of a belief in the need for a stronger legal framework to tackle gender violence. However, feminists know that a strong legal framework is not, and nor has it even been, enough. The legal framework is there, but other measures are still required, and the Aqueduct is an excellent spot to catch the attention of many of those responsible for the perpetuation of machismo. The fact that it was not the content of the graffiti that drew objections, but its location supports the hypothesis that there is widespread public acceptance of the need to do more to protect women. Returning to the issues of street art becoming public art, such a transition does not necessarily imply the art losing its transgressive quality. Tania Cruz Salazar, a researcher, interviewed a number of Mexican street artists about this issue, and one of them stated that: ‘es un acto vandálico porque transgrede visual, social y legalmente el orden espacial y público’.⁴⁶³ Cerrucha needed the permission of the local government to be allowed to display *In/visible* in underground stations, but street artists must take advantage of any space that offers visibility to their work, and they adapt their message in accordance with the location of its display. In Mexico City, the underground network has women-only carriages. This affirmative action aims to reduce the violence that

⁴⁶² *Yésenia: Desgarrador Discurso de Madre de Joven Asesinada: ¡La Que No Quiera Quemar Todo, Que No Nos Estorbe!* (El Desconcierto, 2020) <<https://www.eldesconcierto.cl/2020/02/20/video-desgarrador-discurso-de-madre-de-joven-asesinada-la-que-no-quiera-quemar-todo-que-no-nos-estorbe/>> [accessed 4 November 2020].

⁴⁶³ This was stated by street artist Set. Tania Cruz Salazar, ‘Yo me aventé como tres años haciendo tags, ¡sí, la verdad, sí fui ilegal!’, *Desacatos*, 14 (2004), 197–226 (p. 199).

women experience on public transportation. To guarantee that positive discrimination or affirmative actions are short-term measures to solve a social problem, they should be accompanied by communication campaigns to raise awareness. In that sense, *In/visible* became just such a campaign, in lieu of an official one, while at the same time criticising government inaction.

In/visible introduced the idea of iconoclasm to the participants. The women found the installation interesting in both strategy and contents and wanted to do something similar themselves. Hence, it seems pertinent to analyse the street art techniques used in *In/Visible* to answer some of the concerns expressed by all the participants during this session. As mentioned before, *bombing* is a strategy utilised by Cerrucha to maximise the impact of her artwork: if it is done overnight, it is less likely that the responsible *artists* will be identified, it allows the artist to choose locations based on where is best suited to catch the eye of the target population, and the *bombing* strategy offers a metaphorical response to how gender violence occur. One of the participants noticed this, explaining that cities are transformed by violence every day, with sudden, violent events re-signifying the locations at which they took place. Therefore, *bombing* a town has a similar effect but with a positive message: a site is suddenly re-signified into a spot of protest for justice. Finally, we have the element of surprise, which is more pronounced in areas with less visual pollution than in Mexico City. For those accustomed to the urban landscape, any major changes stand out and attract their attention, and there are few better ways to inflict change on a street than carpet-bombing with art. The fact that street art is displayed outside the for walls of a museum increases the number of people who can access it. Usually, street art is illegal, and it is artistically important for the works to be located in the correct spot when, as was the case here, the location is part of their message. By wheat-pasting the posters in places where they were hemmed in by visual advertisements, *In/visible* created a contrast that made the role of the adverts in transmitting stereotypes more evident.

Not everyone agreed with how Cerrucha went about confronting patriarchal stereotypes in *In/visible*, with the phrases she chose to employ for her ‘tattoos’ being the subject of some debate amongst the participants. Whilst the participants from Queretaro approved of the phrases she chose to use, the Mexico City group disagreed, arguing they ought to have been more explicit. Like Cerrucha herself, the participants acknowledged that the tattoos served to re-victimise the participants. Interestingly, they did not consider this to be a failing on Cerrucha’s part, but rather the very thing that made the portraits so powerful —according to them, everyone has come into contact with those phrases one way or another. Everyone, they said, everyone has experience of those insults, whether they are the person being labelled those

things, or the person doing the labelling. For both groups, the installation seemed to be an appropriate means of publicly confronting society. Feminist art and *artivism* are not only aiming at improving women's lives; they are also part of a broad artistic movement aiming to bring gender equality to the artistic sphere, and to reduce the impact of the male gaze within it. As a result, it is comparatively rare for men to be made subjects —or, indeed, participants— for feminist *artivism*. In this sense, Cerrucha defined convention by using male models in her work, addressing the public from the perspective of at least two genders. The question of whether her use of male models might have been a means of including trans and non-binary individuals in her discussion remains an open one.

With *In/visible*, participants were presented with the opportunity to discuss the inclusion of men in feminist art and activism. They agreed that the inclusion of men in feminist exhibitions depends on the objective of the artist or *artist*. The most senior participant from Querétaro identified, as a mother of two boys, that violence is against women and any form of femininity. Crucially, she was not arguing that men ought to be excluded from the conversations —in fact, the opposite is true. The poster of the little boy conveys the struggles men can face in expressing femininity —the struggles of boys and girls; of men and women, are, in the sense that their femininity is what is being persecuted, two branches of the same tree. For her, the victimisation of men in this regard will only cease once men are allowed to express their feminine sides. Echoing this sentiment, somewhat, another participant stated that feminism's quarrel is with patriarchy, not with men. Feminism does not advocate for a 'battle of the sexes', and ought to find ways to include men in the fight against patriarchy. Even so, all the participants agreed on the importance of some projects being exclusive to women, like *Evidencias* was, as some victims of violence cannot feel safe in the presence of men. However, it is also true that other projects, like *In/visible*, must recognise the role of both men and women in fighting patriarchy. Such projects must seek to include both genders as a means of achieving their ultimate objective. To this end, Cerrucha was aiming to confront the stereotypes faced and perpetuated by both men and women. In Queretaro, the younger participants feared how men might react to these posters, but in response to this the most academically-decorated participant took it upon herself to explain that negative male reactions to these posters —such as laughter, and verbal or physical degradation of the posters— betray an insecurity on the part of those reacting. By reacting in such a way, they hope to deflect discussion on the topic.

The participants of Mexico City agreed with all this the ones from Queretaro pointed out, but they would have liked Cerrucha to have been even more ambitious with her project. Putting the question of re-victimisation to one side, participants from Mexico City mentioned

they would have liked to see a more direct form of *In/visible*. The participants all agreed on the importance of including men in these kinds of exhibitions —the question was *how* they ought to be included. For these participants, it is not a matter of presenting feminist knowledge efficiently, as this would only inform them when what is required from them is an awareness of the patriarchal system. Therefore, if men are interested in joining the feminist struggle, they should study new masculinities and feminism and then be an active part of the feminist movement. In Mexico, the study of new masculinities is a relatively recent phenomenon. It therefore makes sense that participants from the capital mentioned the topic because most experts in the field are working there. Melissa Fernández Chagoya (2014) is one of the academics leading the discussion. For her, these frameworks should not be called ‘new masculinities’ but anti-hegemonic social constructions, for they intend to build a social order in which masculinity is not the hegemonic rule. When tracing the story of new masculinities, she identified four male reactions to feminism: rejection, fear, opposition, and acceptance.⁴⁶⁴ Even though the participants from Mexico City did not explain what they understood by the term new masculinities, based on their suggested modifications to *In/Visible*, they were most likely referring to conceptions of masculinity consistent with the last reaction listed by Fernández. More specifically, they were referring to understandings of masculinity that entail the acceptance of feminism.⁴⁶⁵ Participants therefore claimed that public street art, like Cerrucha’s, may increase men’s interest in feminism. However, by mentioning that they would have liked to see *In/visible* be more direct, they were suggesting that Cerrucha ought to have been more provocative, utilising more aggressive content in order to discomfit men —to make them feel uncomfortable or irritated. As opposed to Cerrucha’s genteel formulations of stereotypes men face, they suggested that she should have employed a more accusatory tone, using phrases like *eres un machista*, to make male participants feel complicit rather than victimised. However, it must be borne in mind that such a tone might result in men feeling alienated from, and rejected by, the feminist movement. It would be a shame to jettison these potential allies, especially when emerging ‘new masculinities’ offer avenues for men to be more in touch with their emotions. These counter-arguments to adopting a more confrontational approach were not presented to the participants, for fear of unduly influencing the discussion, but it is worth noting that Cerrucha has sought to avoid producing art that offends or victimises those who view it.

⁴⁶⁴ Melissa Fernández Chagoya, ‘Mujeres, Conocimiento y Poder. Feminismo(s) En México Ante Las Sociedades de La Información y El Conocimiento’, *Conexões PSI*, 2 (2014), 31–56 (pp. 32–35).

⁴⁶⁵ Fernández Chagoya, p. 35.

Finally, participants from Querétaro expressed concerns about the design, and the typographies used by Cerrucha. The first participant to raise this pointed out —admitting that she knew nothing certain about the topic— that the tattoos reminded her of ancient books, especially the Bible. The text reminded her of just how antiquated these stereotypes are, and how, despite this, they were still being forced upon women. For the participants, the gothic tattoos reminded them of media portrayals of organised crime, given the association of tattoos with this field. They pointed out that the man therefore called to mind a movie villain, saying that they were principally reminded of Maras Salvatruchas. None of them had any specific knowledge about tattoos, yet they could relate the typographies to a diverse range of cultural referents, resulting in multiple interpretations of the tattoos within the group.

In conclusion, the participants from both cities considered *In/visible* an effective tool for confronting the social conventions and constructions surrounding gender-based violence. Furthermore, they all appreciated Cerrucha's strategies as a possible exemplar of visual actions during demonstrations, providing a guide for how women might increase focus on their message, and draw it away from their actions and increase the message's focus more than on the act. The conclusion from both groups was that her *artivism* is a useful inspiration to find more efficient forms to protest. Still, if they are to learn from Cerrucha it will be important to study her evolution as an *artist*, as her proposals have improved over time.

V.III. Conversation session: Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tyburczy and María Laura Rosa's *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*, 21 and 28 October 2020

The third and final conversation session explored the participants' reactions to the *artist* project *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*. Regardless of whether the participants liked the proposal or not, they discussed the subject matter of the *artist* proposal: feminicides in Mexico, and even those who did not enjoy the performances and events recognised feminicides as a structural problem. Since Wolffer's project was a multifaceted one, encompassing conferences, interventions, and performances. First and foremost, it served to raise awareness about feminicides. It also served a pedagogical function, as the conferences sought to inform their attendees about the issue. Moreover, some of the performances gave women a platform to share their stories of abuse and denounce their abusers. Resembling the original art project, participants listened to the academic discussion and the context of feminicides, which gave them more clarity about the issue. However, in introducing them to *Estado de emergencia*, I had to take the length of the project —four days— into consideration,

and they instead listened to extracts. Of the three projects thus far discussed, this was the one least suited to being exhibited online, as this produced significant distortion of its message. However, once the participants had seen the project, they were inspired to propose a variety of strategies aiming to eradicate the problem of femicide.

Employing the ERE scale again, it became obvious that *Estado de emergencia* was better received in Querétaro, scoring 54 points to Mexico City's 43, with the principal emotions of Querétaro's participants being curiosity, interest, astonishment, preoccupation and anger. As there were only three participants in Mexico City, each participant held major say over the results of the group as a whole. The older participant enjoyed the work, finding it easy to relate to her day-to-day reality, while another participant expressed rejection. The third participant agreed with the latter view, and an atmosphere of conflict soon descended. As the conversation continued, participants reviewed the objectives of *Estado de emergencia*—these objectives being more activist than artistic—discussing the problems around femicide in spite of their feelings about Wolffer's proposal. The participant who first expressed her dislike of Wolffer's proposal said that her main issue with the work related to the quality of the audio-visual recordings, assuming that failures in this department were down to budgetary constraints. She might have been right about the lack of financial resources. Still, it remains crucial to emphasise that all the invited artists proposed *artivistic* strategies whose primary focus was to work closely with immediate participants in their project. Outsiders—those who only have access to the proposal at a later stage, who engage with the work through observation rather than participation, are invited to study it and analyse it; however, the question of whether these secondary audiences are satisfied is one to which the *artist* is entirely indifferent.

Another method I used to measure the impact of the *artivistic* projects on the participants was to generate a word cloud, tracking the most common terms used during their discussions. I compiled a separate word cloud for each city, and, when I came to compare them later, I noticed that several differences had arisen between them. In Querétaro, many young girls used the word *miedo* [fear] while stating that the artwork encapsulated why they feel afraid. Meanwhile, in Mexico City, the discussion focussed more around of feminists in activism, and around the concepts of *artivism* and academia. While none of the participants from Querétaro expressed what they thought about the artwork itself, choosing instead to discuss the efficacy of the project, in Mexico City, participants freely discussed what they thought of the project.

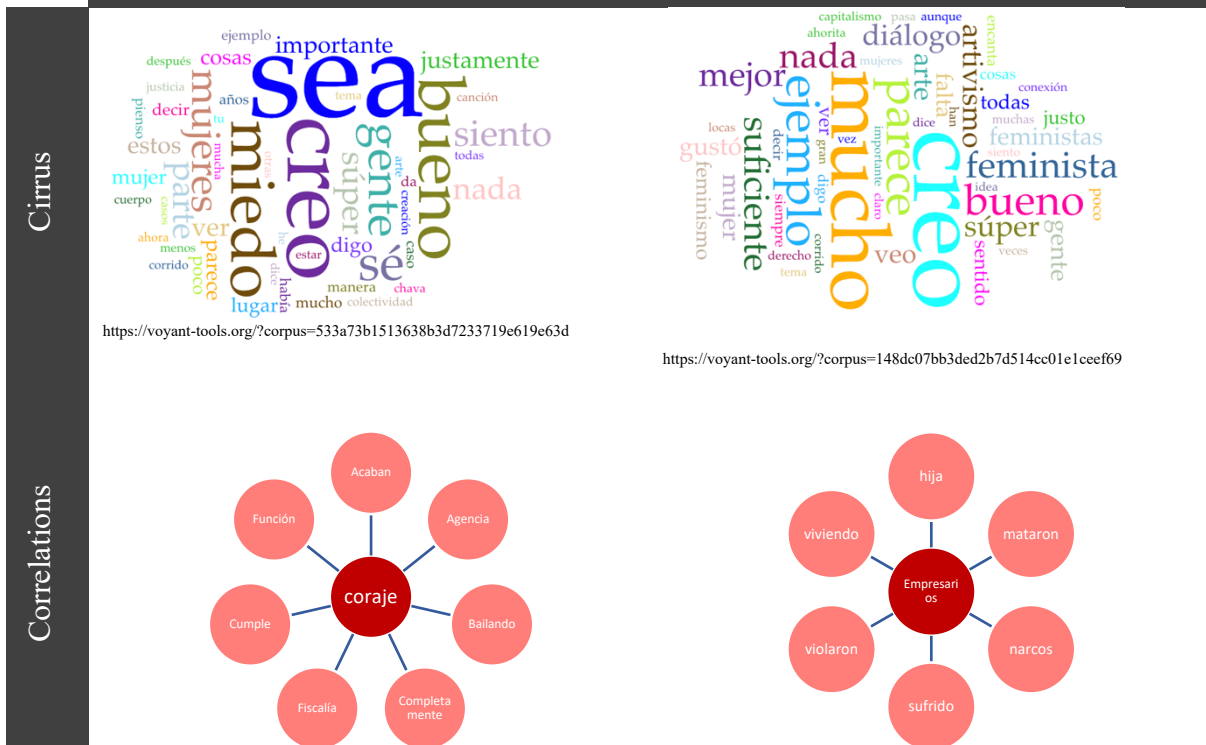
The correlations of these terms employed by the groups were also of significant interest. In Querétaro, participants reported feeling a sense of *coraje* (rage). This rage was directed

towards the police and the authorities for their negligence, and for the inefficiency and inefficacy of the system entrusted to them. Furthermore, their use of the word also expressed their opinion that *artivism* was an effective outlet for this emotion. The second notable multi-correlated word used by the Querétaro group was *cantando* (singing). For them, the act of singing is both an activity that enables women to join together in *sororidad*, and an act strongly connected with recent events associated with the feminist movement. Meanwhile, in Mexico City, one correlation of the frequently-employed term *empresarios* (businessman) likens this kind of character to *narcos* (drug traffickers). In making this link, the participants were suggesting that conventional businessman and *narcos* have a lot in common—their jobs are to increase the production and circulation of capital, and in doing so, they cause massive emotional and physical harm to many people. The term *alcance* (scope) also saw a lot of use from participants from Mexico City, and the correlations employed with regard to this word relate to the question of how to maximise the reach of *artivistic* projects.

Table 5. Visual outcome of the conversation sessions about Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tyburczy and María Laura Rosas' *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*

Querétaro

México City



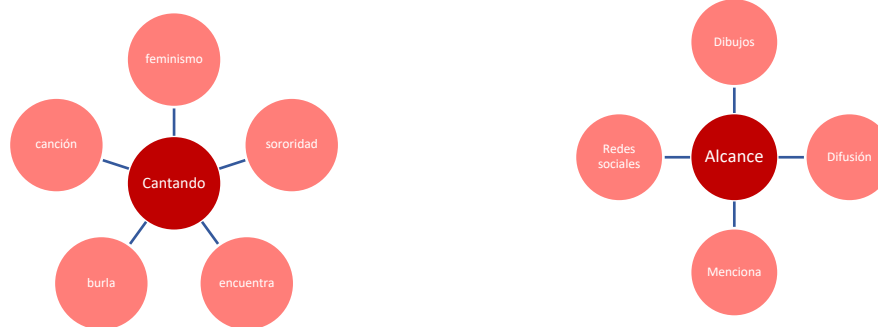


Table 4. Visual outcome of the conversation sessions about Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tyburczy and María Laura Rosas' *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*

For participants in Querétaro, watching the audio-visual records of *Estado de emergencia* allowed them to understand why they live in fear. Even though all the events constituting *Estado de emergencia* took place in Mexico City, the women from Querétaro could relate to the instances of femicide violence presented by the *artists* due to its nationwide normalisation. Before experts were able to properly study and understand the phenomenon, it spread, becoming ubiquitous across the whole country. Once femicide rates have begun to increase in every state, women started feeling seriously threatened, realising that there was nothing they could do to prevent themselves becoming another femicide statistic. It was on this basis that the participants claimed the artwork validated their fear of femicide, forcing them to reckon with the fact that they were only ever one slice of bad luck away from becoming yet another victim. Having been forced to confront real-life cases of women being murdered in public places —on university campi and in the streets— and the fact that even a COVID lockdown could not stop women from being murdered in the unsafety of their own homes, the participants became aware of the constant vigilance demanded of women in order to simply survive. Remaining in a permanent state of alertness is characteristic of a state of emergency, prompting Wolffer to name her project as she did. ‘Para mí es importante marcarla [referring to gender violence and femicides] como eso, un estado de emergencia que no es normal’.⁴⁶⁶

The least discussed artwork was the first one, organised in Puente de Alvarado. Only one participant from Querétaro explicitly stated that she favoured including trans women in the feminist movement, and while nobody outwardly rejected the notion of including them, one of the younger participants seemed to insist that only biological women qualify as victims of violence against women; a statement that could be interpreted as a rejection of trans inclusion. The participants from Mexico City barely mentioned the trans community; they merely complained about the event only being a poetry reading.

⁴⁶⁶ See Addendum, interview with Lorena Wolffer.

Both sets of participants agreed the kinds of denunciations and claims presented during *Estado de emergencia* are the least that police, authorities and judges can expect, and the least that they deserve. What they said can be summarised as follows: ‘They had it coming’. The general distrust in police officers and the entire judicial system, which was also discussed during the first conversation, was there before the participants had any contact with the artworks, but experiencing these projects justified their suspicions. Observing actual women recounting their experiences of femicide and learning about the impotence of the justice system, enlightened participants as to the complicity between the authorities and the male perpetrators of such crimes. While this pact is highly unlikely to be anything concrete or explicit, there appears to be an unspoken agreement in play as there have been countless cases of police officers and judges siding with the clear-cut perpetrator of a femicide. An idea that everyone agreed with was that the culture of machismo and the identification of masculinity with violence is the likely foundation of a system that consistently comes down on the side of men, even in cases where their guilt is easily demonstrable and there is more than enough evidence to charge them with femicide or violence against women. All of this confirms Sayak Valencia’s hypothesis about how masculinity is taught as a synonym of violence within the framework of gore capitalism.⁴⁶⁷ The participants also agreed that not only was the message of *Estado de emergencia* powerful and necessary, but so were the means Wolffer used to convey it.

The use of music in the last two events of *Estado de emergencia* was well-received for several reasons. First and foremost, it is worth noting that the discussion participants spent more time debating the two events that included music, indicating that they perceived them to be of greater interest and significance. Secondly, the fact that artists used popular music genres made it easier for people to relate to, and engage with, the message being conveyed. Thirdly, both genres, salsa and *corridos*, are examples of cultural products that reproduce machismo and, since they are so popular, it is imperative to work through both forms. However, it is important to mention that participants distinguished between the two forms, as they are dramatically different in a number of ways. Fourthly, the use of music as a tool of protest is a growing trend, and the participants deemed the flash mobs that formed part of *Estado de emergencia* to be part of this new trend. In this sense, one of the participants, the most senior, discussed the song and performance by the Chilean women collective Las Tesis called *Un*

⁴⁶⁷ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 178.

violador en tu camino [A Rapist on Your Way] (2019)⁴⁶⁸ and Vivir Quintana's *Canción sin miedo* [Fearless Song] (2020)⁴⁶⁹. The performance by Las Tesis has gained worldwide popularity, making it one of the most successful Latin American *artist* events. The choreography employed by the *artists* imitated the body language of victims of political torture, and, as they danced, the performers sang a protest song, the final verse of which is a twist on the Chilean military anthem. The effectiveness of using music as a tool of protest is that, as an activity, it has a unique power to assemble, unify, and hold the attention of huge numbers of participants, not just in a single location, but across the world, due to the ease with which musical performances can be replicated and disseminated, whether in the form of recordings or covers. Moreover, music allows participants to protest against oppression in a peaceful, joyous and enjoyable manner. At this point, I will note that Quintana's song has become a Mexican feminist anthem, a point I will come to discuss in greater detail.

For discussion participants, including a *corrido* amongst the musical performances made sense, given the traditional character of *corridos* themselves. While one of Mexico City's participants complained about the quality of this concert, another said it was perfect. She explained that it reminded her of the original *corridos*, claiming the concert reminded her of a public performance of the *corrido* of Rosita Álvarez. In addition to highlighting how this *corrido* confronted the traditional portrayal of men in the genre, a participant from Querétaro referenced a recent evolution of the tradition into a highly violent, hyper-masculine form known as the *narcocorrido*. Like *corridos* of the Revolution, *narcocorridos* celebrate the heroic acts of men, although in this case, these heroes are highly dangerous members of organised crime groups. *Narcocorrido* singers regard organised crime as heroic, and, in celebrating its proponents, reaffirm the link between violence and masculinity. Their subject matter includes the assassination of enemies, massive self-enrichment through illegal and hyper-violent means, an a celebration of luxury, all while presenting women as expendable, commodifiable sexual objects —the mere spoils of fame and wealth.⁴⁷⁰ Put briefly,

⁴⁶⁸ Performance colectivo Las Tesis 'Un violador en tu camino', 2020

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB7r6hdo3W4>> [accessed 25 November 2020].

⁴⁶⁹ María Luisa Carrión, 'Vivir Quintana por "Canción sin miedo": "Yo digo que ya no es mía, que es de todas las compañeras que no están"', *CNN Chile* (Santiago de Chile, 27 August 2020) <https://www.cnnchile.com/cultura/vivir-quintana-cancion-sin-miedo-entrevista_20200827/> [accessed 24 November 2020].

⁴⁷⁰ Marco Alejandro Núñez-González, 'Masculinidades En La Narcocultura: El Machismo, Los Buchones y Los Mangueras', *Revista Conjeturas Sociológicas*, 14.5 (2017), 109–26. To better understand the context in which *narcocorridos* are composed, watch the documentary produced by RT which tracked the cultural origins of this genre in Sinaloa in 2017: 'Narcocorridos: La Triste Canción de Sinaloa-Documental de RT', *RT En Español*, 2017 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhyGC4jfoYE>> [accessed 23 November 2020].

narcocorridos take the acts and goals that Sayak Valencia frames as manifestations of gore capitalism and present them in a heroic and aspirational light.⁴⁷¹ Given both the traditional use of the *corrido* form, and its recent repurposing as a means of celebrating violence crim, the composition of *corridos* in which the male figure is *not* presented as a hero, and in which his violent acts—in this case, towards women—are *not* justified, are an act of cultural appropriation, aiming to resignify the *corrido* as a vehicle for celebrating and mobilising women, rather than denigrating them.

The salsa flash mob received less attention during the conversation. Cerrucha succeeded in seeing to it that her song had a joyful rhythm, but this was not something that drew the attention of the participants, with groups from both cities focusing instead on the lyrics. On the top 15 most popular salsa songs of all time, according the Billboard ranking, only one of them makes reference to gender violence; *Pedro Navaja*, a 1978 release by Willie Colon and Ruben Blades, which tells the story of a couple who murdered one another in fits of jealousy.⁴⁷² The vast majority of popular salsa tracks aim to celebrate life, and to encourage those living it to celebrate it through dance. By contrast, the lyrics to Cerrucha's salsa song express not celebration, but anger, insulting the police. Lyrics aside, inviting people to dance transmitted the same sort of cheerfulness that other salsa songs communicate. One of the participants—one of the academics—explained that *Azúcar Rabiosa* was the sort of protest she would like to be involved in, and certainly preferable to other, more violent forms of protest. Hers was a popular view, with the rest of the group expressing their agreement when she stated 'I would love to dance and enjoy myself while telling the authorities that they are useless'. This view echoed Cerrucha's hypothesis: as patriarchy strips women of their most basic freedoms by making them live in fear of violence and feminicides, the act of living alone is a form of resistance, and reason enough to celebrate. Better yet, if women can blame the police for their complicity and incompetence by resisting through celebration.

The inclusion of Lesvy's parents in Mónica Mayer's event introduced the matter of how mothers of victims of feminicides are protesting. In Querétaro, the participants described how moving it was to see the parents contribute to making Mayer's happening compelling and engaging. Meanwhile, the participants from Mexico City discussed this intervention in the context of mother-led demonstrations protesting feminicides and the complicity of the Mexican

⁴⁷¹ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 178.

⁴⁷² Judy Cantor-Navas, 'The 15 Best Salsa Songs Ever: Critic's Picks', *Billboard*, 2018 <<https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/latin/8458665/best-salsa-dance-music-songs-of-all-time>> [accessed 24 November 2020].

authorities. The younger participants discussed the most effective protest strategies and whether activists should be taught *artivism* and other techniques to bolster the effectiveness of their demonstrations. Meanwhile, the eldest participant from Mexico City—a mother of two young girls—stated ‘That is right for feminist activists; however, the mothers of the victims have to be treated differently’. For her, the fact that these mothers have spent their lives suffering under the weight of institutional violence and repressive social hierarchies, with their suffering culminating in the loss of their daughters means that they ought to be able to express that anger in any way that they see fit. For these women, there can be no ‘proper’ way to express their emotions. It makes sense that the Mexico City group were more sensitive to this issue due to recent events that took place in their city—a city where Quintana’s song has become part of the lexicon of feminist protest. Meanwhile, the song was mentioned only briefly in the Querétaro group, and only in the context of a wider discussion around the power of feminist motifs.

It came as no surprise that *Canción sin miedo* was introduced to the discussion about feminicides. It is important to note that, as I was compiling my research, a number of key events came to reshape Mexican feminism. Quintana’s song has accompanied a vast number of anti-feminicide protests since its release and has kickstarted a debate around Mexican national symbols and how they relate to patriarchy.⁴⁷³ Vivir Quintana composed the music after Mon Laferte, the Chilean singer, contacted her. Mon Laferte was going to sing in the main public square of Mexico City, the Zócalo, as part of the city’s commemoration of International Women’s Day. She sought out Quintana and asked whether she would like to sing a duet of a feminicide-themed song. It was Quintana who wrote the song, her composition inspired by the sadness she experienced after one of her classmates was murdered ten years earlier. Their objective with the duet was to make abundantly clear that Mexican women continue to live in fear for their lives, that they have had enough of doing so, and that they will no longer stand for feminicide or the negligence of the authorities. Mon Laferte and Vivir Quintana debuted their duet on March 8th 2020,⁴⁷⁴ and since then their song has been modified countless times, its lyrics tailored to fit a variety of countries and contexts, its most notable performance taking place during the occupation of Mexico City’s National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) building—a performance that cemented its status as a feminist anthem.

⁴⁷³ Lyrics available here: <https://www.lettras.com/vivir-quintana/cancion-sin-miedo-part-el-palomar/>

⁴⁷⁴ Carrión..

Coming into contact with *Estado de emergencia* once again prompted the participants to discuss feminist iconoclasm, and the ins and outs of various forms of protest. This came as no surprise, as the issue of national monuments and symbols becoming flashpoints of protest has long been part of the feminist discussion. Feminist scholars, like Marcela Lagarde,⁴⁷⁵ have explained that the problem of violence is also partially founded on national symbols that reinforce patriarchy and violent heroism. It was only recently, however, that the expression of these ideas became visible during feminist demonstrations. The flying of a modified Mexican flag, in which the red (signifying blood) was replaced by purple (the colour of opposition to female violence),⁴⁷⁶ and the use of Quintana's song are excellent examples of this trend. The song ends with the verse: 'Y retiemble en sus centros la Tierra, al sororo rugir del amor', which is a modification of the last lines of the chorus of Mexico's national anthem: 'Y retiemble en sus centros la Tierra/ al sonoro rugir del cañón'. In the original version, this line acts as a call to arms, imploring Mexicans to defend their country from foreign invaders. Quintana's version also acts as a call to arms of sorts, encouraging feminists to join forces and fight against feminicides —to make the earth tremble not with the force of a cannon fire, but with the strength of their love. The revolution glorified by this song, which it encourages women to join, bears myriad parallels with the movement headed by mothers of femicide victims and the forcibly disappeared.

Estado de emergencia prompted participants from the Mexico City group to mention the events at the CNDH building, and the wider 'feminist revolution' of which it formed part. During this conversation, the aforementioned mother of two daughters defended what took place on September 7th 2020, citing as justification the fact that rates of violence against women actually worsened during the COVID lockdowns. The events of that day unfolded as follows: mothers of femicide victims set up camp outside the National Palace, demanding the President see to it that justice be served in the countless cases of femicide that remain unresolved and unprosecuted. Once again, they felt they had not been taken sufficiently seriously, and therefore decided to occupy the building, transforming it into a refuge for victims

⁴⁷⁵ Marcela Lagarde: *Violencia En Tiempos de COVID*.

⁴⁷⁶ I explained the use of the colours in Chapter IV. Antena 3 Noticias, 'Lazo morado, símbolo de lucha contra la violencia de género', *Antena 3*, 25 November 2011 <https://www.antena3.com/noticias/sociedad/famosas-que-han-sufrido-violencia-de-genero_201911205ddb83e00cf2c3867c9d1b86.html> [accessed 15 December 2020]. On the other hand, on 17 November 2020, Sayak Valencia discussed the significance of how some women modified the Mexican flag to substitute the colour purple. *Sayak Valencia: Nuevos Lenguajes de La Protesta Contra El Femicidio* (Mexico, 2020) <<https://www.facebook.com/UniversidadAutonomadeBajaCaliforniaSur>> [accessed 17 November 2020].

of gender violence, and the mothers of femicide victims, which they named *Centro Okupa*. On 15 September 2020, Mexico's Independence Day, they organised an event parallel to the official celebration, named the *Anti Grita* [The Anti-Independence Cry] —a verbal rebuttal to the official celebration which is called the *Grito de Independencia* [Cry of Independence]. It was in this event —the anti grita— that the Mexico City participants referenced, at which Quintana's song was sung, and at which national symbols complicit in reinforcing the patriarchal order and glorifying violence were challenged. Attendee argued that women are second-class citizens in Mexico, and that Mexican women as a whole are subject no to the protections of human rights, but to endemic violence of some kind or another.⁴⁷⁷

For the participants from Mexico City, it was essential to understand the link that must exist between feminist activism, *artivism* and academia. This preoccupation may be down to the fact that most of the group either were, or were aspiring to be, academics. For them, disagreements inside the feminist movement are also the result of their lack of academic education, which may result from inequality. Nevertheless, the oldest participant claimed that the mothers know the system better than anyone, having witnessed its worst failures, and therefore do not necessarily require any formal education to engage in activism. In the wake of this claim, the other two participants agreed that each role (academic, activism and art) is essential. Both *artivism* and gender studies are necessary to achieve the goals of the feminist agenda. However, it is important to establish a dialogue between both groups. If women are to be the subject of Women's Studies, they need to have recourse to contact victims and activists, and if feminists are to fight patriarchy, it is fundamental that they understand how it operates, and how it links to the structures of power. When the participants reached this point, they were asked if *artivism* could link academia and activism. They considered *artivism* to be a suitable means of achieving this, and of providing more effective tools and strategies to be deployed during feminist protests. This argument can be backed by what María Laura Rosa recently stated during the master lecture 'Arte y Activismos Feministas en Latinoamérica' [Feminist Art and Activisms in Latin America]. In this lecture, she posited that art is almost unique in its ability to succinctly synthesise and present a considerable amount of information; remember the cliché that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.⁴⁷⁸ Furthermore, regarding *Estado de*

⁴⁷⁷ Redacción Uno TV, '¿Qué Es La "Antigríta", Evento Convocado Por Mujeres En Diferentes Partes Del País?', *Uno TV*, 16 September 2020 <<https://www.unotv.com/nacional/que-es-la-antigríta-movimiento-convocado-por-feministas/>> [accessed 25 November 2020].

⁴⁷⁸ *Artivismos Feministas, Poner El Cuerpo. Conversación Entre Mónica Mayer, Lía García 'La Novia Sirena' and Liz Misterio.*

emergencia, the participants from both cities praised its pedagogical intention, evident from the fact that conferences were organised before each artistic event. Feminist academics must therefore continue producing works targeted at the general public and feminist activists alike, utilising art and activism as they do so. However, in order to communicate feminist theory effectively, *activist* efforts must be collective; they cannot be restricted to the realm of academia.

For all the participants, the joint effort of the several artists who organised and performed *Estado de emergencia* set a benchmark for the collective action necessary to bring about the feminist ideal. The young women immediately related this collaborative effort to their own experiences during feminist demonstrations. For them, the feeling of being accompanied by so many women, all demanding the protection of human rights and freedom from murder was deeply empowering one. They explained that it was the first time they did not feel afraid while walking the streets at night and being surrounded by others. Moreover, the sense of greater protection they felt while acting collectively also derived from the fact that it would be harder to target any particular individual as long as they operated in a group. Such collective strategies are becoming more and more common during feminist demonstrations — partly due to the aforementioned benefits they afford their participants, and partly due to the symbolism inherent in achieving something extraordinary in a large group of women, in defiance of the stereotype of greatness as a man acting alone. In contrast to this image, feminist creativity and power is inextricably linked to the idea of collective effort. As stated by Mayer in a discussion that took place between Mónica Mayer, Lia García and Liz Misterio during collective project of theirs, through such an idea: ‘se desmontan los mecanismos hegemónicos de hacer arte’.⁴⁷⁹ One of the academics from the Queretaro group pointed out something similar. As someone engaged in the study of literature, she evidenced this point by citing Cristina Rivera Garza’s collaborative writing exercises. All the participants understood the merit of events with flat hierarchies, in which all those present are encouraged to contribute, with nobody’s contribution being more important than anyone else’s.

In conclusion, while *Estado de emergencia* was the only project lacking universal approval from the participants in my discussion, of the three projects analysed thus far, it is the one where the evolution of the three activists is most apparent. This project was shaped not by any aesthetic concerns, but solely by the belief that, by harnessing certain artistic strategies,

⁴⁷⁹ *Artivismos Feministas, Poner El Cuerpo. Conversación Entre Mónica Mayer, Lia García ‘La Novia Sirena’ and Liz Misterio.*

the artists might be able to bring about a necessary debate concerning potential solutions to the femicide problem. In this sense, the project was a resounding success, since all the participants in my discussion were inspired to discuss real cases of femicide, relate them to their own experiences, and to suggest multifaceted, multidisciplinary strategies to fight against them. Music also proved to be highly effective as the participants talked for a long time about the songs and were also able to relate the work to other successful musical projects. The notion of working collectively was also highlighted as an appropriate and effective means of developing and delivering projects —not to mention a way to stay relatively safe from structural violence.

V.IV. Narrative Analysis. How Participants Defined Violence

As part of the social research methodology, participants had to fill out a form before and after the conversations. The idea behind this was to back up the data I gathered during the online discussions, hopefully allowing me to capture and compensate for the flaws inherent in conducting an online discussion. Recently, there have been some efforts to apply a gender or feminist perspective to the critical-narrative analysis. The critical-narrative analysis was derived from the Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) popularised by social researcher Gabriele Rosenthal.⁴⁸⁰ The premise of the method is that biographic narrations are interpretations of reality. It is possible to understand a subject's context and culture because the interpretations are highly subjective.⁴⁸¹ Few experiments have been conducted using this methodology in Mexico, and those that have been conducted stopped short of proposing a systematised outcome. This research is therefore based on the results of a sociological study that focussed on the Spanish language. Conducted in 2017, this study saw three researchers — Adriano Beira, Leonor Cantera and Ana Casasanta— propose using the BNIM to conduct feminist social research; research which worked by analysing texts to identify the following gender relations of their subjects.

- The micro-system (direct relation, i.e., family), mesosystem (close relations, i.e., friends, co-workers), the exo-system (community, institutions, and media in contact

⁴⁸⁰ Rosenthal has conducted several research projects using this methodology, specially working with Holocaust survivors. She has registered not only her results, but the process she has followed to get those results. That is why she is considered one of the common referents when discussing the BNIM. Rosenthal.

⁴⁸¹ Eugenia Cardenal, 'Biografía y relato en el análisis sociológico. La aportación de la Escuela BNIM (Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method)', *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 155 (2016), 55–71 (p. 58).

with the subject) and the macrosystem (broader context, i.e., religion, lifestyle and culture).

- The content of the subject's speech: what they are saying, why, how and to whom. This involves focusing on the use of linguistic, semantic and rhetorical elements in their speech.⁴⁸²

This method is commonly used for experiments or workshops that encourage women to narrate their experiences (frequently, testimonies of violence). For this research, there was no 'desired narrative outcome' that I sought to produce with the workshops. However, elements of feminist narrative criticism were considered when analysing the answers given. As stated before, feminist *artivism* is rhizomatic in nature, negating the possibility of it engendering a homogeneous reaction in its participants. Nevertheless, looking out for commonalities in the feminist narrative criticism present in each answer makes it possible to observe significant changes in the opinions of the participants as a result of coming into contact with the *artivistic* works.

Since the methodology did not provide any guidelines for narrative data collection, identifying the participants' systems was neither central nor evident. None of them was questioned about their micro-system and their relationship with their families; nevertheless, two of them mentioned unprompted they felt motivated by their children to continue working with these issues. The mesosystems are easier to determine. In Querétaro, four participants studied at the same upper-class Catholic university, with whose ideology they found themselves constantly at odds. Two others from this cohort were academics from a public university. All three participants from Mexico City were philosophy students, also from a Catholic university. Neither the exo-system nor the macrosystem of the participants was relevant for interpreting their written answers because they used general descriptions of how they perceived violence against women.

The first question that the participants had to answer was 'How would you define violence as it is experienced in Mexico?' Although the question made no explicit mention of gender, only two of the participants did not immediately reference the issue of violence against women. All but one of the participants were young women (one of the academics did not answer the 'after form'; therefore, her answers were not considered), either studying for or having recently graduated from a bachelor's programme related to media or design. The only outlier was an older woman (over 60); a postgraduate degree-holder and long-time professor

⁴⁸² Beiras, Cantera Espinosa, and Casasanta García.

of gender studies. She has conducted social research on the subject of violence against women and saw the first *Clothesline* created by Monica Mayer. As a result of all this, her answers were considerably different —and, it must be said, better-informed— than her fellow group members.

Amongst the changes in participants' written responses before and after the discussion were a shift from the passive to active voice, and the increased use of personal pronouns. Among the participants who employed the passive voice to begin with was the gender studies academic. Her first definition of violence was written in the passive, and included a raft of academic concepts related to gender violence (such as *decolonisation* and *gore capitalism*). In her second answer, she retained the passive voice when referencing existing laws that aim to protect women from violence —a habit she may have picked up from her academic writings. However, after the discussion, she used the first person singular to present her hypothesis about the origins of violence, starting with the phrase 'Yo creo', suggesting the discussion gave her the impetus to offer her personal opinion. In that same answer, she also used the first-person plural, stating that 'we need to acknowledge the violence within our families', conveying the necessity of recognising that every family in Mexico contributes to the culture of violence that exists there —a suggestion that may have derived from her experience practicing as a family therapist.

Another change from the active to passive voice occurred in the written contributions of a recent media studies graduate. Interestingly enough, in her case, the direction of the change was reversed. She initially answered using the first-person singular, starting with 'para mí' before proceeding to describe all the violent events that had shocked her. However, for her second answer, she switched to the passive voice, giving a response more succinct and academic in tone, employing concepts learned from the art itself, such as the idea of an *estado de emergencia*. A similar effect was observed in the responses of another woman —also recently graduated, and working in the production of feminist media content. Her first answer was written in the first person singular, introducing her opinion with 'creo'. Her second answer was comparatively brief, consisting of just three adjectives —complicated, systemic and powerless— all adjectives repeated frequently throughout the conversation by participants seeking to vocalise how they felt after learning about the cases referred to by the *artists*

This shift in voice was visible in the responses of one more Querétaro participant —a young woman, in the process of studying for an undergraduate degree, and the only participant never to have attended a feminist demonstration. In the first one, she started with an adjective: *awful*, which she later changed for *saddening*, expressing how she felt after observing the

artivism works. In her response, she limited herself to describing her own personal feelings about gender violence in Mexico, thereby employing the active voice. However, in her second response, she shifted to the passive voice when offering a more general observation about the issue, stating that ‘there is no respect for human dignity, and atrocious acts of violence are happening.’

Another perceivable change was that their answers on the second form were more precise, less subtle and seemed to spring from a more confident attitude. The scholar appeared assertive from the start. Even on the first form, she made explicit reference to the relationship between levels of gender violence and the legal status of abortion, contextualising this topic as part of a wider legislative project that also included same-sex marriage and increased access to justice for women. On the second one, she clearly stated that until women have the right to decide over their bodies, they will be perceived only as objects, to be possessed by men. During the conversations, she made several enquiries of the other participants regarding their stances on abortion. Notably, in these conversations, she to remain as non-confrontational as possible. Judging by her subsequent assertiveness in her second response, it seems that, having taken part in the conversation, and knowing she had support for her views, she felt empowered to address the issue more directly the second time around.

Another perceptible shift was in the terms used by the participants. While the academic employed proper ‘feminist terminology’ from the get-go, the other participants only did so in their second responses, after the discussion. Some Spanish terms are accepted as part of the feminist agenda even without being officially added to the Spanish language or lexicography – such was the case with the word *feminicide* for several years. The act of introducing a term into the public lexicon, to the extent that Spanish language experts are forced to include it, has been understood as a symbolic battle of great significance.⁴⁸³ The responses given by participants here reflected the importance of this struggle. They employed words like *pro-muerte* to describe the pro-life movement, criticising the inconsistency of calling oneself ‘pro-life’ while opposing both abortion and effective legislative measures to combat feminicide. As

⁴⁸³ A good example of this feminist struggle is what recently happened with the Spanish pronoun *elle*. The RAE (Real Academia de la Lengua Española) created a section called El Observatorio [The Observatory] to include words that are being commonly used but still have not been accepted to be included in the dictionary. The day it started, 23 October, they included the word *elle*, a pronoun for non-binary people, and which could be compared with the English singular *they*. However, due to some complaints against the RAE accepting inclusive language they took down the entry and claimed that ‘Debido a la confusion que ha generado la presencia de “elle” en el “Observatorio de palabras”, se ha considerado preferible sacar esta entrada.’ Tendencia El Tiempo, “‘Ella’, “Él” y No “Elle”’: RAE Quita Palabra Del Lenguaje Inclusivo’, *El Tiempo* (Mexico City, 5 November 2020) <<https://www.eltiempo.com/vida/educacion/la-rae-elimina-de-su-observatorio-de-palabras-el-pronombre-elle-por-confusion-generada-547220>> [accessed 17 November 2020].

I write, the word *feminicidio* has been added to the Spanish lexicon, but the term *feminicida* — used to refer to a man guilty of femicide— has not; a fact which did not stop participants using the word. Similarly, rather than using the word *vulnerable*, participants used *vulnerabilizable* [prone to be violated], as women are not naturally vulnerable but forced into vulnerability. Finally, two terms that appeared repeatedly in the post-discussion answers were *artivismo* and *artivista*.

The second question participants were asked to answer was ‘How would you define violence against women?’ Since many of their answers to the first question included descriptions of gender violence, there was often significant overlap between their first and second answers. Their ‘after’ responses showed a deeper understanding of the reality experienced by victims of violence. One key aspect of this debate that the discussions seemed to clarify for them was that it is not only gender violence itself that poses a problem, but also the social and political structures that permit, perpetuate and promote such violence. After reading the testimonies presented by Lorena Wolffer and learning about femicide cases (Mariana Lima Buendía, Paola, Alessa and Lesvy), it was clear for them that it is impossible for victims of gender violence access to justice. The complicity that exists between the state, the media, and violent men is one of the reasons behind the increase in violence. For example, one of the best-informed participants listed quotidian examples of machismo and gender violence that are not generally considered to be examples of such. Her first answer was precise; however, for the second one, she clearly identified that all examples of violence, including the ones she initially listed, have their roots in the patriarchal social structure.

Participants who initially described violence against women as ‘algo’ employed more precise terms to describe the phenomenon the second time around. Some described it as a ‘problem’, others as a ‘systemic abuse’, others still as a ‘social issue’. All of them expressed from the start violence is not purely physical problem, manifesting itself in the psychological, the emotional, and the sexual, as well as having an impact in both the public and the private sphere—all knowledge which heavily implies that the participants were at least somewhat familiar with the legal definitions set out in the LGAMVLV. However, through the *artivist* proposals, the participants were able to analyse violence against women with greater clarity. The insight into concrete and personal stories of gender violence granted by every social institution.

A popular idea that appeared in the first set of responses was that violence against women is a day-to-day reality that has been normalised. After the conversations, they still subscribed to this idea, but qualified it with the use of two adjectives. They observed that acts

of violence usually go *unpunished*, leading women to feel *powerless* about what they can do to prevent them. On their initial forms, participants suggested that all they could do was to direct the anger and fear they felt towards the unfit-for-purpose institutions that consistently fail to grant women proper access. So, in general terms, the *activist* proposals helped participants understand why violence against women can be on the rise despite the existence of a legal framework to fight it.

The last question they were asked was, ‘What would you do, or what are you already doing, to confront violence against women?’ The most obvious shift in perspective between their two answers concerned their perception of what they were already doing to help. For instance, in her second set of responses, the academic again abandoned the passive voice, shifting to the active, reflecting her increased desire to embrace and own her own efforts—her teaching, her participation in activism, and her studies. It appears that the *activist* proposals proved to the participants that every effort, no matter how small, may contribute to improving the daily reality of Mexican women.

The conversations also prompted them to validate political demonstrations and protests as effective tools. After identifying the negligence and lack of gender perspective of judicial institutions, they agreed that women should protect and defend each other. To this end, many of them declared that participating in demonstrations was something they did to confront violence against women. Ever since the COVID lockdown curtailed the possibility of organising and gathering, many participants had started to feel useless and powerless. However, they could recognise the importance of digital activism, of engaging in discussions through social media, as different, but just as valid, forms of political protests.

Some introduced the topic of *activism* into their answers, with those who did convince of its effectiveness as a strategy to fight machismo. Three produced photographs, or other forms of media content, with gender perspectives into their answers, although only one of them self-identified as an *activist*. This was probably because she was the only one to accompany her short films with pedagogical discussions and conversations (just like *Estado de Emergencia*).

The importance of studying gender violence was recognised by participants both before and after the conversations, with all of them pointing out that knowledge-sharing with those close to you is a necessary component of effective study. However, they all pointed out that studying does not work if one does not share what one learns with people close to you. After observing the *activist* proposals, this did not change as they believe that these actions may positively affect them.

The case of participants from Mexico City was not that different. Just like in Queretaro, they understood violence as a structural problem. They recognised gender violence as a growing problem, rooted in the country's social structures, thus rendering it a problem alarming, complex and ubiquitous in nature.

Most of the answers from Mexico City were relatively short, with a single exception; the youngest participant, who used up significantly more lines in expressing her ideas about gender violence. It was not difficult to observe that her first set of responses were drawn from her own knowledge and experience of violence against women. Her second set of responses was far more personal, as she openly expressed her feelings around living as a woman in Mexico. It seemed as though the *artivistic* proposals had shed new light on her own experiences, allowing her to understand them from a new shared perspective.

Since all the participants from Mexico City were philosophers, the role of academia in feminism was highlighted. They all mentioned activities that take place in universities: studying, teaching, and writing. What changed after the conversations was that two of them emphasised the importance of widely disseminating the knowledge learned and generated at universities. One of them even highlighted the role that *artivism* has in spreading feminist theory.

In conclusion, clear trends of difference were visible between the first and second set of responses offered by the participants. After being acquainted with feminist *artivistic* proposals, they developed a clearer idea of why violence against women has been normalised and why, due to the fact that it is a systemic social construction, it is such a complex issue. They were also able to identify which institutions have not been working properly to eradicate gender violence. The notion that violence against women usually goes unpunished was shared and expressed by participants from both Querétaro and Mexico City. From the start, when talking about violence, participants immediately related it to gender violence. However, after the conversation sessions, they appreciated how the country's violent culture fuels specific instances of violence against women. Being part of the discussion and observing *artist* proposals allowed them to write more confidently, clearly, and precisely about violence, while using more concise, specialised and academic language to address the issue.

Conclusions

While analysing the work of Mexican feminist artists, it became clear to me that their proposal was different to that traditional art forms. As distinct from traditional definitions of art, the concepts of *artivism* or *social projects of cultural intervention* seemed to capture the essence of their works better. Right from the outset, it was clear to me that the essential property of feminist *artivism* is not aesthetic in nature. Instead, their work intends to create a sort of pact—a commitment between women attempting to transform the violence that characterises their environment, and to which they are constantly subjected. I therefore decided to study seminal artworks from three Mexican feminist artists, each of whom represented a particular artistic generation. To represent the first generation, I chose Mónica Mayer, a pioneer of feminist art in Mexico, who in 1983 presented her performance *Receta para hacerles el mal de ojo a los violadores, o el respeto al derecho del cuerpo ajeno es la paz* [*Recipe for Giving the Evil Eye to Rapists, or Peace Means Respecting the Rights of Others' Bodies*]. That year, Mayer was part of the biggest feminist artistic event organised in Mexico, *La fiesta de los XV años* [*The Quinceañera Party*] (1984). From the second generation, I opted to analyse the work of Lorena Wolffer, one of the few artists to identify as a feminist in the 1990s, focusing specifically on her project *Evidencias*—a collective exhibition, faulting the testimonies of women from across the nation. Finally, to represent the third and final generation, I chose to analyse the work of Cerrucha, who employs a variety of methods—including street art, performance and photography—to bring feminist concepts into daily life. The last *artist* project I examined was *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* [*Emergency State: pain and resilience spots* also referred to as *Estado de emergencia*] (2018), a collaborative piece a collaborative which the three aforementioned artists worked together. By analysing this piece and comparing it to the previous work of the contributing artists, I was able to track the evolution of Mexican feminist *artivism*. The study of these *artists'* interventions allowed me to isolate and indicate the characteristics that might be present in other feminist *artist* projects.

One of my most important findings was that feminist *artist* projects regard their audience not as passive spectators, but as active participants. Often, their pieces are not exhibited in museums or galleries but in locations relevant to the content of the artwork itself. Where they chose to exhibit their art was therefore front and centre in the minds of the artists; the locations they selected were never incidental. The time and place of their interventions are integral to the *artist* project in question. I argued that this choice signalled a clear commitment to the project's participants. For most of these projects, the participation of the public was

instrumental for the success of the artwork. Some of them integrated testimonies of the participants, while others relied on their assuming a role in the performance itself. For both these strategies, the decision to involve participants in the work itself demanded the social engagement of the artists. It was interesting to note that none of the artists tried to impose their ideas or perspectives on the participants. Since the collective elaboration of the feminist discourse embedded in the artworks responded to the specific needs and context of the community in question, it is safe to conclude that the role of the *artist* in their projects was more akin to that of a guide than an authority. They offered their participants a platform but set no rules regarding how they went about using it is safe to conclude that the *artist's* role is more that of a guide than an authority.

The social engagement of the *artists* seemed inevitable, given their concern with accomplishing a sociological and liminal objective. I described how these objectives varied from one project to another, and in doing so established that they all contributed to challenging gender violence against women. Some of the pieces were clearly pedagogical, while others were therapeutic, intending to help victims and their relatives deal with their trauma. Regarding the liminality of *artistic* projects and defining liminality in accordance with Ileana Diéguez, I analysed the social engagement achieved by the projects, articulated their sociological objectives, the extent to which they encouraged collective speech, and the artistic strategies they employed. The liminal qualities of these projects act as a vehicle for modifying Mexico's violent culture around gender. They are employed by the artists as a means of confronting social challenges through an inversion of the social hierarchy. This 'inversion', I argued, was successfully executed by encouraging women to stand up, make their voices heard, and politicise the private sphere in defiance of patriarchal norms, while others were therapeutic, intending to help victims and their relatives deal with their trauma. Therefore, Diéguez' theoretical framework allowed me to identify certain qualities that distinguish Mexican feminist *artivism* from art.

I also traced many features of *artivism* that derived from the relationship between Mexican feminists from Mexico and the United States. It was Monica Mayer who first introduced feminist art practices to Mexico, having studied under some of the most distinguished artists in the US while attaining her Master's at the Woman's Building in Los Angeles. Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Leibowitz were some of the first artists to take their art out of museums and started using art as a sociological or anthropological tool; a practice they first employed in the 1970s. By the 1990s, they defined their practice as cultural projects of social intervention or a new genre public art in the book *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*

(1996). Lacy observed that artists working with minorities, including feminists, showed a deep concern with helping communities, and ceased fretting about the opinions of art critics, or being appreciated and recognised by galleries. The definition she gave of her own practices is also helpful for understanding Wolffer's. Wolffer herself has stated that she does not consider her work to be *artivistic* in nature; instead, she prefers to characterise it as a social project of cultural intervention, in line with Lacy's detailed definition. In Lacy's book, the Chicano performer Guillermo Gómez-Peña highlighted how this new genre of art began around this time in the USA, but was stymied during the conservative premiership of Ronald Reagan. Consequently, as the 90s dawned, the USA's artists were forced to look south of the border, to the work of Mexican and Latin American feminist artists, in order to update their practices. The neologism *artivism* was also coined by Chicax musicians and members of the EZLN. During the gathering of Chicax musicians in 1997, it was Quetzal Flores who first put forward the term *artivism* inheriting the causes from the 1970s and 1980s and looked for a transnational cultural identity to oppose racism and marginalisation. Chicax musicians found many similarities with the Zapatistas, such as rejecting the capitalist and patriarchal system and the denunciation of discrimination and inequality. When they gathered in 1997, they proposed the neologism *artivism* to name what they were doing: activism with art; in their case, music and dance. The neologism is now used to describe art projects similar to those Chicano musical performances, offering a means of differentiating them from more traditional artworks, of the type typically confined to museums and galleries. This definition of *artivism* allowed me to analyse Mónica Mayer's work according to this framework, despite her work predating the term itself. Similarly, Chicano experts Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre studied Judy Baca's muralism as *artivism*.⁴⁸⁴ They concluded that the effects of such artworks are rhizomatic.

When I posit that feminist *artivism* has a rhizomatic effect, I defined the rhizome in line with the conceptualisation offered by Giles Deleuze and Feliz Guattari, who considered the rhizome to 'operate by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots.'⁴⁸⁵ I therefore sought to determine whether *artist* projects aimed to provoke a heterogeneous reaction from their audiences, and whether these reactions lingered after the project wound up. Instead of trying to identify an agenda on the part of the artists—or *artists*—I instead concerned myself with how the artwork was received. In many cases, it was possible to observe how these projects were enriched by their inclusion of multiple perspectives and opinions. Rhizomatic systems

⁴⁸⁴ In Chapter I, I explained the significance of Baca creating murals as a way to connect with her Mexican roots. Sandoval and Latorre.

⁴⁸⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 21.

unlock the free flow of desire, liberating their subjects from deterministic structures that inhibit them from realising their potential, and it was this characteristic of rhizomatic systems that the feminist campaign against gender violence in Mexico embodied. This last idea is what I could precisely link with the feminist project against gender violence in Mexico.

I defined gender violence in line with the artists themselves, as any physical, emotional, economic or psychological harm that results from the imposition of a heteronormative binary order. In this binary order, masculinity prescribes violent and dominant behaviour, while femininity prescribes submission to, and possession by, men, and defines female identity in relation to the men who possess her. I based these definitions on those of two Mexican academics —Sayak Valencia and Marcela Lagarde— who have been frequently cited by the artists I analysed. For Sayak Valencia under neoliberalism, making money is an expression of masculinity—a way to demonstrate high status—and when men desire to make money without access to lawful opportunities to do so, turning to organised crime becomes the only viable means of generating personal wealth and enjoying a comfortable, luxurious life.⁴⁸⁶ In this context, the most violent men have the greatest chance of success, and violence against women becomes a way to showcase their power. The levels of violence in Mexico have increased with the neoliberal system, reinforcing the heteronormative binary order. My definitions of masculinity and femininity are also inspired by Marcela Lagarde's academic work, which was the basis of the law that protects women from gender violence in Mexico (General Law to Access a Life Free of Violence). She observes that women are captives of a system that constrains their freedoms and offers a miniscule scope of acceptable identities; the *motherwife*, the nun, the whore, the madwoman and the inmate.⁴⁸⁷ Building on this, I observed that the heteronormative binary order manifests itself in the everyday lives of women in the form of constantly reinforced sociocultural, political and economic structures. All these structures tie female identity to men, defining them by their relationships to men and by the male gaze. In this sense, I affirmed that the only way to free women from these captivities is by freeing the flow of desire, made possible only by deconstructing the heteronormative binary order and proposing a rhizomatic gender structure; a move that would also free men from the shackles of violent masculinity. Such an undertaking would imply understanding gender as performative, rather than deterministic; as something that manifests differently in different individuals. That is how I rationalised the fact that the artists here analysed cite Judith Butler's gender theory⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Valencia, *Capitalismo Gore*, p. 183.

⁴⁸⁷ Lagarde y de los Ríos, *Los Cautiverios de Las Mujeres: Madresposas, Monjas, Putas, Presas y Locas*, p. 38.

⁴⁸⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

derived from a statement by Deleuze and Guattari: ‘The rhizome, on the other hand, is a liberation of sexuality not only from reproduction but also from genitivity’.⁴⁸⁹ Based on this, I proposed that *artivism* provides what is needed to deconstruct the heteronormative binary order, even if some projects merely pose questions, and stop short of offering solutions.

I recognised that affirming this might lead one to conclude that feminist campaigns — whether art or *artivism*; academia or activism— have thus far failed to eradicate gender violence. However, I do not believe that feminist *artivism* is directly capable of reducing gender violence —nothing in the academic or legal fields are sufficient to do so. Mexico’s anti-gender violence legal framework may have gained deserved international recognition, but around 66.1% of women in the country have experienced some form of violence.⁴⁹⁰ I did however acknowledge that feminist campaigns have been successful in putting a name to the phenomenon, in diagnosing its seriousness, and in providing hermeneutical categories that allow women to report and denounce the violence to which they have been subjected. I also identified that the artworks I have analysed here had specific social objectives related to violence. Nevertheless, these kinds of projects —the ones I have studied in this thesis, at least— faced budgetary constraints that limited the scope of their objectives, even restricting the display of some elements that formed part of the exhibition. If these artworks are to be promoted as social intervention projects, they require a social diagnosis that guarantees their effectiveness. However, without the necessary budget, the efficacy of the measures used to gauge the success of such projects might have been limited. So, I concluded that these projects might have a more profound rhizomatic effect if adequately funded and supported.

Depending on their objective, I classified the *artist* projects as follows; awareness dynamics that sought to engender a sense of playfulness or joy, strategies for healing or denouncing, and pedagogical strategies. The performance *Receta para hacerles el mal de ojo a los violadores, o el respeto al derecho del cuerpo ajeno es la paz*, *La fiesta de XV años*, some of the adaptations of *In/Visible* and two of the projects included in *Estado de emergencia* belong to the first group. Mónica Mayer’s projects are usually games or playful performances. Her first performance was a collective one; with *Polvo de Gallina Negra*, which took place during a demonstration against sexual violence. In 1982, there was still no law against rape in Mexico, and women generally refrained from publicly denouncing sexual violence, as this was considered a private matter. Inviting women to publicly condemn rape and other forms of

⁴⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 18.

⁴⁹⁰ INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional de Dinámica En Los Hogares*.

gender violence may therefore have been considered aggressive and confrontational at the time. I considered this project an appropriate means for encouraging women to come to terms with the fact that what had been done to them was wrong, and that they ought to stand up to the problem. *Polvo de Gallina Negra* also invited women to pretend to concoct a potion against rapists, all the while pretending to be witches, and to consider and criticise the existence of sexual violence. On the other hand, the *Fiesta de los XV años* replicated a traditional *quinceañera party*. Art critics were somewhat reticent about judging the event, considering it to be more of a celebration than an artistic proposal. Both performances dealt with ill-defined issues relating to violence against women; namely, sexual and symbolic violence. I observed that these projects had two main, interlinked objectives; to create safe spaces for women — spaces in which they could enjoy themselves— and to encourage women to use those spaces by denouncing a phenomenon rendered invisible by its normalisation.

Cerrucha's joyful dynamics are different. The first time she sought to create such a dynamic was in response to *In/Visible* —a previous project of hers. For this initial project, she created five posters, each featuring a single person— a mixture of men, women, boys, and girls —each wearing a tattoo bearing a common gender stereotype. She noticed that, by not giving the models any recourse to reply to their tattoos, she was revictimizing them, and sought to evolve the project to redress this problem. She therefore proposed —and carried out— a project in which she temporarily tattooed gender-based insults onto live participants. If they came up with an adequate answer to them before the ink dried, Cerrucha would then either erase or modify the tattoo. She conducted this intervention twice: once as part of a workshop on symbolic violence, and again during the Festival Zapatista CompArte. I understood this action as a way of subtly forcing women and men to think about how these cultural constructions affect their daily lives. Without claiming that she provided a solution, she undoubtedly encouraged her participants to think about how one should answer these types of insults. For me, it was clear that, thanks to her experience with both versions of *In/Visible*, her *activist* practice has substantially changed. These days, her street art interventions aim to make women and their plight more visible, and to drum up awareness and support for feminist demonstrations. However, instead of focussing on this, I chose to address a more interactive, collaborative project to which she was invited to contribute. As part of *Estado de emergencia*, Cerrucha proposed *Azúcar Rabiosa* [*Rabid Sugar*], a salsa flashmob for which women were encouraged to dance to a specially-composed salsa song in front of the Attorney General's building. The song's lyrics were comprised of phone calls made by women pretending to call the police —needless to say, these consisted mostly of insults complaints. She accomplished a

double objective. I also noted that her *flashmob* linked her art with the original proposals of the Big Frente Zapatista; even the genre of the music —salsa— was selected due to its potential to simultaneously transmit joy and a denunciation of injustice and racism.

The last artwork I considered an example of a joyful dynamic took place as part of *Estado de Emergencia*. The third performance of *Estado de emergencia* was coordinated by the group Invasorix, who sang a *corrido* called *La justicia tiene caras* in front of the Supreme Court. Besides introducing the history of the feminicides Invasorix sang about, I analysed the implications of composing a feminist *corrido*. I argued that a revision and reappropriation of traditional Mexican culture must take place if women are to be successfully reintroduced to public life in the country. The *corridos* are a musical genre with origins in the early 19th century independence movement that became between 1910 and 1920, during the Mexican Revolution. Back then, they were used to herald acts of male heroism, and the only mention they made of women was to celebrate their murders, on account of their having failed to respect traditional gender roles. The modern version, *narco-corridos*, celebrate violent, organised criminals as heroes, and depict women as commodities; as prizes of success, as the mere spoils of wealth and fame. I therefore considered Invasorix's subversion of the genre —using it as a vehicle to denounce male violence and herald the heroism of the victims' mothers in seeking justice for their daughters— to be highly significant. For me, they accomplish two objectives: they condemn the lack of justice for femicide victims in Mexico, and subvert a sexist musical genre to achieve feminist ends—specifically, to memorialise the victims of machismo, while inspiring the sense of collective joy amongst protesting women.

Regarding *artists* projects that denounce violence against women, or seek to be part of the healing process for victims, I noticed that the focus of the artist was always on the participants, any personal artistic agenda aside. I originally considered Lorena Wolffer's *Evidencias* to provide a safe platform from which women could denounce different forms of violence. Wolffer also encourage women to share their stories and meet other victims. There is a feminist motto, which has gained great popularity, which states that 'I am protected by my friends, not the police'. If women are to be protected by their friends, it is absolutely vital that they engage in empathy around one another —a fact which led me to argue that the most important rhizomatic effect of feminist *artivism* is not the opportunity it grants women to denounce the violence committed against them, but to promote *sororidad*. I defined *sororidad* in line with Marcela Lagarde's conception of the term, which categorises it as a pact that exists between women, agreeing to protect one another and resist patriarchy. The notion of healing Wolffer sought to promote was amplified when she made her project available to victims of

gender violence as part of the psychological and legal assistance they receive within women's refuges. After being met with a wall of silence in Queretaro, not receiving a single object or testimony, she started collecting evidence from NGOs working with women victims of violence. By encouraging them to share their stories, she hoped to set these women on the path to psychological healing. Hence, she encouraged them to share their story, which is the first step of psychological treatment. I argued that by personalising the issue of gender violence, by transporting it from the realm of unfortunate statistics into that of real-life events and objects, the women who were part of *Evidencias* could observe the effect of their testimonies —how they helped other women heal, even if they had to remain anonymous in doing so.

Meanwhile, *Estado de emergencia* also promoted the denunciation of the *feminicidal* environment Mexico presents for women. However, I did not consider this to be the primary objective of the artists; her main goal was to show solidarity with the relatives of victims of femicide. This was true specifically in two events. The first project that was part of *Estado de emergencia* was *Anti-cumpleaños* [*Anti-birthday*]. It was coordinated by the artist Lía García and the activist Kenya Cuevas, both trans women. While they did denounce how sexism affects trans women, I mentioned that the main objective of the event —the reason it was conceived in the first place— was to provide trans women with a safe space in which they could mourn those murdered. The event involved reading poetry that described their situation, but this poetry was addressed specifically to other trans women, it sought not to apologise for or explain their identities, but to generate solidarity and support. García's poems made clear that merely surviving in a sexist society is an act of resistance. Also, as part of *Estado de emergencia*, Mónica Mayer coordinated a project that sought to offer victims the opportunity to heal. The project took place at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and unlike her other projects, this one took a distinctly solemn tone. It took place at the site of a student's murder —and saw her parents leading participants to the exact spot their daughter was killed— a phone booth. I pointed out that Mayer limited herself to producing and handing out T-shirts bearing Lesvy's image, deliberately taking a back seat in order to allow her parents to express their anger and sadness. I discussed the case in some detail, explaining how, when her corpse was discovered by the police, they tried to make it look like a suicide and how, once that failed, they contrived an unflattering and untrue profile of the victim, trying to imply, in essence, that she was murdered because she was asking for it. I then linked the facts of the case to the nature of Mayer's intervention, pointing out how, on the T-shirts she created Lesvy's image was outlined by an alternative profile of Lesvy, comprised of what her family and friends had to

say about her. I then reiterated how she only produced the T-shirts as a means of encouraging the participants to honour Berlín and to denounce the violence women face in their universities.

Of the projects I have analysed, I noticed that their pedagogical qualities are displayed with varying degrees of subtlety. Most explicit of all in discharging this function was *Estado de emergencia*, every artistic event included an informative discussion, with the organisers — Lorena Wolffer, María Laura Rosa and Jennifer Tyburczy— inviting academics and activists to discuss feminicides and trans-feminicides. These discussions took place in public places, and anyone was welcome to join in. In this case, they took the artistic opportunity to teach people about feminicides in general, as well as individual cases that served to rally support around an agenda to modify Mexican legislation. I explained how, through such discussions and other *artivistic* projects, a consensus emerged that the content of the Mexican law was good, yet still unfit for purpose, simply because the mere imposition of a legal framework against it is insufficient to eradicate sexism. While, *de jure*, Mexico is making good progress, this is not the case *de facto*. On the other hand, *In/Visible* had a subtle pedagogical intention; through her posters, Cerrucha intended to make visible stereotypes that people assume to be normal when, in fact, they perpetuate the patriarchal order unquestioned. It therefore had a pedagogical element, as did *Estado de emergencia*, but unlike the other project it was impossible to gauge its effectiveness. To get a sense of how *In/visible* was received, I used metrics pertinent to assessing the street art; specifically, where she pasted them, the method she used to paste them, and whether they were subsequently damaged. I nevertheless recognised that, while it may be easy for some projects to transmit their message in the form of street art—such as projects that use the images of women in an effort to make them visible—other require more subtle, interactive dynamics to accomplish their objectives.

After conducting a documentary study, I moved on to a sociological one. As part of my research in the former category, I interviewed Wolffer and Cerrucha, to provide a much-needed academic perspective on feminist art and *artivism*. I conducted these interviews over social media, which thanks to COVID-19, was being used extensively by Mayer, Wolffer and Cerrucha to give conferences and interviews, allowing me to contextualise their artworks and familiarise myself with their objectives. Having concluded that the objectives of *artivism* and new genre public art are sociological in nature, I organised a number of online discussion sessions with the aim of discussing these artworks and measuring their impact. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, instead of hosting in-person focus groups, I held them online. This decision came with some potentially result-skewing complications: greater possibility of distraction, internet connectivity issues, and a lack of environmental control. However,

considering that participants were able to appreciate the *artist* genre through second-hand photographs alone, in lieu of the possibility of visiting actual events or exhibitions, the outcome may have been the same had the discussion been conducted in person. To quantify the impact of the exhibition had on them, participants were asked to fill out two forms—one before being exposed to the art and one after. Both forms consisted of the same three questions and aimed to document their thoughts on the issue of violence against women. The video recordings of the discussion were also analysed using the Epistemically-Related Emotion Scale designed by Reinhard Pekrun, Elisabeth Vogl, Krista R. Muys and Gale M. Sinatra (2016). This scale was designed to measure the type and intensity of emotions felt by participants upon coming into contact with epistemic material (such as books, images, videos or art). The artwork that generated the widest array of strong emotions was Wolffer's *Evidencias*, in spite of the artist's belief that these testimonies have lost their impact thanks to the sheer number of similar stories. In order to understand why this artwork still such a strong emotional resonance has, it is important to note that many of the younger feminists in the discussion group had thus far had little contact with victims of gender violence. Wolffer's critique of her own work was made off the back of thirty years of involvement with the feminist movement, which likely desensitised her to the stories somewhat.

The observable results were:

- The participants felt more encouraged to share their opinions and experiences after being in contact with feminist *artist* projects.
- Acquaintance with the *artist* works taught the participants a variety of specific terminology which they were then able to employ in describing the gender violence situation in Mexico. The *artivism* therefore empowered them to be better conceptualise and explain the problem.
- Participants understood the complicity between state, mass media, and gender violence; after the sessions, they had a better notion of patriarchy and why, despite having a comprehensive legal framework, violence against women continues to increase in Mexico.
- The participants found validation and justification for feminism. From the beginning, all of them were convinced that it was essential to participate in different feminist projects. However, in the testimonies provided by *Evidencias*, they found a concrete reason to continue involving themselves with the feminist movement, and to establish dialogues with those who do not understand it.

- Those who work or aspire to work in academia believed that *artivism* was an effective means of disseminating feminist knowledge. They also recognised the existence of a gulf between feminist academics and activists; that opportunities for collaboration have historically not been taken. Lagarde has also raised this concern, complaining about a lack of understanding of feminist theory that is often perceptible at feminist demonstrations. Participants agreed that women can be feminists without being academics, they also concluded that some knowledge of feminist theory is essential if women are to properly understand the violence to which they are subjected. Hence, *artivism*'s pedagogical feature may be helpful in ensuring a wider understanding of feminist theory.
- Many of the participants were enthusiastic about some of the strategies proposed by the artists or *artists*. It could therefore be argued that, through contact with *artivism*, they discovered new engaging and efficient ways to demonstrate. Employing such tools may also serve to guarantee their own safety and improve the communication of their message.
- Most feminist projects demand a questioning of Mexico's culture and social structure; this includes national symbols (the flag and the hymn refer to war and violence). The proposals of the *artists* encouraged participants to discuss Mexican culture, to identify pernicious aspects within it, and to identify the roots of some of its sexist traditions.
- After experiencing the testimonies from *Evidencias*, the poems from trans women and Lesvy's parents' denunciation during *Estado de emergencia*, participants agreed that they felt more empathy towards violence victims. They also referred to specific cases cited in the *artivistic* proposals to explain their anger. It seems fair to say that observing the proposal allowed them to better channel their anger and rage, which was directed mainly towards the authorities.
- Participants discussed the role men have to play in feminism at length. They all believed that they should not have a leading role, and that, on the occasions that victims of violence ask for men to remain absent from certain spaces, they must respect that wish. They were also unified in decrying the difficulty most men seem to have in understanding why women feel fear and the need to protest. In this sense, the *artist* projects seemed like a good tool for understanding women's experiences. However, since men were not included in the discussion groups during my research, it is impossible to say whether *artivism* would allow

them to better understand why women feel as they do about gender violence. It is, however, possible to suggest that these discussions might pave the way for future research focussing on *artivism*'s rhizomatic effect on the male population.

- All the participants expressed the conviction that women must protect one another, and they all expressed a distrust in the police. It was therefore possible to observe the emergence of *sororidad* amongst the participants as they came to notice that they would need to support each other if they were to confront and protest their adverse circumstances.

Finally, the artworks gave them the tools and hermeneutical categories to realise if they are, or were, victims of violence, what type of violence they experienced, and the importance of speaking out about it. To conclude, it was possible to understand the artworks as *artivism*, or new genre public art. Each of the projects had a sociological intention that was identifiable and, to some extent, demonstrably successful. Through the online discussion sessions, it was possible to appreciate that feminist *artivism* might be a helpful demonstration tool—a dynamic means of expressing discomfort without harming any women. It also furnished the participants with specific narrative and argumentative terminology with which they could better conceptualise and explain gender violence. It is therefore safe to say that *artivism* is doubtlessly a valuable tool for achieving the goals of the feminist agenda, although it will require more funds and attention if it is to achieve its full potential. The methodology I used is an initial suggestion for how to measure the rhizomatic effect of *artivism*. While it may be possible to retain the same analytical categories in conducting future research, these categories must be tailored to the requirements of individual projects. If what matters is the rhizomatic social effect these projects have, then it is necessary to contemplate a social researcher's role when planning, designing and executing these kinds of feminist artistic projects.

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Addendum

Translations

Translation of Receta Para Hacerle Mal de Ojo a los Violadores o, El Respeto al Cuerpo Ajeno es la Paz

- 2 dozen of eyes and hearts of women who accept themselves just the way they are.
- 20 kg of thunder and lightning from angry women against being harmed
- 1 ton of women's steel muscle in demand of her bodies' respect
- 3 tongues of women not silenced after being raped,
- 1 package woman gelatine, spinach flavoured, which understands and supports a raped woman.
- 30 grams of pulverised voices which demystify rape
- 7 drops of men who support the fight against rape
- 1 teaspoon of legislators interested in social change
- some tablespoons of families and schools that do not promote traditional gender roles
- 36 messages from responsible journalists who stopped reproducing images that promote rape
- 3 super-feminists strands of hair
- 2 fangs from the opposition
- Half an ear of the spontaneous and curious person.

'Carefully, following these instructions we will achieve an explosive mix with which you will surprise the rapists living in your house or your neighbour's house, the shy and aggressive, the passive and active, and those that harass you at work, or in the bus and, finally, those hidden at the night that we are taking over.'

Translation of *Azúcar Rabiosa*

What is it like to be useless?

What happens when one cannot trust those in charge of enforcing justice?

What happens when half of a country's population coming back home becomes a strike of luck? We want answers now!

It is not fine that every time I leave home I feel insecure; that every time I leave home I think about who sees me, for them to remember what I was wearing in case I disappear; it is not fine that I worry about my friends, my mom, my family and other women; it is not fine that when a woman leaves home, she does not know if she is coming back; it is not fine that I can only feel safe in a city—that is supposedly mine as well—just because I know how to defend myself; no, it is not fine that my heart gets broken daily because women are being murdered.

Chorus:

In Mexico, there are nine femicides a day because you allow it to happen. FUCKING INCOMPETENT ASSHOLES!

Femicides and transfemicides are part of a hate epidemic against women difference... We are fed up with you not doing your job. We are fed up with living in fear of waking at night. We are fed up when those aggressors and femicides are not punished... ENOUGH! (THIS PART DOES NOT EXIST IN THE SPANISH SONG; HOWEVER, IT APPEARED IN THE SUBTITLES GIVEN BY CERRUCHA)

Femicides make me rabid and make me afraid of the world I live in. Knowing that in Mexico, seven men murder women and seven feminicidal criminals walking free on the street makes me live with permanent insecurity and distrust. Neither forgiveness nor forgetfulness. We want ourselves alive!

Chorus:

DO YOUR FUCKING JOB, INCOMPETENT ASSHOLES! STOP BEING ACCOMPLICES OF FEMICIDES AND RAPISTS!

As a woman, I feel vulnerable. I feel impotence in the face of so much violence against our gender, and at the same time, I feel outraged in front of the indifference from those who are supposed to protect us... it's what the authorities are for. And what have they done? Minimise complaints of women at risk... How many women have been killed after being denied help and protection? How many women have disappeared, and the authorities don't even look for them? And if they find them, it's because they appear dead, mutilated, chopped in pieces and thrown away like if they were trash.

Translation of *La Justicia tiene caras*

Right in the XXI Century,
Mariana Lima Buendía,
a lawyer of ours,
was murdered by her husband.

Julio Hernández Ballinas

fooled everyone
A fed from Chimal,
about his wife, he lied:
He made up a suicide;
he set a whole stage
to get off the hook
of a crime he did.

Justice has faces,
don't pretend you do not get it.
It's in your face, yet you don't see the lie that it is.
It's in your face, yet you don't see the lie that it is.

They took away our strength,
we got it back.
As allies, we work,
holding hands, we walk.
If you harm one of us, we will all respond.

Translation of *Las Perlas* by Lía García

The pearls

I want to tell you a story, a memory that gives me goosebumps every time I say it out loud, every time I close my eyes. One night, I had a dream: I dreamed that a woman walking by the beach grabbed me with her arms and then, she opened my eyes to stare at me. It was a cold night, and my feet were touching the water.

The sea and its immensity, just like the reflection of the moon above it, were present in us. We shed tears due to our meeting amongst the waves, our tears fell inside our mouths, and next to the sea, we were becoming one. The night embraced us and, that woman with her mirror, which was her own hands, never stopped looking at me while telling me in a deep voice:

Sirena [Mermaid], the pain has to be planted.
Pain goes through the skin and tears the memory.
To talk about pain, Sirena, we do not have to open
the windows:
we have to break the glasses.
You must know:
a pearl is a memory of what was hurtful.
A pearl is the result of pain.
It takes ten years for a pearl to be born.
A pearl hurts, and then it shines.
Pearls are the product of pain.
Pearls are scars.

We have resisted from where it hurts,
we have flourished our pain.

We have planted the pain:
what do we do with the pain?
What do we do with what harms us?
Which story is told by the tears?
Where does the scream of our sores go?

They have taken so much from us that they are taking away
our fear.
And what they do not know, what they cannot hear
is that we
ARE ALIVE,
ARE ALIVE.

Translation of *La Calle* by Lía García

The Street by Lia Garcia

Today, the street is our witness again.
Here, the street absorbs once again
the memories of our own.
Here, the street absorbs once again
the memories of our own.

Those wandering from one point to the other,
those who exist,
those who still daydream,
and those who over and over again
will always come back
because the street
will always be our first weapon.

Now, the street feels the pain again.
The stabbing wound
which from my core to my throat,
through my digestion,
to my foot soles
reaches the asphalt, it gives itself,

it kisses it, recalls it,
because the street
was always ours.

Us asphalt sailors.
Our cracks back us up
and time never passes.
Us, even feeling defeated,
we are, they are, I am, you are, they are
ALIVE.

They who teach life
when the sun does not shine anymore
and the moon strips,
gets naked
to participate in their lives.
The street, the street never forgets.

The asphalt over which you stand has no life,
it has no memory.
Where have we come?
Where have we come?
For you to know that where you stand
never forgets.
Blood-wound,
wound-blood,
but several lives lived.

The street will always be witness [female
witness]
of those who each and every day
fiercely and rebelliously shout:
HERE IS THE TRANS RESISTANCE.

The street.

This is the street.

In the street,
transitional lives,
turned off lives,
lonely lives.

In the street,
resisting lives,
transitional lives,
lives that, despite having been silenced
by hypocrisy,
live in this heart.
LUB-DUB-LUB-DUB-LUB-DUB.

This is the street, and this is their memory.
Today the street is again a witness.
Today the street is evidencing these lives
again.

In the street,
our wounds,
our pains,
our fears,
our memories.
In the street, the rebellion as well.

The street will always be a witness.
The street will always be a witness
of what life means
because we give birth to life,
we teach life:

we are life.

Even being stripped of our own life,
the street will always be a witness
of what life means,
because the street
will always be our first weapon.

Analysis of the Tattoo Exercise Inspired by *Texō*

Exercise: Reacting to Cerrucha's tattoo from <i>Texō</i> and <i>¿Qué la boca se te haga chicharrón!</i>		
Tattoo	Queretaro	Mexico City
Qué puta eres [you're such a whore]	<p>Si, soy puta y elijo con quién [Yes, I am a whore, and I decide with whom]</p> <p>Si, y hasta tengo de sobra con quién [Yes, and I get more than enough]</p> <p>Y cómo lo disfruto [And oh, do I enjoy it]</p> <p>¿Y por qué crees que lo voy a tomar como un insulto? [Why do you think I would be offended by that?]</p> <p>Cualquier ser humano por ser un ser humano puede disfrutar, así que no trates de quitármelo por disfrutar de mi placer físico. [Any human being has a right to pleasure; so don't try to take it away from me just because I enjoy physical pleasure].</p>	<p>Papaya tattoo (I am happy and open about my sexuality)</p> <p>Me sonrojo, pero creo que no te pregunte cómo me veía [I am flattered, but I don't think I asked for your opinion]</p> <p>Soy libre [I am free]</p>
Feminazi	<p>Háblame de 3 similitudes entre lo que te hace el feminismo y lo que te haría Hitler [Tell me 3 things feminism would do to you and Hitler would too]</p> <p>¿Y si te enseño historia? [What if I teach you some history?]</p> <p>Ni siquiera vale la pena hablar contigo, por tu profunda ignorancia. Los nazis mataron a mucha gente, nostras a nadie [Due to your ignorance, it is not worth talking with you. The Nazis murdered many; meanwhile, we have not murdered anyone]</p> <p>Pues aguas, yo que tú dormía con un ojo abierto (with irony) [Watch out, then. If I were you, I would sleep with one eye open]</p> <p>No tiene sentido hablar contigo [Talking to you is senseless]</p> <p>Debes aprender la diferencia entre defender la vida de miles y desear la muerte de miles [You need to learn the difference between defending the life of thousands and wishing the death of thousands]</p> <p>Los nazis eran asesinos, las feministas quieren dejar de ser asesinadas [Nazis were murderers, feminists want to stop being murdered]</p> <p>Si buscar que me respeten igual o vestida o desvestida me hace feminazi, lo soy. Si buscar tener voz y voto sobre las leyes que afectan mi cuerpo y a mi familia me hace feminazi, lo soy. Si buscar que la historia se cuente con perspectiva de género me hace feminazi, lo soy. Si pelear contra crímenes perpetrados contra las mujeres por el hecho de ser mujeres que quedan impunes por la violencia sistémica de género que domina nuestro país me hace feminazi, lo soy. [If demanding respect, whether I'm dressed or naked, makes me a feminazi, then, I am. If looking for my voice to be heard and having a say in the laws that affect my body makes me a feminazi, then, I am. If looking for history to be told with gender perspective makes me a feminazi, then, I am. If fighting the crimes against women just for being women, those which are unpunished because of the systemic gender violence makes me a feminazi, then I am].</p>	<p>El puño de una mujer en alto o los nombres de mis amigas [the raised fist of a woman or the names of my friends]</p> <p>No te confundas, yo no mato judíos, marcho con mis hermanas [Don't get confused, I don't murder Jewish people, I march along with my friends]</p>
Seguro te está bajando [You must be on your period]	<p>No entiendo por qué la sangre de mi útero te amenaza tanto y no las de las mujeres asesinadas [I don't understand why my uterus' blood threatens you so much but not the blood of murdered women].</p>	<p>Picture of an empowered bleeding uterus</p>

Date a desear [Make yourself desirable]

Así como al país todos los días [Just like the country everyday]

¿Y eso importa? [Does that even matter?]

Y así aguanto más que tú y logro más que tú [And I can take more than you and accomplish more than you while I'm at it]

La menstruación es un proceso tan natural, tanto como lo es existir, no es un pecado, no es asqueroso y tampoco es un factor determinante en la toma de decisiones de las mujeres. Nunca debería ser utilizada como un insulto o un intento de minimizar a las mujeres, pues no es una desventaja social o biológica y debe dejar de ser entendida como tal. [Menstruation is a process as natural as existing, it is not a sin, it is not disgusting, and it is not a determining factor when women make decisions. It should never be used as an insult or an attempt to minimise women for it is not a social or biological disadvantage, and it should stop being seen as such]

¿Por qué necesitas buscar una explicación adentro de mí por cómo estoy reaccionando o actuando alrededor de ti? Mejor cuestiona tus valores y pregúntate quién te enseñó a reducir a una mujer "enojada" a un proceso hormonal inevitable que ni siquiera vas a poder comprender. Si la simple idea de que una mujer no simpatice contigo te hace atacarla y minimizarla a una parte del funcionamiento de su cuerpo, tienes que analizar lo frágil que es tu género y tu masculinidad. [Why do you need to look for explanation inside my body to why I am reacting or acting next to you the way I am? You should rather question your values and ask yourself who taught you to reduce an angry woman to a hormonal, unavoidable process that you would not even understand. If the sole idea of a woman not agreeing with you makes you attack or reduce her to a part of the functioning of her body, then you have to analyse how fragile your gender and masculinity are]

Jajaja, qué risa...frase de mi abuelita ['ha, ha, ha, funny'...that is what my grandma used to say]

Me pongo y hago lo que se me pegue la gana [I wear and do what I want]

¿Para qué, si a los machos no les importa eso, aun así nos violan y nos matan? [What for? Machos don't care about that; they still rape and murder us]

Ya me deseo y mucho [I already desire myself a lot]

¡Ajá...sí...claro! (dándole el avión)

[Yeah...sure! (ignoring him)]

¿Por qué las mujeres son castigadas cuando sus conductas salen de los estereotipos "bien vistos"?


Pienso que la libertad sexual femenina, desde aspectos tan prematuros como ligar, sigue siendo un tema muy castigado. No se trata de darme a desear, sino de sentirme libre y como yo quiera, entender (y que los demás entiendan) que mi cuerpo es mío, que puedo vestirlo como quiera, llevarlo a donde quiera y hacer con éste lo que quiera. Asumir que nuestros cuerpos son propiedad de alguien o algo más que nosotras mismas es un acto muy violento, y a mi parecer, la raíz de muchos estereotipos que hoy nos dañan tanto, muchas veces entre mujeres también.

[Why are women punished when their behaviour deviates from stereotypes of what is 'well seen'? I think that female sexual freedom, even in such premature acts such as flirting, is still a very punished issue. It is not about making myself desirable, but about being free the way I want to,

No necesito que me baje para estar enojada, gracias [I don't need to be on my period to be angry, thanks]

An image of my silhouette

¿Y por qué querría darme a desear? [Why would I want to be desirable?]



understanding (and that others understand as well) that my body is mine and I can dress it how I like, take it where I want and do with it what I want. Presuming that our bodies belong to someone or something else is a really violent act, and, for me, the origin of many of the stereotypes that harm us so much, on several occasions even within women]

The exercise of reacting to the tattoos was highly instructive for participants as it encouraged them to acknowledge some of the complexities surrounding symbolic violence. In both groups, they considered the strategy for *Texō* and *¡Qué la boca se te haga chicharrón!* To be more personal. However, once they had taken part in an exercise devised by Cerrucha in order to personalise her art, they were able to identify a greater depth of qualities in her works. The exercise in question was part of the original *In/visible* exhibition, and consisted of participants coming up with responses to the stereotypes and insults that had been temporarily tattooed on their bodies. Only once a participant was able to properly confront the content of their tattoo did Cerrucha erase it. This exercise led the women in the conversation sessions to identify similarities between Cerrucha's subjects and the experience of many women — themselves included— on the streets. While walking the streets, women may unexpectedly be subjected to verbal violence, such as insults or *albures*.⁴⁹¹ As was the case during Cerrucha's exercise, they are insulted when they least expect it, and therefore struggle to answer the insults, or defend themselves against them. One of the participants in Querétaro, who works with the victims of gender violence through narrative exercises, noticed that reading insults to which one is accustomed aloud —that is, as purely verbal expressions— alters one's experience of them and offers a fresh perspective. For this participant, doing so allows one to perceive how hurtful a word can be. One more participant from Querétaro linked the exercise with the idea of consent. Getting a tattoo should be a free and voluntary action, just like any sexual act. Therefore, by getting an unsolicited tattoo and devising a response to its contents that sees it erased, the participant is symbolically standing up to sexual violence. This was an empowering activity for this participant, and it linked Cerrucha's work with recent feminist movements. Although movements like #MeToo and NiUnaMenos have encouraged and empowered women to denounce men who have raped or sexually harassed them, women are still frequently pilloried and accused of hypocrisy for accepting some sexual advances and rejecting others. The issue of consent is fundamental here —the non-coercive consent of both parties is the difference between sex and rape. Flattery is somewhat analogous to sexual behaviour in this regard —there are some situations in which it is acceptable, and other in which it constitutes harassment or objectification. Nevertheless, the exact definition and parameters of 'consent'

⁴⁹¹ Participants mentioned *albures* which are a form of symbolic violence. However, in Mexico, some have defended *albures* as a cultural manifestation that part of the Mexican identity. *Albures* are discourse units that have a hidden sexual meaning. Far from romantic, they usually objectify the person to whom they are addressed. Miguel Ángel Hinojosa Carranza, described how *albures* and harassment are a form of gender violence as they are usually used to suppress and control women. Miguel Ángel Hinojosa Carranza, 'De Violencia, Masculinidad y Miedo En Tepito', *Versión Nueva Época*, 28, 2011, 1–18 (p. 8).

are still topic of debate. Sara Clarke-Vivier and Clio Stearns (2019) explored the effects of the MeToo movement on the issue of consent. One problem they identify with the notion of consent is the widespread claim that ‘yes means yes and no means no’. In their opinion, this implies that women are in control over whether they are raped or not; that simply saying ‘no’ is sufficient to prevent this from occurring, and that having been raped necessarily entails that the victim did not say ‘no’.⁴⁹² However, in a hierarchised society that considers women inferior to men, there is no possible refusal.

The different responses offered by the two groups to the insult *que puta eres*, were exceptionally interesting. Participants from Queretaro opted for a highly combative response, with all but one of them saying they would reply by embracing the insult. On the other hand, participants from Mexico City favoured the idea defending themselves with an argument; of telling their harasser they, and they alone, have the right to decide who they want to be. One of the participants from Mexico City thought of artistic tattoos she would get to replace the insults, admitting that the images would mainly be addressed to other feminists who might understand the meaning and not the wider population, who might lack the necessary referents to understand them. For this tattoo, she proposed an image of a papaya to symbolise that she is content with her sexuality. Papayas have long symbolised female reproductive organs and have been used in performance with this connotation in mind.⁴⁹³

When confronted with the insult *feminazi*, the Queretaro group offered two responses; firstly, highlighting the ignorance that underpins the insult, with many participants pointing out the myriad differences between feminists and Nazis. The second response involved explaining what it means to be a feminist, what feminism fights for, and how it differs from Nazism. The participant who proposed alternative tattoos suggested covering the *feminazi* insult with an image of a raised fist, accompanied by the names of her friends. She was not really worried about being called a Nazi but more about sending a message that she would fight for her friends. To the phrase *seguro te está bajando*, participants from Queretaro and Mexico City offered similar responses, either choosing to point out that menstruation is natural and normal, or to remind their torment that automatically putting a woman’s anger down to menstruation is not a valid inference. They either pointed out that menstruation is natural or that claiming that a woman is angry because of menstruation is not a valid answer. They also linked this insult to

⁴⁹² Sara Clarke-Vivier and Clio Stearns, ‘MeToo and the Problematic Valor of Truth. Sexual Violence, Consent, and Ambivalence in Public Pedagogy’, *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 34.3 (2019), 55–75.

⁴⁹³ Examples of papaya used to represent female genitalia: Kathryel Alfaro Ortega, *Belle Com La Papaya*, oil on canvas, 2020. Mara Berendt Friedman, *Dancing in the Womb of Papaya*, 1994, Lupita Poktik, *Femicidio: mujer asesinada por el hecho de ser mujer*, 2020, Paola Velasquez, *Fotografía-papaya*, 2019.

the everyday experience of gender violence in Mexico; cases of femicide are an excellent reason to be angry, yet blood only seems to bother men when it leaks out the uterus, not when it leaks out the uterus, not when it spills out from a murdered woman. Two of the participants referred to the uterus as a source of strength, with one participant claiming that menstruating women are capable of far more than the person insulting them. In response to *dete a desear*, the participants suggested simply ignoring it, or openly laughing at their tormentor. Participants stood up to the insult by reminding themselves that they were free to do what they wanted, and by confirming their right to love themselves, citing the phrase *ya me deseo y mucho*. Replacing the insult with the image of one's own silhouette was also proposed, as a means of symbolising the idea that the only desire that matters is one's own.

Narrative Exercises

Narrative exercise from Querétaro, 19-21 October 2020	
Pre	Post
How would you define the violence lived in Mexico ⁴⁹⁴	
<p>La violencia contra las mujeres es ancestral, estructural y tiene que ver con la misoginia, el machismo, el patriarcado, el racismo, el clasismo. La violencia contra las mujeres en México ha empeorado en la fase del <i>capitalismo gore</i>, el recrudecimiento del crimen organizado alrededor de las drogas y con la pandemia de COVID.</p> <p>Creo que es necesario reconocer la historia de la violencia contra las mujeres en México: precolombina, durante la colonización, la independencia, la reforma, la revolución, la cristiada, la guerra sucia y en los últimos 40 años de gobiernos neoliberales. También es necesario reconocer la historia de la violencia en nuestras familias. Ha habido muchos avances en leyes de igualdad, no discriminación y para prevenir la violencia y el feminicidio, pero son leyes que no funcionan, un sistema judicial, unas fiscalías que no ejercen justicia. 20 años de capacitación a las instituciones no ha cambiado a las, los funcionarios ni estructuras. El cambio de régimen, “primero los pobres”, aun no ha reconocido que ahí están las mujeres y no han hecho cambios legislativos: despenalización del aborto, matrimonio igualitario, justicia para niñas y mujeres. Es necesario un cambio en la subjetividad colectiva: se sanciona socialmente más el daño a un cuadro, que la violación de una niña o un feminicidio. La protesta de las feministas es cada día más numerosa y confrontativa sin tener una respuesta del Estado.</p>	<p>Aumenta el feminicidio y todas las formas de violencia en México por el coronavirus: aumentó el consumo de alcohol y otras drogas, así como los malestares por salud mental.</p> <p>El encierro, el despido masivo, la pobreza y la incertidumbre son caldo de cultivo para la historia de violencia en el país. Desde la colonización hasta las más recientes guerras, el patriarcado tiene el poder de la violencia y la muerte de las mujeres (aunque se diga próspera, en la práctica es promuerta).</p> <p>Mientras las mujeres no tengan derecho a decidir sobre su cuerpo y su vida, en condiciones de igualdad en todos los ámbitos, la violencia seguirá, pues culturalmente se le seguirá viendo como un medio (ser para otros: incubadora, limpiadora, cuidadora voluntaria y gratuita), escondiendo todo el valor de su trabajo.</p>
Alarmante, triste, parte del día a día de tod@s.	Alarmante, triste, injusta e impune.
Extrema e inaceptable.	Como un problema constante que ha llegado al punto de considerarse hasta algo cotidiano.
Para mí la situación es inaceptable, las cifras que tenemos en todos los aspectos van más allá de lo creíble; para mí, México se ha vuelto un país que desconozco. Algo que me impactó muchísimo es que hace poco nos volvimos el país número uno a nivel internacional en abuso sexual infantil,	Es inhumano lo que se vive en México; la violencia de todos los días es un miedo colectivo de las mujeres y que debe ser erradicado de una forma u otra. La situación por la que está pasando el país es como pocas en el mundo y eso muy duro. México no solo tiene estados de emergencia que

⁴⁹⁴ All the transcriptions of the participants answers were written respecting the original ones. None of them were proofread or edited to keep their value as social evidence to be analysed.

que hace pensar todo lo que sucede detrás de la puerta de muchas casas y como la situación cada día se desborda más. La violencia en México me ha hecho vivir todos los días con miedo de no regresar a casa, así como de todas las familias que sus hijas ya no están más y se quedan esperando a su regreso.

se prenden de vez cuando, México es un país de emergencia porque es una situación que le acontece a toda una nación y que se vive todos los días.

Creo que la violencia siempre ha existido, sobretodo la violencia de género pero la facilidad del acceso a la información ha logrado que nos enteremos, en ese sentido me parece que vivimos en un momento catastrófico ya que somos el país más violento de América.

Complicada, sistemática e impotente.

Es una violencia que empieza en casa desde que los padres no dejan salir a sus hijas a las mismas horas o lugares que a sus hijos y desde que la “respetabilidad” de una mujer la dicta su ropa. Es una violencia que se ve cuando un hijo sabe que su papá le está poniendo el cuerno a su mamá, pero cuando la mamá lo reclama en casa, los hijos se molestan por “hablar así de mi papá enfrente de mis hermanas”. Es una violencia en la que tener un pasado emocional y/o sexual con alguien te hace una puta, te desvirtua porque los hombres creen que tener relaciones sexuales te cambia, te quita tu inocencia. Es una violencia donde tu novio no te quiere llevar con sus amigos porque “te van a ver” y en vez de exigirles a sus amigos que te respeten, te esconde, te deja en casa como si fueras un juguete suyo, y como juguete suyo cree que si te humilla y te hace arrepentirte de tu pasado antes de él, vas a cambiar y vas a ser un juguete mejor.

Indignante, saber cómo la respaldan tantas instituciones políticas, medios de comunicación. Parece una burla ver cómo tienen que juntarse grupos de personas a menudo asociadas con las víctimas de feminicidios para exigirle y obligar a la fiscalía general de justicia (que en teoría está para que se cumpla la justicia) que se castigue a los feminicidas. Parece una burla que primero una colectiva y/o grupo de activistas se junten para visibilizar un problema social y no puedan los medios de comunicación cumplir con su función.

Espantosa. Estoy cansada de vivir con miedo por mí y por otras.

Entristecedora, es increíble cómo en pleno siglo XXI se sigan cometiendo actos de violencia tan atroces como asesinatos a sangre fría, la dignidad humana no es para nada un tema importante y mucho menos de lo que la sociedad está consciente.

How would you define violence against women?

El daño causado a las mujeres es físico, mental, sexual, patrimonial, simbólico y llega hasta la muerte por no ser considerada sujeta de derechos iguales, humana igual a los hombres, en todos los espacios: familia, escuela, salud, educación, participación social, cultura, política. Ser cosificada, no considerada sujeta política, dueña de su cuerpo y sus decisiones con respecto a su sexualidad, salud, participación, etc. La expone a violencia en todas las etapas de su vida.

Es el daño físico, mental, espiritual, emocional causado a las mujeres consecuencia de la cosificación, del irrespeto profundo por lo femenino: la capacidad de dar vida y cuidar la vida. Por querer controlar su reproducción se controla toda su vida: su sexualidad, su tiempo, su creatividad. Se usan todos los medios para mantenerles oprimidas y explotadas: violencias por medios económicos, políticos, sociales, culturales. Los medios y el arte juegan un gran papel: producen y reproducen la

	<p>violencia sutil (amor romántico por ejemplo) o explícita (narcóticos feminicidas).</p> <p>La ausencia de interlocución con las mujeres como agentes, ciudadanas defensoras de su vida, está formando un malestar insoportable que se refleja en las acciones directas.</p>
<p>Creo que es algo tan “normalizado” que mucha gente no se da cuenta de lo común que es.</p>	<p>Es un abuso en contra del sexo femenino, que existe de forma sistémica en el país y que se nos es inculcado desde que somos chiquitos. Abuso verbal, psicológico y físico solo por el hecho de ser mujeres.</p>
<p>Algo tan cotidiano que la gente ya no lo toma en serio.</p>	<p>Como un problema social que necesita más atención y la creación y mejora de un sistema judicial que no nos considera importantes para protegernos.</p>
<p>Como una supresión de los derechos que como seres humanas tenemos. Una desigualdad que se vive en todos los ámbitos de la vida diaria: social, político, económico, físico, artístico, sexual, educativo, etc. Es una forma de discriminación a lo que somos.</p>	<p>Es el odio hacia el género, por el simple hecho de serlo. Existen diferentes tipos de violencia contra las mujeres, pero todas son simplemente por ser mujeres.</p>
<p>Cuando una persona decide violentar a una mujer por el simple hecho de su género, asimilándola como débil y fácil.</p>	<p>Es un problema del sistema de nuestro país y he llegado a pensar que mundial, la estructura de nuestra cultura ha llevado a crear un patriarcado sistemático en donde las oportunidades, libertad e integridad de las mujeres está por debajo que la de los hombres.</p>
<p>Se limita a la violencia causada por un hombre que sufre cualquier mujer por el hecho de ser mujer, incluye violencia emocional, física y sexual.</p>	<p>Violencia contra la mujer es cualquier pensamiento, manifestación, discurso u omisión que se comete hacia una mujer que pone en riesgo su dignidad, o salud mental y/o física y que viene de una persona del sexo opuesto o de una institución. Puede ser pero no se limita a encontrar hoyos en el sistema penal para no castigar a asesinos, o agresores de cualquier mujer, maltratar física, verbal o emocionalmente a una mujer, exponer la identidad de un agresor para reducir su pena por su crimen, vulnerabilizar a una mujer por su género y/o sexo.</p>
<p>Como resultado de un proceso histórico que nunca fue cuestionado, o confrontado y que hoy sigue sin tomarse la seriedad que debe.</p>	<p>Los actos y conductas que corrompen y/o minorizan la dignidad de las mujeres, en innumerables tipos y formas de ser ejercidos. No sólo es retrógrada, nunca debió existir.</p>
<p>What would you do (or do you do) to stop or confront gender violence in Mexico?</p>	
<p>Educación participativa desde una perspectiva de igualdad, DH y no discriminación. Participación en acciones colectivas para impulsar leyes de igualdad y no discriminación. Formación en Experiencia Somática para la atención de mujeres afectadas por la violencia.</p>	<p>He sido activista, docente, investigadora, sigo acompañando a colectivas feministas y profesionalmente me estoy preparando como terapeuta. Estoy segura que el arte cura.</p>
<p>Me educó, trato de dialogar con la gente a mi alrededor que vive en una posición de privilegio.</p>	<p>Denuncio lo que noto entre mi familia, amigos y conocidos, sobre todo en temas de lenguaje, manipulación</p>

	<p>que de alguna forma son parte de estos machismos cotidianos que a veces no nos damos cuenta que están mal. Voy a marchas feministas, me informo acerca de las causas, la situación de México, de feminicidios, intento compartir información real acerca de la situación. Trato de no ser cómplice ni participe de la manipulación que existe por los medios y por el público general y los hombres que buscan callar las historias y a las mujeres.</p>
<p>Atiendo a las marchas, creo discusiones con mis conocidos y trato de crear conciencia entre estos.</p>	<p>Estar activa en redes, hablando sobre el tema, buscando informar sobre este problema para lograr que más gente se una a la causa.</p>
<p>Todos los días lucho contra los micromachismos que se presentan con personas que me rodean: familiares, amigos, conocidos, etc. Nunca me quedo callada cuando hay una situación de desigualdad y violencia, ya sea en el ámbito laboral, personal o social. Desarrollo productos audiovisuales de reflexión donde la gente pueda evaluar y comprender situaciones que estén normalizadas y de las que se debe hablar. También me trato de involucrar en proyectos y eventos donde se reflexione del tema. Me gustaría decir que lo que hago es a gran escala, pero creo que por ahora el alcance que tengo no es tanto comparado a lo que hacen otras mujeres.</p>	<p>Todos los días lucho contra las situaciones cercanas en las que me enfrento, si veo violencia en algún lugar no me quedo callada y hago algo al respecto.</p> <p>Soy activa en redes de la forma en que puedo y siempre que me es posible, abrir espacios de dialogo con gente que esta aprendiendo para que entiendan mejor o intercambiar ideas para progresar. De igual forma, siempre implemento espacios libres de violencia en mi trabajo, así como las temáticas de los proyectos audiovisuales que trabajo visibilizan esta situación y siempre los acompaño de la parte de reflexión.</p> <p>He estado haciendo activismo sin darme cuenta, con estos proyectos audiovisuales y con poemas y ensayos que escribo de vez en cuando, por lo que me entusiasma seguir haciéndolo pues sé que su impacto es real. En general la propuesta del activismo en todas sus formas, me parece de lo más interesante y una manera de lograr esta conexión con la gente para crear espacios de reflexión. El activismo es expresión pura de lo que muchas mujeres sentimos y que puede lograr cambios tangibles en situaciones y personas.</p>
<p>Me informo e intento permear a los de mi alrededor para hacer consciencia de la violencia de género, además de sumarme a las protestas.</p>	<p>Formó parte de un colectivo y sobre todo me informo y busco fuentes que respalden mi discurso.</p>
<p>Castigaría mucho más gravemente la violencia, crearía denuncias, abriría espacios para compartir testimonios sobre violencia en relaciones y me acercaría a niñas menores para proveer un apoyo en su crecimiento y desarrollo desde antes de la adolescencia que es cuando suelen toparse con más problemas.</p>	<p>Yo trato de estar informada y leer mucho sobre el tema para poder responder y respaldar cualquier argumento contra los movimientos feministas. Una un poco más difícil pero muy coherente es cortar contacto con amistades que no apoyen el empoderamiento femenino y crean que “vandalizar” espacios públicos no sean “la manera” y la manera más fácil es siempre estar enojada. Ese es mi secreto...siempre estoy enojada.</p>

Me cuestiono a mí misma, y trato de cuestionar a otros para deconstruir esas creencias, prácticas y hechos que tanto daño nos hacen.

Primero me cuestiono a mí misma, y trato de trabajar mi entendimiento de inclusión y empoderamiento de las mujeres. Después cuestiono a mis grupos cercanos, hablando de la normalización conductas que atentan contra las mujeres y su dignidad y seguridad (entre otros aspectos).

Table 7. Narrative exercise from Mexico City, 19-21 October 2020

Pre	Post
How would you define the violence lived in Mexico	
Alarmante	Cada vez más difícil
Me parece que se convierte en un modo de vida. Estamos acostumbrados a vivir en una situación, ya sea pública (por ejemplo, narcotráfico) o privada (por ejemplo, violencia doméstica), de violencia continua.	La describiría como un dolor latente. A veces parece que ya es una herida que nunca podrá cicatrizar.
Insostenible	Estructural
How would you define violence against women?	
Aplastamiento de la dignidad de las mujeres.	Terrible. Alarmante.
La definiría como una expresión de poder y de opresión que priva a la mujer de su libertad y sanidad (mental, sexual y psicológica).	Me parece difícil responder con una definición contundente, sin embargo la pienso como un acto contra una mujer por ser considerada inferior, débil o sumisa. Esta se ejerce a través de daños sexuales, físicos o psicológicos.
El problema más grave de las muchas crisis que estamos viviendo.	Omnipresente.
What would you do (or do you do) to stop or confront gender violence in Mexico?	
Dar clases, participar en talleres.	Talleres, capacitación, dar a conocer el tema. Seguir hablando y exigir cambios.
Participar en este tipo de conversatorios, estar activa dentro de grupos de mujeres para que ninguna mujer se sienta sola. También reunir a diferentes mujeres para llegar a propuestas reales de cómo ayudar a las mujeres en estas situaciones.	Abro espacios junto con mis amigas. Espacios de diálogo y para aprender más. Después del conversatorio, definitivamente quiero promover el activismo como una forma de acercamiento al feminismo.
Escribir, estudiar, hacer difusión cultural y de ideas feministas. Apoyar a quienes pueda.	Estudiar a mujeres, fomentar el diálogo crítico y la creación de espacios de comunidad.

Testimony from One of the Organisers of the Protest in Querétaro

Si no mal recuerdo se nos convocó el nueve de marzo [sic: 9 de febrero] a una marcha por el 8 M, y cuando llegamos la organización nos sobrepasó. Estaban divididas varias mujeres que estaban encargadas de la seguridad, otras que estaban encargadas de la logística y se hicieron distintas comisiones para poder coordinar la marcha, nunca, nunca imaginamos que al llegar a la plaza ésta excedía en el número de mujeres, o sea, más bien tenía muy limitada sus dimensiones porque el número de mujeres que estábamos ahí era exorbitante.

...Empezaron a rayar, hubo quienes no estaban de acuerdo, empezamos a rayar camiones, el tanque, monumentos, las...el mismo asfalto, rayábamos las paredes, mientras mujeres que no conocíamos nos cubrían y gritábamos las consignas. Sobre todo, fue después del feminicidio de Ingrid, entonces eso ya nos había enardecido lo suficiente. Empezaron las consignas también del derecho a decidir, se juntaron las consignas de las mujeres trabajadoras, las consignas de las mujeres que estaban por feminicidio; había madres también que habían perdido a sus hijas por feminicidio. Hablaron distintas compañeras, hubo performance en donde una mujer se quitó la ropa y llena de sangre, bueno lo que aparentaba se sangre porque era pintura, estaba reclamando un país que nos asesina. Y, a la mañana siguiente cuando todo terminó obviamente hicimos bloques como para que no se fueran solas, hubo por ahí distintos hombres enojados que intentaron pasar con sus coches a la fuerza y... bueno, no los dejamos pasar...Y bueno a la mañana siguiente que vimos los periódicos dijeron que fueron diez mil mujeres. ¡Diez mil mujeres! Una cosa que jamás había pasado en Querétaro, un estado tan chiquito, tan mocho y tan tradicional...

**Interview with Lorena Wolffer
Mexico City-London, July 2020**

Natalia Stengel 1: Un poco el proyecto salió de la frustración, poquito después de haber participado en el taller que diste en Querétaro, estuve con CONAVIM en la Alerta de Género de Campeche. Y acabé como súper desilusionada del proceso que se seguía, de lo que en consistían las alertas, entonces viré al arte y, ahora que me he puesto a investigar, pasé a estudiar el artivismo. Entonces, mi primera pregunta tiene que ver, en este contexto de tantas violencias ¿Cómo seleccionas una manifestación de violencia por obra? ¿Cómo haces esta selección?

Lorena: ¿Cómo centro una obra en ciertas condiciones que tienen que ver con la violencia? Mira, primero, a mí el término activismo no me gusta y no lo uso porque, asume como que proyectos que tienen una génesis y un alcance muy distinto tienen el mismo efecto, entonces hay una cosa como de que equiparar, tanto las estrategias como las repercusiones de estos proyectos, entonces es una cosa como rara, ¿no? Yo, o sea incluso, y creo que lo platicamos un poco, o imagino o quiero pensar que sí, en el taller en Querétaro, mi liga con el arte, digo está siempre, pero no son lo más importante ni me interesa que lo sea. Desde ahí, como que se me hace complicado incluso nombrarlo arte, más nombrarlo artivismo. Entonces yo utilizo el término intervenciones culturales participativas. Y culturales justo porque no me interesa como referirme al arte, sino a la cultura, no el sentido del arte y la cultura, sino la cultura que vivimos de fondo todos los días.

Pero bueno, en realidad como que no hay un proceso de selección, para decir: ‘ay, ahora voy a hacer tal cosa...’ Este, no es un como un proceso cerebral, crítico, analítico, frío, donde pienso: ‘claro, lo que tengo que hacer es esto’. Sino que, cada proyecto se va como engarzando con el anterior y son en general como el resultado de todo lo que está pasando o que me están pasando, cualquiera de las dos y que me preocupan y que una lleva como a la otros.

Evidencias, que es lo que entiendo que te interesa, justo surgió porque como a lo largo de los años me he acercado más a los sistemas de procuración de justicia y una de las cosas que fui como entendiendo y conociendo, fue que nunca hay evidencias suficientes, bueno, el sistema de justicia y el acceso a la justicia son nulos, pero el tema de cómo probar las violencias es como muy complicado, entonces salió un poco de ahí. Pero salió también en defensa absoluta a la palabra en primera persona y a la experiencia subjetiva en primera persona. No es lo mismo

una violación que ‘a mí me violaron de esta manera...y me pasó esto...y tuvo esta serie de consecuencias’ y que quizás o no, son equiparables a las tuyas o a las de otra chava de a lado.

Entonces eso, como que no son temáticas que... No es como una selección fría, sino, son como más bien parte de una conversación muy larga que va teniendo, que va cambiando, quizá como modulando ciertos temas para pasar a otros y otros. Y, digo, que, para mí, vivir en México y hablar de las violencias contra las mujeres no es una elección, sino una realidad.

Empecé a trabajar hace muchos años haciendo performance y el performance me llevó casi de manera inmediata a las violencias. Y trabajar con un cuerpo, y eso me llevó casi de manera inmediata a las violencias, entonces, eso, como nunca hubo una posibilidad de elección, siempre fue como que estuvo determinada por mi realidad.

Natalia Stengel: Ok, sí, un poco me ha pasado con el análisis. Porque ahorita dices que me estoy concentrando en *Evidencias* y sí, por una cuestión metodológica, pero también entrevisté a Cerrucha hace poquito más de un año, y entonces acabé también con *Estado de emergencia* (2018) y como que he ido creciendo las obras.

Lorena Wolffer: Pero justo, por ejemplo, *Estado de emergencia*, responde muy claramente a tu pregunta. *Estado de emergencia* es una respuesta al Estado. Es literalmente el Estado, es una respuesta que, para mí, que para muchas es insostenible. ¿No?

Natalia Stengel: Sí. Y en ese sentido, también pensando en *Estado de emergencia* y en *Evidencias*, ahorita que iniciamos, pensaba, ok, *Evidencias* ya acabó, pero hoy otra vez que las mujeres están confinadas en sus casas, parece como renacer lo que yo vi en *Evidencias*. ¿No te cansa el una y otra vez que no cambien las cosas?

Lorena Wolffer: Es agotador y es frustrante y produce, también como muchísimas heridas y muchísimo enojo, creo que también es importante como hablar del enojo acumulado. Y no quedarnos en esta imagen de que siempre tenemos como pensamientos benevolentes. Porque, además, desde los primeros feminicidios de Juárez que fueron a finales del 92 y principios del 93, son ya casi 30 años, son treinta años de lucha en los cuales sí se han conseguido muchas cosas, pero la realidad es que las violencias sólo han ido creciendo. Entonces que la consecuencia del trabajo de treinta años sea el incremento incesante e incomprensible, pues es brutal, entonces sí me cansa, pero sobre todo me preocupa profundamente.

Me preocupa también cómo las cosas que hemos ido haciendo, digo, no sé, por ejemplo, el cambio en la legislación. La existencia de la Ley de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia en sus versiones locales, por estado, bueno en la Ciudad de México y en general es una ley fabulosa, es decir en términos, por ejemplo, de legislación, tenemos una legislación ejemplar. Justo comparándola con la de Inglaterra; hice un proyecto hace unos años ahí, y descubrí que en Inglaterra siguen hablando de violencia doméstica que da por supuesto un debate sin llegar a establecer el feminicidio no como una causal de homicidio sino como un delito en sí mismo, con características, específicas, fue un logro monumental. Tener la ley de acceso que establece tipos y modalidades de violencias, para mí es un logro enorme, porque justo establece una distinción entre el tipo de violencia, que es la forma de la violencia que es física, psicológica, sexual, etcétera y el lugar donde ocurre la violencia ¿no? La violencia laboral, en el hogar, institucional, etcétera. Y eso, ahí por ejemplo, hemos avanzado muchísimo, pero la realidad es que el acceso a la justicia sigue siendo prácticamente nulo y eso es pues terrible y además esa falta de acceso a la justicia o la imposibilidad es justo lo que ha producido que esto continúe y se incremente. O sea, porque sí hay un permiso y un acuerdo donde matar mujeres es viable y aceptable.

Natalia Stengel: Sí, no sé que tan de acuerdo estás, justo he leído a Marcela Lagarde y a Rita Laura Segato. Y me pareció interesante que de alguna manera lo que dice Rita Segato es que ni siquiera es un asesinato de una persona; el feminicidio en la cabeza de un feminicida, bajo esta idea de que las mujeres son parte de la propiedad del hombre. En realidad, es la eliminación de una propiedad masculina.

Lorena Wolffer: Sí, hay varias partes o hay textos de Rita Laura con los que no estoy de acuerdo. En ese sí estoy de acuerdo. Pienso que sí, que hay una noción de pertenencia que es innegable.

Natalia Stengel: Ok. Cuando expusiste *Evidencias* hubo alguna reacción, además de la de Querétaro no llevándote objetos, que más bien me habría sorprendido de que te llevaran objetos en Querétaro, pero ¿alguna otra reacción que recuerdes como característica al montar *Evidencias*? ¿Buena o mala?

Lorena Wolffer: O sea, hubo muchísimas reacciones. Por ejemplo, en la primera vez que fue en el MUAC, en la Ciudad de México, y que además había este planteamiento, como lo hubo

también en Tijuana en el SEJUT, de que no sólo llegabas con tu objeto, sino que tú lo montabas y podías decir dónde ponerlo y muchas de las personas que iban a donar objetos, no necesariamente tenían escrito su testimonio del objeto que estaban donando, ¿no? Entonces muchas llegaron a dictarnos en ese momento, y entonces lo capturamos. Entonces, en este proceso sucedían muchas cosas. Digo, hubo por ejemplo, desde una mujer que llegó y estuvo como merodeando un buen rato, que es algo que sucede mucho en mis proyectos, siempre hay mujeres o participantes que están como ahí un buen rato antes de decidir si le entran o no y, al final hay unas que sí y otras que no. Ella estuvo horas como viendo quién llegaba y qué daba y cómo era el objeto que estaban entregando, como el procedimiento. Y, eventualmente, ya se atrevió y entregó un objeto y al decirle: ‘oye, tu puedes ponerlo en la vitrina donde tú quieras’, llegó a la vitrina y habló con otra de las participantes y pues se quedaron ahí platicando un buen rato y, al día siguiente, regresó y al otro día también para traer otros objetos. Entonces se ve que le funcionó poder hacerlo y encontró reparación a tal grado que eso, que regresó dos veces más, ¿no?

No sé, pienso, hubo una chava que había donado una vajilla y su historia era que, un día en su casa, un amigo de su *roommate* tenía como determinado acostarse con ella y, cuando ella lo rechazó, al día siguiente se despertó y en la puerta de su cuarto había un plato hondo con orina del tipo. Entonces ella, lo que estaba donando era toda la vajilla. Y años más tarde me escribió y me dijo que quería la vajilla de regreso, que sentía que ya había como pasado por el proceso que tenía que pasar con Evidencias y con la vajilla y que si no me importaba regresarla. Le dije que claro que no, que cuando quisiera. Y ya se la regresé. Es el único caso de un objeto regresado. Pero digamos en general lo que pasaba siempre es que los momentos de recepción de los objetos en el espacio, pues eran momentos de catarsis y de reconocimiento de los que estaban ahí. Siempre era como muy difícil pues eso, el momento de llevar y entregar.

De hecho, habíamos puesto un periodo de recepción en el museo antes del montaje y después, la opción de ir durante el montaje y, al llegar y encontrarnos había como, cuarenta, no como 20 o 25 objetos, y yo estaba trabajando con mis estudiantes en ese momento que me estaban ayudando a nada más ir sacando cada objeto y leer lo que decía. Era un proceso bien difícil y duro. O sea, para una que está solamente como leyendo y mirándolo y para quienes donen y llevan objetos pues es, sí es bien complicado, pero al mismo tiempo, se transforma en un espacio como de sanación, es decir, los llevas y sí hay este reconocimiento y puede haber como un desfogue de todo eso que está ligado al objeto que estás donando, entonces también hay una sanación, reparación en ese acto. Entonces digo, en ese sentido hay muchísimas historias de mujeres que llegaban llorando o contaban como la historia y, al momento de

contarla se desmoronaban y luego como que ya se reconstruían, entonces hay muchas historias. También, de pronto, algunas bien duras de familiares o sobrevivientes de feminicidio y, no sé, por ejemplo, en Guadalajara estaba la hermana de una chava que fue asesinada por su pareja y llevó, por que además el cuate primero mató a sus perros, —como que tuvo una serie de eventos antes de que la matara a ella— y entonces llevó un frasquito de las pastillas con las que había matado a los perros. Y sí, como son, como que cada historia y cada mujer medio que la tengo como presente, porque, pues esas son cosas, como bien duras.

Cuando llevaron... una chava llevó unas monedas porque su pareja cada vez que se le caían las monedas la golpeaba. En fin, cada historia siempre traía, o trajo, como todo el dolor. Como que uno está por momentos exentos, y ve lo que se sentirá con cada objeto, como que cada una de las personas que lo donaban, desde las sobrevivientes de las violencias hasta las familias de víctimas de feminicidio y ver que traer el objeto, es traer todo el evento y todo el dolor y toda la impotencia frente a los sistemas de justicia y todo lo que ya sabemos. Entonces son espacios muy cargados.

Natalia Stengel: Ok, y ¿tú, dirías que la obra está como centrada en las mujeres que llevan los objetos o en el espectador que llegaba a ver los objetos?

Lorena Wolffer 6: No, para mí, la parte como medular de *Evidencias*, y en general de las intervenciones que realizo, siempre tienen que ver con la participación, lo que queda es tal cual, como el vestigio, el documento, el registro de ese intercambio. Pero la parte medular tiene que ver con eso, con la parte de juntar el disco roto, no sé, con las cosas que llevan y llevarlo a un museo y ponerlo ahí. Y mucho menos con un público que sólo lo observa, quizá como una parte de justicia, no es que sea menos importante, pero sí ocupa, un lugar distinto, es como secundario.

Natalia Stengel: Ok. En Querétaro, el día de la inauguración, hiciste como una especie de foro abierto. ¿En todos los lugares donde la inauguraste hacías ese tipo de foro?

Lorena Wolffer: Mmm, es que en Querétaro, la presentación de *Evidencias* era parte de este foro, un encuentro de museos. Entonces creo que eso más bien tuvo que ver con ese formato y esa onda. Con *Evidencias*, normalmente nada más se inauguraba.

Y bueno, justo a partir de Querétaro, hablando de formas y de experiencias distintas, a partir de Querétaro, cuando hice las siguientes dos versiones como grandes, porque también

hice unas pequeñas en espacios público, pero en SEJUC en Tijuana y en el museo Raúl Anguiano en Guadalajara, lo que hice fue colaborar con colectivas feministas para recabar los objetos, o sea justamente pensando en la experiencia de Querétaro y del riesgo que para muchas era como entrar a un lugar y exponerse a revelar que están siendo víctimas de violencia y tal... Trabajé con colectivas que me ayudaron a recaudar objetos, entonces tenían la alternativa de llevar el objeto al lugar, pero también la alternativa de entregárselo a alguna de las integrantes de las colectivas en corto y de una manera privada, en la que nadie te viera y pudieras hacerlo sin exponerte a que nadie supiera y eso la verdad también derivó en, como que multiplicó las experiencias, porque entonces ya no sólo eran conmigo, sino con muchas, todas las que estaban recibiendo y recogiendo objetos en ese momentos, este... Además, recogimos muchos más objetos. O sea, en las dos llegaron muchísimos objetos. Entonces se multiplicó exponencialmente, ya empecé a hacer familias de objetos que también era como raro, la familia de zapatos, la familia de cuchillos o las caguamas.

Natalia Stengel: Ok, sí más o menos detecté como ese patrón, esa familiaridad de objetos. En esta idea de multiplicación de las experiencias, ¿tú, dirías que la obra produce sororidad?

Lorena Wolffer: Sí, o sea yo creo que sí, por supuesto. Creo que sí hay como eso que decía antes, este reconocimiento mutuo: yo valido tu experiencia y tú validas la mía. O sea al momento de estar en una circunstancia similar, donde te estoy llevando un objeto. Yo estoy trayendo otro, hay un proceso en donde la poca o mucha credibilidad que hayas tenido antes deja de existir. Hay un intercambio en el reconocimiento de las experiencias, por un lado, entre quienes llevan los objetos y, después, con las colectivas y con quienes terminaron coordinando conmigo la colección o la recolección de los objetos, por supuesto.

Porque, además, siempre eres una especie de muro de contención. Es decir, yo no pensaría necesariamente como sí se ha hecho en otros proyectos, míos y de otras personas, el tener terapeutas que acompañaran. Aunque en el MUAC sí, ahora que me acuerdo había un taller de una chava que trabajaba con víctimas de violencia sexual, con sobrevivientes de violencia sexual, pero, eh (breve pausa) estar ahí en ese momento te transforma como en eso, un acompañante en justo una testiga que se hermana, te hermanas de inmediato con la experiencia de la otra y acompañas y la contiene. Yo no pensaría que mi papel es el de ser como la médico, porque no soy terapeuta, pero sí hay como una...(pausa) se generan como uniones o vínculos a partir del recuento de las historias que son tan fuertes como las historias.

Natalia Stengel: Y, también, un poco, con este despertar feminista, o no sé cómo llamarle a que ahora hay muchas mujeres llamándose feministas, he visto la reacción adversa, sobre todo de parte de hombres, aunque también he visto a mujeres, con esta idea de que se quejan de todo, las cosas no están tan mal y las están exagerando y ese tipo de actitudes. ¿En algún momento en *Evidencias* se presentó una actitud similar de cuestionamiento a hacer algo así?

Lorena Wolffer: Pues bueno, cuando yo presenté *Evidencias* la primera vez, en el MUAC, que no me acuerdo cuando fue, creo en 2010, producir este tipo de proyectos era políticamente incorrecto, entonces por ahí. La aceptación de los feminismos era algo que no sólo no había sucedido, sino que no se alcanzaba a ver para nada que fuera a suceder. No era para nada (breve pausa), no había este nuevo estado de las cosas donde se habla abiertamente de los feminismos en donde todo el mundo sonríe y se supone que todos estamos de acuerdo, eso para nada existía. Y, al contrario, era, o sea, por ejemplo, a mí se me tachaba de, como de ¿por qué sigues hablando de eso? O como si las violencias fueran algo que sólo algunas personas les afecta. Y yo cada vez que respondía, ‘pero es que esto es lo que nos pasa, y sucede todos los días’, pero no parecía tener un eco. Entonces de entrada, sí había como ese rechazo y no era que realmente como a mí o a mi trabajo, o sólo de hombres, puede haber gente muy crítica de lo que hago y está bien. Pero era una crítica a que fuera un arte feminista, algo que he platicado mucho, por ejemplo, con otras, que le pasaba a Mónica Mayer o a muchas otras compañeras y colegas. ¿No?

Entonces, en ese sentido, ya de inicio, sí era transgresor hacer *Evidencias*, era como ir contracorriente de los mandatos de las instituciones culturales y también de los mandatos sociales. Era bastante complicado. A mí, por ejemplo, el nuevo estado de las cosas, por lo menos en apariencia son más aceptadas, se me hace rarísimo, me toma como por sorpresa, aún. Y en ese sentido, todo esto que tú mencionas ahora venía acompañado de eso que tú mencionas: ‘¿de qué se quejan? ¿de qué están hablando?’. No sé, por ejemplo, toda la conversación a partir del movimiento de Sicilia, eh, de si se hablaba o no de las violencias de las mujeres como un fenómeno distinto al fenómeno de la violencia generalizada y la negativa del grupo de Sicilia a hacerlo, o sea era justamente eso: ‘¿Ustedes de qué están hablando? Hay cosas siempre más graves’. Entonces, lo que pasaba en ese momento es que siempre hay un discurso que era que las violencias generalizadas eran mucho más graves que la violencia contra las mujeres. Entonces, cuando sí se hablaba de las violencias contra las mujeres, se hablaba de ellas en un

segundo o tercer plano, cuando se reconocía como algo distinto, con una serie, bueno ligado a una serie de fenómenos distintos a las violencias generalizadas, como consecuencias de la guerra contra las drogas.

Natalia Stengel: Sí, ok. ¿No temes un poco que esta aceptación feminista pase de moda y entonces se quede como pendiente todo esto?

Lorena Wolffer: Pues mira ahora, con la época de la pandemia ya no tenemos idea de que vaya a pasar, porque justo, esa enorme fuerza y como esa avalancha en la que veníamos ahora, poco a poco, parece haberse calmado y no sabemos qué vaya a pasar, entonces por lo pronto ya no existe, literalmente, ni siquiera es que pasado mañana deje de existir, o sea con una pandemia de por medio ya no existe y como te decía al principio, para mí, para algunas de las colegas con las que trabajo, el problema no es pensar en una sola emergencia, sino en la multiplicidad de emergencias que se enciman una tras otra. Ahora no sólo estamos hablando de las violencias contra las mujeres que están igual que siempre, es decir no nada más...me regreso un poquito. En este furor, y en este, quién sabe cuál sea la palabra, en este momento peculiar de los feminismos mexicanos, para mí hubo siempre una dislocación que es irreconciliable, había por un lado la narración de 2019 fue el año de los feminismos y las mujeres y ta, ta, ta y, después, la realidad, en donde los números siguen incrementando y esas dos ideas convivían felizmente sin que una afectara a la otra. Y eso, desde ahí ya era muy enloquecedor, porque claramente 2019 no pudo ser el año feminista si nos seguían matando, si nos siguen matando como siempre y cada vez más, cada vez más y cada vez más. Entonces también sería como muy crítica de los alcances de esta ola feminista, porque quizá lo que les faltó fue tiempo para que empezara a tener efectos en la vida real, pero lo cierto es que no los estaba teniendo, o sea, los estaba teniendo a cuenta gotas.

Antier, recordemos por ejemplo que a la par de estos enunciados de 2019, los feminismos y tal..., la cantidad de escuelas y facultades de la UNAM que se fueron a paro por violencia contra las mujeres, digo apenas antier acaban de regresar las facultades porque era insostenible para las chavas que llevan 5 meses en paro, que continuara el paro durante la contingencia y de cara a la pandemia. Entonces, yo te diría, el miedo no es sólo es a que pase, el miedo es que todo lo que tiene que pasar no ha sucedido. Ha sucedido en términos como de enunciación y eso, quizá como de articulación, pero no de una realidad o no de una afectación a la realidad.

Natalia Stengel: Sí, de acuerdo. Son todas mis preguntas. No sé si quisieras decir algo más.

Lorena Wolffer: Mmmh. Pues bueno la verdad es que no había pensado para nada en *Evidencias* en el confinamiento. Entonces está bueno el tener esta conversación, porque claro, regresa. O sea, una de las cosas de las que hemos estado hablando. O bueno que a mí, mis temas, eran ese que te acabo de contar, el de la dislocación entre la narración y la realidad o las narrativas y la realidad, pero mi otro tema de obsesión últimamente tiene que ver con cómo las estrategias necesariamente para contravenir las violencias contras las mujeres tienen que cambiar, porque los alcances de lo que hemos hecho ha ido cambiando y que, si bien hace 10 años era absolutamente indispensable contar nuestras historias en primera persona, hoy ya no lo es. Yo no fui al encuentro zapatista en diciembre, pero lo que me cuentan muchas amigas es que, como que hubo dos días en que las mujeres contaban sus historias y todas, algunas a las primeras, a las segundas o a las terceras, pero todas, se aislaban. Te pones a cantar una canción en la cabeza, te pones a platicar con alguien porque es insostenible, ya no tenemos capacidad de escucha porque eso también se ha normalizado que también era parte de las estrategias de *Evidencias* al trabajar con testimonios.

Entonces, los testimonios claramente no tienen el poder político que sí tuvieron en otro momento, porque ya han sido tantas las narraciones de violencia que hemos escuchado que, como tantas otras cosas, se ha normalizado, entonces, bueno qué hacer hoy frente a esto que pasó. La conclusión de esta conversación que tuvimos ayer algunas feministas era como qué hacemos de cara al tema y todos los casos de violencias en México, la frase de conclusión fue, no nos fuimos, después del 8M y el 9M no nos fuimos y aquí estamos. Y, la pregunta que sí haría, en reconocimiento de que las estrategias necesariamente deben de cambiar porque ya pasaron un chorro de años, casi 30 años desde que empezamos como a luchar frontalmente para erradicar las violencias contras las mujeres, ahora la pregunta es cómo transformas este escenario en una realidad de confinamiento global. Qué podemos hacer o qué es lo que vamos a hacer cada quien, desde su casa, desde su espacio para quienes puedan quedarse en casa, porque bueno, además en México, digamos que es un país con tantísimas desigualdades que hay mucha gente que no tiene el menor privilegio de quedarse en casa, pero ¿cómo va a cambiar eso? ¿Cómo esta realidad va a cambiar esto que ahora resulta tan difícil para que las mujeres podamos vivir vidas vivibles?

Entonces es un momento de interrogación.

Natalia Stengel: Sí, de acuerdo. No sé si, quiero pensar cómo va a cambiar, pero...

Lorena Wolffer: Hay que... También, yo sí tengo, como, no sé si escuchaste la conferencia de Naomi Klein y Angela Davis, y si no pues está en línea. Se llama *Surviving-Rising Minorities*, o sea yo sí creo en lo que dice Naomi Klein del enorme potencial de estos momentos de crisis y de quiebre como momentos de posible transformación. Esta idea de que, lo que ayer era imposible hoy resulta que sí fue posible y si bien estos momentos, pueden ser parte aguas para el horror, o sea para el rescate de las grandes empresas, transnacionales y blah, blah, blah. También es el momento para transformar muchas cosas y, quizá este es el momento este sea. Ayer hablábamos también de ok, todo eso que no ha existido en la Ciudad de México, por lo pronto, porque el gobierno declaró la *Alerta de género* y luego no pasó nada y no ha pasado absolutamente nada. O sea, es una declaración vacía, entonces ¿por qué no pedimos que justo en estos momentos de confinamiento se empiezan a hacer esas cosas que antes ni siquiera pensábamos que se podían hacer? ¿Por qué no pedimos que en efecto se trabaje en una policía especializada que pueda tener, o sea de mujeres que atiendan sólo a mujeres, con perspectiva de género? ¿Por qué no poner eso sobre la mesa ahorita? Entonces sí pienso, estoy segura de que nuestra responsabilidad es esa, la de imaginar otras formas y tratar de hacerlas realidad.

Natalia Stengel: Perfecto, sí de acuerdo. Muchísimas gracias.

Lorena Wolffer: Muchas de nada.

Interview with CERRUCHA
Ciudad de México, 05 de enero 2019.

Natalia Stengel: Gracias por aceptar ser entrevistada. Como te comenté vía correo electrónico, estoy realizando un MPhil en Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies en King's College London y estoy trabajando con tu obra, *In/Visible*, para medir el impacto que puede tener el arte feminista en la reducción de la violencia de género.

Cerrucha: Sí, bueno, *In/Visible*, fue uno de mis primeros proyectos. El más reciente fue *Azúcar Rabiosa*, que es un proyecto que me comisionó Lorena Wolffer, para un proyecto más grande que se llama *Estado de Emergencia*; el Centro de Cultura Digital y el CENART les comisionaron a ella, a Jennifer Tyburczy y a María Laura Rosa hacer una serie de conservatorios en relación a los feminicidios y transfeminicidios, entonces ellas dijeron sí, pero pues lo vamos a llevar al espacio público y lo vamos a llevar a los espacios donde está sucediendo algo relacionado con este tema, entonces escogieron cuatro puntos. El proyecto se llama: *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia en el Estado de México* y uno fue en el Tribunal Superior de Justicia, otro fue en la Procuraduría General de justicia, otro fue en donde asesinaron a Alexa Flores y otro en donde asesinaron a Lesvy en CU. Entonces hicieron conversatorio en el espacio público, llevaron una sala, la pusieron en el espacio público y era un conversatorio y a la par comisionaron a una colectiva o artista llevar a cabo una acción. A mí me tocó en la PGJ, entonces hice *Azúcar Rabiosa* y el proyecto es que abrí una línea de teléfono, a la cual podría hablar cualquier persona, dejar un mensaje como si le hablaras a la PGJ con respecto a su desempeño frente a los feminicidios y transfeminicidios, y cómo te hace sentir la problemática. Y con esos testimonios hice una canción de salsa, y esa canción de salsa la fuimos a bailar a la PGJ el día de la intervención, que fue el 14 de noviembre. A mí me gusta mucho ese proyecto, porque estoy tratando de empezar a cambiar desde dónde hablamos de la violencia...si quieres te lo enseño, la canción dura veinte minutos, no te la voy a enseñar completa, pero para que lo veas, es un proyecto que voy a seguir experimentando en relación al baile, la salsa y la protesta.

Natalia: ¿Tú compones la música?

Cerrucha: No, la música está en el soundtrack para que la puedas escuchar. (Se escucha al fondo la grabación de la salsa).

Natalia: ¿Ellos son bailarines?

Cerrucha: Son participantes en general.

Natalia: ¿Cuál fue la reacción de la PGJ?

Cerrucha: Ir a tomar fotos de cada una de las personas que estaban ahí.

Natalia: Qué chafa.

Cerrucha: O sea porque, ven que acá está la carpa. Está...aquí no se ve, pero bueno. Está frente a la PGJ, nosotros estamos aquí y cruzando la acera está una carpa que es en donde se llevó a cabo un conservatorio que lo moderó Julia Antivilo.

Natalia: ¿La PGJ sabía que iban a ir?

Cerrucha: Sí, pero no sabían a qué. O sea, como sí pidieron permiso para estar ahí enfrente, es un proyecto, también pues Lorena tiene muchísimo peso aquí, entonces como que no se van a meter con ella, pero, pues no es que supieran que íbamos a mentarles la madre...a mentársela bailando.

Natalia: Sí, mi experiencia con la PGJ no es muy buena tampoco.

Cerrucha: No, pues no, a nadie.

Natalia: Nosotros llegamos con carta de diputado y no nos sirvió de nada para conseguir una entrevista.

Cerrucha: No, olvídale, entrevista...Ésta ahorita está todavía, que es de fotomurales. Este es *Deconstruyéndonos* y literalmente es de cómo nos vamos deconstruyendo y desconstruyéndonos en base al género. Entonces llevo haciendo entrevistas dos años con personas que ya están dentro de los feminismos o que están luchando por los derechos de las mujeres, se llamen a sí mismas o no feministas. Entonces quería yo ver qué herramientas han

ido generando para reconstruirse y deconstruirse, qué es lo que hemos estado haciendo. Entonces tomé fotografías de las personas a quienes entrevistaba y un testimonio en audio, entonces los fui separando por temas: el cuerpo, los feminismos, qué son los feminismos o sea como también tratar de hacerlo muy digerible para personas que no tienen relación alguna con la lucha. Entonces, es collage, empezar a tomar también imaginario de las marchas y de todo lo relacionado a los feminismos de México que yo he tomado, entonces, este es uno de los fotomurales y aquí tiene un QR que puedes escanear y escuchar este audio. Entonces éste está ahorita en la calle de López en el centro, si sales del metro “Salto del agua” está el mercado de San Juan y tiene tres sedes: Arco de Belén, este y otros dos juntos. Este se llama “Hermana yo te creo” porque tiene la pancarta. Este se llama “Estamos unidas o unidos” y son 30 metros de mural como una valla de contención, que estamos unidas, chido, pero tampoco van a pasar, y pues son personas que algunas sí estaban juntas, otras no, fui tomando esta fotografía en base a verla desde antes y esa está en el metro “Salto del Agua” entre la línea 1 y 8. Este se llama *Hay que abortar el sistema heteropatriarcal* está en la puerta de la Gozadera, nos faltó el cacho de arriba, pero estaba lloviendo mucho y también es patrimonio, este edificio es patrimonio nacional y ya no me metí ahí porque mis amigas restauradoras me cortan la mano. ¿Van a estar aquí más días?

Natalia: Estaremos yendo y viniendo.

Cerrucha: Bueno entonces acá está la ruta. Este es el metro “Salto del Agua” que es la línea rosa, saliendo de una te vas hacia la izquierda, la primera calle que es López y este es el mercado, lo que vimos ahorita y está el edificio, adentro verás el otro, esta es la plaza de San Juan y ahí está punto Gozadera, que es el *feminist hub* de la Ciudad de México. Entonces este proyecto son dos años de estar haciendo entrevistas, fui al Encuentro Internacional de Mujeres que Lucha en Chiapas, no sé si pudiste ir.

Natalia: No, del que me enteré fue del de Morelia, pero tampoco había mucho disponible en internet.

Cerrucha: Si hay otro de las zapatistas y puedes, muy recomendable. Entonces ahí tomé como muchas entrevistas, fotos y demás y a principios de 2018 apliqué para una residencia artística en el Centro de la Imagen, que acaba de iniciar, la primera vez que la hacen, se llama: *Me sobra barrio*, entonces como que tenías que vincular el Centro de la Imagen con un cuadrante del

Centro Histórico. Entonces dije: para pronto la Gozadera. Entonces empecé a hacer talleres, en vez de que solamente fueran, como que tenía todo este material; hice más entrevistas, pero ya en la Gozadera y entonces era un taller en el que se hacía la entrevista a las personas, a veces estaban juntas, a veces no, entonces era como más de discusión y la segunda parte era crear un discurso visual, como que guiarlas para que estuvieran. Son fotos de ellas, en su mayoría mujeres, también hay unos hombres, entonces son fotos de ellas, pero con imaginario visual feminista, etcétera, entonces ir viendo cómo nos queremos representar. Estos eran como los *sketches*, que al final pues ya los hago yo en Photoshop, algunos no rifan. Entonces, por ejemplo, este que es muy literal: hay que abortar el sistema heteropatriarcal este es tal cual intacto como resultado de un taller, así lo quisieron y por qué: porque es como una persona de mayor edad viendo qué es lo que están haciendo las más jóvenes, están ayudando, se están levantando.

Natalia: Encuentro transgeneracional.

Cerrucha: Otros, pues ahí, como que este ya decidí qué es lo que le pongo. Y ahí empecé a meterle texto de algunas de las entrevistas para que tuvieran más peso. Entonces, se pusieron ahí porque es espacio público, me interesa muchísimo ir a ese público, porque es justamente a ese público al que le estoy tirando con ese proyecto y de hecho aquí, donde estuvo, me tocó una semana antes de que montáramos el mural, fui a ver otra vez la textura de la pared, dije: me lanzo en chinga. Me fui en coche, dejé el coche y pensé: bueno me bajo no se lo lleva la grúa porque me bajo en chinga. Entonces me meto al coche y enfrente de mí un tipo dándole unos putazos a una mujer, literal así. Brutal. La chica se detuvo en el coche, lo dejó todo sangrado. Y yo así de: ¿me bajo? ¿Este tipo tendrá un arma? Como que se empezó a ir para allá, me bajé, le hablé a la policía, muy latente, muy presente todo. Es alucinante que eso sea normal. O sea, en esto la gente sí vino, pero porque yo así rápido dije: tú ven para acá y tú para allá, y tú no nos dejes y le hablé a la policía. El otro se fugó y yo dije: “puta, donde regresé este cabrón, no mames”. Afortunadamente llegó en chinga la patrulla porque ahí es zona calientona, de día no hay tanto pedo, de noche está más cabrón. O sea, la Plaza de San Juan y todo eso sí está feón, a veces, entonces siempre hay tira por ahí. Llegó en chinga, lo agarraron porque no estaba muy lejos. Entonces yo decía: vio mis placas, me vio, lo están metiendo al bote, o sea no lo van a meter al bote, nada más lo van a llevar en la patrulla y esta chava no sé, muy fuerte, a parte tocaya.

Natalia: Además, si no denuncia no pasa nada ¿No? Tiene que denunciar.

Cerrucha: Claro, entonces sí se fueron, pero ya no podía acompañarla, entonces no sé si puso la denuncia o no. ¡Qué dices fatal! Igual cuando lo pusimos, fue en dos días la puesta, en el estacionamiento, estando ahí, de repente llegan dos tipos, x, súper tranquilos, el cuidador también súper tranquilo, todo chido. Llega un tipo, se quita la playera: “ay, deténmela carnal”. Llega otro y se empiezan a pelear, de la nada así: tatatatata (imitando el sonido de los golpes). Tenía una asistente en ese momento y las dos así de: quítate güey. Terminaron y se fueron.

Natalia: ¿Cómo del Club de la Pelea?

Cerrucha: Sí, güey. Tranquilos. Súper normalizada la violencia. La hija del cuidador, que ha de tener unos veintitantos, así tranquila; yo le dije: “¿qué onda?”, y ella me dijo tranquila: “se han de haber peleado por algo, pero ya todo bien y ya se *encontentaron*”. Entonces todavía le sigo, tengo mucho material y mucho que hacer, te metes a cada uno. Cuando activo el mural llego con una bocina y hago un recorrido por los fotomurales y vas escuchando el audio, este de género y feminismos, que también todo lo tengo que volver a editar, porque todo ha estado intenso este año (se escucha en el fondo el discurso de Lorena)

Natalia: ¿Tu objetivo es sólo trabajar en la Ciudad de México o pretendes salirte?

Cerrucha: No, salirme, pero pues después de siete años de estar en Canadá y aunque ya llevé cuatro años aquí, dos fueron de un estira y afloja con el ex y la chingada, entonces son como dos años de estar aquí y empezar a moverme a otros lados.

**Natalia: ¿Trabajarías con las mismas imágenes o generarías nuevas para otros lugares?
¿Serían otros proyectos?**

Cerrucha: Ahorita movería estos, voy a seguir generando. Es que tengo dos años de entrevistas de dos horas, más de cincuenta entrevistas.

Natalia: ¿Es Lorena no?

Cerrucha: Sí, pues estas que sí son muy puntuales: qué son los feminismos, cuáles son las luchas, por qué es importante y tal. Entonces sí te tienes que ir con las personas que ya lo tienen ultra digerido para poder decirte sólo esa parte, pero pues sí, tengo muchísimo. Por eso tengo Mantarraya que es mi estudio de foto para ver, para que sea redituable el asunto, porque está bien cabrón. Ahorita quiero una beca, pero el FONCA sería hasta el próximo año, si es que me dan la lana. *In/visible* es un proyecto que me gusta mucho, pero sí estoy tratando de moverme hacia otros lados.

Natalia: Yo llegué a In/Visible por una página que tiene artistas contra la violencia de género.

Cerrucha: ¿Española?

Natalia: Ajá y la obra que tienen es *In/Visible*. También como parte de las actividades del doctorado me tocó exponer en una clase y expuse tu obra y me costó mucho trabajo explicar mandilón, lo encontraron como cobarde, que hace peor la connotación de mandilón porque si es un hombre con atribuciones femeninas, decirle cobarde es decir que las mujeres somos cobardes. Y también de ahí pensé un poco en las preguntas. En específico esa (la que se llama “Eres un mandilón”) lo que ellos decían es que él se ve un poco femenino hasta que le ves la cara de hombre, eso es intencional: ¿qué sea como ambigua su espalda?

Cerrucha: Sí. Porque es el concepto de feminizar algo, o sea un cuerpo, con la palabra lo estás feminizando, pero también si ves a esa persona, de buenas a primeras tiene atributos muy femeninos estereotípicamente, sí es intencional, pero también así es la persona, así es él. Esas imágenes no están modificadas casi en nada, es cuando estaba empezando con ese proyecto, intenté en primera instancia el ponerlo con maquillaje: los tatuajes, o hacerlo como estos de rasca-huele y estaba tratando, entonces esas no están modificadas de ninguna manera más allá del tatuaje mismo.

Natalia: Tengo una duda ¿por qué el de “todos los hombres son iguales” y la de “mi marido sí me deja trabajar” a ellos dos, bueno a ella y a él, no se les ve la cara?

Cerrucha: Pues también por esta parte de que puede ser cualquier persona. O sea todos los hombres son iguales, es muy intencional cortarle la cara, como que todos lo mismo, que finalmente no, también me interesaba que hubiera frases que fueran sexistas hacia todos lados. Aunque fuera muy sutil, pero sí es algo que se utiliza muchísimo aquí. La de mandilón yo la he traducido como *pussy whipped*, como que esa es a lo que han llegado a muchas personas, de manera similar la usan.

Natalia: Pero sería lo mismo para machismo, que la traducían por chovinismo, que tanto no es lo mismo, que nosotros tenemos chovinismo en español. Esa parte les costó entenderla.

Cerrucha: De hecho, ese proyecto yo lo inicié en 2010, desde el 2009 lo fui trabajando en la universidad, en Canadá, nadie entendía nada, o sea todos me decían: “¿eso qué es? Yo no entiendo nada. *I cannot relate.*” Y yo así: “*I know*”, no eres tú el público, pero no lo entendían ni mis compañeras, ni las maestras, son súper conceptuales en esa escuela y en fin, entonces esa parte sí fue difícil allá. Entonces vine, la puse aquí y claro, tiene todo el sentido que yo esté aquí, de hecho, digo, por muchas razones me regresé, pero una razón fundamental es porque aquí me siento útil, lo que estoy haciendo es útil desde mi perspectiva, y en América Latina, también me interesa que esté en muchos lados, no me quiero cerrar a estar en México o en la Ciudad de México, no, pero es para ciertos contextos definitivamente.

Natalia: Justo por ahí te iba a preguntar si un proyecto parecido hacer algo como lo que hace JR: que manda la gente su foto y él se las imprime y está llenando todo el mundo de imágenes.

Cerrucha: Me encanta lo que hace, de hecho, por eso he querido hacer fotomural desde hace mucho tiempo y esta es la primera vez que puedo hacer fotomurales grandes, pero pues para eso necesitas una infraestructura y una cantidad de lana y un mecenas que este tipo me queda clarísimo que tiene, porque para no meter marcas...no sé de dónde saca lana. Esa parte no la cuenta, tiene sus fotos con Angelina Jolie y todos sus compas. Digo no es que haya nacido en ese contexto, pero ya se mueve en ese contexto y sí puede hacer muchas más cosas. Entonces sí, me encantaría hacer muchas cosas, creo que es muy limitante la parte económica aquí en México, pero siento que también, a mí lo que me ha sucedido con el FONCA es que aplico con un proyecto y me dicen: “esta parte es demasiado ambiciosa” o sea *Deconstruyéndonos* ha

tenido muchos giros, mantiene su esencia de hacer más digerible los feminismos, acercar a diferentes públicos, representarlos en el espacio público, pero sí lo propuse para hacerlo en diferentes partes del sur global, para el FONCA y para nada me lo dieron. Y en otros proyectos el *feedback* que sí me han dado es: “no es que es demasiado ambicioso”. Como que de repente los proyectos que son como voy a poner unas fotos en una pared gigante o en cinco, como que ya no son tan creíbles, es lo que yo interpreto también.

Natalia: ¿No estará ahí también el factor de discriminación de género?

Cerrucha: No necesariamente, no lo sé, porque no he estado en ese jurado. Pero para otro proyecto de PECDA sí me dijeron, alguien que estuvo en el jurado, me dijo: “Yo vi tu proyecto y no porque te conozca, sino porque era muy buen proyecto, abogué por el proyecto, pero como *feedback* te digo que dijeron que demasiado ambicioso”. Entonces no creo que haya sido de género sino más esa onda. ¿Entonces qué quieres que haga? Te voy a decir que voy a hacer una foto en un marco, a ver si me crees.

Natalia: ¿Tienes alguna forma de medir el impacto de las obras que estás haciendo? ¿O llevas seguimiento de eso?

Cerrucha: En este momento no, igual y ahorita te platico de otro proyecto que estoy haciendo que sí va hacia allá. Me encantaría, pero como soy una persona y hago circo, maroma y teatro para poder: pagar, comer y entonces siempre estoy corta de lana y angustiada y eso no te deja crear, pero la única manera que he encontrado hasta el momento hacerlo lo más personal posible. Empecé a meter talleres antes de los proyectos, entonces por eso, por ejemplo, está el taller, que no di una vez, lo di varias veces, a varias personas, mantengo contacto con ellas: algunas no, obviamente tampoco voy a forzar las cosas. Ahí me doy cuenta: ¿cuál es mi medición?, que es muy subjetiva, pero el que haya venido una persona durante los talleres, uno de los participantes a decir: “Ah qué chido, esta es la primera vez que me puedo sentir parte de un proyecto que sé que es para mí, porque a mí me gusta vestirme de mujer, yo soy hombre, y no lo veo desde un tema político, simplemente me gusta y es el único espacio donde realmente he sentido que puedo pertenecer”. Sé que algo está funcionando. Los testimonios de las participantes cuando estamos terminando el taller: “Ah, a mí me gustó” o “Yo he abordado temas de género, pero nunca lo había abordado de una manera artística que viniera de mí”. Este de la Gozadera, en ese mural ese fue uno de los *feedbacks*: “Como que nunca había podido

expresar esto de otra manera y eso también me conecta con otras de las que estamos aquí, o sea, lo hicimos en conjunto”. Una de las participantes también en el Centro de la Imagen, porque hicimos varias, la última presentación, de hecho, del proyecto hicimos conservatorio y entonces como que recibo su experiencia entonces sé que algo estoy haciendo bien, el que haya sido una buena experiencia, que le haya dejado algo, el que esta misma persona en año nuevo me haya mandado un mensaje: “qué chido conocerte”. Eso sé que ya está chido, entonces hasta ahí van esas mediciones y estar en contacto, como que yo siempre trato de tener ese cuidado: no quiero utilizar a la comunidad, cómo hacerlo sin dejar de intervenir en ciertas comunidades, de hacer algo ahí, cuál es mi función, siempre estar pensando cómo estoy posicionada ahí; siempre estoy muy preocupada por eso y me doy cuenta que la mayoría de las artistas no lo está, entonces como que yo sé que estoy ahí, platico y me dicen que está chido. Es difícil también, yo ahorita lo que prometí de reconstruyéndonos es: tú me estás dando tu tiempo, me estás dejando tomarte tu foto... como en todos los proyectos, nadie te va a dar nada a cambio, yo te digo: yo me comprometo a darte las fotos, o sea que tú como participante puedas usar las fotos como se te de la gana, siempre y cuando no sea comercial, para toda tu colectiva, chido, te las doy en alta resolución y distribúyelas donde quieras. Como empezar a ver un *creative commons* en ciertos sentidos, pero también no estar yo así como de: voy a dar toda mi obra, empezar a hacer un intercambio y ahí es una manera de medirlo, pero muy a largo plazo, porque sé que esa persona tiene una relación con la comunidad. O cuando regresan de otros proyectos de género. Pero, definitivamente es algo que me interesa muchísimo. Empecé a hacer los talleres porque sí va a tener un impacto mi obra, pero como no lo puedo medir y no lo puedo manejar de la calle para afuera, entonces que sea antes de llegar a la calle, entonces ahí sé que toqué a cinco personas, pero sí las toqué y sí lo sé y eso es algo mucho más tangible.

Yo organicé un festival en Holbox de murales y la idea era que, bueno, que a mí me vendieron, era que participar con esta banda: vamos a hacer algo chido de Holbox, de todo el impacto ambiental que están teniendo las hoteleras que quieren venir, hacer un poco de denuncia. Entonces claro que me apunto y pues no era como yo creía y se ve cabrón, al final de cuentas el proyecto era: ve y pinta bonito Holbox para que venga más turismo y pongamos más banquetas y que nos lleve la chingada, porque al final de cuentas eso es lo que quería esa gente. Pero sí siempre se nota la intención, digo ya que tienes experiencia.

Natalia: Y, un poco también relacionado con esto, ¿piensas en una clase social en particular con tu obra? o ¿Has visto que haya diferentes reacciones a tu obra dependiendo la clase social?

Cerrucha: Yo creo que hay distintas recepciones, dependiendo del estrato socioeconómico que tengan las personas, el bagaje cultural, pero definitivamente sí le tiro más a un estrato socioeconómico bajo, medio bajo. También estoy aprendiendo, con esto de audio, el de los feminismos, me pregunto: ¿quién lo puedo entender? Seamos honestas, sí...entonces el heteropatriarcado, pero tenemos que irnos a desmenuzar el tema y es concientización, es meterte a hacer otra labor, es como campaña. Entonces digo: ¿qué hago? ¿Estoy haciendo arte campaña? ¿Qué carajos estoy haciendo? Finalmente, pues sí, me iría más por ahí, me parece que tiene más utilidad, pero estoy pensando, cómo llegarles a ciertos públicos. Porque tampoco puedes decir: esto lo tengo que desmenuzar tanto, porque tampoco vas a infantilizar a la gente; o sea, la gente tiene todo su bagaje y entiende perfecto lo que se le está diciendo. Yo creo que, más que nada, es en dónde lo posicionas y cómo lo posicionas y también influye mucho entonces el cómo te acercas a esa pieza. Justo In/Visible era: estás en el metro o estás en la calle, que eso ahí sí ya es para todo el mundo; digo, claramente si te vas a Polanco entonces no es para todo el mundo, o sea nos queda claro la parte elitista, pero es más accesible, no está en un marco, que finalmente ya, si eres alguien que no va a ir a una galería pues tampoco te vas a dedicar a algo que está enmarcado, ya estás familiarizada con el material, o sea todo el mundo sabe que hacer con un periódico: el periódico se toma, se lee, se hojea. Me interesa mucho utilizar este tipo de medios, cómo voy a presentar la obra, que ya a quienes estoy dirigiéndome tengan un poco de conocimiento de qué se hace con ese objeto, o, finalmente: ¿qué es esto? Si tu puedes ver un espectacular pues también puedes ver un fotomural, algo te llega, algo no te llega, qué te representa, a mí, después de estar viendo un fotomural donde hay un grupo grande de mujeres que dice: casa de mujeres por la dignidad, pues tiene mujeres, dignidad, tiene unidad, un conjunto, hay una que está con dientes de loba, hay alguien que está ahí rabiosa; o sea hay un movimiento, algo te tiene que mover, dependiendo de tus referentes, claramente. Pero sí me interesa ir viendo qué es lo que mueve, o sea con este proyecto, de hecho ahorita con las demás cosas que tengo que hacer, es hacerle más difusión porque el centro de la imagen no hizo difusión alguna, está muy cabrón. entonces quiero buscar periodistas y, con el curador, que es un chidazo, se llama: Ingacio Prat curador de “Me sobra barrio”, irnos ahí y hablar con la gente del mercado, también, porque hay están todos los carniceros y sentarnos así de: ¿te dice algo? ¿No te dice? Bueno, está bien, también, pero también es como una excusa, el arte se empieza a volver un objeto, un proyecto, pero también una excusa para juntarnos para el diálogo, al igual para mí la foto es eso: “¿Te puedo tomar una foto? No”, no importa, ya me acerqué, ya te hablé, ya me puedes contar un poco, tengo esa excusa y mucho más en un espacio

que ya se ha vuelto tan violento que aproximarte a la gente es violento, porque desconfías, no sabes porqué se te están acercando, depende de cómo manejes la cámara.

Natalia: ¿con tu obra no sientes un poco que...es que yo vengo de la escuela de diseño y, uno de los problemas que tenemos es que la mayoría de nuestras alumnas son mujeres pero también ellas son el principal objeto de la publicidad, ¿con tu obra, al ponerla en la calle, al utilizar papel periódico no sientes que hay también una intención de adueñarse de este espacio que tradicionalmente ha reforzado estereotipos, violencia?

Cerrucha: por supuesto es reapropiarse de los espacios que ha tomado la publicidad y también es el lenguaje, el lenguaje de la publicidad es hablar el mismo idioma que está hablando tu consumidor y es súper eficiente: ¿por qué chingados no lo estamos haciendo las activistas? Sí lo estamos haciendo, pero ¿por qué no lo hacemos más? O sea ¿por qué no hacerlo de una manera sumamente consciente? Y por eso utilicé tatuajes, pero ahorita ya están poniendo de moda, pero hace diez años no era tan así, estaba muy estigmatizado entonces estoy estigmatizando esa frase, ¿no? Es utilizar eso: te estoy marcando. ¿Quién te está marcando? Pues el lenguaje popular, porque es algo que conocemos, entonces sí, definitivamente es utilizar los distintos medios, pero con un propósito distinto, porque son muy funcionales, por eso también digo: vamos a lo grande. Mucho más en México y en el D.F. tienes que hacer circo, maroma y teatro para que te volteen a ver, uno de los proyectos, de la 2R, de red de apropiaciones que también es con tatuajes: son fotografías de mujeres con tatuajes, pero de las cosas que sí queremos ver, como: voy sola por la calle, ese también hicimos un performance en el zócalo; performance en el zócalo es y traemos bocinas y altavoces y los *Hare Krishnas*, literalmente, eran más, eran más vistosos porque venían de colores y *they were louder*. Tienes que competir con muchas cosas que están sucediendo al mismo tiempo, entonces tienes que hacer una cosa más monumental, para que la gente diga: eso está choncho lo voy a voltear a ver; que sea repetitivo, en fin buscar ciertas estrategias para que la gente sí lo note, porque sino pasa desapercibido muy fácilmente, porque hay tantos estímulos que...

Natalia: Sí, más bien pensaba: ¿qué pasaría si todas las mujeres nos interesáramos que voltearían a ver esta parte? Que nos enfocaremos que es importante que la gente entienda toda esta subalternidad femenina.

Cerrucha: no a mí me encantaría, pero creo que también ahí no todas las mujeres buscamos eso y te digo porque en el mural este que está en el metro, que es otra de las cosas que me encanta, a diferencia de una galería, la gente va y te platica. A una señora le pregunté: “¿qué te parece?”, “Pues muy mal, ¿no? Me parece fatal, estas mujeres ahí y con la falda, yo estoy muy bien en mi casa y a mí me gusta y no me gusta que me estén diciendo otras cosas”. Pero es que eso está metidísimo, o sea, me queda claro, eso está ahí, o sea, entonces como que todavía tenemos que hacer más chamba en ese sentido.

Natalia: Yo tuve una lectura de la imagen de la niña, que igual y me dices que está súper jalada, pero el que sea la única de las cuatro que te está viendo como dos cosas: una, que ella está retando como esta idea que no es un juego para niña y dos, también, el que sea ella la única, sugiere que los más chicos no necesariamente tendrían que crecer con estos estereotipos. ¿Va por ahí?

Cerrucha: sí va por ahí. Y también la imagen de la segunda serie, que es del niño al que están tatuando esa originalmente es de la primera. Esa la tomé en la misma época solamente que ya no la pude integrar por lo de siempre: falta de lana, porque hice un tiraje de ocho mil piezas y eso, meter una más era demasiado. Pero sí, claro es como lo más literal que hay y no me molesta que sea así: cómo adultos tatúan a las nuevas generaciones, sí. También es lo que tenemos que combatir.

Natalia: pues es que si pensamos que los niños de seis años no saben cual es la diferencia entre el enojo y la tristeza por eso de que les prohíben llorar tiene que ser literal. La parte del trabajo de nuevas masculinidades tiene huecos fuertes.

Cerrucha: fuertísimos, de los dos lados, digo, desigual está, pero para los dos lados está jodido. El tener que ser el proveedor y el no sé qué, tener que casarte. Yo lo veo con mi primo y de repente digo: puta, cómo ha sufrido por cortar con la ex-novia y ya se habían a casar. Digo, con todos sus privilegios y todo también, pero también se los está llevando la tiznada, así, no la pasan nada bien.

Natalia: Creo que eso está muy interesante en tu obra y otras que estoy viendo que ya se incluyen a los hombres. Porque el arte feminista cuando empezó en los 60s y todas estás mujeres que estaban enojadas y que, gracias a ellas hay acceso a las universidades y

derechos...no incluían al hombre, el hombre era este gran enemigo. Que entiendo de donde viene la idea, pero la falta de trabajo con ellos impide los efectos.

Cerrucha: sí, el hecho de que se haya dado de una manera tan desproporcionada, que las feministas como que ya es la conversación está muy avanzada, y entonces cuando te pones a hablar con vatos aunque quieran hablar del tema, es bien difícil, porque hay como un algo...pues sí yo ya vi eso, nosotras ya descubrimos otros asuntos y tú apenas estás descubriendo que algo está mal. Es así de tárdate lo que te tengas que tardar, nosotros nos vamos a ir por otro lado, pero al final de cuentas no podemos avanzar a ningún chingado lugar porque necesitamos hacerlo como sociedad, no como una parte de. Muchas cosas que nos tenemos que plantear y explicar, por ejemplo: ¿por qué para mí concepción una persona de 60 años no debería de estar con una de 20? Pues porque es un abuso de poder, para mí es clarísimo, y el tema de género, por lo general, son los hombres los que están con más chavas, pero para los hombres no y si yo se lo digo a mis compas feministas es así de: “claro, obvio, *next*”. Sí podemos decir bueno, *where do you draw the line*. Y me dicen mis compas: “deberían hacer un taller de feminismos para los hombres” Y mi primera reacción es de: *do your fucking homework*, ahora por qué chingados yo, a parte de tener miedo de salir a la calle y la chingada, voy a hacerte la puta tarea, güey. De estar haciendo filosofía al respecto, todas las filósofas ahorita, dándole duro por todos los frentes, como para que: “ay, es que yo no sé cómo hacerle.”

Natalia: bueno, pero también el sacar el arte del museo y de la galería con estos temas puede ser una forma de que ellos entren a estos temas.

Cerrucha: por supuesto, es toda la intención. Por otro lado, digo sí es necesario escuchar la otra parte, aunque me cueste trabajo, aunque a veces me de mucha hueva, sí es muy necesario escuchar la otra parte que diga: “quiero hacer algo al respecto, pero realmente no sé por dónde, dame entrada”. Y decir sí, también tenemos que dar entrada.

Natalia: sí y, pensando en este trabajo que tienes sobre feminicidios ¿cuál es la entrada que se le debe dar a los hombres? O sea, en este tipo de obras, la que tienes de femincidios: ¿cómo se invita a los hombres a tomar conciencia sobre el papel feminicida que podrían tener?

Cerrucha: la obra consiste en hablar. Podrían haber hablado. Yo literal, hablé por teléfono a todas las personas que conozco: “por favor habla a esta línea”. Se compartió literalmente cuarenta mil veces en Face, en redes. ¿Crees que hubo un hombre? No hablé ni un solo hombre, porque no te ataño, porque sienten que no les ataño. Yo sí siento que me ataño porque siento que cada vez que salgo de aquí y veo para allá y veo unos vatos con vidrio polarizado, me da miedo, sí me ataño, pero los vatos nada más es de: bueno, pues las voy a apoyar. No, carnal, no. Es como el: te ayudo en la cocina. No pendejo, no va por ahí. Todavía no entienden ese papel, pero más hacia tu pregunta es de: vayan, estén con nosotras, bailen, podrían haber hablado, pero no hablaron, fueron a bailar, eso sí, como a poner un poco el cuerpo, ok, chido, bien. Pero finalmente, esta obra en sí es empezar a sacar esa rabia de una manera distinta, para mí el baile es goce y es vida, entonces es ir y manifestar mi enojo y mi indignación, pero también haciéndolo de una manera no festiva, porque no es de fiesta, sino en la que celebro que estoy viva, eso es lo que tú me quitas, pues con eso *I am going to fight back with that*. Lo que tú me quitas es el goce de la calle, es la comunidad, es la vida misma, el goce de poder estar tranquila, bueno entonces empezar a utilizar eso y hacerlo más seguido. Por eso me estoy metiendo más al baile, más a cosas que me gusten, porque todos los círculos feministas es bien difícil, porque te bajonea mucho, porque es de muertes y porque estamos, si lo ves *el bigger scope*, es aterrador, entonces no podemos nada más hablar de estas cosas y seguir alimentando ese terror, sino empezar a ver de qué otras maneras y puede que no sea la correcta, pero tenemos que empezar a verlas, pero en ese en particular, habrá otros en los que los hombres no tengan papel, en otros sí me interesa mucho que estén, pero siento que todavía no les cae el veinte de que también les ataño, lo suficiente como para que accionen y vayan a un taller, los talleres estaban abiertos a hombres. Los únicos que fueron, fueron hombres trans, pero ningún heterosexual, para Deconstruyéndonos estaban vetados los heterosexuales, pero para hablar no y eso hablando con artistas de izquierda: “¿Vas a hablar?” “Sí” y luego: “es que no sé que decir”. Pero bueno para nosotras es más fácil poder expresar eso, porque también está más a flor de piel el sentimiento de indignación y violencia. Lo sientes en tu cuerpo todo el tiempo.

Natalia: sí, pero no existe tampoco una sola definición oficial de qué lleva a un hombre a ser el victimario: unas dicen que es un ritual de la masculinidad, otras dicen que está relacionado con el como las mujeres se adueñaron del espacio público. Pero al final, el victimario todavía no tiene un discurso elaborado y tampoco hay muchas coincidencias entre Ciudad Juárez y Estado de México. ¿Dónde está el victimario? ¿Cómo trabajan los hombres el tema del feminicidio?

Cerrucha: yo creo que están en pañales, no le puedes decir a la gente: tú eres un victimario, es lo peor que le puedes decir: tú eres un asesino serial de mierda. Y alejándonos de eso, cuando yo digo: “eso literal, que acabas de decir, es sexista”, no te estoy diciendo eres un macho de mierda, eres sexista, no. Lo que interpreta esa persona es: “ves, me dices que soy malo”. No, no eres malo, esa acción no es correcta, pero lo que esa persona me escuchó fue: soy malo, estoy mal, mis acciones son machistas, no entiendo porqué y por lo tanto no te quiero escuchar, entonces se corta la comunicación, con algo sumamente banal. Al igual como seguimos alimentando esas partículas de lo que puede llegar a ser un victimario, podemos empezar a deconstruir eso, pero están en todo, están en el que dejemos pasar que existan esos comentarios, dejar pasar esas cosas que son tan sutiles. Por eso a mí, en lo personal, me interesa muchísimo el trabajar la sutileza, la cotidianidad, esas son las gotitas que no te puedes quitar tan fácil. Porque yo te puedo decir: “ay, me parece una pendejada que nos hayan metido en la cabeza que nos tenemos que depilar”, ajá, sin embargo, lo sigo haciendo, estoy en contra de ello, me vale y lo sigo haciendo; cuando lo veo en el cuerpo de alguien más digo: chido, perfecto, en el mío me cuesta un chingo. Justo por eso dice: deconstruyéndonos, o sea, ¿en qué momento has logrado tú quitar ciertas cosas y con cuáles te estás enfrentando constantemente? Pero creo que es una chamba que estás dispuesta tú hacer y que los vatos no están dispuestos a hacer porque tienen un beneficio de ello mucho más tangible, entonces claro no están dispuestos a hacer el aguafiestas de sus compas que diga: “oye carnal esto que estás diciendo está de la chingada”, porque entonces es: ay, ya no lo invites. Como nos pasa a nosotras sí nos toca la piel, entonces sí estoy dispuesta a que muchos círculos me hagan a un lado.

Natalia: Sí. Pensaba en la frase: “todos los hombres son iguales” que de alguna forma los condiciona a ser iguales y es violento, pero por lado les permite que, si yo compito por un puesto junto con un hombre, le van a dar el puesto a él, probablemente. Esta misma frase les ha dado muchos privilegios y los condiciona a permanecer iguales.

Cerrucha: sí, ahorita que lo dices, creo que es realmente eso que en este momento no sé cómo expresar. O sea, es, justo, las frases que nosotras vemos: “mi marido sí me deja trabajar” es literalmente es opresiva, es muy claro, las de los hombres les benefician y los oprimen al mismo tiempo, entonces, mejor me quedo con el sí somos iguales al fin que está chido porque saco un beneficio. Yo no sacó un beneficio de un carajo si mi marido me deja o no me deja trabajar, finalmente hay un permiso ahí. Entonces como que esa parte, es eso, les estamos pidiendo que

dejen privilegios, que reconozcan que hay un privilegio y que ese privilegio está oprimiendo a alguien más y eso realmente no está bien. Nadie quiere reconocer sus privilegios ni decir que están jodiendo a alguien más, porque tampoco es su intención.

Natalia: No, no es que haya una toma consciente de este poder heteropatriarcal.

Cerrucha: pero ¿quién nos manda meternos a estas cosas tan complicadas?

Natalia: Esas son todas mis preguntas, no sé si quieras decir algo más.

Cerrucha: pues bueno, ahorita ya me interesa más, o sea la parte de In/Visible en sus inicios sí esto de marcar la piel como te va marcando la sociedad, es permanente, cómo lo empiezas a borrar, etc. Pero finalmente, me di cuenta de que estaba volviendo a victimizar, o sea es un proyecto que al final de cuentas es revictimizante porque te pone frases que son jodidas y te las vuelve a marcar, entonces por eso empecé con el performance en el que sí hago el tatuaje, pero te lo borro si me das una alternativa. Porque me encantan los tatuajes, me encanta la metáfora del tatuaje y también me encanta el contacto directo con las otras personas, entonces por eso fue este proyecto que se llama *Texo*. Y es hacerte el tatuaje sexista o racista y empezar a hacer una colaboración en repensar el lenguaje, de bueno, vamos a decir esto: ok, cómo lo diríamos diferente y que te saque el enojo, o sea, porque también esa es otra: bueno, lenguaje incluyente y vamos a no decir chinga tu madre, estoy de acuerdo, pero entonces: ¿qué carajos decimos para cuando se la quieras mentar a alguien no le mientas la madre? ¿Le mientas qué? ¿No se la mientas? ¿Qué le dices? Yo sí me veo tratar de buscar esa alternativa cuando ya esto con el enojo a más no poder, voy a decir alguna pendejada, seguramente algo de lo que esté en contra. Y es que al final de cuentas, también por eso me interesa muchísimo el mensaje, porque, digo, ustedes lo saben: como hablas piensas, así accionas y también eso puede ir para atrás, el poder que tiene el lenguaje. Pero entonces, ¿cómo realmente hacer que sea efectivo? Si no hay receptor: ¿cómo le haces? Y que te saque el enojo y que no esté oprimiendo a alguien más, está hecho para eso, ese es el único propósito de un insulto, es decirte que eres una mierda, entonces, cómo lo hago sin ser racista, sin ser clasista, sin ser sexista. Todos los recursos más fáciles, entonces yo tengo mis monotemas: eres una mierda, carajo y ya no sé qué más decir.

Natalia: porque además es verbo chingar es súper violento.

Cerrucha: entonces todos esos. Yo no me rajo, porque quien se raja sólo son las viejas que tienen su raja. Todo es violento desde esa perspectiva yo cuando regresé de Montreal, más bien, estando en Montreal era todavía más, como de no voy a decir estas palabras, eso está prohibido y ya que estoy aquí ya entiendo cuando mis compas utilizan esas palabras: y soy bien puta, y cuando está bien decirlo y no decirlo ¿no? Cuando es una reivindicación, empiezan a ver todas esas líneas que se desdibujan que son interesantes, también. Como la marcha de las putas: “¿Me dices puta? Ah sí, pues puta y media, güey” Es ponerte el trabajo y darle esa vuelta y ahora ya está el *queer*, pero con C: cuir, ya no es colonialista, es abajo y a la izquierda.

Natalia: Mil gracias.

Interview with Juana López

CONSENTIMIENTO - JUANA LÓPEZ
3/2

Entrevista a Juana López López	
He centrado la investigación en conocer el efecto que generan obras feministas que se concentran en violencia contra las mujeres. Rastreo el efecto a partir de la focalización que realizan las artistas sobre un tema en concreto. Esta entrevista se centra precisamente en eso mismo.	
1. ¿Por qué la fotografía? ¿Qué contraste en la fotografía que te permite expresarte?	ME GUSTA EL TIPO DE IMAGEN QUE ES LA FOTOGRAFIA
2. Antes de dedicarte a la fotografía ¿Utilizabas algún medio creativo de expresión?	ARTESANIA PARA VENDER
3. En tus sombras es posible identificar la presencia de mujeres ¿Te parecía importante que se distinguieran las mujeres de los hombres? ¿Por qué?	SI. POR SU ROPA Y PELO, ES IMPORTANTE
4. También es posible identificar la vestimenta indígena ¿Por qué te parecía importante esa identificación?	MÁS SOLO POR REBOZOS. IMPORTANTE PORQUE ES NUESTRA CULTURA SI HAY NIÑAS-SOMBRIAS DE ELLOS SE VE POR SU CABELLO, AUNQUE SU ROPA ES INDÍGENA
5. ¿Qué opinas del discurso feminista mexicano o el discurso feminista zapatista?	NO SE DE MEXICANO, PERO DE LOS ZAPATISTAS ME GUSTA SU INTERÉS EN HACER MÁS IGUAL LAS MUJERES
6. ¿Manipulas digitalmente alguna de tus imágenes? ¿Por qué?	SI CORTAR, CONTRASTE, PARA HACER MÁS A MI GUSTO
7. ¿Cuáles consideras que son tus principales influencias?	NO SE. LA VIDA DE MI Y DE MI FAMILIA
8. Además de la capacitación técnica para tomar fotografías, ¿recibes alguna en historia del arte?	NO
9. ¿Por qué contar tu historia a través de sombras?	PORQUE PERSONAS DE MI FAMILIA NO LES GUSTAN QUE SUS CARAS ESTÉN EN VISTA. NO LES GUSTAN 'REAL'
10. ¿Quién te parece importante que vea tus fotografías? ¿Por qué?	PERSONAS NO DE MEXICO, QUE SEYAN DE LA HISTORIA ESTOY AHA DONDE HAY HISTORIA DE VIOLENCIA Y SUFRIMIENTO
11. ¿Por qué decidiste contar tu historia?	↳
12. ¿Durante las inauguraciones te interesa convivir con los espectadores? ¿Por qué?	NO. NO HABLO BIEN EL ESPAÑOL, ME DA VERGUENZA, ME DA PENSA Y MIEDO

Conversation Sessions' Transcriptions

Session 1. Querétaro: *Evidencias* by Lorena Wolffer. 12 October 2020.

Las demás se irán integrando.

Les explico la dinámica, ya más o menos en el correo y en el formulario vieron las condiciones de participación. Todas las obras que vamos a ver están relacionadas con violencia de género, ninguna presenta imágenes violentas, pero, sí la de hoy y la del miércoles tienen testimonios que son un poco dolorosos y, en ese sentido si alguna de ustedes se siente incómoda está en libertad de salirse y, obviamente, su participación no la factorizaría en mi análisis de los contenidos.

Estoy investigando qué efecto rizomático tienen el activismo feminista que trabaja con violencia de género y, ésta es como la alternativa que pude armar dada la pandemia por la que ya no pude viajar a México para mis grupos focales.

Entonces, cómo funciona. Voy a presentar la obra procurando no dar ni una opinión, sabiendo que la objetividad no es esta cosa que habían definido en ciencias sociales y posteriormente las invitaría más bien a que ustedes dialoguen sobre las obras de arte. Si alguien tiene problemas para participar con la cámara encendida, que espero que no sea el caso porque necesito analizar sus reacciones, pueden en el chat comentar alguna cosa que se les vaya ocurriendo en relación con las obras de arte. Nada más les pido que sean muy respetuosas entre ustedes. Ninguna de las opciones o los contenidos que voy a mostrar expresan lo que yo pienso, más bien no intervenga de ninguna manera las obras de arte. Entonces voy a compartir la pantalla, a partir de este momento voy a dejar la pantalla compartida por si alguna de ustedes, al momento de discutir, quiere ver la obra de arte en específico.

Déjenme compartir pantalla.

Procuraré ser lo más breve posible para decir lo que tengo que decir y que más bien se trate de escuchar lo que ustedes tienen que decir sobre las obras.

La primera artista con la que estoy trabajando es Lorena Wolffer, algunas de ustedes la mencionaron en los formularios. Y ella es mexicana, nació en 1971, estuvo un tiempo en San Francisco, pero ha trabajado toda su vida en México. Y es de las pocas feministas o artistas que en los 90s se siguieron llamando feminista, porque un poco en los noventa parecía que la lucha feminista había terminado y que ya no quedaba ninguna deuda respecto a la agenda feminista. Ella empezó haciendo performance, de hecho, mencionaron uno de los performances

que hizo, que fue súper significativo, que se llamaba ‘Mientras dormíamos’ y fue súper significativo para la gente ahí presente y para ella porque justo por ese performance ella va a cambiar por completo la forma en la que trabaja. Mientras dormíamos es un performance sobre el feminicidio, y también respondía a las críticas que había hecho algunas críticas feministas desde la academia, diciendo que por qué si a las artistas les interesa tanto los problemas de las mujeres no han hablado de feminicidio cuando en Ciudad Juárez está estallando esta problemática. Entonces, ella hizo esta obra donde se marca en el cuerpo las heridas que han sufrido algunas víctimas de feminicidio y, haciéndolas se dio cuenta o adquirió consciencia de que ella no representaba a las víctimas de feminicidio en Ciudad Juárez, porque adquirió consciencia sobre la posición privilegiada desde la que ella habla, al final, ella tiene un apellido extranjero, es blanca, es de ojos verdes y entonces sí hay una lejanía étnica entre ella y otras mujeres y justo después de ese performance ella dijo: “Dejé de importar mi cuerpo, o lo que yo tenía que decir dejó de ser el centro y me dediqué a crear plataformas en donde se podían escuchar muchas voces”. Entonces sigue haciendo performance, pero son muy distintos los performances que ella hace ahora, en realidad son como muy personales y parece más bien un proceso de curación que lleva a cabo para superar el estar en contacto con víctimas de violencia todo el tiempo. Ella tiene la mandíbula trabada a consecuencia de experiencias de estar conviviendo con mujeres que han sufrido violencia. Trabajó en refugios y de ahí sale la obra que vamos a ver hoy.

Justo tuve la oportunidad de entrevistarla para mi tesis, y me metió en un problema. Porque en el camino de estudiar el arte feminista en México me di cuenta de que ya no están haciendo arte, o lo que ella hace ya no le llaman arte, sino que le llaman artivismo. El concepto de artivismo lo acuñaron los artistas chicanos o chicanas en los noventa junto con comunidades zapatistas. Los chicanos y chicanas traían su movimiento nacional, el libro de Gloria Anzaldúa que es una escritora y teórica chicana en EUA fantástica, publicó un libro y como que les hizo clic esta idea de buscar la identidad y hacer algo con su producción artística, escucharon de los zapatistas, viajaron a un encuentro con ellos y, de ese encuentro sale el neologismo artivismo que mezcla arte con activismo. Y al principio Lorena se identificaba como *artista* pero eventualmente, las instituciones artísticas se adueñaron del término y entonces Lorena tiene problemas hoy definiéndose como artivista, no tanto por lo que significa, sino porque ahora es esta cosa institucional en el que las instituciones ya tienen definido qué es buen artivismo y qué es mal activismo. Entonces, ella llama a lo que hace proyectos culturales de intervención social poniendo un acento en que, lo que a ella le interesa es la intervención social modificando la cultura y, el arte es sólo una estrategia de modificación de la sociedad. Y, viene de un libro

que publicó Suzanne Lacy quien es de las grandes feministas, artistas feministas en EUA, —si a alguien le interesa el libro lo tengo digitalizado y se los puedo compartir—que se llama New Public Art y justo analizan cómo tiene que ser este arte público y cómo el arte dentro de las galerías y los museos es una dinámica bastante elitista y discriminatorio y había que sacarlo y si lo sacas entonces se mantiene con los impuestos de la gente y por ahí va la discusión que mantiene Lacy y de ahí viene Wolffer.

Otras de las autoras que menciona Wolffer son Judith Butler y cómo define el género. Sayak Valencia quien es mexicana y también la mencionaron en los formularios, el concepto de Sayak Valencia es capitalismo gore. Y...Ileana Diéguez, quien es una académica cubano-mexicano y ella trabaja el concepto de liminal para aplicarlo a estas formas de *artivismo* o proyectos culturales de intervención social que se refiere a todos estos proyectos que trabajan desde las márgenes y que no son institucionales y no los ha consumido ninguna institución.

El proyecto con el que estoy trabajando se llama evidencias. Empezó en 2010, terminó en 2016, lo presentó por primera en el MUAC. Lo que ella hizo fue aprovechar la situación de prestigio desde la que estaba para hacer un llamado público a mujeres que habían sufrido violencia a que le donaran objetos con los que habían sido violentada. Además, las mujeres podían decidir dónde colocar su objeto, inicialmente, el día que iban a participar y donaban el testimonio que contextualizaba este objeto que estaban donando. En el MUAC fue muy exitoso, hubo algunos... algunas eventualidades que ella no esperaba: mujeres que llegaban con su testimonio no escrito, entonces ese día se los dictaban y se convertía en otra cosa completamente diferente porque se convertía en escuchar su historia y entonces había consuelo a la persona que había donado el objeto o, mujeres que daban vueltas alrededor del MUAC viendo lo que hacían y de repente se aparecían con un objeto, mujeres que volvieron hasta tres veces con un objeto distinto y que se pusieron a platicar entre ellas y a intercambiar sus historias. Y, estando en el MUAC se dio cuenta que tenía que sacar esta exposición y la presentó igual en la Ciudad de México en la Alameda Central y en el Parque España con esta idea de llevar el arte a los lugares liminales y salir de las instituciones. Entonces les voy a ir leyendo los testimonios que acompañan los objetos porque hay objetos justo como éste, el martillo y el machete que es como muy fácil imaginarse que vienen de una escena violenta y, hay otros, que es como más sutil la historia que está ahí o justo la víctima que lo donó al momento de hacer donar su testimonio, pudo reconstruir su historia y darse cuenta de que había sido víctima de violencia.

Este dice: ‘Yo no hacía nada cuando me pegaba. Me llegó a pegar con martillo, con desarmador, con machete...Empezó por los celos. Habíamos ido a la tienda y me dijo que se

me había quedado viendo un hombre. En la casa me pegó. Ya después agarró el machete y me dijo: “Mejor te mato para que no seas para nadie, ya viste cómo te estaba viendo ese señor”. Me iba a dar en la cabeza, pero puse mi brazo y me cortó la mano’.

Todos estos objetos siguen juntos, al final, aunque las mujeres podían decidir cómo exponerlos ella hizo una labor de curaduría. Entonces acaban todos los cuchillos juntos, todas las caguamas juntas (que hay muchísimas caguamas) tiene 237 objetos... 236 y ahorita les explicó porque eran 237 y ahora son 236. Están en el archivo del MUAC para consulta.

Después de la Ciudad de México, lo sacó, también por esta idea de que el arte y los esfuerzos feministas un poco se han centralizado en la Ciudad de México y, la primera ciudad que visitó fue Querétaro. Lo expuso en el Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro en un congreso, el primer congreso de museografía, que organizó el Museo de la Ciudad con la que ahora es Secretaría de Cultura, cuando todavía era el Instituto Queretano de la Cultura y las artes y, en Querétaro la experiencia fue completamente distinta. Hizo lo mismo que había hecho en la Ciudad de México, abrió la convocatoria, esperando recibir objetos y no llegó absolutamente nadie a donar objetos. Entonces, el día de la inauguración Lorena Wolffer, lo que hizo fue poner hojas blancas y escribir: “aquí debería haber un objeto” y sustituyó los espacios en donde debió haber habido un objeto y no apareció. Y solamente en Querétaro, porque era un congreso, al final hizo un conservatorio y, en el conservatorio preguntó: ‘¿por qué en Querétaro nadie había llegado con un objeto? O ¿si de plano en Querétaro, de plano, no había violencia de género?’ Que de hecho a mí me tocó participar en esta experiencia, pero yo era staff entonces tampoco podía yo intervenir mucho. Lo que las mujeres le dijeron fue que: como Querétaro es...todo mundo se conoce, es una sociedad chiquita, les dio miedo que las viera algún conocido entrando con un objeto y le fueran a contar o a sus papás o a sus parejas que habían ido a denunciar la historia de violencia que habían vivido. Entonces, a partir de Querétaro, Wolffer se dio cuenta que ella estaba vulnerabilizando a las mujeres que estaban donando un objeto y, la recolección la hizo a partir de ONG’s y entonces insertó *Evidencias* en el proceso de atención psicológica que reciben estas mujeres por medio de estos refugios u ONG’s como parte de este ejercicio de contar tu historia y reconstruir el hecho por el que estás contando tu historia.

Este objeto que es de violencia psicológica dice: ‘Silencio...silencio...silencio...nadie habla...nadie escucha...nadie puede hablar...miedo...silencio...silencio de castigo o frases destructivas... ¿para qué elegir?’

La tele o el silencio reinando en la casa...nadie puede hablar. Si alguien habla demasiado...corre el riesgo de salir lastimado...apaleado...

Durante años el silencio ha dolido casi tanto como los golpes. El silencio impuesto por alguien que sólo se atreve a dar discursos hechos, repetidos de lo mismo...lo mismo...lo mismo...

No hay razonamientos que valgan...el canal de la comunicación está cerrado siempre...

Y mientras tanto...todos tratando de comprar la idea de que así se puede ser la familia feliz'.

Además, justo para huir de estas estrategias artísticas, que un poco es la historia del arte feminista, entre que los museos no las exhibían y luego decidieron: “bueno, pues no quiero que me exhibas”. Los testimonios no tienen un formato definido y Lorena Wolffer no intervino de..., absolutamente, de ninguna manera en la forma en que las mujeres narraron su historia.

De los 237 objetos, 180 son de violencia familiar, 104 pertenecen a violencia física, 82 a violencia psicológica, 4 son de feminicidio, que donaron familiares a la exposición. Y de estos 138 habían sido violentadas por sus parejas, 38 por los padres y las demás mencionaron que habían sido alguna persona que pertenecía a alguna institución. Yo sé que acabó de hacer el recuento de lo que había ahí, aunque Lorena Wolffer se opone a esta idea de convertir la violencia de género en cifras, porque justo detrás de las cifras hay un montón de historias que son distintas y además, ella en la entrevista que le hice lo que me explicaba que le sorprende es que hay un boom feminista brutal desde 2019, hay unas leyes fantásticas (la LAMVLV) es extraordinaria, pero luego esto no se traduce en más justicia o en mayor igualdad para las mujeres. Entonces esta falta de articulación tiene que ver con que no se están visibilizando a las víctimas y no se entiende que es lo que están viviendo las mujeres en México.

Este (objeto) es violencia física y psicológica: ‘El cambio desde que empezamos a tener problemas económicos, ya mi último hijo tenía siete años. Las discusiones comenzaban a hacerse más agresivas sin llegar a los golpes. Un día al regresar de una cena de su trabajo me llamó “fachosa y tonta” porque le hacía quedar mal con los compañeros del trabajo. De pronto comenzó a insultarme cada vez más fuerte, me jaloneó, me golpeó la cara y entonces fue cuando me escupió. Todavía recuerdo que seguía gritándome aún cuando yo estaba llorando y nuestros hijos se encontraban en casa durmiendo’. Este es el tipo de objetos como que sorprenden, al final es un bote de saliva. Hay mil cosas, hay crucifijos, hay un bote de orina, que sí vamos a ver y, luego hay desgarradores y otros objetos que parecen más relacionados con la violencia.

Caguamas hay un montón y todas las historias están relacionadas con el alcoholismo que, cuando les preguntan a las grandes teóricas del feminismo en México, sobre todo a Marcela Lagarde quién es quien definió y creó el término de feminicidio que heredó de Diana

Russell y Jill Radford como femicidio, cuando le han preguntado, esta pregunta: ‘si el alcohol juega un papel relevante’. Ella lo que dice es que hay casos en los que sí y casos en los que no, y es un problema multifactorial y no podemos asumir que hay una sola causa del feminicidio y, si fuera el alcoholismo, más bien que negligencia de parte de todos y de todas que no se ha atendido esa causa.

La caguama dice: ‘Siempre era igual, él no tenía trabajo y cuando yo le conseguía un viaje de mudanza, él se gastaba todo en caguamas. Se ponía bien borracho, y el último día llegó muy tarde a la casa, entró gritándome una bola de grosería porque un amigo suyo le inventó que yo tenía un amante y que cuando yo me iba a trabajar, realmente me iba a verlo, entonces dizque le fui infiel. Y bien borrachote me dijo de cosas, cuando me dio el guamazo, mi hija salió a defenderme gritándole que yo no era ninguna puta. Ahí fue cuando mi esposo se quitó el cinturón y comenzó a golpearla a ella, por más que le gritaba que le dejara, él siguió. Ahí fue cuando decidí llamar a la policía. Fue entonces cuando me cayó el veinte’.

Hay varios testimonios que cuentan que le llamaron a la policía o que denunciaron, este no dice qué fue lo que pasó después de la denuncia, otros sí cuentan que no hubo ninguna forma de acceso a la justicia.

Las monedas es un caso de feminicidio, de los cuatro que están ahí. Ella cuenta mucho el que recibió en Guadalajara porque fue la hermana de la víctima de feminicidio que llegó con un botecito de pastillas y se animó durante la donación del objeto a contar la historia de la hermana, la pareja de la hermana llegó una noche y envenenó a la hermana y a los perros de la hermana. Y un poco está el vacío presente en los cuatro objetos en el que quién lo debió haber contado pues ya no está: ‘Ella ya no está aquí para contarle, pero lo hizo antes, ésta es su voz.

Aquella noche no fue distinta de todas las anterior, tenía miedo y procuraba cautela. Cuando llegué a mi casa no sabía si él estaría ahí o no. No quería enfrentamientos. Y sí, estaba ahí, dormido, aunque no era tarde, borracho. Me empecé a desvestir para ponerme más cómoda. De pronto sentí una terrible angustia: había tirado al piso unas monedas, sabía que eso lo volvía loco. Traté de recogerlas lo más rápido posible, pero era tarde, ya estaba parado enfrente de mí, con esa mirada de odio. Me dió [sic] una cachetada y me empujó, comenzó a gritarme. Yo corrí y me encerré en el baño. Ahí pasé la noche, una más de muchas, sin dormir, a la expectativa, en el piso’.

Este es el último objeto que les voy a presentar. De los 237 objetos, después de dos años de ya haberlo donado al MUAC, en el 2018, la contactó una de las chicas. Su historia es que llegó una noche a su casa, estaba el novio de su *roomie*, quien le dijo que quería tener relaciones con ella; ella lo rechazó y se fue a dormir y, cuando despertó abrió la puerta de su

cuarto y afuera de su cuarto estaba su vajilla llena de orines de este tipo. Entonces ella donó la vajilla y en el 2018 le escribió a Lorena Wolffer, le dijo que ya había acabado su proceso y ya había lidiado con la violencia a la que ella había estado expuesta y que, para ella era pertinente recuperar la vajilla porque justo la vajilla tenía otro significado y quería recuperar la vajilla. Entonces en realidad, Lorena Wolffer, está un poco expuesta a lo que las donadoras quieran hacer con esos objetos. Tal cual le devolvió la vajilla y listo.

Este es un ejemplo de violencia patrimonial y psicológica: ‘Esa tarde llegué feliz a la casa, no podía estar más orgullosa. Por fin había terminado las pinturas de la exposición. El maestro me había halagado muchísimo y yo ya no podía esperar el momento para mostrárselas a mi novio. Tenía tantas ganas de que se sintiera orgulloso de mí, por primera vez. Ahí estaba, se las empecé a enseñar. Él sólo me dijo que yo no era una artista, que no me atreviera a compararme nunca con él, que eran una porquería y que de una vez asumiera que no servía para nada, que siempre iba a ser una artista chafa, que cómo me pensaba atrever a exponer eso. Enojada me fui al cuarto. Él extendió todos mis trabajos y se orinó en ellos, en todos. Nada quedó’.

También estas historias permiten visibilizar esta idea de que, en cuanto la mujer sale del espacio privado es una gran perpetradora que está arruinando el orden social que tenemos. Y lo último es que tengo un video, el problema de los videos es que creo que no se ven muy bien. De todas formas, acabando les dejó el *link* en YouTube para que puedan ver el video adecuadamente y a su tiempo. Y acabando de ver el video les sedo la palabra, regreso a la diapositiva si alguien quiere regresar a alguna diapositiva si ustedes quieren. Ahora sí que voy a estar a sus órdenes.

SE VE EL VIDEO

Listo, también si tienen alguna pregunta de la obra y se las puedo resolver o comprometerme a investigar y podérselas resolver. Entonces es con micrófonos abiertos a ustedes.

PARTICIPANTE 1: Pues yo, no sé, me da mucho coraje ver estas cosas. Se me hace súper padre que hagan estas cosas para que la gente pueda ver más. No me sorprende que en Querétaro no haya habido (se ríe) o sea gente, o sea que a la gente le haya dado miedo. Pero, hójole, a mí me da un montón de rabia ver estas cosas y darte cuenta y...no darte cuenta porque al menos ya lo sabemos, pero que vivimos en un país con súper pocas ganas de ver lo que está pasando y decir que... o sea yo tengo muchos conocidos que dicen que no solo matan a las mujeres, sino que también a los hombres y que cuál es problema y ¿por qué le damos tanta

importancia? Y ¿por qué se dañan los arcos? Me da coraje de ver estas cosas y más porque siento que a este tipo de exposiciones vas si quieres, pero realmente la gente que no quiere no va a ir y no se va a enterar y no lo va a querer ver. Eso es lo que yo veo. Lo padre de esto es que como tú decías, lo sacan de los museos y también está súper bien. Y así, si vas al parque España o te vas aquí a la Alameda, por ejemplo, pues que veas algo que te topes de madrazo creo que sería mejor a que no todo el mundo le gusta y a los museos o no quiere y ahorita pues menos. Entonces, pues sí.

PARTICIPANTE 2: ¿Se escucha bien? Es que lo escucho medio cortado.

NATALIA: un poquito cortado, pero sí se alcanza a escuchar.

PARTICIPANTE 2: ah va, algo que a mí me parece súper interesante, creo que es, bueno a parte de que sea una exposición de evidencia de estos objetos es que justamente visibilicen este tipo de casos es que, justamente, la violencia no son solo golpes o no son cosas que repercuten físicamente en las mujeres, pero, por ejemplo, esta de la orina, que es una que también me impacta porque, pues obviamente es esta parte de minimizar a las mujeres por, por, ser ellas. Por lo que ella, por la forma en que se está expresando y creo que está muy interesante la forma en que están haciendo evidente estos, también este tipo de objetos o de situaciones en las que se da. Y justo, como dice Participante 1, que también aquí en Querétaro que no se haya podido prestar la ciudad como para que se hiciera una actividad como esta porque aquí todavía existe mucho la parte de la cultura que es muy...más cerrada, que es más...bueno no sé si estoy...si puedo decir esto, que está más arraigada la parte católica, que está más arraigada la parte de la religión y que, justamente, la gente del status y que no quieren ser vistas y que no quieren hablar justamente por la parte de que van a ser criticadas y el qué van a decir. Entonces creo que sí es...y también la parte de llevarlo a los espacios públicos. Se me hace una buena causa.

PARTICIPANTE 3: bueno a mí me tocaron varios. Quería decir que me tocaron varios testimonios. Y bueno estoy con mi pelotita para como sacar mi energía. Varios, si los vuelvo a ver quizá pueda decirlos de uno por uno, pero esto de Querétaro y Guanajuato, yo soy de Guanajuato, aunque tengo 33 años aquí. Bueno recientemente yo saqué en mi familia un asunto de abuso sexual y fue el silencio, o sea dos de mis hermanos, una hermana, —mi hermana mayor— y un hermano, me dijeron: “tú no dices nada, este...” pero igualito, así: “tú no le dices nada a mis hermanos”. O sea, esta cultura del silencio, o sea dije pues claro, me estructura el

silencio, pues claro que sí. He usado también mucho el arte yo, para poder expresar. Yo pensé, qué objetos llevaría y yo pensé, bueno pues yo llevaría objetos que yo he realizado, por ejemplo, mi primera pareja yo terminé con él porque un día me dijo: “puta de mierda”. Y terminé con él y no regresé jamás, pero me dolió mucho ese, ese, ese...y cómo lo fue trabajando, y trabajando y trabajando, finalmente como que con lo que di ya en, en, en finalizar ese episodio fue en pintar un cristo que está haciendo popó y de la popó (ríe), pero fue un sueño, fue un sueño, así fue; y de la popó salen florecitas, este...y ya ahí se acabó y claro con un chingo de terapia y todo. Y esto de minimizar, o sea esto de la violencia simbólica, el de destruir lo que, lo que hacemos, este...pues sí, el minimizarlo, o no escucharlo, o en este caso extremo orinarlo ¿no? Quizá, bueno también tengo esa experiencia más o menos, pero sí creo que es de lo más doloroso el no ser vista, no ser apreciada, no ser, este (se le corta la voz con lágrimas). Y bueno, yo trabajando género, yo trabajando género, igualdad de género y que me lo diga alguien que yo apreciaba mucho y que trabajaba género, masculinidad ¿no? Entonces es una cosa muy dolorosa (continúa con la voz cortada), muy dolorosa y creo que para mí sí, el arte es una posibilidad de sacarlo y bueno también, así, en vez de arañarme el corazón, mejor arañarme mi pelotita o hacer una actividad física que me permita sacar eso afuera. Y sí creo que no es una cuestión personal de esas chavas, no es una cuestión de pareja, ni familiar. O sea, yo, al menos yo sí me identifiqué con varios casos, bueno cuchillo no, ni martillo, no he llegado hasta allá (ríe). Pero sí, este, en palabras y en cosas pues simbólicas creo que eso sí es. O el silencio, este silencio que nos estructura, al menos yo. A mí me encantó oírlos a un hermano y luego a mi hermana decirles la misma frase: ‘tú no hablas con mis hermanos’ y dije órale, qué bien, hablan igualito, eso mismo deben tener en la cabeza, esa prohibición. Entonces sí, en conclusión, sí me identifiqué con varias y creo que no puedo sustraerme a lo que...como que no está afuera; el arte no está afuera, está de alguna manera conectado con lo que a mí me pasa, o me pasó, o me pasaba o igual me vuelve a pasar, quién sabe.

NATALIA: muchas gracias, Participante 3. ¿Alguien más?

PARTICIPANTE 4: Sí, yo. Bueno pues, primero a ver, voy a ver si estructuro. Sí, los relatos, las narrativas son muy dolorosas, dolorosas porque parten de una cotidianidad, parten de la vida que va transcurriendo día tras día. Y estoy pensando en estas narrativas, estoy como leyendo, me anoté algunas cosas (hojea su cuaderno) como para encontrar cosas de la narración que trabajo generalmente con narrativas. Y es muy interesante que estos testimonios, por ejemplo, es ese relato personal parte de la vida en pareja, de la vida en familia. Creo que aquí

todas de la vida en pareja y estaba pensando en estos pactos, por ejemplo, de silencio. Yo tenía la duda de cuándo fue esta exposición que hace Lorena Wolffer en Querétaro, que yo, por ejemplo, ni me enteré, bueno no tenía porqué enterarme, pero ¿en qué año fue, Natalia?

NATALIA: fue en el 2010.

PARTICIPANTE 4: Ok. Y sí, y me reí cuando se comentó que en Querétaro nadie había ido a dejar un testimonio y claro, pensando en la sociedad queretana, o sea queretana, hay todo un tema en la cuestión de la queretaneidad, es una ciudad pequeña, todos nos conocemos, y sin embargo la violencia está presente y ahí es un pacto ya de silencio, de no decir nada, un primer pacto. Y me llama mucho la atención porque también, por ejemplo, hablando con amigas, hablando pues en el espacio más concreto que sería la familia, no se dice nada hasta que uno empieza como a tirar del hilo. O hasta que yo empecé a tirar del hilo con algunas historias familiares, esto a nivel familiar y luego al nivel de extender el núcleo, como ir hablando, pero la parte esa es importante, la de poder hablar y que a veces no se puede hablar o, a veces, no se permite hablar y entonces esta cuestión del silencio es algo que prevalece, es algo que está ahí presente en los textos y es algo que yo creo que está presente...tendríamos que ver desde cuándo. Y decimos, en qué momento o yo me pregunto, o sea justamente, como a partir de esto que nos está siendo evidente, que se nos está mostrando, que se está haciendo visible, que se está compartiendo y qué hacemos con esto que vemos, que visibilizamos y si con esto podemos hablar con nuestras personas que, yo siempre digo, si empezamos a hablar de esto con quienes están en nuestro círculo más cercano eso ya sería un gran logro. Porque si lo pienso desde la cuestión académica, que es en el ámbito en el que me muevo, pero una cosa es la parte académica, las cuestiones, vamos a decir textuales y otra cosa es hablar realmente de cómo podemos llevar, no sé estaba pensando estas cuestiones de estos feminismos hacia realidades que son tal vez diferentes a lo que se proponen los libros y cómo podemos hacer que las jóvenes, que las estudiantes puedan realmente comenzar a hablar, puedan comenzar a hablar, puedan comenzar a escribir desde su propia experiencia. La parte académica se queda siempre, a veces, no siempre, a veces esto de arte y *artivismo*, pero la parte académica se queda como muy en el cuadro, ¿no? No estoy diciendo todas; no estoy diciendo toda la parte académica, pero al menos desde la parte de la literatura es cómo hacemos que esta obra de Lorena Wolffer, que además toca, por ejemplo, temas muy interesantes de lo privado y lo público y que realmente llevar la vida privada, ponerla a los ojos de los demás, compartiría con los demás es un trabajo difícil, es un trabajo que implica muchos procesos, pues, para todas las personas que

hayamos vivido violencias. Porque yo creo que o yo pienso que las habremos vivido todas en alguna medida, ¿no? En algún momento de nuestra vida. No sé ya me paro (ríe) porque si no puedo seguir hablando y hablando, me parece muy interesante. Una cosa más que quería agregar, esta cuestión de los objetos, por ejemplo, el martillo, el machete, la caguama y luego la otra cosa que tiene que ver también con una manera de agredir y que son además fluidos corporales, que es la saliva, que es la orina, entonces que no es solamente una cuestión de un objeto, no solamente a través de la palabra, entonces que es interesante, vamos a decir, el análisis desde afuera, esta utilización de los fluidos corporales como una manera de agredir a la otra persona, la acción de escupir. Estoy pensando porque estoy trabajando con una alumna sobre narrativas de sicariato, ¿no? Y estamos analizando verbos, bueno verbos de violencia y entonces justamente como cuáles, pues hay muchísimos en las novelas del sicariato y es interesante pues pensar y ahora esto me hace pensar más cosas, pero ahí me detengo porque no quiero acaparar todo.

PARTICIPANTE 5: Bueno, ahora sí quiero hablar yo. Bueno yo, pensando desde que dijiste que fue en el 2010, pues yo tenía 15 años cuando salió y estaba en una escuela católica cuando salió, del Opus Dei. Entonces obviamente ese tipo de exposiciones para mí y mis conocidas eran totalmente irrelevantes que de hecho eso nos llevó, ahora que ya somos más grandes, casi todas mis amigas son feministas o están tratando de entrar al mundo del feminismo, que pues la educación que nos dieron nos hizo quedarnos calladas. Hay muchas que han sufrido violencia en muchos sentidos, tengo amigas que fueron agredidas sexualmente y que, por la educación que tuvimos no pudieron decirle a nadie, ni hablarle a la policía, ni hacer nada y, hasta la fecha siguen sin poder aceptar que lo que tuvieron fue una violencia sexual a pesar de que cuando me lo platicaron a mí...porque yo he sido feminista durante mucho más tiempo que la mayoría de mis amigas y tuvieron la confianza de venir a mí, a decírmelo, a pesar de que yo supe desde el momento que me lo dijeron que había sido una violencia sexual, ellas no lo pudieron aceptar porque es una forma como que de defenderse a ellas mismas. Pero, por la educación que tuvimos, este tipo de exposiciones que te ayudan a ver que hay violencia en muchos más sentidos de lo que nos han enseñado, pues no lo tenemos tan a la mano y, te da miedo hablar porque te da miedo qué van a decir y porque es cotidiano, de alguna forma se vuelve algo que pasa seguido y que les pasa a todas y que es muy difícil. Si yo a los 15 años hubiera tenido acceso a esto, que, pues estaba presente, pero por la educación que tuve no, no estaba muy presente que digamos, siento que habría sido totalmente diferente para mí y para muchas de mis amigas, la forma en la que crecimos y como nuestras experiencias en todos los

sentidos, tanto escolares como de relaciones, pero pues no. Y siento que ahorita, por las redes sociales, más niñas tienen más acceso y pues la verdad me parece muy bien eso. Pero, por lo menos por mi experiencia me parece que no fue así. Y ya.

NATALIA: Mil gracias, Participante 5. Bueno, Participante 6, no sé si quieres hablar, no estás obligada.

PARTICIPANTE 6: no sí, ¿me escucho?

NATALIA: sí

PARTICIPANTE 6: Ok, a mí me pasan dos cosas con este tipo de exposiciones. La primera es que es un claro ejemplo de que, el arte responde a la sociedad y pues, lo que la artista comentaba en el video de poderle dar voz a mujeres que ya no la tienen por ser víctimas de violencia o de un feminicidio a través del arte pues sigue siendo a través del arte, pues sigue siendo muy importante que de cualquier otra manera. Y creo que también, cuando preguntan que, porque rayan los arcos, pues creo que es dar voz y eso me parece increíble y de alguna manera lo apoyo al 100%. Me causa mucho conflicto, y no sólo con este tema, sino con otros como controversias sociales que tengas que hacer algo como tan crudo para concientizar a la sociedad. O sea, yo siempre como que mi discurso feminista es: ¿por qué les tenemos que pedir que nos dejen de matar? O sea, ¿por qué tenemos que pedir que no me quites la vida? Y, de alguna manera, este tipo de exposiciones me hacen temblar, porque digo: cómo te tengo que explicar, de qué otra manera te explicamos todo lo que está pasando. Entonces te tengo que mostrar los objetos con los que estas mujeres fueron violentadas e incluso asesinadas para que te des cuenta de lo cotidiano que es y que no necesitan tener una pistola o algún arma con la que normalmente quitarías la vida o violentarías a alguien, sino, unas monedas, o lo que decíamos del fracaso de orina se convierten en objetos violentos al momento que alguien decide usarlos de esa manera. Entonces me parece, o sea me causa conflicto esa dualidad. Me parece súper interesante que se le de voz a través del arte, pero me causa conflicto el tipo de sociedad en el que vivimos para ser así de crudos para que alguien sea consciente de lo que está pasando.

NATALIA: perfecto, muchas gracias. Tengo unas preguntas que derivé de lo que estaban diciendo. Sobre las pintas el libro de Suzanne Lacy les puede dar argumentos para defender porqué se vale pintar monumentos, pero no voy a organizar una revolución feminista. Está en

inglés, habría que traducir, habría que traducirlos. Mis preguntas, son, que más o menos las han ido respondiendo. ¿Qué opinan de la disponibilidad que hay hoy en día para acceder a estas historias? ¿Es pertinente? ¿Sigue teniendo sentido? ¿Qué hacemos con todas estas?

PARTICIPANTE 1: Tú dices, ¿a parte de esta exposición? O sea, en general ¿no?

NATALIA: Sí, en general.

PARTICIPANTE 1: Pues yo creo que es súper importante, al menos yo, ahorita lo que hablaban de tipo, esta exposición, que ya no es, me parece que como decía la Participante 6, que es una respuesta a la sociedad esto. Ya no es nada más contar, ya no basta con contar lo que nos pasa, lo que le pasa a la gente, a nuestras amigas. Ya se tiene que enseñar, objetos del día a día para que la gente lo sienta cercano y para que lo entienda. Entonces, siento que, siempre, siempre entre más sabes historias más aprendes tú y más cuenta te das de que a ti también te ha pasado, porque a mí me ha pasado también. Porque, como decía la Participante 5, yo antes, yo no estuve en escuela católica, pero, pues... México, entonces como que conforme he crecido me he dado cuenta de que a parte que me han violentado de manera física, lo psicológico es algo que, cómo lo pruebas, cómo te das cuenta de que realmente estaba mal. Entonces cuando escuchas a todas estas mujeres que tuvieron los ovarios para ir y enseñar estas cosas, o sea como que te resuena y te das cuenta de que lo que tu pensabas que es normal, no es normal, entonces yo siento que hasta siento que faltaría que hubiera más formas de ver estos relatos. O sea, yo lo veo, como en Querétaro, o sea dónde podemos ver a parte de publicaciones en Facebook o Instagram que están saliendo a contar de sus abusadores. O sea, hace falta poder verlo más seguido y no que no cause revuelo cada vez que lo ves en Facebook, sino que realmente se vea que a todas nos ha pasado. Yo también creo que a todas nos ha pasado de una forma u otra, y que, desde palabras, físico o lo que sea, la violencia es muy, muy grande. Esto siento que ayuda un montón.

PARTICIPANTE 3: a mí me gustó mucho la experiencia de la chava que le pidió la vajilla a la curadora.

NATALIA: pues sí, Lorena trabajó como curadora.

PARTICIPANTE 3: sí, eso me gustó mucho porque ella estaba asumiendo que tenía ya una alternativa, para, para, para, dejar eso doloroso, ¿no? Entonces, mira un relato crudo, yo no

puedo, de hecho, no pude estar en cuestiones de feminicidio porque literalmente no podía escucharlos. No, o sea, yo no, o sea no puedo escuchar, ni ver escenas de violencia sin que me afecten, entonces, por eso me gustó el testimonio de esta chava, porque, bueno a mí se me hace, como te dije, el arte se me hace como una terapia. Cuando el sujeto, sea yo o sea ella, creo que tiene que tener la oportunidad de transformar ese dolor en arte, o en algo que lo cambie, que lo sublime, que lo exprese, no sé, pienso que, en primero, sólo es ético, si la sujeta, si la mujer, está de acuerdo en mostrarlo y en cómo mostrarlo y que tenga la alternativa de curarlo, también. Eso es para mí.

PARTICIPANTE 2: yo igual que la Participante 3, ahorita que dijo al final eso, creo que viene muy claro. Esta exposición de presta a que las mujeres puedan hacer eso. O sea, permitir que ese objeto que representa la violencia que sufrieron esté ahí y esté presente para que otras mujeres puedan verlo y puedan experimentarlo de otra forma, pero puedan ver cómo fue. Justamente, con esta parte de la narración y ver el objeto como tal. Ya sea, el de la vajilla o el que cambió, o ¿a qué cambió ella?

NATALIA: ella sólo la volvió.

PARTICIPANTE 2: pero, después dejó algo más, ¿no?

NATALIA: ah no, fue otra señora que llevó tres objetos.

PARTICIPANTE 2: Ah ok, pero justamente está la parte, está esta parte que ella tiene, lo permitió y otras mujeres pueden intervenir en experimentarlo en poder acceder a él. Y a mí sí se me hacen súper pertinentes exposiciones como esta porque sí visibilizan, como ya lo había dicho, visibilizan otro tipo de violencias que normalmente que nosotros no estamos conscientes que pueden representar eso. Entonces, a mí sí me parece que no es obsoleta en lo absoluta.

NATALIA: ok. ¿Qué opinan de que los objetos fueran expuestos en un museo o en un espacio público en lugar de estar en un expediente policial como parte de una investigación? O sea, que las evidencias no se convirtieran tal cual en evidencias policiales para enfrentar la violencia de género.

PARTICIPANTE 4: Yo. Pues yo opino que, a ver, que, si se hubieran quedado como evidencias en la cuestión judicial, no nos habríamos enterado de éstas, no habríamos visto esta exhibición, para empezar, porque habrían dicho que a lo mejor las clasificarían como algo que no podría ser visto. El hecho de llevarlas al museo, el hecho de hacerlas públicas. Que claro, diríamos, también al museo, quién va al museo, va cierto público, ciertas personas, eso también hay que señalarlo, me pareció muy oportuno que se exhibieran en la Alameda Central, en el Parque España porque son espacios públicos donde se transitan otros tipos de persona que no necesariamente van al museo, porque ya el museo también...entonces en eso diría que me parece apropiado que aun en el museo el público es muy, digamos, delimitado y llevados a la Alameda Central, al parque España lo hacen más visible para más personas que no son solamente las que van al museo. Entonces yo sigo pensando que sí es necesario esta visibilización, que sí es importante que hablemos de esto que ocurre. Y que, así como hablamos a lo mejor, no sé, pero hablamos por decir de algún tema, hablamos de fútbol, no van a decir: “no, no hablemos de fútbol”. Pero bueno, así como hablamos de un tema tan común, como sería hablar del fútbol, pues justamente, por qué no hablamos de esto que afecta y que nos afecta en muchos sentidos y sigo pensando que está bien ponerlo ahí y que está bien que no se quede solamente ahí, que no se quede en el museo, que no se quede solamente en una exhibición en unas imágenes que vi en la alameda central, sino que está pues perfore nuestra vida, y yo digo como nuestra vida es nuestra vida cotidiana. Que hagamos eso y que sepamos que está ahí esa violencia y que es una violencia que está las 24 horas del día. Y pues eso.

PARTICIPANTE 5: Dijiste que algunos de esos objetos, bueno más bien dijiste que algunas historias habían llegado a las autoridades, bueno pues yo también creo que, el que sus objetos estén expuestos en una exposición habla de la ineptitud de las autoridades. Entonces también es una forma de evidenciar en esto. Me parece importante que estén expuestos.

PARTICIPANTE 6: yo también creo que es importante lo que decíamos hace rato. Llevar la vida privada a la vida pública, tristemente, algunos de estos objetos sí entrarían como evidencia, pero también muchos objetos no. Por ejemplo, la vajilla muy probablemente no entraría como evidencia, entonces es tan limitado para cuestiones de violencia de género lo que se puede mostrar tal como evidencia de una violencia que muchas cosas de estas quedarían en un archivo, en una foto y ya. También estamos hablando de violencia psicológica, que muchos de estos objetos fueron usados para eso y que también como evidencia probablemente no entrarían, entonces ya llevar esta vida privada de lo que paso de las monedas: a él le chocaba

que se le cayeran las monedas y ya le fue suficiente razón para violentarla, llevar esa vida privada a una anécdota de la vida pública, creo que eso es lo importante, que no se quede en un archivo. Y claro, como dice participante 5, seguramente alguna, no sé si todas, probablemente denunciaron y no pasó nada.

PARTICIPANTE 3: a mí se me hace importante que se muestren a las mujeres y al público porque justo esto, la subjetividad o la intersubjetividad de estar platicando lo que para cada uno significa estos objetos, estos...o sea la explicación de lo que significa para la autora y lo que significa para cada quien y cómo nos toca. Pues justo cambia la intersubjetividad, si se hicieran muchos así cambiaría la cultura, con mucho arte en todos lados.

NATALIA: Ok.

PARTICIPANTE 6: Yo me acuerdo de que vi hace tiempo una exposición de niñas violadas y ponían los zapatos de las niñas que habían sido violadas en la calle y fue súper viral, sobre todo las imágenes y en Facebook por lo que mostraban. Cómo es ese zapatito tan inocente le había pertenecido justamente a una una niña inocente que no tenía que haber sido violada. Y creo que es ese mismo discurso, o sea llevar ese objeto privado a la vida pública para concientizar, sirve, uno y además es como parte de nuestra lucha. O sea, como ya no sabemos cómo hacerte entender pues de esta manera lo vamos a intentar.

NATALIA: Ok. Y, mi última pregunta es un poco ¿qué demandarían ustedes del espacio público ya sea para montar este tipo de exposiciones y participar o para justo establecer el diálogo posterior, como lo que mencionaba la Participante 4, que no se quede la experiencia de ver estos testimonios en una lucha interna? ¿Qué demandarían ustedes del espacio para sentirse seguras?

PARTICIPANTE 3: a mí me gustaría platicar con la autora de la vaquita que está en los arcos, porque le pusieron una pañuelaza verde, entonces se veía más bonita con su pañuelo que sin la pañuelo. Entonces me gustaría platicar con la autora de cómo ve a su vaquita con la pañuelo. Y me gustó mucho porque fue una actividad muy colectiva, a alguien se le ocurrió comprar la tela, a alguien se le ocurrió hacer la pañuelo, iban a ser pañuelos chiquitos, pero decidió hacer una pañuelota. Otras se la pusieron, o sea es muy colectiva esa exposición de la vaquilla y el diálogo con la artista. El diálogo con la artista, qué piensa de esas intervenciones. Porque hasta

ahorita lo que se ha escuchado con respecto a eso es pues las amenazas de la diputada Elsa Méndez, ya este...amenazó a 14 jóvenes, ya las puso en su Face, las expuso, hay hordas de gente de ultraderecha metida amenazándoles, mandándoles amenazas de muerte, mandándoles fotos de feminicidios y escribiéndoles, hablándoles o sea eso es lo que está provocando la diputada y no hay ese diálogo con la artista, por ejemplo.

PARTICIPANTE 1: A mí me gustaría que hubiera, por ejemplo, primero pensé, poner estas exposiciones afuera de iglesias en Querétaro, pero que fuera en lugares tipo universidad o sea que lo tengas más a la mano sin buscarlo, porque luego también la gente no lo quiere ver. Pues sí, ahorita lo pensé en universidades, a mí me habría gustado haber visto esas cosas y que te llamaran la atención, o sea que realmente no te lo esperaras y lo vieras más en tus alrededores, que lo tuvieras menos especializado.

PARTICIPANTE 2: yo lo que pienso, bueno a parte de justamente espacios escolares de universidades, creo que también faltan los espacios donde damos más representación, también en lugares donde hay menos alcance de la tecnología. O sea, por ejemplo, espacios de comunidades pues el acceso a estos espacios como los museos, o el jardín, pues probablemente no es para ellos, o para ellas que son a las que queremos que lleguen este tipo de arte, de activismo. La representación que se busque que ellas también puedan hablar, que también puedan mostrar este tipo de cosas, porque normalmente no llega, o sea no llega a estos espacios y pues yo creo que hay que llegar. Y pues la seguridad que comentaba también Participante 1, bueno no sé si dijeron de seguridad, la seguridad de las personas, o de las mujeres que quieran mostrar arte u objetos, o lo que sea, que exista la seguridad de que no va a suceder nada después.

PARTICIPANTE 6: yo creo que yo también, de alguna manera, demandaría como la libertad de expresión artística, o sea al final de cuentas el feminismo surge de una necesidad de opresión que no es fácil de digerir cuando toca ciertos temas cruda. Y bueno, yo me dedico al cine y pasa mucho que en narrativas, cuando sabes que tu película va a salir a cierta comercialidad, evitas ciertos temas o evitas ciertas escenas o evitas ciertas cosas tan gráficas porque no se te permite ser tan gráfico en ciertas cosas, entonces, no sé creo que es complicado, creo que lo gráfico mueve, lo gráfico impacta y de alguna manera pues demandaría que esa libertad de expresión, de poder hablar de un tema tal como es, sin disfrazarse, sin taparse, sin censurarse.

NATALIA: Perfecto, no sé si alguien más quiera decir otra cosa. Ok. Les agradezco muchísimo haber participado hoy. Les suplico que participen mañana para poder tener uniformidad en mi metodología y les comparto todos los materiales acabando para no interferir demasiado en sus opiniones y que sea lo menos intervencionista de mi parte el experimento, pero ya tomé nota y yo les comparto una carpeta con algunos materiales. Muchísimas gracias, nos vemos mañana.

Session 2. Querétaro: *In/Visible* by Cerrucha, 13 October 2020

La artista con la que hoy voy a trabajar es Cerrucha, que es un pseudónimo y en concreto voy a trabajar con la obra de *In/visible* y luego metí otras dos obras, que son como derivadas de *In/Visible*, pero justo me parecen interesantes y en ese sentido les voy a proponer hoy un ejercicio mientras estoy exponiendo que hacen que tenga como más sentido la exposición de invisible. Cerrucha es mexicana, justo es la generación reciente de feministas, ella nació en el 87, entonces es más joven que Wolffer ha trabajado con Lorena. Estudió en Canadá y ella sí se llama artista sin ningún problema, en su página de internet, de hecho, deja claro que Cerrucha es su pseudónimo de artista. Ayer que salía mucho el tema de las pintas, ella justo por eso usa el pseudónimo, porque es una forma de firmar la obra, pero atribuirse el crédito a su nombre. Ella no publica en ningún lugar su nombre real, salvo en su correo, si le escriben les va a contestar con su nombre real, pero bueno yo prefiero no revelarlo porque ella no lo hace. Está súper activa en Instagram, de hecho, ahorita tiene un proyecto que se llama Arte: Arma de construcción masiva, en donde entrevistó, la primera fue una entrevista a Lorena Wolffer, está increíble el proyecto. Nada más les pediría a las que no la siguen todavía en Instagram, les pediría que se esperen al jueves para seguirla para que no influya en los resultados de mi investigación.

Ella estudió en Canadá artes visuales y fotografía. Se dedica sobre todo a la fotografía, pero hace instalaciones de arte callejero, muy parecidas a las que hace el artista francés JR, que no sé si lo ubican, también está muy activo en Instagram, nada más que el señor tiene un acceso a recursos brutal que Cerrucha no tiene, y, en la entrevista que le hice, justo es lo que dice, que si tuviera más recursos saldría de la Ciudad de México y, tal vez sus instalaciones serían más grandes. Ha ido cambiando un poco su dinámica de trabajo. Por ejemplo, ya tuvo un proyecto que incluía las pintas feministas durante las marchas, porque al final también las pintas son una forma de arte callejero y, hay que entender que el arte callejero es distinto a estos proyecto de intervención, que yo más bien los veo parecidos al muralismo; porque el arte callejero se pinta o se pega donde es pertinente que se pinte o se pegue para que lo vea quien lo tiene que ver, si es una crítica al gobierno, pues entonces se pegará o se pintará frente a donde trabajen diputados o senadores, si es para una población en específico va a estar ahí. Y juega con el tema de la ilegalidad, a veces es permitido y a veces no es permitido.

Invisible es la obra que ella realizó como su tesis en Canadá. Luego hizo una segunda versión de invisible y luego la volvió a adaptar. Yo nada más estoy trabajando con la primera fase, que es la de 2011, porque la segunda fase lo abrió a públicos de todo el mundo y justo, si

está siendo bastante complicado rastrear los efectos de las obras de activismo feminista, si me hubiera abierto a la globalización se complicaría más, entonces nada más me estoy concentrando en el caso mexicano.

Su pseudónimo es una mezcla, no es un error ortográfico, viene de serrucho y de cer [existir] y ella se define de la siguiente manera: “serruchar las mentes ajenas, ruptura de preconceptos, siembra de cuestionamientos”. Eso es como el objetivo que tiene con sus estrategias. Invisible justo fueron una serie de fotografías, originalmente eran cinco, incluía la quinta, pero solamente pudo pegar 4, por cuestiones de presupuesto, pero sí la incluí porque me parece que establece un diálogo interesante con las cuatro imágenes. Estas cuatro imágenes son pensadas únicamente para el universo mexicano. Incluyó originalmente 2000 copias de cada una, usando Offset sobre papel periódico y cubrió 8.5 km sobre avenida Insurgentes Sur, y las estaciones del metro de Salto del Agua y Tacuba. La estrategia que ella hizo se llama *bombing* que es cuando cubres la mayor parte de una ciudad en el menor tiempo posible de forma que la ciudad amenace de forma completamente distinta a cómo había anochecido. Justo eligió estos lugares que son estratégicos, ella dice que prefiere trabajar con poblaciones vulnerabilizadas, sin embargo, como está trabajando aquí con estereotipos y roles de género, sí buscó atender a una población más bien de la clase media y por eso la zona de Insurgentes que eligió, que está llena de oficinas, sobre todo hay muchísimas oficinas de gobierno en la zona de Insurgentes Sur donde pegó estas imágenes. Todas las imágenes son así, son tatuajes falsos sobre los que se lee alguna forma de estereotipo o de roles de género, este dice: ‘todos los hombres son iguales’ y obviamente está referida a esta idea del machismo y de que absolutamente todos los hombres están destinados a ser machistas y como que hay algo de su naturaleza que los lleva a ser machistas, esa es la imagen completa, nunca se vio la cabeza del señor.

Luego tenía este que dice: ‘mi marido sí me deja trabajar’ y esta bueno, es una realidad en México, 12.8% de las mujeres sigue pidiendo permiso para salir a trabajar, incluso muchas de ellas presumen que el que les den permiso implica que tienen más libertad que a las que no les dan permiso y aunque el porcentaje tan grande en relación a otros problemas que tenemos de género, el 47.6% de las mujeres en México siente que trabajar implica descuidar a sus hijos, entonces hay toda una carga de culpabilidad en torno al salir de la casa y separarse del espacio privado e integrarse al espacio público. Además está todo el tema que explica una académica feminista mexicana, Teresa Incháustegui, que dice que el problema, en casi todo el mundo, pero en México es muy notorio, es que las mujeres no iniciaron a trabajar por un triunfo del feminismo, iniciaron a trabajar porque justo en los 80s empezaron a haber crisis económicas

tras crisis económicas y entonces no quedó de otra más que permitir o forzar a la mujer a trabajar para poder tener un segundo ingreso en el hogar, y de ahí viene también toda esta relación de salarios más bajos a mujeres que a hombres, o la brecha de género que tenemos en salarios en México.

Luego tiene este cartel que decía ‘eres un mandilón’. Mandilón, supongo que dado que estoy con un público mexicano todo el mundo sabe qué significa, es uno de los términos que más trabajo me ha costado traducir, pero bueno tiene que ver con el hombre que se dedica a cumplir labores que se creen que son, que...tienen atribución femenina, que hay una conexión natural entre las labores que llevan a cabo las labores que llevan a cabo las mujeres en lo privado y, por lo tanto, el hombre que se dedica a esas labores está yendo en contra de la naturaleza. La línea, no sé si la alcanzan a ver, pero el cartel tiene como una línea, es accidental, es porque el cartel estaba doblado, entonces no tiene un significado particular la línea.

El siguiente fue este, que dice: ‘ese juego no es para niñas’. Es el único el cartel de los cuatro que ella pegó que la persona fotografiada mira directamente al público, en las fotografía que hay del montaje que hizo Cerrucha, el cartel más dañado por parte del público fue justo el de la niña, en la mayoría le arrancaron el pedazo de los ojos, que ese un poco el tema del arte callejero, los artistas saben que su arte está expuesto a la vandalización y es parte de la obra, pero justo tampoco hay una medición o una forma de saber si en concreto dañaron el cartel de la niña porque fue el que más le molestó al público o si algún otra razón detrás de esta acción de vandalismo a la obra de Cerrucha.

Y, el quinto cartel, que, si lo agregué, es este, que también estuvo pensado para el público mexicano, que dice: ‘lloras como niña’ y aunque el niño no ve directamente al espectador, al final, sí se le puede ver la cara completa y un poco contradice esto de lloras como niña y justo está a punto de soltarse a llorar el niño mientras está siendo tatuado.

La obra entera, tanto esta fase como la segunda fase, justo a lo que se está enfrentando es a la construcción patriarcal y, la definición de patriarcado con la que estoy trabajando es la de Marcela Lagarde. Marcela Lagarde va estar presente, estuvo ayer y mañana también voy a trabajar con ella. Ella define al patriarcado o, a la opresión patriarcal como: ‘La opresión patriarcal de las mujeres es genérica, es decir, las mujeres son oprimidas por el hecho de ser mujeres, cualquiera que sea su posición de clase, su lengua, su edad, su raza, su nacionalidad, su ocupación. En el mundo patriarcal ser mujer es ser oprimida’. (Lagarde, Los cautiverios de las mujeres). Obviamente hoy habría que cambiar la palabra raza por etnia porque ya no se está usando raza en ciencias sociales.

Después de que presentó In/visible, se dio cuenta que estaba cometiendo, o que había cosas de la primera instalación que no le encantaban. La primera justo es que no sabía cómo había reaccionado el público, ella no había tenido ninguna forma de interacción con el público, salvo el día del montaje, y, a ella, justo lo que le interesa es conocer cómo está reaccionando el público a estas formas de intervención feministas. Y, también se dio cuenta que, como las personas tatuadas, o falsamente tatuadas de sus carteles, no estaban frente a ella, no tenían forma de contestar, caía en una re-victimización. O sea, el decirle al hombre que se ve menos, de acuerdo con el estereotipo del macho, que es un mandilón y no darle la posibilidad de que le conteste ella misma lo está victimizando y perpetúa esta idea de las etiquetas y de los estereotipos. Por otro lado, además se dio cuenta que a ella lo que le interesaba era llevar, o tenía más bien fines de activismo feminista y, el street art, no termina por llevarla a un objetivo más cercano al activismo feminista. Sigue haciendo este tipo de instalaciones, la última que hizo fue en el metro de la Ciudad de México, pero ya no tiene como estas críticas, más bien se ha dedicado a promover una imagen positiva de la mujer, una cuestión de sororidad entre mujeres entonces muestra a varias mujeres agarradas de la mano, pero ya no es este tipo de sentencias de género.

Y en la última sesión que tuvo en su proyecto de 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva', entrevistó a una mujer etíope que está haciendo un programa de empoderamiento femenino y, mientras se cortó la transmisión ella explicó la diferencia entre el arte y el artivismo, es que el artivismo primero piensa en la causa que quiere atender y, posteriormente actúa con estrategias artísticas sobre él. O sea, no es la obra de arte con su contenido social, sino es más bien la utilidad social y luego veo qué estrategias del arte puedo adecuar para que sea mejor.

Después de esta parte de invisible, la adapta y, en ese sentido les voy a mostrar las imágenes de lo que hizo después, porque no hay videos de cómo lo trabajó y entonces les quería proponer si en el chat pueden ustedes contestar. Ella lo que hizo, fue decir: ok, ya tengo los tatuajes, ya tengo todo el trabajo de los estereotipos y roles de género e insultos con connotación de género en México y, entonces, llegaba a talleres o a festivales y tatuaba a la gente con tinta y si la gente lograba responderle al tatuaje lo borraba, si la gente no lograba responderle al tatuaje la gente se quedaba tatuada durante dos semanas pensando en aquel insulto o aquel estereotipo que no había logrado contestar, con la esperanza de que, el tener marcado durante dos semanas ese estereotipo o ese insulto lo o la llevará a trabajar de manera mucho más profunda con estas palabras, estuvo abierto a hombres y a mujeres en el segundo, el primero sólo fue a mujeres porque fue en un taller de violencia de género. Entonces mi

propuesta es si en el chat pueden intentar contestar a los tatuajes que vamos a ver. Esta es como se veía en las calles invisible.

Justo también pensar en la construcción genérica de los insultos, este dice ‘qué puto eres’, obviamente a ninguna de las participantes, el insulto no está dirigido a ninguna de las que está aquí, pero si lo traducimos al femenino: ‘qué puta eres’ tiene un significado completamente distinto entonces pensar en cómo responderían a este tatuaje.

Esta nueva dinámica de invisible lo presentó en un taller que se llamó ‘Texō’ en latín, que significa bordar o entretejer en el Centro Cultural España y la otra versión la trabajó en el Festival CompArte de los Zapatistas, en la Universidad de la Tierra y se llamó ‘Qué la boca se te haga chicharrón’, que es esta expresión, cuando dices algo que puede suceder y entonces la gente te dice: ‘que la boca se te haga chicharrón’ para evitar que se vuelva realidad, obviamente fue distinto en uno y en otro porque al final, en el segundo estuvo en contacto con los zapatistas, y curiosamente en estas comunidades le pudieron contestar a todos los insultos y en el Centro Cultural España no pudieron contestarle a todos los insultos, la hipótesis tiene que ver con las mujeres zapatistas al vivir alejadas de la cultura mainstream, o han sido tan influidas de los contenidos mediáticos a los que sí han estado expuestas las poblaciones urbanas. Una de las cosas interesantes que resultó del taller es que, los insultos que incluían la palabra chingar no fueron contestados, eso se quedaba, que ahí justo yo estoy hipotetizando el peso de la palabra chingar en el contexto mexicano.

Este que dice ‘feminazi’, este en la universidad de la tierra en Chiapas. Que feminazi comienza a ser un insulto común a raíz de las marchas. ‘Seguro te está bajando’, que sigue siendo en la universidad de la tierra. Lo difícil de analizar las de Texō, que es la que presentó en el Centro Cultural España a las participantes del taller en contra de la violencia de género no puede revelar mucho de la experiencia porque tiene que garantizar la seguridad de las participantes, entonces tampoco es que haya mucha información. Incluso entrevistándola sí cuenta, pero está limitado lo que puede contar.

Esta que dice ‘date a desear’, elegí estas imágenes no tanto por los insultos que tienen, sino o por las frase que tienen porque eran los más visibles y los más fáciles de leer, porque los demás se ve la marca en el brazo pero no se alcanza a ver qué dice en el brazo.

Para cerrar y darles la palabra, justo, la dinámica que hace Cerrucha con su arte callejero es una tradición ya bastante consolidada en el arte feminista, y una de las primeras historiadoras de arte feminista, que justo trabajó a la par de Mónica Mayer y Maris Bustamante y toda esa generación de primeras feministas, Araceli Barbosa, lo que dice, es que hay tanta violencia simbólica en la publicidad que vemos todos los días, sobre todo pensando en ciudades como la

Ciudad de México que está a reventar de publicidad y que vemos carteles por todos lados, que el arte feminista, una de las luchas que tiene que llevar a cabo es contrarrestar la violencia simbólica a la que estamos expuestas a través de imágenes, usando justo el poder de la imagen que están produciendo las feministas. Entonces Cerrucha continúa en esta tradición feminista, no solamente en la tradición del arte callejero que bombardea las ciudades.

Si alguien que regrese a alguna de las imágenes regreso sin ningún problema.

PARTICIPANTE 4: O sea, ¿qué tenemos que responder? ¿Cómo si nos dijeran esto?

NATALIA: sí, si quieren doy un ratito, a las últimas cuatro diapositivas. A qué puto eres, que lo podemos volver femenino como qué marimacha eres, que sería traducción más cercana al femenino, feminazi, seguro te está bajando y darte a desear, que son a las que habría que responder en el chat.

PARTICIPANTE 1: siento que a las mías me faltó poner que es ironía, no es literal. (Ríe)

NATALIA: ok, no te apures, yo lo anoto. Ustedes me dicen cuando quieran pasar al conservatorio. ¿Listo? ¿Quieren que inicie con una pregunta y de ahí...? Ok, pensando un poco en el conservatorio de ayer, esto que mencionaba de que el arte tiene que salir del museo para enfrentar a aquellos que ni siquiera se paran en el museo. ¿Qué opinan de estos esfuerzos de arte feminista o artivismo feminista que justo lo que hacen es sacar al arte de los museos y montarlos en las calles?

PARTICIPANTE 3: sí, sí había mucho en las marchas. Por ejemplo, en Querétaro hubo dos marchas de las putas y, hubo muchísimas expresiones contestando a ese de 'eres una puta'. Y sí logró, creo que sí logró deshacer ese estigma, o sea es que esa palabra durante siglos nos ha limitado a ser o a decir o actuar con libertad. Entonces enfrentar esa palabra y digo, hasta por experiencia personal es bastante empoderante, atravesarlo o pasarlo.

PARTICIPANTE 2: a mí también me parece que llevar los esfuerzos de llevar estas actividades al espacio público, creo que generan y ayudan a esta parte de la reflexión. Y hacerlo como, tanto mujeres y hombres. Por ejemplo, en el ejercicio de estar contestando esto, de pronto pensamos que uno va a contestar en seguida, pero pues también es el momento que estás en frente, o estás en la calle, o estás en cualquier situación, en la que uno se bloquea y llega a ser

difícil también para este tipo de situaciones entonces la reflexión, para este tipo de frases y este tipo de situaciones y obviamente es vivirlas en el espacio público, ayuda a la reflexión.

PARTICIPANTE 1: yo estoy tomando unas clases de fotografía documental y nos enseñaban hoy una entrevista de un caricaturista inglés y él hablaba, o sea él se consideraba a sí mismo un mago, porque la gente se queda con la idea de que la magia ya no existe. Pero él decía que los artistas son magos y que las palabras que usan los artistas son los hechizos y con eso un poco puedes cambiar a la gente. Entonces decía, por ejemplo, que los publicistas eran magos malos porque le daban opio a la gente y hacían que la gente se atontaba y compraran lo que quisieran. Pero él decía, que el arte es justo es esta forma de darle magia a la gente, entonces justo con esto lo veo. Como que me hicieron clic las dos partes, en el momento que tienes este tipo de artivismo afuera en las calles están hechizando a la gente y estás haciendo que lean estas cosas y digan: ‘ay wey’. Como ahorita nosotras, qué realmente diría o qué significa eso para mí o porque se está haciendo todo esto. Entonces como que te cuestionas un poco. O sea justo creo que como lo que ahorita decía Participante 2, a mí se me hizo bien difícil esto de contestar las preguntas y, si aquí, en un ambiente de qué somos 8 mujeres...7 mujeres y te tardas pensando o sea qué horrible cuando te pasa, que a todas nos ha pasado, que te dicen eso y te quedas congelada y ya hasta tu casa dices: ‘ah caray, le hubiera dicho esto’. O sea, como que difícil es reflexionar y darle sentido a esto, pero se me hace que el ponerlo afuera...el arte va hechizando a la gente y le da su magia un poquito. De hecho, se los quería compartir, pero pues no las tengo en otro lado (se ríe), pero luego se las comparto.

PARTICIPANTE 4: Sí yo también pienso, bueno, respondiendo a la pregunta, que es importante que el arte, bueno, el arte callejero, porque estas frases son como más recurrente en el lenguaje oral, creo yo. Y en el lenguaje oral y a lo mejor en contextos de conversación de tú a tú. O en una conversación, no sería la palabra más adecuada, pero de un tú a tú, de insulto y entonces al verse escritas o al pasarlas ya al texto escrito y sobre todo que se van a inscribir en un cuerpo, pues sí atraen la mirada de los que caminamos, recorremos y andamos por la ciudad. Y yo creo que al momento que nos atrae la mirada nos hace detenernos ¿no? Es como andar, caminar y al ver, o sea nuestra mirada se detiene y el detenernos nos hace como un repensar, como si fuera un balde de agua fría. El ver esa frase escrito, que son frases que hemos escuchado y que sobre todo es eso, como esa transición de lo oral a lo escrito y, lo escrito en un cuerpo entonces, bueno sobre todo pensando que aquí todas están inscritas en un cuerpo.

PARTICIPANTE 6: yo también creo que, al final, el hecho de que salga de los museos y se ponga en la calle como lo platicábamos ayer sí es un tema económico y sociocultural, también. Impregna a otro sector, el que está en las calles, y no lo reduce a un sólo sector, el que está en museos y también esta parte que decías, se me olvidó el término, de que la ciudad duerme de una manera y despierta totalmente de otra, pues habla también del mismo movimiento, como un poco...lo poco predecible, que es lo que pasa en la violencia de género o en los feminicidios o tal, un día vas al metro y no pasa nada y, el jueves hay una imagen que te está dando un mensaje, así igual es el movimiento ¿no? Entonces, creo que van de la mano y ya.

NATALIA: Participante 5, no sé si quieras decir algo en relación con esta pregunta, o te esperas a otra pregunta.

PARTICIPANTE 5: es que todas dijeron básicamente lo que yo pensaba, o sea que es lo que hablábamos ayer, que es importante que saquen las obras artísticas de este tipo que el público las pueda ver. Porque hay gente que necesita verlo y que no tiene el acceso para verlo, o gente que no entiende que sus insultos o sus palabras pueden llegar a dañar a alguien y este tipo de obras siento que funcionan este tipo de obras pueden llegar a causar consciencia. Aunque también me causa un poco de conflicto pensar que a veces hay hombres que lo ven y solamente se burlan de ese tipo de cosas, entonces eso es lo que diría.

PARTICIPANTE 4: perdón, un poco lo que señalé, que en esa parte dice que lo ven y se burlan, pero yo creo que la parte que rescataría es eso, que sí lo ven, que claro, aunque vamos a decir la respuesta aunque sea una burla está eso, que se hace visible, pienso que llega así a tener un efecto en ponerlo. Creo. En mi opinión.

PARTICIPANTE 3: sí, yo creo que, el ponerlo de un día para otro, o sea el factor sorpresa, es una revuelta, no sé, pensé, por ejemplo, hace muchos años creo que hubo una intervención sobre la Diana, hace muchos años y, bueno pues sí, fue un factor sorpresa. O cuando pintaron las fuentes con sangre o pintura, o la diamantina esta en donde pintan de color al funcionario o aún ahora los arcos. Sí fue una revuelta, con v chiquita y con b grande, y yo creo que ni siquiera se lo esperaban las mismas que lo hicieron, no se esperaban la profunda conmoción de Querétaro, como si les hubieran cambiado sus, pues sus íconos. Es que pintaron la legislatura y pintaron también los arcos, nadie se ofendió porque pintaran la legislatura, pero todo Querétaro estaba ofendido porque pintaron los arcos, o sea sí fue algo bastante agresivo para

las personas y lo quiero mencionar como revuelta, revuelta de revolución y revuelta de revolver de darle vuelta al asunto.

NATALIA: En relación a lo que han dicho sobre los hombres, sea que reaccionan burlándose o que despiertan o lo que sea que pase por los hombres tengo una pregunta que también se la hice a la artista sobre qué postura deben tomar las activistas y las artistas feministas sobre qué esperan de su obra con los hombres, porque está esta discusión que llevamos dos milenios de patriarcado, bueno pongamos menos considerando las conexiones que hay con el capitalismo y el nuevo patriarcado, pero en la que toda la literatura y libros de ciencias sociales y todo el arte todo estaba dedicado a los hombres o a satisfice the male gaze, este deseo observatorio de los hombres, entonces ahora hay muchas feministas que se rehúsan a hacerles la tarea a los hombres y darles el mensaje con un medio artístico entonces piensan en públicos femenino, ¿qué postura creen que deben tomar las *activistas* feministas? Y ¿por qué?

PARTICIPANTE 4: pues, yo no sé, yo también es esa cuestión de, o sea hay otras críticas académicas que dicen que como mujeres hemos aprendido a mirar desde una mirada masculina, por ejemplo, Laura Mulvey, en su artículo sobre el cine y el placer de mirar desde la construcción, vamos a decir del cine desde una mirada masculina, y que eso también pasa con la cuestión de los feminismos y que desde las mismas mujeres hay como estos ataques también hacia posturas feministas, etcétera. Entonces como, pienso que es una cuestión y esto lo platicaba con algunos compañeros, con algunas amigas que trabajan también con diseño, que es una cuestión que, así como aprendemos a leer, creo que tendríamos que aprender a mirar y aprender a mirar desde otras posibilidades y desde otros puntos de vista, desde otras perspectivas. Y que sí necesitamos otra educación o educaciones para no tener que tener sólo una, visuales. Porque claro, que esto, es decir cómo estamos también mirando los trabajos de las activistas mujeres. Cómo es que lo estamos visualizando, para mí sería una pregunta que está ahí.

PARTICIPANTE 1: yo creo que, ahorita que lo pensaba con lo que decían y con lo que preguntaste yo lo veo de dos formas y creo que todavía estoy en este momento, en una época en la que estoy aprendiendo a decir lo que me gusta y hacia dónde voy, pero por un lado creo que me encantaría decir que no, que sólo lo hagan para las mujeres y a los hombres no, me encantaría decir que sólo sea de mujeres y para mujeres, que ya ha habido una opresión desde siempre. Pero también lo veo por el otro lado, y digo es que seguimos viviendo en un

patriarcado, o sea eso no se ha terminado, entonces tal vez un poco manejarlo en ese sentido para que lo entiendan por ahí, o sea que también vaya hacia los hombres, o sea es muy utópico tal vez decir, o sea en una sociedad ideal podría ser sólo para mujeres y todo el mundo lo entendería. Bueno, y ni siquiera tendría que haber que hacer estas cosas, pero todo el mundo lo entendería y no habría que hacerlo ni para uno ni para el otro. Pero todavía vivimos en una sociedad súper desigual entonces creo que también se puede explotar eso, siempre siendo conscientes de que lo estamos haciendo así. No sin darnos cuenta, pero sí somos conscientes que lo estamos haciendo para ese lado, pues tal vez darle por ahí para que entiendan todos, hombres y mujeres incluidas.

PARTICIPANTE 3: yo creo que va dirigido a los hombres también. Por ejemplo, esta respuesta de ‘soy la puta madre que te parió’, tiene muchos niveles, y es desde, bueno yo tengo dos hijos hombres y, cuando vi al chiquito pintado con el ‘los niños no lloran’, este, es una agresión grandísima hacia los niños, o sea el decirles eso, el ponerles eso, y cuando digo, o sea, es una ofensa a lo femenino. Yo diferencio entre las mujeres y lo femenino, yo creo que, este, lo femenino incluye también a los hombres y regreso otra vez para que se entienda. Cuando yo digo ‘la puta madre que te parió’, soy la puta madre que te parió, se lo estoy diciendo a mis hijos, se lo estoy diciendo a mi pareja, se lo estoy diciendo a los hombres y en otro nivel pienso también como en la madre tierra; o sea soy la puta que te parió, o sea me estás dejando, o sea cuando me estás explotando, me extrayendo, me estás destruyendo, me estás ensuciando, etcétera, es la madre tierra dejada, prostituida, entonces sí yo creo dentro de los hombres también hay una parte femenina dejada, desconocida, o negada, o negada, ooooo, sí yo creería en una reivindicación de lo femenino y que incluye a los hombres, eso es.

PARTICIPANTE 5: yo creo que debería de estar como dirigida de alguna forma a ambos porque, al final de cuentas, lo que decían. No queremos cambiar a las feministas, o sea no estamos tratando de cambiarlas a ellas que ya tienen el pensamiento que queremos que tengan, que nos va a ayudar a destruir el patriarcado. Es que yo creo que no es una lucha de géneros de mujeres contra hombres u hombres contra mujeres, yo creo que más bien es una lucha de romper estas barreras como lo es el patriarcado, entonces, bueno eso es algo con lo que he tenido muchos problemas con mis amigas al respecto. Pero yo creo que el feminismo no es solo para mujeres, yo creo que el feminismo también es para los hombres, porque necesitan romper esos como estigmas que tienen que no les permiten cosas tan simples como llorar, como lo dice la obra, o sea, el feminismo no está. Es que no sé cómo decirlo. Yo creo que no es una

lucha de géneros, es una lucha contra el patriarcado y eso, y tiene que estar dirigido también a los hombres para que puedan formar parte de, porque si no forman parte de, al final nos quedaremos atascadas.

PARTICIPANTE 6: yo creo, y un poco reforzando esto que acaban de decir, o sea creo que hay parte del movimiento que sí son separatistas y hay algunas que son inevitablemente separatistas, pero la comunicación del movimiento que es lo que harían este tipo de obras que es concientizar, difundir, comunicar lo que está pasando de una manera artística. Esto precisamente no puede ser separatista, al contrario, o sea creo que para empezar el arte en sí no es separatista y al contrario es lo que buscamos, es difusión, es concientizar, entonces lo que se espera de los hombres en este sentido es que se interesen, que de alguna manera busquen un interés en la obra más allá del morbo, más allá del chiste que realmente busquen un interés para entender el movimiento desde el arte.

PARTICIPANTE 2: pues igual creo que ya dijeron muchos puntos interesantes. Pero regresando al concepto de lo que es el *artivismo* y que mencionaste en un principio, Nat, de la utilidad que puede tener, o sea la repercusión que puede tener creo que ahí justo está la respuesta, si queremos que los hombres entiendan, y que los hombres también se pongan a reflexionar y a tener esta parte de, de diferentes temas, porque cada artista puede tocar diferentes esferas o diferentes temas pues yo sí creo que debe de ir dirigido para aquellos que tienen que reflexionar, o sea para aquellos que lo tienen que utilizar y lo tienen que también poder agarrar con las manos y decir: 'qué hago con esto' entonces yo sí creo que también es para todas.

NATALIA: ok, muchas gracias. ¿Qué opinan de los conflictos que tuvo la palabra chingar y que no se pudiera contestar en *Texō* en concreto apareció mucho?

PARTICIPANTE 1: ¿cómo? Yo no entendí.

NATALIA: en el taller de *Texō* algunas de las frases que tatuó Cerrucha incluían la palabra chingar..., eh chinga tu madre y cosas así. Las que incluía esa palabra no fueron eliminadas, las que traían esas palabras no fueron eliminadas, se fueron con sus tatuajes y la palabra, ¿por qué creen que no se pudieron contestar a esas frases?

PARTICIPANTE 3: porque está normalizada ya. O sea, el verbo chingar se usa para todo, entonces pienso yo que ya, así como el wey ya no es ninguna ofensa, así de la chingada, me chingaron, chingaste o sea hay una gama muy amplia del verbo chingar que ya como que está normalizada esa violencia.

PARTICIPANTE 1: siento que también suena como menos específica hacia las mujeres, siento que también como dice la Participante 3. Entonces sí a mí me hubieran puesto un tatuaje que dijera: chinga tu madre o chingar y otro que me dicen 'seguro estás en tus días', como que me ofende más la de seguro estás en tus días que chinga tu madre, o sea igual las dos me ofenden, pero siento que una está más dirigida a las mujeres y la otra está más generalizada.

NATALIA: ok. ¿Les parece que ya no tiene la connotación de la mujer violada?

PARTICIPANTE 4: no, a mí no me parece que no la tenga. O sea, porque justo ahora en esta frase de chinga tu madre en estas reivindicaciones es justamente el quitar este a tu madre, es justamente como el chinga a...no sé si dicen a tu padre, tengo que pensar justamente en sí lo dicen o el claro el qué padre entonces se dice el qué madre. Como en estas expresiones. Pero volviendo al chingar, sí, estoy pensando en por qué no contestaron, tan solo al menos decir el chinga tu madre, chinga la tuya, como que la respuesta más inmediata desde mi ser sería chinga a la tuya y no sé porqué no la responderían, estoy intrigada. Pero yo sí sigo pensando que sí tiene una connotación violenta y una connotación violenta a la mujer.

PARTICIPANTE 2: sí justamente, es como ese término de la mujer y, lo que decía la Participante 4, de la chingada, hacerlo a la parte, a la tuya, etcétera, yo creo que sí es un término muy lastimado y que viene de muchos años atrás, de cómo la cultura de la sociedad lo ha hecho así. Estaba tratando de acordarme del Laberinto de la soledad que justamente hablan de la como de esta parte, como Octavio Paz decía de esta parte del término de la chingada, la madre, de cómo este término ha sido utilizado y que ya es parte de nosotros, es algo de la vida diaria.

PARTICIPANTE 3: me estoy acordando de una discusión que tuve hace muchos años con una pareja y que me dijo, pero hace muchos años, como treinta y tantos años, y yo no me ofendí, me dijo, claro si soy un hijo de la chingada, claro, me tenía que encontrar con una hija de la chingada como tú. Entonces hasta me da risa, yo también tengo normalizado, no me ofendí tanto como con una pareja que sí me había dicho lo que les comenté ayer: puta de mierda, eso

sí tardé décadas en perdonarle eso, creo que hasta que fui a la marcha de las putas la terminé de sanar eso, pero esto de que me dijera ah, pues sí, claro, como soy un hijo de la chingada, claro, me tenía que encontrar con una hija de la chingada, o sea como está más normalizado y es ya menos ofensivo. Pero sí habría que pensar o desnormalizar esa violencia.

PARTICIPANTE 2: bueno, algo rápido para agregar justo a lo que decía de esta palabra, que siento que también la palabra chingada en México tiene este amor-odio de su utilización y como ya es inevitable que forme parte de nosotros. Entonces, como sí es esta parte de amor odio y que está arraigada a lo que somos.

PARTICIPANTE 5: es que yo, por ejemplo, yo soy una persona muy mal hablada, o sea yo digo muchas groserías, la neta y, sí uso mucho la palabra chingada. Casi nunca digo chinga a tu madre, la verdad sí es una palabra que he intentado sacar de mi vocabulario, pero sí es como algo que no había pensado, la verdad, pero que sí tiene una connotación ofensiva hacia la mujer. Y, ahora pensándolo, pues yo creo que lo correcto sería dejar de usarla, igual y esa y muchas más que uso, pero es que es difícil porque es algo que ya uso constantemente y es una palabra que ya tengo muy normalizada, hasta en mi casa. O sea, la verdad soy muy mal hablada, entonces es como muy normal en mi vida, pero pensándolo ya más, es algo que tendría que cambiar.

NATALIA: perfecto. De las interacciones que tuvo Cerrucha mientras montaba, antes de convertirlo en este taller más interactivo, bueno le tocó ver cómo golpeaban a, se golpeaban una pareja y la respuesta de la gente fue eso pasa y no se hace nada. La otra fue en el metro, mientras montaba, se acercó con una señora, que no sabía que ella era la artista y le preguntó que qué le parecía y la señora le contestó, me parece muy mal que vengan y me digan que me salga de mi casa cuando yo estoy muy conforme y contenta encerrada en mi casa, entonces también por ahí vino la motivación de cambiar la estrategia ¿Qué opinan del cambio de estrategia que hizo Cerrucha con su obra?

PARTICIPANTE 5: a mí me parece que tiene más como significado, porque ya es más personal que literal te lo pongan en la piel que no es solamente que lo estás leyendo, o que te lo pongan en la calle, literalmente te lo están pintando en ti, entonces, sobre todo a las personas que no lo pudieron contestar, yo creo que de todas formas les sirvió como para esas dos semanas tuvieron la tinta puesta pues estarlo pensando, como porqué no supe contestar a este insulto. O a lo

mejor ni siquiera lo vieron como un insulto y, después de tenerlo durante tanto tiempo puesto y verlo diario, seguramente pensaron, esto es un insulto, entonces como que, si tiene más, más cercanía hacia la persona.

PARTICIPANTE 1: a mí me gustaron las dos formas. O sea, la segunda no hubiera existido si no se hubiera dado cuenta por cosas de la primera, entonces por un lado pienso como Participante 5, o sea tal vez te impacta más. No sé, es que yo creo que no hay un mayor o un menor impacto, siento que es de diferente forma, porque así como, el primero fue para más gente, aunque no fue medible y el otro fue más personal, o sea los dos fueron de diferente forma, pero siento que los dos estuvieron, o sea sí fue como el ciclo de la instalación que tenía que tomar, como el bombing que decías tan en grande, porque como ya lo hemos platicado, que te agarre así de madrazo en el metro y obviamente como los comentarios de la señora, o sea va a haber de todo. Habrá gente que le gusta, que no, y pues no es para todos al final de cuentas. Cada uno lo va a tomar de una manera o de otra, lo bueno es que como habíamos dicho por lo menos lo vio, como quería Cerrucha, y al menos le indignó.

NATALIA: no sé si alguien más quiera decir alguna cosa de la obra para cerrar la sesión de hoy.

PARTICIPANTE 6: yo ahorita estuve pensando como la similitud de los tatuajes, no sé, yo ahorita lo estuve pensando y esto es un análisis mío ahorita. Cuando una persona se pone un tatuaje es con consentimiento ¿no? Y lo piensa y lo analiza porque sabe que es algo que le va a quedar en la piel, porque sabe que hay un consentimiento previo a, y se me hace bien interesante que algo de lo que siempre habla la lucha es justo del consentimiento, entonces, como esta similitud del consentimiento del tatuaje y de la frase que dice en la vida real, se me hace muy interesante plasmarte algo a lo que tal vez no has dado tu consentimiento de.

PARTICIPANTE 1: sí y que de una forma es como violentar el cuerpo. Que ellas hayan estado y se los hayan puesto pues es una forma de violencia y que si de por sí cuando alguien te la dice es feo, que te lo escriban y que la tengas dos semanas sí está, o sea yo creo que sí te ha de pegar en otros niveles, pues sí, diferente.

PARTICIPANTE 6: si, y pudiera ser como, estoy dejando que se me tatúe algo que no quiero dejar que me pase en la vida.

PARTICIPANTE 3: sí, yo creo que, como en clase, por ejemplo, no se vale etiquetar a alguien y eso que hay un consentimiento de estar ahí pues en la calle también debería haber un proceso de consentimiento.

PARTICIPANTE 4: a mí lo que me llama la atención es la tipografía que usa, porque, es pues no sé, no sé mucho de tipos de letras, este no sé qué estilo es. Me llama la atención la tipografía. Y eso. Sí porque es un, digamos está en la piel, siempre el tatuaje para mí es como más una cuestión de una imagen, más que letras, son como imágenes claro el que cubra tanta, ya sé que no está así tal cual tatuado, pero es este mensaje que está, esas frases y la tipografía me causa un poco de no sé, me gustaría saber porqué esa tipografía, como en no sé, desconozco los tipos de letras, pero creo que ahí hay varias cosas para también ver con más calma.

PARTICIPANTE 1: sí ahorita que estabas diciendo eso, también como que vi muy, no pensé más lo de la tipografía, pero pensé, en cine y en todos lados, cuando hemos visto que hay un malo que hace algo a veces lo tatúan para que sepan lo que hizo y esté marcado de por vida. Entonces también está interesante que haya escogido, el tamaño y todo y que sea un tatuaje como que dice participante 6, cuando es consentimiento lo haces por la razón que quieras, pero cuando es así, algo tan violento pues sí es, se me hace bastante interesante.

PARTICIPANTE 2: sí yo creo que, ahorita que estaba diciendo la Participante 4, justamente regresamos a lo que decía, a lo que creo que la obra tiene que ver, que es lo de los estereotipos y justamente toca esta parte de los estereotipos y de las creencias, entonces creo que esa tipografía como dice Participante 1 la hemos visto muchas veces con una connotación no buena y ha formado parte de cosas que nosotros ya cuando la vemos pues es de un preso o algo así o de alguien que hizo algo malo. Entonces yo creo que sí tiene algo de los estereotipos hablando de estereotipos.

PARTICIPANTE 1: sí, como de mara salva trucha, también, siento que son ese estilo. Digo tal vez no iba por ahí, pero como que viene a la cabeza eso también.

PARTICIPANTE 4: pues no sé, pero tiene esas iniciales en la letra mayúscula, es como estos emblemas. A mí me hacen pensar en textos como más clásicos, sobre todo por la curva, la letra inicial, siempre como si fuera un emblema y por eso pienso en un texto, como estos textos

antiguos, como estos textos viejos. Y que claro, ahora mismo estoy pensando y por eso está saliendo así, si, si, porque claro son frases que tienen años, son frases que tienen años de vida en nuestra historia, vamos a decir en el país. ¡O sea, mi marido sí me deja trabajar, fuuu!, pues desde cuando no estará en nuestro imaginario. Entonces no sé si la letra, porque a mí la letra me parece como para un texto viejo, esa es mi impresión.

PARTICIPANTE 2: como de algo más arraigado, ¿no?

PARTICIPANTE 4: sí, como de algo antiguo. Como algo que.

PARTICIPANTE 1: sí, como textos religiosos.

PARTICIPANTE 2: siento que juega como entre ambas, ¿no? Porque como que está esta parte, que sí yo la reconocería como de algo más antiguo y la otra, por ejemplo, la de la niña se me hace súper en la mente, la he visto en películas y cosas que están súper estereotipadas, entonces sí, en general me parece un artivismo muy interesante para reflexionar.

NATALIA: aquí son más contemporáneas las tipografías que uso.

PARTICIPANTE 2: sí, justo creo que juega con eso, como que trata de, no sé, de jugar con todo lo que somos.

NATALIA: ¿alguien quisiera decir algo antes de cerrar la sesión de hoy? ¿No? Perfecto, muchísimas gracias.

Session 3. Querétaro. *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* coord. by Lorena Wolffer, María Laura Rosa and Jennifer Tyburczy. 14 October 2020

Bien, pues voy a empezar, ojalá, la Participante 3 llegue en algún momento. Participante 6 me avisó que no va a poder estar, entonces ya tuve que armar con ella alguna otra estrategia metodológica. Hoy vamos a ver la última obra de las que estoy organizando, es la más grande de las tres, es un proyecto bastante grande y acabando les voy a enviar el formato de cierre que son las tres preguntas que contestaron en los formularios, les voy a pedir que las vuelvan a contestar para ver si influyó de alguna manera en su comprensión de la violencia el observar las obras de arte.

Entonces les voy a enviar el formulario, también el libro de Suzanne Lacy y bueno, compartirles la presentación, por si alguna quiere regresar a las obras.

Comparto mi pantalla.

El proyecto se llamó Estado de emergencia es del 2018 y, lo que coordinó Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tiburczy, María Laura Rosa y Julia Antivilo también estuvo metida en la organización. Me parece como importante definir tres conceptos que fueron fundamentales en el desarrollo de la obra y que van a estar como presentes todo el tiempo.

La primera es que, aunque invitaron gente de Estados Unidos y de Sudamérica (Argentina y Brasil), el concepto que se pidió que se trabajara fue el de feminicidio aunque en estos países tienen el concepto de femicidio, la gran diferencia entre femicidio y feminicidio, es que femicidio sólo se refiere al asesinato de una mujer, el feminicidio sí es lo mismo que homicidio, entonces cuando los hombres salen con: 'a los hombres también nos matan', la respuesta es, si estuviéramos hablando de femicidio igual y podríamos hacer una comparación estadística. Feminicidio es que los motivos por los que una mujer es asesinada son de género. Y en ese sentido Marcela Lagarde es la que acuña el término y lo incluye en el código penal y crea la Ley de Acceso mientras es diputada. Establece 7 características que debe tener un asesinato para que se considere feminicidio:

La primera es que presente cualquier signo de violencia sexual, lo que es importante es que dejó afuera el que sea o no sea la pareja sentimental quien la asesinó, porque es común que los policías no quieran tipificar como feminicidio cuando no es la pareja sentimental de la víctima.

Si presenta heridas o mutilaciones degradantes tanto antes como después de haberla asesinado.

Si hay una historia de violencia previa entre la víctima y el victimario.

Si hay una relación emocional, sentimental o de confianza. Sea una pareja, en el trabajo o en la escuela.

Si hay indicios de acoso previos al asesinato.

Si la víctima estuvo privada de su libertad o incomunicada previo a su asesinato.

Y si el cuerpo de la víctima se expuso en una zona pública.

Y Estado de emergencia va a trabajar con cuatro casos de feminicidio, para los que la ley fue fundamental para definirlos como feminicidio y fue toda una lucha que los definieran como feminicidio.

El segundo concepto que también es importante tomar en cuenta antes de entrar a Estado de emergencia, es desde dónde definen género las coordinadoras del evento y cómo entienden género a lo largo de los cuatro días que se llevó a cabo Estado de emergencia. Su comprensión del género es desde Butler y, por lo tanto, Butler lo que dice que lo ha tenido que ir un poco parchando y, de hecho, si ustedes leen el género en disputa la primera edición y la última edición, en el prólogo ella aclara: ‘a ver, en ningún momento negué que existieran los hombres y las mujeres, sí soy feminista’. Lo que ella dice es que el sexo es mucho menos relevante en la definición de la identidad de género de lo que hemos supuesto y que, el obligar a la sociedad a encasillarse en un sistema binario, o eres hombre o eres mujer, es falaz porque nadie es 100% hombre o 100% mujer y además es una cuestión performativa, entonces de ahí viene la comprensión que estas mujeres tienen del género. Lorena como artista, María Laura Rosa como historiadora del arte, Julia Antivilo igual como historiadora del arte y como activista (ella sí se define como activista) y Jennifer Tyburczy ella se considera queer, que también Wolffer se considera queer, Tyburczy de hecho, como que su objeto de estudio es, desde la teoría queer.

Analizar el museo porque ella dice que los museos nos obligan a hacer una lectura de las obras de arte a partir de la división binaria de la sociedad, entonces también por eso ella suele sacar su obra de los museos.

Y, el tercer concepto que es importante tomar en cuenta, es el del capitalismo gore de Sayak Valencia que ya más o menos había mencionado. Ha habido un enfrentamiento entre Rita Laura Segato, que es una académica argentina sobre el femicidio y también a veces incluye el término feminicidio y, las autoras mexicanas que estudian el feminicidio. La gran diferencia es que, Rita Laura Segato, un poco, explica la existencia del feminicida como un ser víctima de su contexto y lo que dicen las mexicanas es que, más que, que él sea víctima, en países como México, y Colombia, en concreto siguiendo la línea de Sayak Valencia, la masculinidad está asociada con la violencia. Entonces cuando un hombre se manifiesta de forma violenta lo que

está haciendo es reafirmar su masculinidad y, para ellas, en el sistema neoliberal capitalista que tenemos que además es un narcoestado, justo está validada esta conducta masculina como una conducta violenta. Entonces no es una víctima contextual, sino es una educación que sistémicamente promueve el asesinato de mujeres y de otras personas, porque tenemos un problema con el crimen organizado.

Lorena es a quien convocan, la convoca el Centro de Cultura Digital y le dicen: ‘queremos que nos hagas un evento para el 25 de noviembre, que es el día internacional de la eliminación contra la mujer, sobre el feminicidio’ y Lorena dice: ‘sí, siempre y cuando aceptes mis condiciones’. Y sus condiciones fueron que ninguno de los eventos artísticos se llevaba a cabo en ninguna institución cultural, sacó todos los eventos artísticos de ahí. Utilizó las instalaciones del Centro de Cultura Digital como centro de atención a víctimas de violencia y les dio asistencia legal y talleres de defensa personal a las mujeres y, lo convirtió en un esfuerzo colectivo entonces también Estado de emergencia permite ver cómo ha evolucionado la labor de Lorena a partir de que decide más bien armar plataformas para dar voces. También Cerrucha participó aquí y van a notar la evolución que ha habido en el arte de Cerrucha y esta idea de que el arte es colectivo.

Los eventos se llevaron a cabo del 10 al 13 de noviembre, tiene sentido que además no quisiera, no sé si no quiso, pero tiene sentido que Lorena prefiriera justo no hacerlo el 25 de noviembre porque ella dice que es un poco falaz e injusto cómo, cada 8 de marzo y 25 de noviembre parece que a México le interesan muchísimo las mujeres y hay un montón de exposiciones por todos lados y, el resto del año lo existen las mujeres.

Entonces es del 10 al 13 y todos los eventos se van a llevar a cabo en lugares que están de alguna manera relacionados con los feminicidios y, tanto Lorena Wolffer, Tyburczy, María Laura Rosa y Julia Antivilo van a tener un papel más bien secundario en todo esto.

Los lugares en donde se llevó a cabo se les va a llamar puntos de dolor y resiliencia. El primer punto de dolor es en Puente de Alvarado y...se reproduce el video, lo pauso. Fue en Puente de Alvarado y fue con la comunidad trans y un poco esto que habíamos estado hablando de llevarles las obras a la gente que las necesita oír aquí justo el tipo de hombres que se encontraron la obra, pues son hombres que contratan a sexo servidoras, trans y no trans. Las artistas son mujeres trans y participa Kenya. Que, la Participante 3 ¿ya está por ahí? Sí, la Participante 3, si quieres sacar tu pelotita porque justo va a haber varios testimoniales de feminicidio y, si en algún momento te quieres salir porque es demasiado para ti adelante.

En Puente de Alvarado, todos los puntos de dolor estuvieron previamente acompañados de un conversatorio, que tenía más bien una intención pedagógica y, luego se hacía la propuesta

artística. En Puente de Alvarado estuvo Ileana Diéguez, la mencioné el primer día porque Lorena Wolffer trabaja con el concepto de liminal de Ileana Diéguez y justo lo que Diéguez dijo es que, los feminicidios y los transfeminicidios son liminales y, por lo tanto, solamente desde los lugares liminales, se puede entender realmente qué es lo que está pasando en estos lugares. Los dos transfeminicidios que fueron homenajeados en este punto fue, el de Paola, que es el primer caso de transfeminicidio en México. A Paola llegó un tipo a contratarla, cuando se dio cuenta que era trans le disparó y se fue y eso lo evidenció otras de las sexoservidoras, Kenya Cuevas, que es la que lo ha estado contando y es la que denunció y fue un proceso de denuncia terrible. Durante todo el proceso, además la policía le hizo *deadnaming* a Paola, que es cuando utilizan el nombre de la mujer trans que tenía previo a su transformación. Lo calificaron como homicidio y tuvo que entrar la comisión de derechos humanos para que se considerara transfeminicidios. Sin embargo, todavía no existe una ley de transfeminicidios y en ese sentido, hay alguna polémica. Le preguntaron a Marcela Lagarde sobre esto, Marcela Lagarde dijo que son mujeres y por lo tanto están protegidas por la ley, y luego dos meses después dijo: ‘necesitan su propia ley’ porque empezó todo este movimiento de cambiar la palabra mujer en la ley por seres menstruantes en lugar de mujeres para excluir a las trans. Entonces Marcela dijo, bueno, si van a afectar la ley, pues mejor hagamos otra ley y que dejen la palabra mujer porque es pertinente que la ley sea de acceso para las mujeres a una vida libre de violencia.

El otro transfeminicidio fue el de Alessa, que no se ha resuelto al día de hoy. El cuerpo de Alessa fue descubierto en un hotel, ellas han hecho toda la investigación, además se ha convertido en una lucha interna, porque justo el punto donde las están asesinando es donde viven y donde trabajan. Entonces hay esta intersección de hechos a los que se enfrentan todos los días.

El siguiente punto de dolor fue en la UNAM y fue en honor a Lesvy Berlín. No sé si están familiarizadas con este caso, fue muy mediático y, de hecho, la mamá de Lesvy Berlín, Araceli, ahora aparece en varios medios y se ha vuelto una activista muy interesante. El caso de Lesvy apareció muerta en la UNAM, con un cable de teléfono alrededor de su cuello y cuando llegó la policía se llevaron el cuerpo y, la PGJ, que ahora es fiscalía, publicó en su Twitter oficial que Lesvy había cometido un suicidio, a lo que todo el mundo un poco reaccionó entre risas y enojo por la forma en la que pretendían vernos la cara, porque no tenía sentido que Lesvy hubiera podido sostener el teléfono para ahorcarse porque eventualmente hubiera perdido fuerza y habría soltado el teléfono. Entonces, cinco horas después la PGJ publicó otro comunicado por Twitter intentando explicar que efectivamente Lesvy había sido asesinada, pero, la descripción que hicieron de Lesvy un poco daba a entender que ellos suponían que

merecía ser asesinada, porque dijeron que estaba borracha, que estaba bajo influencia de drogas, que hacía mucho que ya no estudiaba en la UNAM y que vivía con su pareja, entonces un poco decían que se lo buscó. A raíz de eso hubo marchas en la UNAM y se empezó a usar el #SiMeMatan para decir quién eres por si las dudas, por si la PGJ no pueda crear un perfil falso de ti. En este punto de dolor estuvo Tamara Ibarra que dijo que las universidades y los protocolos que tienen las universidades para contrarrestar la violencia de género no sirven y que hay una complicidad universitaria que favorece la violencia de género. Mariana Berlanga habló de la parte cultural y, María Laura Rosa, quien fue quien coordinó el conservatorio lo que dijo es que, el sentido de ir a la UNAM, a este punto, porque trabajaron a lado de la cabina telefónica, es convertir a ese punto en un espacio de memoria y que les ayuda a vivir mejor.

La artista que estuvo aquí invitada es Mónica Mayer, que algunas de ustedes comentaron que sí conocían a Mónica Mayer. Mónica Mayer es la primera artista mexicana que se llamó feminista, ella empezó a trabajar en los 1970s, se fue estudiar al Woman's Building en los Ángeles y ahí conoció a todas las feministas artista de EUA (Judy Chicago, Suzanne Lacy, Arlene Raven y todas ellas), regresa a México, en el 82 da unos talleres y, de esos talleres salen los primeros grupos de arte feminista en México. Y ahorita les voy a poner un video de más o menos lo que hizo, Mayer, a diferencia de otras activistas y artistas feministas, Mayer prefiere trabajar con una parte amorosa que, con una parte agresiva, sí ha denunciado, sí ha dado voz a víctimas pero usualmente son performances mucho menos agresivos que otras propuestas feministas. Es súper famosa, nada más que se ha perdido el crédito, su obra de arte hoy está presente en prácticamente todas las universidades de México que es el tendedero, el tendedero es de Mayer lo único es que se ha deformado un poco el tendedero. Mayer empezó con una pregunta: '¿qué es lo que no te gusta de tu ciudad?' Y colgó esos testimonios anónimos de un tendedero y hoy lo ha llevado por todo el mundo. No cobra por montar el tendedero porque dice que no se siente cómoda cobrando por colgar el dolor de las participantes, pero algo que sí es importante decir tanto en evidencias de Lorena Wolffer como en el tendedero de Mayer, es que son artistas que estudian muchísimo antes de llevar a cabo la obra, y lo que les ha pasado a los tendaderos es que se convierten un arma de dos filos, están impidiendo que haya acceso a la justicia porque denuncian el nombre de los violadores o de los acosadores y entonces esa es una violación del derecho de privacidad de los violadores y acosadores y entorpecen el proceso de justicia. Entonces Mayer dice que todo el mundo puede adaptar el tendedero como quiera, pero sí sería buena investigar como se tiene que hacer para no entorpecer los procesos de justicia. Lo que hizo en la UNAM fue llevar playeras moradas, dado que el color morado se asocia con la lucha en contra de la violencia contra las mujeres, y

les dibujo el perfil de Lesvy Berlín muy sutil para enfrentar el perfil real con el perfil falso que intentaron crear las autoridades y se dedicaron a recorrer la universidad liderados por los papás de Lesvy Berlín, que es particularmente doloroso oír a los papás, y, no quiero decir decoraron, intervinieron la cabina telefónica en la que murió Lesvy Berlín. Entonces voy a poner el video.

VIDEO

Las estampas rojas las pusieron en los cuatro puntos de dolor no solamente en la UNAM y sobre la complicidad de los medios de comunicación, la abogada Gabriela Amores dio un taller para el Museo de las Mujeres de Ciudad de México, subieron los videos y están ahí disponibles los videos en el perfil del Museo de la Mujer, está súper triste que exista pero es muy útil, el principio por el que dio el taller es porque, cuando enfrentas un caso de feminicidio lo más probable es que no accedas a la justicia, entonces explica las acciones que tienen que seguir las familias para poder denunciar adecuadamente un caso de feminicidio. Y el tema de los medios de comunicación es que justo muchos publican la imagen o el nombre del feminicida completo y, entonces le ayudan en el juicio a recortar su sentencia. Hay toda una complicidad entre medios, gobierno y masculinidad violenta.

El tercer punto de dolor fue frente a la Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, ahí hay un cambio, ya no es un lugar en donde asesinaron a mujeres, sino es más bien empiezan a ser los lugares en donde las mujeres deberían de poder acceder a la justicia. La conversación la coordinó Jennifer Tyburczy, aunque ella es estadounidense habla perfecto español y tiene un estudio sobre las despedidas de solteras organizado de las señoras de las Lomas. Ahí participó Lulú Barrera que dijo que la burocracia es estratégica, no es accidental y que justo está para impedir el acceso a la justicia, Andrea Medina y Soledad Novoa mencionaron la violencia institucional que sufren las familias cuando intentan acceder a la justicia. Y en ese sentido, Netflix acaba de sacar el documental de ‘las tres muertes de Maricela Escobedo’ que es un caso paradigmático y terrible sobre el feminicidio y la falta de acceso a la justicia.

Y la intervención artística que se llevó a cabo aquí estuvo a cargo de Invasorix que son músicas de la Ciudad de México, no tienen un género definido, más bien van adecuando el género de acuerdo con el contexto a las necesidades sociales que quieren atender. En este caso optaron por el corrido, entonces, vamos a escuchar el corrido y luego les cuento sobre el caso que están cantando, tiene sentido usar el corrido. Una porque es una forma en que los hombres han construido el heroísmo, sobre todo post-revolucionario y dos, porque hay corridos sobre el asesinato de mujeres, previo a que existiera el término feminicidio y la lección es que ella se lo buscó, son como moralejas sobre cómo comportarse bien como mujer para evitar que te asesinen la mayoría de los corridos, en concreto está el de Rosita Alvariz, Güera Chavela,

Belén Galindo, son historias de feminicidios tal cual y, parece que ella se lo buscó. Entonces les voy a poner el corrido y luego les cuento del caso del que hablan.

Bueno y ellas además le dieron la letra de la canción al público para que cantara con ellas. Aquí está la letra de la canción por si no se alcanzó a entender. Ellas están cantando sobre el caso de Mariana Lima Buendía y tiene sentido que lo hayan hecho frente a la Suprema Corte de Justicia porque es el primer caso que fue determinado por la Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación como feminicidio. Que bueno para llegar tomó varios años. Lo que sucedió con Mariana Lima Buendía es que tenía un matrimonio bastante complicado, o bastante violento, él la golpeó varias veces, el día en decidió dejarlo le habló a su mamá, tenía listas sus maletas, nada más esperaba que llegara. Ballinas era policía y, cuando llega, la asesina, oficialmente no fue lo que pasó; habló a la policía, dijo que su esposa se había suicidado, que se había ahorcado en la barra del baño, que cuando llegó vio el cuerpo, lo bajó de ahí, lo puso sobre la cama, nadie cuestionó que el señor hubiera alterado la escena del suicidio, oficialmente no puedes hacer ese tipo de cosas y él siendo policía sabía que no podía tocar el cuerpo. Y crearon un cuerpo de investigación, la policía del Estado de México, de Chimalhuacan, Julio Hernández fue parte del equipo de investigación cosa que no podría haber sido porque existía la sospecha y de acuerdo con todo lo que hicieron, el peritaje estuvo súper mal hecho, no coincidían los peritajes de un lado y del otro. Entonces la mamá de Mariana decidió que iba a seguir, en el Estado de México se declara que fue suicidio y ella decide que no y junto con el observatorio nacional de feminicidios llega a la SCJN y, la Suprema Corte realiza las investigaciones pertinentes y en 2015 no solamente dicta que fue un feminicidio, sino que además acusa al Estado de México al gobierno en general, a la policía del Estado de México de cómplices y por entorpecer el acceso a la justicia. Entonces por eso es como pertinente que hayan ido a cantar este corrido frente a estas oficinas, bajo esta idea de que si sí pudieran hacer este tipo de cosas ¿por qué hay tan pocos casos que llegan a la suprema? Y ¿por qué no han hecho más por detener los feminicidios que hay en México.

El último punto de dolor fue frente a la procuraduría general de justicia, que hoy es fiscalía general de justicia y estuvo a cargo de Cerrucha que van a ver un cambio brutal de lo que vimos ayer a lo de hoy. Previo a la intervención de Cerrucha tuvieron su conservatorio. Julia Antivilo coordinó esta conversación y estuvo Brandao, Ileana Diéguez y Saturnino. Wolffer también estuvo ahí y justo la conclusión a la que llegaron es que lo único que tenemos las mujeres para enfrentar el feminicidio y la violencia de género en general, es el feminismo, entonces, después de los cuatro días de eventos, la conclusión es que no se trata de que las mujeres sean violentas, más bien se entiende que hay un enojo brutal, pero no es que ahora las

mujeres vayan a matar hombres, sino que más bien se tiene que armar una red sorora para contrarrestar todos los feminicidios. La intervención de Cerrucha fue un *flashmob* y tuvo dos días: el primer día fue en la UNAM, abrió una línea de teléfono en el que la gente podía hablar para decir...imaginarse que le estaban hablando a la PGJ y decirles todo lo que les gustaría decirle a la PGJ y no se había atrevido hacerlo, la línea de teléfono estuvo abierta para mujeres y para hombres, no habló un solo hombre y con la llamadas telefónicas que recibió Cerrucha contrató a un grupo musical y compusieron una pieza de salsa y, esa pieza de salsa se pusieron a bailar frente a la PGJ y van a ver en el video están bailando frente a la gente que está ahí formada esperando a meter su denuncia en la PGJ.

Ya no se escuchan muy bien esos últimos, las voces al final. Obviamente la que trae el paliacate rojo y el sombrero es Cerrucha. Ahí está la letra de la canción, porque los subtítulos en inglés no son exactos. Cerrucha ahí medio metió mano en los subtítulos. Pero es esta idea de usar una música alegre para festejar estar viva y, de paso, decirles las cosas que sería pertinente que se enteraran los de la ahora fiscalía.

Esa es Estado de emergencia. Fundamentalmente ahora tienen ustedes la palabra sobre las cuatro obras, puedo regresar a la que ustedes quieran y puedo poner el video que quieran.

PARTICIPANTE 2: yo nada más tengo una pregunta rápida porque se me fue el internet, y me desconecté rápidamente. ¿La del baile, ¿como cuál fue el fin a parte de estar en un lugar fuera?

NATALIA: no se homenajeó a ninguna víctima de feminicidio esa vez, más bien Cerrucha abrió una línea de teléfono para que la gente pretendiera estar hablando con la PGJ y les dijera todo lo que les gustaría decirle a la PGJ y, con eso, ella compuso la música o la canción con la que fueron a bailar con sus oficinas. Les comenté que estuvo abierta a hombres y mujeres y, ningún hombre, uso la línea de teléfono.

PARTICIPANTE 1: No sé si puedo empezar. Me dio mucha rabia ver esto. O sea, lo sentí como...por un lado me dio coraje porque me parece por los videos nada más que había como muy poco foro, o sea había muy poca gente, no sé si en realidad haya sido así, pero me da coraje que no haya habido más gente para que se hiciera un poco más grande. Esta última fue, creo, como la que más me pegó, o sea siento, es como la ironía algo como decías y estar celebrando que están vivas, pero a la vez estar bailando y escuchando esa canción se me hace una mentada de madre, se me hace súper triste. Y realmente no sé ahorita que estaba leyendo la letra, o sea me siento afortunada que no me haya pasado nada de eso, pero me da, o sea se

me hace tan triste esa situación que estamos ya súper acostumbradas y se nos enseña a vivir, me da mucho coraje, en serio. Me da coraje que pase esto. Que tengan que ser que los papás de un feminicidio tengan que ir al lugar para que todo esto crezca, o sea que se tengan que hacer este tipo de cosas. Me dio mucho coraje. Al final, de alguna manera, cumple su función, como el arte, si me hace sentir así cumple su función, pero no sé cómo se puede reflejar esto en que la PGJ haya hecho algo o se hayan dado cuenta o les haya importado, porque no sé si fue suficiente esto. Obviamente no, por eso seguimos, pero, pues sí, como que siento que le faltó más gente.

NATALIA: ¿alguien más quiere decir algo?

PARTICIPANTE 3: bueno, hay que mencionar que ayer me dolía mucho la cabeza, me tomé doble o triple de dosis de mi analgésico. Y hoy también, este porque sí el tema me parece fuertísimo y empieza con que, concretamente, hoy, el día de hoy sé de tres casos o más en los que la fiscalía y tiene nombre, la agencia 4, la fiscalía de la agencia 4 de la 5. Minimizan las violaciones, los acosos y le dan la bolita a la chava ¿no?: “Pues que no eres una adulta, que no puedes negociar”. O sea, de parte, las fiscalías completamente de parte de los violadores, los acosadores, pero así, completamente. Sí tenemos un problema gravísimo, bueno este caso de esta Lima, Mariana Lima, recién acaban de...10 años después, acaban de poner en prisión al sujeto, 10 años después, después de tanto movimiento, después de tanto sufrimiento de su mamá y de muchas mujeres, y ahí en ese video dice que son nueve, pero ahorita son once y a veces son 12 diarios, entonces, o sea el problema se ha incrementado muchísimo. Este año se incrementó más del 50% y no hay respuesta y entonces sí, yo me imaginé bailando afuera de las fiscalías, tal vez podría tolerarlo más, te digo que yo me he ido de los otros performances porque no tolero la narración de los feminicidios, entonces a lo mejor, darle la vuelta y me imaginé con la música de amor de mis amores y dejaste de quererme. Y yo decía: ‘ay, pero cómo bailamos esa canción tan fea’. No hay cuidado que la gente de eso no se enterará, algo así con esto...Sí me pareció. Lo del corrido, hacer nuestros propios corridos y, la parte del teléfono me pareció también muy bueno que le dijeron todo lo que piensan de ellos, ¿no? Ineptos, corruptos, buenos para nada, inútiles, etcétera. O sea, sí me pareció bien irles a cantar sus verdades, porque de verdad no sé qué hacer. No sé qué vamos a hacer con las fiscalías, o sea las leyes muy avanzadas, pero la justicia totalmente paralizada.

NATALIA: nada más rapidísimo, nada que en 2018 la cifra sí eran 9, la cifra sí ha subido, pero además la cifra es la que mantiene María Salguero con su mapa, no es la de la policía porque resulta que las fiscalías no se comparten la información y, entonces, no es muy confiable lo que sea que publique el gobierno sobre feminicidio. Está también ese tema.

PARTICIPANTE 2: bueno, yo nada más iba a decir, antes de que las siguientes preguntas. Para mí, me parece que Cerrucha, o en general esta parte del activismo que vimos, me suena mucho a sanar, como que tienen esta parte de trabajar en sanar, porque hídole no me imagino los papás de Lesvy, que tienen que ir, y poder hablar, poder ver ese espacio y revisitarlo, pues también me parece que es una forma de sanar y de seguir exigiendo y creo que su obra va mucho por ahí. Su activismo va mucho por ahí, entonces me parece que también es muy importante el tener este tipo de reflexiones y de expresiones porque son necesarias para las personas cercanas como también para nosotros, como para entender y como para poder estar ahí y hacer algo, entonces esa es opinión de esto.

PARTICIPANTE 1: yo quería agregar algo rápido a lo que estaba diciendo, y un poco también a lo que dice Participante 2. Yo, personalmente, o sea yo no creo que sea una sanación o que vayan sanando, aunque sea lenta y largo. O sea, por lo que veo fue un año después del asesinato que van los papás, la matan en el 2017 y ellos van en el 2018. A mí no me cabe en la cabeza que están sanando algo, que ha habido una injusticia gruesísima, que no hay nada resuelto y que tengan que regresar a ese lugar, donde les cuesta un montón, para que haya algún tipo de justicia no sé para mí no creo que haya sanción. Y, por otro lado, a mí lo que me deja esto que vimos es un montón de miedo. O sea, neta a mí, yo sí me quedó con la impotencia y el miedo de verlo de frente todo esto que pasa y decir: ‘chale, si un día, más miedo de salir y de que si me hacen algo o alguien cercano mío, nadie va a hacer nada’. Entonces sí me deja un montón de miedo la verdad.

PARTICIPANTE 4: bueno, pues sí yo creo que sí se genera y de hecho el miedo está ahí latente. Y el miedo, pues vivimos con miedo y ya lo dice Susana Rotker que las ciudadanías del miedo, y cómo se ha ido construyendo en las sociedades y sobre todo en este México que estamos viviendo. Y ahí está, el miedo está ahí latente lo que yo estaba. O sea, por desgracia, desgraciadamente somos ahora, y vivimos bajo, sobre, con contra el miedo, estamos de una manera u otra, si todavía no nos ha tocado, no nos ha llegado, pero sí estamos ahí bajo ese ambiente de miedo y eso lo dicen varios y Susana Rotker lo dice en *Ciudadanías del miedo*.

Yo estaba pensando que a través de estos trabajos, de estos puntos de dolor y resiliencia en los que se fueron presentando este evento, que con estos puntos de dolor es posible cartografiar y a partir de cartografiar, o sea mapear, estos diversos lugares que de una manera u otra se van vinculando y a partir de estas cartografías, primero yo creo que sí es posible conocer para los que no estuviesen enterados, o no estuvieran enteradas, aunque hubiera poca gente, yo creo que a partir de esto es posible conocer o reconocer o recordar, también, por ejemplo la cabina telefónica se convierte en una, pues en eso, en un memento, para no olvidarnos que ahí hubo un feminicidio, que estemos conscientes que ahí ocurrió, o sea mataron a una mujer y que desgraciadamente no se ha hecho justicia, pero que lo sepamos. Yo creo que eso es importante y también es otra parte de la posibilidad de dar voz y de una manera u otra de dar voz, yo pienso que sí, también hay un proceso pues al menos, no sé, no lo sabemos, que, si para los padres es difícil, pero ya la posibilidad de poder hablarlo creo que es una parte del proceso. ¿No? Y luego estaba pensando con las canciones, con la cuestión del corrido, con la cuestión de la salsa que yo lo veo como una idea de resignificar, es que he tomado unos apuntes, por eso estoy como girando la cabeza, de resignificar el corrido, de resignificar la salsa, es decir darle otro significado sobre todo pensando en la tradición del corrido y que los corridos siempre son más de los narcos, como una apología a la violencia, bueno para algunos y bueno también hay mucha discusión sobre el corrido en sí; pero muchos de ellos en los últimos años, ha habido este papel masculino, estas masculinidades y pues las mujeres en otros roles y, el hecho de que hablar, o sea que utilizar este ritmo, utilizar también las salsas pensamos eso, la sonora dinamita y la canciones y la letras y el ritmo pegajoso y que, claro es como el ritmo lo que está ahí, entonces creo que es retomar esto que está dentro, a lo mejor...no, a lo mejor no, está dentro de un sistema que también es hetero-patriarcal, o sea se ha analizado el corrido, sobre todo este que hubo después del *trending* de la cultura narco y entonces es para mí creo que con las letras, o sea con estas letras y sí hay un impacto. O sea, a mí la última letra, esta de la salsa, me causó pues muchas emociones, porque, por un lado, sí el ritmo invita a bailar y claro, y la letra, si la vemos y la leemos esa parte del coro creo que logra también sacar, es como sacar el dolor a lo mejor más el enojo y la molestia que sentimos por justamente esta ineptitud de las autoridades. Y sí, a mí esta, el inicio, o sea realmente la letra, me llegó a mover muchas cosas. Esa sería mi participación.

NATALIA: Muchas gracias.

PARTICIPANTE 5: a mí todo lo que vimos, lo que más me causó fue miedo, si de por sí ya, con todo lo que escuchamos diario de feminicidios y violencia de género y ese tipo de cosas me hace tener miedo de salir, de hacer cosas. Verlo como más cercano a gente que le ha pasado y como eso, justamente que sea en los lugares en que ha pasado sí me movió y me hizo tener más miedo del que ya tengo. Y, también me pareció como muy interesante los lugares que, pues, han sido los lugares de violencia, cómo puede ser hasta un lugar en el que neta no tendría porqué pasar, o sea, la escuela. La escuela es un lugar que debería ser seguro y claramente no lo es. Y pensar en todos los lugares dónde también puede pasar, como dijo una de las chavas en uno de los videos, que si quieren que nos encerremos. Pero, por ejemplo, ahorita en la cuarentena, cuántos feminicidios no ha habido dentro de sus propias casas, entonces encerradas o afuera, seguimos igual, o sea inseguras, eso es lo que a mí me dejó.

NATALIA: ok. Mi primera pregunta está relacionada con el boom feminista que hay hoy, no sólo en México, en todo el mundo. El ver a las mujeres juntas enfrentándose a la violencia estructural o sistémica que hay en México ¿no les confiere ningún tipo de seguridad? ¿O sea es miedo únicamente?

PARTICIPANTE 5: Otra vez voy a hablar yo, bueno yo este año fue la primera vez que fui a una marcha, no había ido a ninguna otra y, cuando fui a la que fue antes de la pandemia, literal un fin de semana antes de la cuarentena, nunca me había sentido tan cómoda estando rodeada de tanta gente. Y éramos puras mujeres, obviamente. Yo sí vi a un señor, porque iba acompañando a su esposa, que iba sola y él iba alejado, la verdad como muy respetuoso. Pero éramos tantas mujeres, pero fue la primera vez que me sentí segura caminando en el centro y, caminando entre tanta gente, porque normalmente a mí me gusta ir a conciertos y me gusta ir al antro y, aún así, no me siento segura, aunque vaya con mis amigos, pero aquí, fue totalmente diferente. Entonces siento que está muy padre que haya tanta gente entrando al movimiento, pero también siento que falta mucha, bueno no sé si ya me estoy desviando, pero siento que falta mucha educación dentro de las feministas, no sé cómo describirlo. Siento que hay quienes se están metiendo un poco por moda, que digo, está bien, bienvenida porque es muy importante que entren y que empiecen de alguna forma, pero sí siento que falta eso.

PARTICIPANTE 1: a mí me pasó igual. Yo la primera marcha que fui, fue hace dos años, no fue aquí, fue en España, y a mí nunca me había tocado una marcha y también la de aquí de México, o sea ver a tantas mujeres en un mismo lugar, o sea, a mí me hizo sentir súper

empoderada, era un sentimiento impresionante. Era, como, aquí puede pasar lo que sea, pero nosotros vamos a reinar, así me sentía en éxtasis con todas, padrísimo, a mí se me hizo increíble. Pero, siento que eso pasa más también, ahora la del aborto, cuando estás en esos ambientes se enaltece y dices: 'bueno, es que hay más gente como yo'. O sea, realmente es bueno ver a tanta gente, pero cuando te vas... bueno, de hecho, esa que yo fui en España, fue cuando lo del caso de la manada, no sé si saben, que... estos chavos y a mí me impresionó, fue cuando dijeron que no les iban a hacer nada. O sea, no era una marcha del 8 marzo, ni nada. Fue, o sea, no vamos a hacer nada como gobierno, y todas las mujeres, yo estaba en Barcelona, salieron a la calle. Yo no podía creer el movimiento que había allá en contra de la injusticia, a mí me... o sea me sigue sorprendiendo hasta la fecha, o sea a mí me apena, ahora, antes de la del aborto, el domingo, hubo la de esta chica de Querétaro, que mató. ¿Sí supieron de ese caso? Que pensaban que había desaparecido, no, en Morelia, que bueno se hizo la marcha de esta chava y fueron menos de 20 personas. Entonces es, sí hay mucha diferencia. Pero sí, a mí se me hace algo increíble cuando ves a todas juntas, pues sí, como a la gente se hacía para atrás cuando pasábamos, es increíble.

PARTICIPANTE 2: bueno, yo nada más para agregar algo eso. Sí, también he estado en marchas y tienes este sentimiento de seguridad, pero creo que sigue existiendo, o por lo menos a mí todavía me pasa, que salgo a la calle, aquí a la esquina, por... queso o lo que sea, caminando y me sigo sintiendo insegura. O sea, yo todavía sigo teniendo ese sentimiento y ese, ese esperar llegar a casa bien y, obviamente ese mismo sentimiento por mi hermana, mi mamá, mis amigas y cualquier mujer. Yo la verdad a pesar de que tenemos estos momentos de unidad, para mí, me parece que sí, o sea yo sí sigo teniendo ese miedo y creo que es un poquito más latente. Y de pronto también es enojo, el enojo nos ayuda como para que las cosas se hagan. Pero yo sí creo que el miedo sigue ahí.

PARTICIPANTE 1: sí, de hecho yo ahorita con eso que dice la Participante 2 aún estando en estas marchas con tanta gente... o sea me acuerdo que siempre tenía el miedo de, primero de que entrara un cuate y nos echara ácido, ese era como... todas íbamos con nuestra leche, con el kits de cualquier bronca, o sea teníamos miedo de que llegara la policía y algo nos hiciera, o sea teníamos miedo, éramos tanta gente y tenía un miedo que nos pasara algo porque, hasta te hacían sentir... siento que la policía y el gobierno te hacían sentir como el estar ahí estuviera mal. Entonces sí era un poco de miedo. Ahora la del aborto también, o sea coches con hombres que les valía y se ponían y aunque no... o sea sí te da miedo. A mí me da miedo, como que ese

coche si siguiera y nos atropellara, o sea como que sí me da miedo, pues sí sigue, aunque haya mucha gente.

PARTICIPANTE 3: pues yo sí veo muchas diferencias entre marchas, por ejemplo, de Chile, Argentina, España y México y, este, no quiero ser malinchistas, pero sí siento que hay más griterío en las marchas de México y menos creación artística. Yo siento que cuando sales, o sea cuando transformas tu miedo, yo, voy a hablar de mí, cuando yo elaboro un cartel, así pienso de...haber, ¿cómo voy a llevar mi cartel? ¿Qué voy a decir? ¿Cómo lo voy a pintar? O sea, cuando yo soy creadora y muestro mi creación, pues me siento mejor que cuando nada más voy a gritar y que ni siquiera sé ni qué. O sea, vuelvo a la comparación con Chile y Argentina, España, que pues ahí, y siento que, en otras marchas, o sea en sí la población mexicana sí somos ingeniosos, ingeniosas, o sea sí somos, como sí le vendría muy bien a las feministas mexicanas pues llenar de creación, las manifestaciones, o sea de canciones, de corridos, de música. Bueno, se ha vuelto tan...el corrido este que hubo, hay una canción de no recuerdo cómo se llama la chava, pero ya se la aprendieron y es como un himno ¿no? Las mantas, los carteles que algunos son bastante ingeniosos. Entonces yo pienso que, pues esta, o sea, impulsar más la expresión artística permitiría elaborar este miedo y sentirse, bueno yo...Bueno les voy a decir un secreto, pero no se lo digan a nadie. Yo una vez pasé por una tienda y vi una tela baratísima, baratísima, entonces yo dije, estaba tan barata que compré nueve metros y la doné a las organizadoras de la marcha, pero mi idea era hacer muchas pañoletas verdes, este...y intervenir estatuas, así, y regalárselo a la gente, así, esa era mi idea. Pero las chicas que lo tomaron hicieron una pañuelaza, entonces otras hicieron una pañuelaza y luego se las dieron a otras y pues vieron la vaquita que está en los arcos y pues se la pusieron. Entonces, eso me da mucha felicidad porque pues es una creación colectiva, alguien la vio, alguien la compró, alguien corto, alguien la cosió otras la pusieron. Es de verdad una creación colectiva y eso me da mucho gusto. O sea, creo que la creación es curativa, para mí.

NATALIA: mi siguiente pregunta es pedirles que hipoteticen porque espero que nunca hayan estado en esa situación. Pero justo pensando en cómo interactuaríamos con espacios en el que hubieran asesinado a una mujer y si les parece que estas estrategias son suficientes para cambiar esa interacción con los espacios de alguna manera embrujados.

PARTICIPANTE 2: Yo. Nat, puedes repetir la pregunta, la verdad es que no me quedó muy claro.

NATALIA: o sea, si ustedes estuvieran en un espacio en donde asesinaron a una mujer, ¿cambiaría realmente su interacción con el espacio con una intervención como las que hicieron en Estado de emergencia? O ¿seguiría siendo solamente este espacio adueñado por el asesinato de una mujer?

PARTICIPANTE 2: yo creo que sí cambia, yo creo que sí se transforma ese espacio. Porque, no sé, yo creo que sí toma otro significado, desde el momento en que la chava o la mujer fue asesinada, tanto en el momento que es intervenido. Entonces yo sí creo que es imposible, o por lo menos para mí lo sería, seguir viendo ese lugar de la misma forma y seguir habitando un lugar de la misma forma. Porque ya ni siquiera, para mí sería revivirlo, tal vez. O sea, revivirlo obviamente no, porque no estuve ahí, pero saber que algo sucedió ahí y que tuvo este significado y que cambió las cosas pues yo creo que para mí sí tendría esta transformación.

PARTICIPANTE 4: sí, yo también. Yo pienso en esta pregunta de cómo interactuaría con este espacio. Sí, yo creo que es importante ver, o sea tener otra manera de ver el espacio justamente porque, estoy pensando que también la arquitectura, los monumentos en las ciudades, pues también están construidas desde unas historias hetero-patriarcales, pensemos en el famoso Santiago de Querétaro y este famoso Santiago a caballo que está en tantas partes de la ciudad de Querétaro y que es así como una historia que me parece absurda. Pero es como por decir la historia y luego pienso en esto que dice: se pone una placa que dice, aquí estaba el cine premier, etcétera, etcétera y entonces sí yo digo. Y esas son las historias oficiales, las historias que parece ser que sí importan, pero entonces, digo ¿por qué no empezar a construir otra arquitectura, otra manera de también recorrer y vivir y ver nuestra ciudad y ver estos espacios que parecen tan cotidianos? A nadie le importa una cabina telefónica, pero creo que sí las vemos de otra manera, si a partir de eso reescribimos la historia de otra manera y a partir de eso vamos a reconstruir otras memorias, sobre de estas historias que siempre han sido y están siendo y han quedado minimizadas. Y si no queremos que queden minimizadas, si no queremos que se queden en el olvido ¿no? Pues yo creo que sí daría, o sea justamente a ese lugar en donde una mujer ha sido asesinada, porque claro, también pensar que esa mujer pude haber sido yo y eso cambia, cambia realmente y si digo, si así está el Santiago ese que mataba moros y aquí lo glorificamos en Querétaro. Digo, pufff, o sea me pregunto, vaya historia que nos estamos...que se ha construido el gobierno del Estado para hablar de una historia que es justamente cuando se habla de las historias oficiales ¿no? Pero se habla muy poco de la vida

cotidiana y de la vida de las mujeres en su cotidianeidad, porque es justamente a quién le importa, pues si no nos importa a nosotras, pues creo que es importante que rehagamos otro recorrido, otras miradas a estos lugares.

PARTICIPANTE 3: pues yo más que los lugares diría a las mujeres, porque...o sea vuelvo al ejemplo de Argentina, porque allá hay un desaparecido, o una desaparecida o la violación de una niña y se manifiestan en miles y aquí, y hombres y mujeres y todos, y aquí como mencionó la otra compañera, hay un feminicidio y hay 20 personas, o las mamás buscando a sus desaparecidas y hay 20, 40 o sea no tienen, no les damos, digamos, sí tienen la dignidad, pero no les damos la dignidad que se merecen esas mujeres que han sido expuestas o que han sido maltratadas hasta el feminicidio, entonces sí yo creo que para mí es darles la dignidad a ellas, a la dignidad que pretendieron quitárselas, pero que no se las quitan, que no se las puede quitar nadie. Entonces es que, pues toda la gente que las amó o que las ama sí ofrecieran creaciones, creaciones de ellas, lo que he visto es que a veces bordan...bueno, por ejemplo, en el caso Argentina bailaban con sus muertas y con sus muertos las locas de la Plaza de Mayo y, aquí, este...pues todavía no se ve muy bien, pero las he visto bordando, pero, para no darle más vueltas, es eso, o sea construir y somos muy buenos, buenas creando entonces yo creo que es como animarnos para hacer estas obras artísticas.

PARTICIPANTE 5: yo creo que...interferencia. Ay, se me cortó todo, no sé si me escuchan. Sí perdón es que se metió algo raro. Yo creo que, por ejemplo, si yo fuera en la UNAM y hubiera pasado el feminicidio en la cabina telefónica, y yo pasara por ahí todos los días en mi recorrido a clase, claramente...para empezar no me sentiría segura estando en la escuela, que de por sí ya era una situación difícil, y luego ver eso todos los días es difícil. Siento, para las personas que saben que alguien murió ahí y, de alguna forma, siento que este tipo de intervenciones es como volver a, como reapropiarse del lugar, no para hacer menos el asesinato sino justamente para lo que decían antes, que es como, que no se vea como solamente la mataron; la mataron y estamos buscando justicia y es...vamos a hacer algo por ella. Es reapropiarse del lugar y no para regresarlo a lo que era, que era una simple cabina telefónica, sino como darle otro significado totalmente.

PARTICIPANTE 1: yo siento que para mí sí cambiaría, pues como decía participante 5, que si yo lo pienso en si estuviera en la UNAM y paso por ese lugar y sé que ahí pasó algo, sí cambia totalmente el lugar y si fuera lo contrario, o sea yo por ejemplo, que la gente lo siguiera usando

de cabina de teléfono, por ejemplo, no sé si es respeto, pero se le guarda como algo de, sí respeto y deee, pues sí, sí cambia la idea. A mí me cambiaría el chip totalmente, cada vez pasar por ahí y verlos y ya no es un teléfono, es algo más, es un arma homicida, un testigo de un feminicidio, entonces pues sí para mí sí cambiaría también.

NATALIA: ok y mi última pregunta que se va a relacionar un poco con lo que han dicho de las marchas y crear en el feminismo ¿qué opinan de este tipo de proyectos, como estado de emergencia y otros proyectos feministas, no sé si tú, la Participante 3 hablabas de la canción de Vivir Quintana o las Tesis, que las tesis es un esfuerzo colectivo, pero en fin las feministas han visto que la creación colectiva se opone al discurso artístico de la creación del genio, o sea esta idea que tenemos del artista es un genio que crea solo y se inspira por las musas, que además es relativamente falso porque todos los artistas tenían talleres y trabajaban en equipo, pero bueno oficialmente es una persona el genio y las feministas han contestado con una respuesta creativa desde la colectiva. Entonces ¿qué opinan de esta respuesta colectiva de feminismo en las marchas y dentro del arte o el *artivismo*?

PARTICIPANTE 3: sí, me refería a Vivir Quintana. Pero ciertamente las Tesis son geniales, o sea geniales, tan geniales que influyeron en todo el mundo y bueno es una creación colectiva, no es una creación individual, entonces, este...sí yo, ahí quedaría.

PARTICIPANTE 1: yo creo, a mí se me hace, la colectividad es súper importante porque le das autoría y voces a más de una y cuando hay más de una es más fuerte todo. Y se ve que no una persona piensa así, sino que es una gran cantidad de gente. El que hagan este tipo de cosas, me parece que, pues sí, que se deberían seguir haciendo y seguir en lo colectivo y no lo de una persona.

PARTICIPANTE 2: justamente con esta parte de los distintos acercamientos que cada *artivista* tiene en diferentes proyectos creo que también entra no el qué se hace si no que está narrando. La parte de qué se narra y qué es lo que se quiere expresar, justamente, entonces sí yo creo que todas estas formas de *artivismo* son súper importantes y más ahora que pues, es una forma de poder trabajar con este tema y justamente eso, o sea ¿qué es lo que se está narrando? ¿Qué es lo que se está tratando de decir y de expresar? Y volviendo a lo que dicen la colectividad es importante, porque ninguna cosa se hace de una sola persona. Digo bueno hay artistas que sí les gusta tener el reconocimiento unitario, pero creo que sí es súper importante la colectividad

y más que nada en el arte, porque el arte puede venir con el ejemplo que decía la Participante 3, alguien compró la tela y alguien más lo intervino y alguien más la puso. Entonces al final se vuelve algo colectivo y a mí sí me parece súper importante que se siga haciendo.

PARTICIPANTE 4: sí yo también pienso que esta cuestión de la colectividad, bueno es muy importante, volvería un poco a lo mejor a la pregunta que no hacías al inicio de si ver a mujeres juntas enfrentándose a las autoridades juntas no nos podría brindar un poco de seguridad. Entonces bueno, pienso que van vinculadas y pienso que sí, justo en literatura por ejemplo hay muchas escritoras, en esta época también, Cristina Rivera Garza habla sobre la *comunalidad* ¿no? Y también discute mucho este concepto del escritor o la escritora. Y hace ejercicios también más de escribir como a distintas manos con distintas voces. Y hablando de estas cuestiones de violencias tienes el libro de dolerse y luego, ella escribe, donde justamente aparece el caso de Maricela y la hija y lo interviene el texto. Es interesante y luego responden varios escritores, varios artistas a ese libro y el libro se llama condolerse. Y entonces se va formando una comunidad se van encontrando amigos, amistades y que yo creo que esto, que vemos en estas propuestas de arte, de activar, como siempre estoy en esa lucha de llevarlo a la vida ¿no? De cómo lo llevamos también nosotras y cómo vamos haciendo estas redes de mujeres y estos grupos de mujeres con los cuales podamos ir sintiéndonos seguras, creando redes en las que podamos tener esa seguridad de que estarán ahí, en esos momentos. Entonces pienso, o sea qué opino de esto, de estos proyectos me parecen sí muy interesantes y creo que es lo que está ahora, en estos años, en varias disciplinas, no solamente en las cuestiones artísticas o de *artivismo*, sino también desde otras como en este caso que viene al caso que serían estas escritoras. Que antes, pues eran las ediciones, pero ahora pues ya, sí, si se ponen todas como autoras; hoy estaba escuchando una entrevista con Verónica Gerber y que justamente su trabajo es interesante porque es un poco pedir prestados textos provenientes de distintas disciplinas y, armar con todos esos otros textos otra nueva versión. Entonces bueno, estaba pensando en esto y que, creo, así como se habla de este boom de los feminismos pues sí también esto está teniendo un efecto en varias áreas y también yo creo que esto, ojalá vaya más allá de las humanidades, que esa siempre es la parte también compleja y de lucha.

PARTICIPANTE 5: yo creo que el tema de la colectividad da como una cuestión de pertenencia y de unidad y entonces cuando formas parte de algo más grande te hace sentir que perteneces a algo y que hay gente que piensa como tú y que, pues que tú estás luchando por algo que está

bien, no que necesariamente que estás loca y que lo estás haciendo sola. O sea, literal, es esa cuestión de pertenecer. Creo que, literalmente es muy importante que exista la colectividad.

NATALIA: perfecto, no sé si alguien quiera decir alguna otra cosa para cerrar.

PARTICIPANTE 3: me vas a decir que me salí de tema, pero sí es la oportunidad que tengo. Yo vi una pregunta en el *Face* o sea protestando en las pintas en los arcos y me pareció muy interesante. Decía: ¿pues qué tiene que ver los feminicidios con el aborto legal? O sea, una cosa y otra cosa es otra cosa, estas lo están mezclando, y entonces me pareció una pregunta importante, porque pareciera que una se refiere a la muerte y la otra se refiere a la sexualidad nada más. Pero sucede que, en los dos casos, el cuerpo de la mujer es cosificado, es torturado, o sea no se le permite tomar decisiones es, o sea se le trata como cosa o como esclava. Así a las esclavas se les imponían hijos, se les vendía sus hijos, o sea no les estaba permitido decidir sobre su cuerpo y sobre su reproducción. Y mucha, o sea, si no puedes decidir sobre tu cuerpo pues tampoco puedes decidir sobre tu vida. Entonces yo respeto mucho, vengo de una familia híper-católica, toda mi familia es pro-vida, toda, toda, toda, pero yo digo que cada quien tome sus decisiones, pero sí respetar que quien no, quien no quiere estar embarazada, sobre todo niñas, adolescentes y, o sea que no se les torture a fuerzas a tener un embarazo y que bueno, o sea la mayoría de las veces una niña de 10 años, de 14 años, o sea no tiene la opción de decir, o sea no está madura para decir que quiere tener relaciones sexuales. Cuando dicen prevenir embarazo adolescente, digo más bien prevengan las violaciones, o sea, por favor. ¿No? Entonces bueno, yo sé que tu tema es más feminicidios, pero yo sí creo que hay una relación entre una y la otra.

PARTICIPANTE 1: yo tengo dos cosas. Una duda, primero quería confirmar ¿la autora de capitalismo gore?

NATALIA: sí, te escribo el nombre. Es con K. Ya te lo escribí.

PARTICIPANTE 1: por otro lado, a lo que decías la Participante 3, a mí me lo explicaron así, yo creo me sirvió un montón para explicarles a todos mis cercanos que también son súper conservadores y así, que hasta que un hombre deje de tomar decisiones de mi cuerpo o alguien independiente a mí siga tomando decisiones sobre mi cuerpo, pues nunca voy a estar libre, entonces nunca nos vamos, o sea sí ya cada quien que opine lo que opine. Pero, cuando el

aborto, bueno sólo si es por violación. Yo digo, bueno, punto, o sea, yo haga o no lo que quiera, hasta que alguien no deje de tomar decisiones sobre mi cuerpo, no voy a ser libre, entonces, pues sí.

NATALIA: sí, yo no trabajo el tema de aborto y nunca me he metido a trabajar el tema de aborto. Pero sí mantengo la postura que un país feminicida no puede ser un país provida, entonces creo que ahí hay un hueco brutal, o sea, esto que decía Participante 1 que temieron que las fuera a atropellar, hójole, luego no me digas que eres provida si estás dispuesto a atropellar mujeres. Entonces sí entiendo ese hueco. Pero justo como nunca me he metido al tema académicamente, sería empezar de cero, es eso, no que no vea la vinculación.

PARTICIPANTE 2: yo nada más rápida agregaría, regresando al tema un poco de ver el arte en museos. Creo que se dijo, pero muy por encimita, es que hay cero representación de mujeres artistas en los museos, creo que en una de las preguntas del cuestionario había sobre eso. Que, si habíamos visto como exposiciones o algo en los museos y pocas veces me ha tocado ver dentro de los museos esta representación, digo, igual son espacios que justamente lo que hablábamos de que también tienen cierta clase, que le pertenecen a cierto sector. Pero, yo sí creo que también esa es una parte súper importante de abarcar y que pues sigan buscando estos espacios donde puedan tener contacto con todas las clases y con toda la sociedad.

NATALIA: sí, las mexicanas sí han cuestionado esta falta de representación, con menos fuerza, es que EUA tiene a las Guerrillas Girls que se dedican a publicar todo el día cuántas mujeres faltan en los museos y ahora traen el rollo de BLM. Pero, por ejemplo, Karen Cordero que es una de las grandes historiadoras de arte feminista fue al JUMEX invitada un ocho de marzo, porque el ocho de marzo sí existimos, y el JUMEX reconoció frente a ella que creo que sólo el 21 o el 27% de su colección son mujeres y gastan una millonada de exposiciones de artistas muertos, pero no hay ninguna promoción real de artistas mujeres ni artistas vivos. Creo que tiene que ver con el mercado del arte, los hombres siguen vendiendo más caro, también, sí está complicado.

PARTICIPANTE 2: y el tipo de arte que venden, o sea realmente sigue habiendo esta parte y lo que decía Participante 3, la codificación de la mujer se sigue viendo en el arte, y seguirá existiendo por parte de los hombres seguirá por mucho tiempo. Se seguirá viendo a las mujeres

como unos objetos, a la mujer en el arte que es representada por hombres y eso es lo que sigue vendiendo.

NATALIA: sí. ¿Alguien más quisiera decir otra cosa?

PARTICIPANTE 5: yo tenía una duda, ayer de Cerrucha, que nos dijiste que nos podáis decir, pero la verdad es que no me acuerdo de que era.

NATALIA: ah que me esperaran para seguirla en redes sociales. ¿Algo más? SILENCIO. Muchísimas, muchísimas gracias, yo les mandaré ahorita el formulario de salida. Mil, mil gracias.

PARTICIPANTE 6: SHE SENT HER PARTICIPATION AS SHE COULD NOT BE PRESENT.

Ya acabé de ver la presentación, me imaginó que va hacia como estas otras maneras de manifestar a través del arte, pero un arte más en las calles. El de las calcomanías me pareció impresionantes y creo que al hacer visible lo que nosotros decimos en el discurso feminista de 9 a 10 mujeres mueren en México. Probablemente si lo dices en palabras se queden ahí y son fuertes, pero al mismo tiempo, tal vez, al repetirlas tanto se vuelven más insignificantes, porque hay quien habla de sí se mueren 10 mujeres al día, pero mueren más por crimen organizado, como si fuera competencia de haber quién muere más ¿no? Entonces, este tipo de activaciones, performances de poner las calcomanías como puntos rojos de mostrar ‘aquí fue una mujer violentada’ me parece la mejor manera de hacer tangible y visible una cifra, un problema y obviamente que tú si eres mujer y lo estás viendo ahí te sientas insegura. Y, si eres hombre y lo estás viendo ahí, que sepas qué está pasando. En ese primer video incluyen a las mujeres trans, que es un tema en en el que yo estoy totalmente de acuerdo. Creo que, los derechos de la mujer trans se convierten en derechos de la mujer al momento que esta persona hace la transición hacia ser mujer, entiendo y es un discurso y un debate que he tenido con otras feministas. Entiendo que los derechos de las infancias trans sean mucho más complicados porque, desgraciadamente en el mundo a una edad tienes derecho de decidir sobre tu propio cuerpo, antes de los 18 tienes una persona que es responsable de ti y de tus decisiones. Entonces, bueno, ese es otro tema pero yo sí estoy a favor de que las mujeres trans son parte del movimiento feminista y que obviamente los feminicidios trans no hay que quitarlos del camino, o sea en mi sentido hay que sumarlos al movimiento son tan parte de nosotros como

cualquier otra mujer y justo ayer veía un documental sobre la impunidad de los casos que el 97% de los casos de feminicidio son impunes y es un chingo, o sea es súper triste darte cuenta de lo complicado que realmente ganar, o no ganar, hacer justicia, me acuerdo de una de las marchas que fue había un letrero que decía: ‘pedimos sentencia, porque justicia sería que no la matarán’ y es real, no estamos pidiendo nada más que el hecho que no se haga un homicidio, que por ley, desde hace miles de años, es un delito entonces por qué el nuestro no, por qué nuestro homicidio a las mujeres no lo toman como tal. Y en este documental que veía hay dos cosas que van un poco de acuerdo con esto, que bueno, en esta salsa o merengue que hace Cerrucha habla de eso, son dos cosas: me impresiona la falta de respeto que tiene el Estado, el gobierno y el sistema hacia el sentido humano, este documental se llama ‘las tres muertes de Marisela’, hay una parte del documental en donde el procurador de justicia de Zacatecas dice: es que yo sé que estamos buscando a ese feminicida ¿no?, es un feminicida en específico de una chava de Ciudad Juárez, pero ustedes tienen que entender que es uno entre miles, tenemos 999 casos que resolver, entonces el tuyo se convierte en el número mil y pues espérame, porque llevó tres años intentando resolver 999 casos y no sé cuándo llegue al mil y entonces pasan tres años y resultan que tu caso es impune y ya nadie encontró a tu feminicida. Eso a mí me dolió un buen, o sea que seamos tan cifradas, eres un número, eres un registro, eres un folio y no eres una vida. Y yo digo, como yo soy el número 1000, los 999 háganse a un lado, es por qué no estamos haciendo caso a más de 1000 casos, por qué están archivados y por qué cuando desaparece algún hijo de un gobernador y cuando asesinan a un servidor público en chinga resuelven el caso. Pues claro, la justicia es un privilegio en México, la justicia es para los privilegiados.

El otro que me parece súper interesante que es algo de lo que habla Cerrucha en su canción, es este tema de cansancio de pedirles que hagan su trabajo, de decirles por favor hagan su trabajo y dejen de ser unos ineptos. En este docu, la mamá de la chava encuentra al feminicida dos veces, por su cuenta, se va en su coche a buscarlo, se tarda 3 meses y lo encuentra una vez y a la policía se le “escapa” y lo vuelve a encontrar y otra vez. Entonces, cómo una mamá digamos mortal en el sentido que no tienen ni las herramientas ni los estudios que se supone que debe de tener la gente que nos protege lo encontró dos veces, cómo ustedes ineptos, no lo hacen. Y yo me he dado cuenta a través de las canciones feministas, tengo dos en la mente: la que se hizo súper fuerte de la culpa no era mía que inició en Chile y esta que escribió, ah se llama, la de Vivir sin miedo, es de Vivir Quintana, en las dos marchas últimas, bueno en la última que asistí que fue en Querétaro, por Jessica, cantamos Vivir sin miedo y hace colectividad, la música, las canciones, el estar en la calle, tomando tu la calle a través de una expresión artística

que al mismo tiempo la expresas tú a través del dolor, del enojo, tiene otra vida, tiene otro sentimiento, entonces hay una parte de la canción que dice, que resuena fuerte, nos queremos vivas, entonces al mismo tiempo todas gritan nos queremos vivas y ese impresionante ¿no? Y es una canción que la escribió una chava por un problema político, social y tan latente, que gracias a su música, su letra nos identificamos un chingo de morras con su canción y hoy la utilizamos como un himno para nuestro movimiento y esa canción creo que es, es hermosa en un sentido de sororidad pero menciona nombres, menciona yo soy la voz de la niña que subiste por la fuerza, o sea menciona cosas horribles y la otra que es la de la culpa no era mía, que esa sí creo que se hizo totalmente viral sirvió a tal extremo, que gente que nunca se había cuestionado qué es el feminismo empezará a escuchar una canción pegajosa con ritmo, etcétera, pero que en realidad te estaba dando un mensaje súper fuerte. Yo escuchado *weyes*, así, el día que fui a marchar al centro por Jessica, el señor que vendía los *bonice*, cantando y la culpa no era mía (8), pero en burla ¿no? Después se echo un comentario de algo así como: seguro son panistas. Pero dije, te lo juro, yo pensé qué cabrón que el señor de los Bon-ice se burla, pero al mismo tiempo sé que le llegó y sé que al menos la primera vez que la escuchó, escuchó su significado, después decidió convertirla en burla, pero al menos la primera vez que lo escuchó está el significado y eso es la música, que también se convertía en un performance, que también hicimos en la marcha de la Ciudad de México y es una manera súper colectiva de manifestarse y al mismo tiempo tiene una dualidad entre sororidad y colectividad, que tiene significado súper profundo y súper doloroso. O sea, les estamos cantando que no nos maten, les estamos cantando que no era mi culpa por vestirme como yo quería, les estamos cantando que estamos representando a las que ya no tienen voz. Entonces, bueno, creo que ya me desplace, creo que esas son mis conclusiones. La neta te agradezco, Nat, porque a través de estas tres pláticas que tuvimos conocí cosas del feminismo que yo no sabía y las he compartido, con mi novio y así, que le he dicho, le platicué de la primera obra que nos mostraste de los objetos, es que claro no siempre es un arma, o sea estos *weyes* agarran o que tienen a la mano para matar a lo que “les pertenece”. Y para lo que necesites yo te ayudo. Mil gracias.

Session 1. Mexico City. *Evidencias* by Lorena Wolffer. 19 October 2020

La dinámica, voy a grabar todo. En las dos computadoras. Listo.

La dinámica es la siguiente: yo presento la obra que estoy analizando, procurando influir lo menos posible en su opinión, entonces no voy a dar contenidos muy subjetivos y luego abro la discusión, ninguna ha durado las dos horas, la última es la más larga porque es un proyecto de arte bien grande sobre feminicidio, pero las otras han durado una hora o poquito menos. Y algo que es importante que supongo que lo ven venir, pero las obras con las que estoy trabajando lidian con violencia de género, entonces tienen, ninguna de ellas tiene imágenes violentas, pero sí hay contenido violento, si alguna de ustedes dos en cualquier momento se siente mal sobre lo que estamos viendo se puede salir sin ningún problema. Entonces, sí es importante que lo mencione.

Déjenme compartir mi pantalla.

Bien. La primera artista que vamos a ver es Lorena Wolffer, algunas de ustedes ya mencionaron en los formularios, ella es de la Ciudad de México. Ha estado activa desde ya varios años y se volvió muy famosa como performancera, es de las pocas que en los 90s se siguió llamando feminista, porque en los 90s, un poco, dejó de usarse el concepto y las mujeres dejaron de identificarse con el término, bajo el principio que las feministas habían triunfado y la agenda feminista lo había logrado, y la realidad es que quedaron muchos problemas pendientes. Ella se sigue llamando a sí misma feminista. Obtiene una beca para irse a San Francisco, está allá dos años y detecta que mucho del feminismo mexicano o de la negación del feminismo viene de EUA, entonces como que ve esa relación muy clara.

Uno de los últimos performances que hizo se llamó 'Mientras dormíamos', es muy interesante porque en una conversación con Marta Lamas, Lamas dijo que le impresionaba que las mujeres artistas en México dijeran sentirse interesadas por los problemas de mujeres, pero ninguna de ellas había trabajado el feminicidio. Y justo este performance de Lorena era sobre el feminicidio, ella aparecía y se cortaba, o se marcaba las heridas que han presentado varios de los cuerpos de las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez que todavía no eran considerados casos de feminicidio pero que ya estaba allí el problema y mientras lo presentaba se dio cuenta de lo lejana que estaba ella a estas mujeres, al final, ella es un artista, tiene una plataforma bastante más grande que las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez, tiene un apellido extranjero, es de piel blanca, es de ojos verdes, entonces hay una diferencia étnica que la aleja de las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez. Y entonces va a cambiar por completo su lenguaje artístico, todavía hace performance, pero sus performances son sobre todo como un proceso de sanción para ella misma, ella lo ha

platicado, el estar expuesta a la violencia al final la daña psicológicamente, físicamente tiene la mandíbula trabada por estas experiencias, entonces usa el performance como forma de curar. En concreto ella dice: ‘dejé de importar de mi cuerpo, lo que yo tenía que decir dejó de ser el cuerpo, me dediqué a crear plataformas en donde se podían escuchar muchas voces’.

Y justo la obra con la que yo estoy trabajando es de las primeras que hizo teniendo muchas voces, que es la obra de ‘Evidencias’ que presentó entre 2010 y 2016. Entre las autoras que Lorena menciona mucho y que creo que es importante discutir las con un foro feminista está Judith Butler, por lo tanto, su definición del género es la de Judith Butler, esta idea que el género es performativo, que el sexo es mucho menos determinante y que más bien se nos ha obligado en un marco hetero-normado y binario a encasillar a hombres y mujeres. Sayak Valencia que es mexicana, y es la creadora del concepto de *capitalismo gore* que voy a explorar a mayor profundidad en la última sesión y la otra autora es Ileana Diéguez que ella es mexico-cubana, es profesora en la UAM y ella trabaja el concepto de liminal, justo para analizar el arte y el *artivismo* feminista, son todas estas obras que se llevan a las márgenes para estar mucho más cerca de la población que está marginada o alejada del sistema. Ahora un proyecto puede ser liminal incluso adentro de un museo, lo que importa es la interacción y el tipo de público con el que se está trabajando, el romper barreras institucionales, entonces tiene ver más con eso que con el espacio físico.

Y, tuve la fortuna de poderla entrevistar, lo que me metió en un pequeñito...

PARTICIPANTE A: Natalia, perdón, una pregunta: ¿si yo no conozco muy bien el concepto de *artivismo*?

NATALIA: ahí voy. Lo voy a definir. Justo me metió en un problema gigante, porque yo empecé a estudiar arte feminista y me di cuenta de que estaban haciendo *artivismo*, entonces me puse a estudiar el *artivismo*. Entrevisté a Lorena Wolffer y me dice: no, yo no me considero *artivista*. Y yo dije: ‘bueno ¿ahora qué hago?’ Pero tiene sentido que ella no se considere *artivista*. El *artivismo* es un neologismo que acuñaron los artistas chicanos y chicanas en EUA, empezaba ya cierta tensión con EUA incluso antes de las crisis migratorias que hemos tenido y, Gloria Anzaldúa, que es esta autora chicana, feminista, fantástica publica un libro que se llama ‘*Borderline*’ en donde habla de esta identidad latina o chicana en EUA, pero además ella es chicana de las que...su familia vivía en México cuando México perdió el territorio, entonces ni siquiera es una migrante, su familia se quedó allí atorada y solamente porque no es rubia es considerada... es discriminada todo el tiempo y el libro se convirtió como en una voz para los

chicanos y las chicanas y al mismo tiempo fue prohibido en varios estados de EUA. Entonces cuando los músicos chicanos y chicanas se enteraron de este libro les pareció interesante esta idea que el arte mismo y su creación fuera incómoda y fuera molesta y empezaron a hacer música que confrontaba al sistema. Se enteraron de los zapatistas en el 94, los contactaron, tuvieron un encuentro en Aguascalientes II, Chiapas y, de ese encuentro, sale el término *artista* que es un... puede ser un activista o un artista que utiliza estrategias artísticas con fines activistas. Eso es el *artivismo*. Wolffer en algún momento se consideró *artista* hasta que los museos se adueñaron del término y empezaron como a equiparar los proyectos, entonces lo que ella hace, ahora le llama proyectos sociales de intervención cultural, que ella explica que le interesa mucho más el impacto cultural que tiene. Sigue metida en la esfera del arte, pero ya no tiene... su preocupación no es artística, y si los grandes críticos de arte dicen o no dicen si es arte lo que está haciendo la tiene sin cuidado. El término, el de proyectos sociales de intervención cultural, le pertenece a una feminista estadounidense, artista, maravillosa que se llama Suzanne Lacy que lo aportó en un libro que se llama *New Public Art* en donde habla del arte público y la interacción del público con el arte y esta idea que mantenemos el arte público con los impuestos y por lo tanto tendría que ser más significativo y, hoy con el *Black Lives Matter*, el libro es del 93, se vuelve aún más relevante.

De las primeras obras que hizo ya como una plataforma fue 'Evidencias', que es justo ésta. Lo presentó la primera en 2010 en el MUAC y consistió... e hizo un llamado público a las mujeres que hubieran sufrido alguna forma de violencia a donar el objeto con el que las habían violentado acompañado del testimonio que contextualizaba este objeto y su experiencia en el MUAC fue fantástica, llegaron muchas mujeres y además descubrió que estaba lleno de experiencias que no esperaba, desde mujeres que no llevaban su testimonio y entonces ahí lo contaban y entonces al momento de contarlo se convertía en otra cosa, era un intercambio y era intentar consolar a esta mujer. Otras que daban vueltas, veían de que se trataba y al final se animaban... y al final iban tres días seguidos a dejar objetos. Y entonces le pareció pertinente sacar la obra y en la Ciudad de México la presentó también en el Parque España y la Alameda Central, justo siguiendo esta idea de lo liminal y que el arte te encuentre en donde menos lo esperes, pero donde más pertinente es. Al final los públicos de los museos son los mismos, y los públicos de los museos feministas son todavía más chiquitos y siempre son las mismas.

Entonces les voy a ir presentando los objetos y les voy a ir leyendo los testimonios, no tengo todos los objetos porque es muy grande la exposición.

TESTIMONIO.

Entonces estos objetos, el martillo y el machete, que fácilmente se pueden relacionar con violencia y luego hay otros que cuesta trabajo visualizar en una escena violenta, hay además varios tipos de...de violencia de las modalidades enlistadas en la ley, hay violencia psicológica, comunitaria, simbólica, física y patrimonial y hay violencia feminicida, que ahorita hablo de los objetos de violencia feminicida. Después de sacarlo a los parques lo llevé a la ciudad de Querétaro al Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro y..., hizo lo mismo, abrió la convocatoria, y no llegó una sola mujer en Querétaro. Entonces puso hojas blancas en las que decía aquí debería haber un objeto. Y en Querétaro, como era un congreso, acabando la inauguración, conversó con las asistentes y preguntó por qué en Querétaro nadie donó un objeto. Entonces las mujeres le dijeron: ‘no pues la verdad es que es una sociedad bastante pequeña, cerrada, todo el mundo se conoce, la convocatoria fue pública y nos dio miedo que alguien nos viera llegar al museo con el objeto porque pues sabían a qué veníamos’. Entonces, a raíz de eso, Lorena ya no convocaba abiertamente sino a través de ONG’s u OSC’s que estuvieran tratando con mujeres víctimas de violencia, entonces eso inserta Evidencias en el proceso de sanación de las víctimas, de reconstruir la historia y toda la parte psicológica de estos proyectos y así ya nadie se tenía que enterar que alguien había donado.

Este objeto dice: TESTIMONIO.

Y luego, hay saliva y orina entre los objetos que, una vez más no es como lo cotidiano en las narraciones de la violencia. También se expuso en Guadalajara en parques públicos y en el museo de arte Raúl Anguiano y en el Centro Cultural Tijuana y luego regresó a la Ciudad de México donde es parte del archivo del MUAC.

Otra de las cosas que es como interesante de evidencias es que Lorena no tenía control sobre absolutamente casi nada. Las mujeres decidían donde montar su objeto entonces más o menos la labor de curaduría la hacían ellas y ella en su entrevista me contó que hay una historia de una chica que llega a su depa y está el novio de su *roomie* y, este tipo le dice que quiere tener relaciones con ella, ella lo rechaza se va a dormir y a la mañana se despierta, abre la puerta de su cuarto y afuera está su vajilla toda orinada por este tipo, entonces ella donó la vajilla y cuando ya había acabado evidencias le escribió a Lorena y le dijo que ya había acabado su proceso psicológico y que ya había sanado esa herida y que, por tanto era pertinente recuperar la vajilla porque ya significa otra cosa y Lorena se la devolvió, entonces está la libertad en ‘Evidencias’. De los 237 objetos quedan 236, ninguna otra de las mujeres la ha pedido de regreso.

Esta de la saliva dice: TESTIMONIO

Tiene varias caguamas, por esta relación del alcohol de las caguamas y aunque las mujeres podían decidir dónde montarlo, al final mientras viajaba ella sí iba agrupando los objetos porque no viajaba con las donadoras.

TESTIMONIO

De todos estos objetos 180 violencia familiar, o violencia de pareja, 104 es física, 82 es psicológica, 4 son feminicidios. De todos estos 138 el agresor es la pareja, 38 son los padres, incluyendo padre o madre y el resto mencionó a algún desconocido, policías, profesoras, secretarias o secretarios, funcionarios públicos también hay algunos.

De las que tengo aquí todas son de parejas, aunque esa claramente es el padre golpeando a la hija y un poco describo esto para dar una idea de lo que hay en evidencias, porque justo también 'Evidencias' es una forma de resistirse a cómo México transforma a las mujeres víctimas de violencia en una víctima más y, cada año publica sus estadísticas y la historia atrás de esas estadísticas pues, quién sabe. Entonces por ahí va.

Esta es de feminicidio. Las cuatro, obviamente las donaron familiares o amigas, otra de las que tiene de feminicidio que justo fue en el museo de Arte Raúl Anguiano, llegó la hermana con pastillas y se animó a contar la historia en medio de la conversación con otras víctimas de violencia, el novio llegó y la envenenó a ella y a sus perros con pastillas, entonces ella donó las pastillas. Este no dice cómo fue el feminicidio, sólo dice que ya no está.

TESTIMONIO

Digo, evidentemente la violencia fue escalando hasta que el tipo la asesinó. Los testimonios no tienen un formato establecido y la relación entre las artistas feministas y las instituciones artísticas ha sido un estira y afloja, y eso Lorena lo dice mucho que sólo exponen mujeres el 8 de marzo y el 25 noviembre y el resto del año esperan que las mujeres, pues no sé qué haciendo y con qué se mantienen, pero listas para ser expuestas esos dos días y entonces sí, todos los museos tienen perspectiva de género y las colecciones, obviamente la mayoría de artistas coleccionados son hombres, o sea sí hay un hueco ahí brutal y, por otro lado limitan mucho la libertad creativa y demandan de todos los artistas, pero de las feministas, una forma de expresión concreta y las feministas se han hartado de eso, entonces más bien es un intercambio, en el que las feministas dicen: tú no me quieres y yo no te quiero, porque así hago lo que quiero. Un museo habría demandado que los testimonios más o menos fueran uniformes y siguieran un mismo formato. Lorena no formateó ninguno, cada uno podía decir lo que quisiera. Hay algunos que tienen errores de redacción y los dejó así, porque justo se trata más bien de darle voz y cabida a las víctimas más que, que de ella quede como la gran artista feminista en México. Que puede que sí sea de las grandes.

TESTIMONIO

Y antes de poner el video, igual en la entrevista y lo ha dicho en otras entrevistas, luego les comparto recursos lo que no quiero es influir mucho en el juicio que puedan hacer, a ella lo que le sorprende es la falta de articulación entre la realidad jurídica y la realidad social de las mexicanas. Entonces Lorena Wolffer reconoce que tenemos una ley fabulosa, LAMVLV, es ejemplar, casi ningún otro país del mundo tiene tal mecanismo de protección, pero la violencia ha aumentado desde que existe la ley, entonces claramente hay como un vacío entre las leyes y nuestra realidad y, evidencias también juega en ese límite, porque al final estos objetos, algunos de ellos podrían ser utilizados en una investigación policial y el caso es que están más bien aquí, y no se puede decir que estén almacenados porque están activados por el testimonio de la víctima, pero Lorena Wolffer va a trabajar mucho con esto de qué hacemos con la realidad que no termina de reflejar el trabajo legal o que han hecho las feministas en estas áreas.

Entonces voy a poner un video, ahí yo termino mi colaboración, abro los micrófonos para ustedes, voy a dejar la pantalla compartida por si quieren que regrese a algunos de los objetos en particular.

Sobre ejemplos de violencia por parte de las madres, hay varias historias de madres que les dicen a sus hijas que están gordas, si no se visten, arreglan, comparten de cualquier manera no van a conseguir pareja ese es el tipo de violencia que han denunciado de las madres en su mayoría. Y les sedo un poco la palabra.

PARTICIPANTE A: Participante B, empieza tú.

PARTICIPANTE B: es que no sé, me quedé pensando, pero si quieres tú, adelante.

PARTICIPANTE A: No pues es que yo no sé, no sé, pues igual no sé qué decir. O sea, estoy sonriendo por nervios, justo la, la, la presentación me provocó algo muy, muy distinto y es algo conflictivo, ¿no? Entonces porque, porque, porque nunca es igual cuando lo ves, este...a cuando lo escuchas, incluso, cuando vives es una cosa muy cosa muy distinta, porque muchas veces justo no sabemos que estamos viviendo procesos de violencia, ¿no? Entonces, el hecho de que esas, bueno que se lleve a ciertas escalas en las que h́jole, es identificable, por ejemplo, uno de los testimonios que decía, fue aquí cuando me di cuenta, cuando llegó borracho y empezó a golpear a mi hija, digo, justo es un momento en que darse cuenta. Incluso probablemente hay instancias de violencia anteriores en las que una se pudo dar cuenta, pero como esta, pues no sólo la socialización de la violencia, sino, pues la dificultad de admitir que

se está en una situación así, pero, además, me llama la atención el, como, paso posterior que es el de dar el objeto con el que se ejerció la violencia y conservarlo para formar parte de una especie de sanación. Eso yo sí creo que es una de las cosas que más me sorprendió, o sea, por ejemplo, porque, claro no creo, o sea seguramente tiene una explicación psicológica que no alcanzo a formular, ni tiene sentido que la formule en ese momento, pero, por ejemplo, la hermana con las pastillas, ¿no? Qué es lo que le hizo pensar que debía coger esas pastillas o, entonces eso me llamó mucho la atención y me impresionó.

PARTICIPANTE B: a mí también, o sea como que, me...este hecho de que sean objetos materiales, por ejemplo, uno que me impresionó mucho fue el de las monedas porque me transportó directamente, o sea, traes un pantalón y se te caen las monedas, está el sonido que hacen y hasta se me hizo la piel chinita. Porque sí, el hecho de que sean como algo material hace totalmente visible la violencia de las mujeres, ¿no? Y el hecho de que todos estos espacios sean creados para la visibilización, o sea se me hace súper fuerte y muy potente el hecho de que se usen objetos que usados para ejercer cualquier de violencia, ¿no? O sea, ya sea psicológica, y de todas maneras, incluso psicológica, también se me hace mucho más difícil y fuerte, pero creo que incluso puede ser, o sea como, receptora, puede ser aún más fuerte en cuestiones psicológicas y sí...creo que eso era todo por ahorita.

NATALIA: Está perfecto, yo tengo preguntas. ¿Creen que ayuda a entender si una está en una situación de violencia el ver una situación similar en otra? Y ¿por qué sí o por qué no?

PARTICIPANTE A: ¿Cómo, Natalia? Perdón, puedes repetir la pregunta.

NATALIA: o sea esto que decía la Participante A que estás inmersa en una situación de violencia y no te das cuenta. ¿Ayuda a darte cuenta el ver tu misma situación vivida por otra?

PARTICIPANTE A: ¿Puedes repetir la pregunta?

NATALIA: Sí. Si cuando estás inmersa en una situación de violencia y no te das cuenta ¿ayuda el leer un testimonio, por ejemplo, narrando tu misma historia para darte cuenta?

PARTICIPANTE A: sí, sí yo creo que sí completamente y creo eso es como uno de los objetivos de la visibilización, siempre que se platican, o sea es que yo sí creo que la narración

de la vida de una misma es parte de la construcción de ellas, entonces si no tenemos los elementos narrativos para formular que nos sentimos violentadas no tenemos los elementos hermenéuticos para interpretar una situación de violencia y, claro, porque a veces pasa mucho sobre todo con las familias violentas, cuando una persona crece o entra en contacto con otras familias u otros entornos se da cuenta, ese típico ‘esto no me era normal, eso que me hacía sentir mal, por algo me hacía sentir mal’...bueno, tal vez sí es normal, pero no es lo sano o lo bueno. Creo que sí ayuda mucho a identificar esas situaciones...Creo que de hecho a mí me ha servido para evitar ciertas situaciones.

NATALIA: Ok.

PARTICIPANTE B: O sea creo que también hay un apego, no sé si necesariamente en el momento en el que estás viviendo violencia sea tan fácil como, o sea igual y si lo puedes como ver, pero no tomar cierta acción a lo que estás viviendo, o sea yo lo veo mucho en ese mismo momento, porque también está difícil, porque pues estás dentro una situación que igual y, pues se podría decir como normalizada, entonces también es difícil salir como de ese círculo, pero sí pienso como Participante A en el punto de esos temas. No, es que esto, o sea, viéndolo como en retrospectiva, decir, con razón esto me hacía sentir mal y también el hecho de tener un, alguien con quien puedas compartir incluso hablar este tipo de situaciones es súper valioso. Porque tampoco está tan fácil llegar y hablar con cualquier mujer sobre este tema por miedo a sentirte juzgada o por miedo o no poder como expresarte, no sé. Entonces me parece muy importante que sí se haga, pues que se formen espacios donde se pueda compartir este tipo de experiencias ¿no?

NATALIA: Ok.

PARTICIPANTE A: algo. ¿Puedo agregar algo?

NATALIA: adelante.

PARTICIPANTE A: este, que me parece, justo por eso último que dijo la Participante B, que haya lugares en donde se puedan compartir esa clase de experiencias, porque a pesar de lo que pasó en Querétaro, el hecho de que a la convocatoria llegue gente dispuesta a contar su historia, si habla de que existe una necesidad ahí, de contar la historia.

NATALIA: y justo, también derivado que lo último que decía la Participante B, estos espacios para contar las historias de violencia que sufren las mujeres ¿tienen que ser de puras mujeres?

PARTICIPANTE A: yo por ejemplo pienso en el objetivo del espacio, creo que hay espacios en los que se busca una conciliación comunitaria, por ejemplo ¿no? Entonces en ese sentido no puede ser completamente separatista. Pero yo, por lo menos en principio creo que y sobre todo cuando se tratan temas tan delicados, como, estos creo que sí, yo prefiero los espacios exclusivos de mujeres.

Provecho, es que está aquí mi perrita.

PARTICIPANTE B: yo también creo que sí depende mucho como de tipo de violencia, porque si hablamos como, ay no sé a mí se me hace una pregunta muy complicada, porque también está el hecho no sé si ahí pueden entrar familiares o sea hablar, o ese sería otro espacio para hablar sobre, o sea, que un feminicidio dentro de la familia, pero creo que más bien sería como otro espacio. Entonces sí se me hace complicado decir si sería exclusivo para mujeres. Sí, pero sí pienso mucho como en esto de los familiares, o sea papás, mamás, hermanos o hermanas que también necesitan como espacios.

NATALIA: ok. ¿Quién creen que debería ver esta exhibición? Además de las mujeres el día que van a donar, después la exhibición se quedaba en los museos ¿quién sería pertinente que la viera?

PARTICIPANTE A: yo pienso que todo mundo, o sea sí todo, todo, todo mundo, los políticos (ríe). Pero sí creo que es, ahh un problema que sí afecta la totalidad de la población, no nada más por la cuestión de los feminicidios, si no por la serie de violencia que visibilizan, por ejemplo no nada más la cuestión como feminicida, sino la cuestión del alcoholismo que es un problema grave en México y, pues le sumas eso a una poca educación emocional, entonces pues creo que esta clase de exposiciones también hacen manifiesto que las vivencias sí son, son, comunes y distintas al mismo tiempo entonces justo, no es lo mismo lo que vive, por ejemplo, la artista que pues mujeres de Querétaro, o mujeres de diferentes zonas. ¿No? Yo sí creo que sería una cuestión de que mucha gente la viera para que viera que la violencia tiene cabida en casi cualquier, en cualquier contexto, ¿no? Político-social.

PARTICIPANTE B: sí, yo también pienso que todos y, más que nada, creo abre un espacio como para cuestionar todo alrededor e incluso ver que, pues o sea un poco lo que decía la Participante A, cualquiera puede sufrir este tipo de violencias y que también no está solo, o sea creo que eso es como muy importante, que se pueda sentir dentro de algún, cualquier persona pueda sentirse dentro de un lugar en el que hay gente que ha pasado por, igual algo parecido y puedan seguir y se ayuden a visibilizar, incluso las historias de personas que no las están contando en ese momento.

NATALIA: ok, cuando Lorena presentó por primera vez, había menos disponibilidad de testimonios, no había redes sociales, o sí pero todavía eran estas cosas gigantescas que todo el mundo tiene. ¿Qué opinan hoy en día de la disponibilidad que existe de testimonios?

PARTICIPANTE B: a veces se me hace un poco peligrosos, más que nada por la persona y también por el hecho de que se empieza a usar como su testimonio. Es que se me olvidó la palabra, no me acuerdo si se le dice como revictimización. O sea, como que...pienso como en muchas...digo que no es lo mismo necesariamente, pero de *influencers*, por ejemplo, que pasó con...que todos vimos de una cierta *influencer* que sufría, o para muchos, sufría una cierta violencia entonces todo el mundo empezó a hablar de eso y creo que puede llegar como afectar más a esa persona o, bueno a esa mujer. Aunque también me parece una herramienta muy buena en el sentido de que, por ejemplo, pienso en, como se llama, o sea que personas que hablan o que dan su testimonio y que eso también les ayuda a sanar de alguna manera, así como llevando estos objetos a un museo entonces creo que tiene, o sea, ambos lados. Bueno o un poco más difícil.

PARTICIPANTE A: pienso que, que, a ver yo siempre he sido como defensora de dinámicas como el *MeToo* y esa clase de cosas, pero ya posteriormente creo que justo el hecho de que como mujeres nos cueste a veces vocalizar realidades comunes justo por, pues esta tendencia a permanecer calladas y no justo, socializar nuestras experiencias hace que si la primera...el primer contacto de algunas personas, específicamente mujeres con las comunidades con las comunidades de mujeres es exclusivamente en estos términos de narración de la violencia, creo que una consecuencia indeseable podría ser la definición de la identidad exclusivamente como víctima. Pero, creo que, realmente creo con la multiplicidad y rapidez de las redes sociales, la plática de esta clase de situaciones ha permitido que se hablen de como realidades comunes mucho menos feas y graves ¿no? O sea, sí ya contaste, aunque, no niego que sea súper, súper

difícil, pero si ya contaste que has sido violentada, entonces que sabes que tu palabra tiene un poder para contar las cosas que te gustan y, en ese sentido, sí puede ser como un primer paso de formación de comunidades de mujeres.

NATALIA: y mi última pregunta es ¿qué opinan de que estos objetos estén en una exposición artística y no en un archivo policiaco? Y que Lorena no haya llevado a las mujeres a ninguna fiscalía a denunciar, los objetos se quedan o en los museos o en los parques donde fueron exhibidos, ¿les parecen tiene utilidad?

PARTICIPANTE A: Yo creo que, o sea sí, pues la verdad a mí me parece bien, porque va a tener muchísimo mayor alcance en una galería o museo que en las oficinas del ministerio público, eso es yo pienso, porque, porque yo le tengo mucha desconfianza a la policía como institución ¿no? Y creo que eso, por una parte, y por otra parte que, a de ser también una cuestión del proceso personal de la víctima o de la hermana de la víctima. Si ya no, no sé si te devuelven la evidencia al final del caso, la verdad, eso no sé, pero por ejemplo lo de los platos, que fueron donados y después recogidos finalmente quienes sí tienen la potestad de decidir sobre esa clase de objetos sí son las víctimas, las propietarias de estos. Eso pienso.

PARTICIPANTE B: A mí se me hace muy, pues este poderoso como que se exhiban en lugares así justo por lo que decía la Participante A. En el caso como del ministerio público, o sea que es lo primero, o sea lo que pasa en los ministerios públicos es que te van a ser sonar a ti como la que provocaste esto. Entonces y a parte de que también conlleva a un proceso personal de cada persona, pero el hecho de que se le de la visibilidad que ni siquiera te otorgan ante un MP o sea ni siquiera como ante el mundo, sino como víctima se me hace muy poderoso y, no se cuáles sean en el caso de todas las personas, bueno mujeres que llevaron sus objetos sí, de qué manera les ayudó para sanar, de alguna otra manera. Digo, la parte que también está algo psicológico, pero sí es como un paso el llevar un objeto y aceptar lo que pasó. Creo.

PARTICIPANTE A: porque, además, como el, el, el hecho de asociar todo el, el incidente violento con un objeto como que también siento que lo saca de una misma, ¿no? De alguna manera, creo, porque ya no es nada más que, que, yo soy, o sea ya no es mi culpa, sino que es, hay objetos externos que sí utilizaron para infligirme este daño, entonces, pues no es nada más la culpa y no puede ser nada más la culpa de la víctima. Sí, sí, implica un separamiento del evento.

PARTICIPANTE B: sí.

NATALIA: No sé si quisieran algo más que no se derive de mis preguntas. Les agradezco un montón estar.

Session 2. Mexico City. *In/Visible* by Cerrucha. 21 October 2020

La artista con la que voy a trabajar hoy es Cerrucha, voy a integrar a una artista más para mañana, pero voy a volver a Lorena y Cerrucha porque trabajaron juntas.

Cerrucha es una *artivista* feminista, ella sí se identifica como *artivista*, y en su página de internet se identifica así. Es más joven, ella es del 87, entonces ella pertenece a esta generación que no tiene problemas para identificar como feminista, a diferencia de la de Lorena. Y, su pseudónimo, no es un error ortográfico, es una mezcla del sustantivo de serrucho con S y *cer* en latín, que significa existir; entonces, se define a sí misma como: 'serruchar las mentes ajenas, ruptura de preconceptos, siembra de cuestionamientos'. En Instagram está súper activa ahí, tiene ahorita un programa que se llama 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva', para el que entrevista artistas y *artivistas* de la parte sur del planeta, empezó en México y ahorita está con artistas africanas y, en la sesión de hace dos semanas, una de las artistas se quedó sin conexión y entonces Cerrucha aprovechó para explicar el *artivismo* y, me parece que su explicación fue bastante clara, ella lo que dice es que el *artivismo* ve un conflicto social y piensa cómo resolverlo desde el arte, más que pensar una obra de arte y luego insertarla en la realidad social, es al revés, y su principal preocupación es justo la problemática que hayan identificado, más que una cuestión técnica o estética. Ella estudió artes visuales en Canadá y trabaja sobre todo fotografía y es artista callejera, o *street art*, se parece mucho al trabajo que hace JR que es un artista francés, él es más famoso y ha trabajado en la frontera de México; él hace fotografías gigantes de personas y las pega en distintas paredes. Cuando entrevisté a Cerrucha me dijo que sí, que encuentra paralelismos nada más que JR no sé cómo le ha hecho, pero el señor está conectado con todo el mundo y tiene unos patrocinios brutales y, Cerrucha, entre que el tema que trabaja es feminismo y que en México las artes están súper precarizadas. No sé si ya vieron que el FONCA desapareció, entonces pues más precarizadas van a estar las artes.

El proyecto con el que voy a trabajar es de Canadá, más, no es de Canadá, justo es su tesis en Canadá que hizo pensando en México. Tiene dos fases, yo sólo estoy trabajando la primera porque la segunda está pensada en un público universal y tiene material de todo el mundo y, sería una locura metodológicamente analizar esa obra, pero sí analizo dos vertientes que hizo de *In/visible* en México y me interesa muchísimo el *insight* que ustedes puedan tener porque, al final, yo no soy de la Ciudad de México, pero ustedes sí, entonces creo que va a ser como muy enriquecedor a mi análisis lo que puedan decir. Usó una estrategia que se llama *bombing*, el *bombing* en *street art* es cuando cubres la mayor parte de una ciudad en el menor

tiempo posible, usualmente lo hacen de noche para que la ciudad amanezca completamente diferente y, con esta exposición ‘bombeo’ 8.5km de avenida Insurgentes Sur y las estaciones del metro Salto del Agua y Tacuba y trabajó con cuatro imágenes; en realidad eran cinco, pero por cuestiones de presupuesto en esta fase nada más trabajó con cuatro, sin embargo, yo en la presentación sí incluí la quinta porque establece un diálogo entre las cinco imágenes que creo que se perdió cuando quitó la quinta imagen.

Entonces estas son las cinco imágenes que tiene, al final el que se llame In/visible esta exposición se refiere a todos los roles, etiquetas que caen sobre la gente y que suponemos invisibles pero que, en realidad son más visibles de lo que nos gustaría que fuera.

Este dice, todos los hombres son iguales, ninguna de las versiones se le vio la cabeza al señor. Obviamente se refiere a esta idea que tenemos en la cabeza de que todos los hombres son machistas y estamos condenadas al machismo porque es algo natural en todos ellos.

Luego tenía este, que tampoco se le veía la cabeza a la mujer, que dice ‘mi marido sí me deja trabajar’, y este, o sea además que es una etiqueta social es una realidad en México, todavía al día de hoy el 12.8% de las mujeres en México pide permiso para ir a trabajar y además, han entendido este de sí me da permiso como algo bueno o positivo, como un marido súper liberal porque les da permiso, y aunque la estadística del 12.8% no es tan alta en relación a otras problemáticas de género que tenemos en México el 47.6% de las mujeres sienten que el ir a trabajar implica descuidar a los hijos, entonces además hay toda una culpabilización de cuando la mujer se atreve a dejar la esfera privada y se enfrenta a la pública.

Este que dice eres un mandilón y a él sí se le alcanza a ver la cara, la raya que tiene a la mitad del cartel es porque estaba doblado no es parte del diseño. Que, el término de mandilón, como lo hizo en Canadá lo tuvo que traducir y es un rollo traducir mandilón, yo ya también en esa parte, ella lo tradujo como *pussy whipped*, ya luego les contaré cómo lo acabe traduciendo.

Estos tres adultos se complementan de alguna manera para representar el patriarcado, la definición de patriarcado con la que yo estoy trabajando y la base teórica de toda mi tesis es Marcela Lagarde, porque al final de cuentas ella define feminicidio y estoy un poco apegándome a las mujeres; entonces ella dice: ‘la opresión patriarcal es genérica, es decir la opresión es por el hecho de ser mujeres, cualquier que sea su posición de clase, su lengua, su edad, su raza, su nacionalidad, su ocupación, en el mundo patriarcal, ser mujer es ser oprimida’. La única anotación que yo le hago a esta definición es el término raza, porque hoy en ciencias sociales ya no se utiliza porque es irrelevante, resulta que no existen las razas humanas, lo

sustituiría por etnia, porque en México es pertinente hablar de la discriminación y el racismo étnico que tenemos. Y las otras dos que también son parte de este universo patriarcal, son niños. Este que dice: ese juego no es para niñas. Pero ahí sí, tienes a la niña viendo directo al espectador y estas fueron las cuatro que sí logró exponer en la Ciudad de México.

La quinta que dice: lloras como niña que la incluyó hasta la segunda fase, pero aquí también, no tienes al niño viendo directo al espectador, pero sí de frente y viendo al tatuador.

Y, un poco, su instalación se veía así, que esta parte me interesa mucho justo conocer su opinión porque la pegó junto a otros carteles de publicidad, porque la Ciudad de México siempre está a reventar de carteles. O no sé si ustedes lo notan, como foránea cada vez que iba a la Ciudad de México me sentía abrumada por la cantidad de imágenes disponibles. En otras imágenes que he visto de la exposición los artistas callejeros saben que su obra está expuesta no solamente al clima, sino también a la reacción de la gente, igual que las pintas feministas y todo ese tipo de obras de arte. La imagen de la niña fue la más dañada en estas pegas hay secciones donde la niña le arrancaron los ojos.

Después de que hizo esta instalación se dio cuenta de que su obra revictimizaba a las personas fotografiadas justo porque les pega etiquetas que fácilmente pueden ser reales y fácilmente pueden obtener en su día a día y no les daba la posibilidad de réplica, nada más los dejaba ahí tatuados y tampoco sabía como reaccionaba el público. Si el día en que los pegó, viendo tal vez qué imágenes fueron más dañadas que otras, ella no tenía una noción real de la reacción. Que también es una observación para las pintas feministas durante las marchas, Cerrucha ha buscado una estrategia en la que interactúe más con el público para conocer realmente el estado de la cuestión y cómo la gente reacciona a este tipo de obras. Ha seguido exponiendo de esta misma manera, la última fue una instalación en el metro en el tren que chocó hace unos meses estaba instalado con obra de Cerrucha, pero es distinto, ya no es una crítica social, es más bien como una invitación a la sororidad y a la unidad femenina, o sea sí ha cambiado su lenguaje de arte callejero y ahora, además, hace talleres y otro tipo de interacciones con el público.

Entonces propuso otras estrategias, y en ese sentido les quiero proponer si pueden y si no, doy tiempo acabando, si en el chat, ustedes replicar un poco el ejercicio. Entonces bajo este principio de que los participantes están siendo revictimizados y no pueden responder, las siguientes versiones iba con la gente, la tatuaba con henna y les daba chance de contestar durante el tiempo que tarda en secarse la henna, entonces había de dos: si lograban contestar se los borraba o les tatuaba la nueva versión del tatuaje. Si no lo lograban contestar la gente se quedaba con esa etiqueta durante dos semanas o el tiempo que duraba la henna pensando todo

el tiempo en el insulto o en el estereotipo que no habían podido responder y así ella sí ya pudo percibir como la gente reaccionaba o no a este tipo de etiquetas. Lo presentó en el Centro Cultural España, en un taller para la erradicación de la violencia de género y ahí hubo algunos que no se borraron, los que incluía la palabra chingada no se borraron. En el conversatorio de Querétaro me decían que era curioso que la gente no contestara al chinga tu madre y la respuesta natural chinga la tuya, yo no estuve en el taller, pero a mí me parece que Cerrucha no borró ese tatuaje porque sí contestas chinga la tuya continuas el ciclo que implica violar una mujer, entonces no es una respuesta adecuada que desestructure el problema de chingar. La otra versión la presentó en la universidad de la tierra que se llamaba CompArte y ahí sí borraron todos los tatuajes que habría que ver si tiene que ver con que las zapatistas se han separado de la cultura mainstream y tienen acceso a la influencia mediática y entonces tal vez estén menos incluidas por los medios de comunicación y les sea más fácil. Entonces, mi propuesta es, mostrar estos tatuajes y ver si pueden pensar en qué responderían para que les borren el tatuaje o para que les tatúen la versión positiva.

Este es en masculino, entonces ahí mi propuesta es que lo pasemos al femenino a qué puta eres o que lo pasemos en su sentido: qué lencha eres, o qué machorra eres.

PARTICIPANTE A: bueno, me parece curioso, porque la primera lectura que hice de este tatuaje fue más bien de qué cobarde, ¿no? Entonces, y que sí se entrecruzan todos esos significados y hay muchas posibles respuestas y adaptación del mismo tatuaje para las personas.

NATALIA: Sí, sí prefieres pensarlo en ese contexto y contestar en ese contexto está perfecto también.

Este que dice feminazi que está siendo un adjetivo comúnmente utilizado para llamar a las feministas. Este que dice seguro te está bajando. Todas estas imágenes son de la universidad de la tierra, un poco lo difícil de hacer el análisis de esta versión es que por protección de datos Cerrucha no puede brindar mucha información sobre cómo fueron estos talleres, sobre todo en el Centro Cultural España, pero, bueno más o menos tiene información ella. Y este que dice: date a desear.

Si les parece doy 5 minutos para intentarlos contestar y después pasamos a la parte de la discusión.

PARTICIPANTE A: ¿Cuál es penúltimo? Perdón

NATALIA: El penúltimo es, seguro te está bajando.

NATALIA: ¿Listo? ¿O quieren más tiempo?

PARTICIPANTE B: un poquitito más, es que me cuestan mucho trabajo este tipo de cosas.

NATALIA: sí te sientes incómoda haciéndolo puedes no hacerlo, si quieres.

PARTICIPANTE B: no, no, está bien, sólo que sí me cuesta mucho trabajo.

NATALIA: está perfecto.

PARTICIPANTE A: tengo, como, estoy escribiendo como los, lo que me pondría también, pero también la explicación del porqué. Eso, eso ¿lo hago o mejor no?

NATALIA: si quieres sí, claro, nada más lo tendría que incluir yo en mi análisis, pero sí.

PARTICIPANTE A: bueno si no lo puedo decir, nada más. Se los digo y se los platico aquí.

NATALIA: Hola, Participante C.

PARTICIPANTE A: pero es que hasta me dieron ganas de tatuarme.

NATALIA: puedes probar con henna, si quieres y ver cómo te sientes con el tatuaje. Justo también supongo que es parte del chiste. Lo que están intentando hacer ahorita, Participante C, es contestar. Esta fue una intervención artística en el que Cerrucha, que es la artista, tatuaba con insultos o roles o etiquetas a la gente y antes de que se secase la henna podían borrar el tatuaje o cambiar el tatuaje si contestaban adecuadamente a lo que tenía. Entonces justo están haciendo el mismo ejercicio, intentando contestar a estos cuatro tatuajes: este, que lo pasamos a la versión femenina, entonces puede ser: qué puta eres o qué machorra eres o qué lencha eres, un poco dejé abierto a la interpretación. Feminazi, seguro te está bajando y date a desear. Son los cuatro tatuajes con los que estamos trabajando. Entonces, si quieres y poner en el chat qué responderías tú para procurar borrarte el tatuaje que Cerrucha te hubiera puesto.

PARTICIPANTE C: ok, yo responder a una de estas cosas.

NATALIA: ajá, cómo responderías.

PARTICIPANTE C: ah el chat, ay no ¿qué hice? Bajé todo, perdón.

PARTICIPANTE A: y los mandamos al chat de todas o a al privado.

NATALIA: si quieres al chat de todas, si quieres privado y lo veo sólo yo, como prefieras, si nos quieres compartir a todas al de todas.

PARTICIPANTE C: oye, Nata, no encuentro el chat. Es que dice Anáhuac. No, es que, me vuelve a pedir que inicié reunión, pero yo sí las estoy viendo, perdón mi inutilidad.

NATALIA: o sea no te aparece esto que acaba de comentar la Participante A.

PARTICIPANTE C: no, yo a ustedes las veo en una franjita nada más. Veo a la Participante A, con su pelo diferente. Hola, Participante A.

PARTICIPANTE A: mueve tu mouse y te va a salir abajo.

PARTICIPANTE C: no, es que me sale Anáhuac, haga clic en abrir *Zoom* en el cuadro de diálogo formado.

PARTICIPANTE A: ah no, es que no estás en *Zoom*, entonces, estás en tu mail. Busca la aplicación de *Zoom*.

PARTICIPANTE C: es que apreté nada más el *link*. Nunca me había pasado esto. Sí, *Zoom meeting* de la Anáhuac.

NATALIA: ok, estoy leyendo las respuestas. Ok, no sé qué habría respondido Cerrucha, sobre las respuestas de Participante A. Justo creo que son significativas para un contexto feminista, o un contexto que ya está inmersa en la discusión y en ese sentido sólo te preguntaría si estarías

dispuesta de alguna manera a que sean muy fáciles de entender por este círculo feminista y tener que explicárselos a los demás, o que los demás sigan teniendo esa poca comprensión sobre lo que tienes tú tatuado.

PARTICIPANTE A: Sí, pero creo que también es, como un, pues, me estás como preguntando sobre mi cuerpo ¿no? O sea que me tatuaría yo, me tatuaría algo que habla en mis términos y que no le responda a los demás lo que quieren, entonces, o sea si un hombre me grita en la calle o algo así, no le voy a responder, porque no voy a perder mi tiempo en intentar que mis conceptos y sus conceptos se entiendan porque me está insultando y me está categorizando de una forma en la que yo, a la que yo ya no lo veo significado, entonces sí.

NATALIA: ok, ok. Perfecto.

PARTICIPANTE A: eso le diría yo y reclamaría mi tatuaje gratis.

NATALIA: ok. Luego, tengo las de la Participante B. Ok, sólo, creo que justo que utilicen el término feminazi sugieren que no tienen idea de quiénes fueron los nazis, porque justo las feministas no están matando a ninguna etnia ni erradicando una práctica religiosa, supongo que sí los habría borrado Cerrucha. Participante C, no sé si quieras responder a alguno. Estás creo que silenciada.

PARTICIPANTE C: no puedo escribir en el chat, pero comparto, me gustó, bueno no, elijo el de 'qué puta eres'. Entonces, yo tendría que elegir una respuesta a ese... ¿no? Híjole, qué poca imaginación, diría, pues me tatuaría soy libre. Nada más, no respondería, no les daría explicación, diría nada más, pues soy libre. Porque a veces se interpreta ser puta como ser libre ¿no?

NATALIA: ok, sí.

PARTICIPANTE C: como el uso de la libertad. No sé, igual y no está nada original.

NATALIA: es que se supone que no puedo dar mis opiniones, pero.

PARTICIPANTE C: pero eso es lo que yo veo. Pensé mucho como responder a no soy puta, soy dueña de mí. Pues sí, ser dueña de mí es ser libre. Es que no sé si entendí la dinámica bien.

NATALIA: Sí, sí, sí. En la exposición sobre la que vamos a discutir es esta. Que es justo el paso previo. Voy a contextualizar tantito Participante C, el paso previo a lo de los tatuajes, eran cuatro imágenes, bueno cinco, pero sólo alcanzó a pegar 4 alrededor de la Ciudad de México, en Avenida Insurgentes Sur, Salto del Agua y Tacuba, la otra estación del metro. Y las imágenes eran estas: lloran como niña, ese juego no es para niñas, eres un mandilón, mi marido sí me deja trabajar y todos los hombres son iguales. Entonces, lo que sigue es que más bien, yo les hago preguntas o, bueno puedo iniciar con preguntas o más bien iniciar con su participación si alguien quiere decir algo sobre la obra de In/visible. Sí, Participante B.

PARTICIPANTE B: a mí, justo lo que decías, de como los espectaculares que siempre hay en la Ciudad de México. O sea me puse como a pensar en ello y la verdad es que, habiendo vivido toda mi vida aquí, o sea la verdad es que yo ya no les doy como tanto, o sea no me impactan tanto, o sea los paso, los veo, o sea siempre que manejo, o voy en un coche o caminando y no me causan nada porque siempre son lo mismo, o sea no, entonces se me hace, muy interesante la manera de apropiarse de un espacio que no sé si, si hablo como para todas las mexicanas que viven en la Ciudad de México, pero que simplemente sólo ya pasas a lado de ellos como si nada y ver algo así ya es visibilizar y tomar un espacio.

NATALIA: ok, ¿alguien más quiere decir algo sobre esto?

PARTICIPANTE A: eh, pues esa me encantó. La de todos los hombres son iguales y de hecho tengo como idea que he visto algo de esta exposición, igual, como dice participante B, luego es tanto que ya no te fijas, pero además este...habla, también, ¿cuándo fue esto?

NATALIA: en 2010.

PARTICIPANTE A: sí, justo o sea yo no caminaba por la calle. Entonces es interesante a la clase de gente que le va a tocar ver esta clase. Ahora sí es muy probable que yo me hubiera enterado de esta exposición, aunque no la hubiera visto yo, seguramente por Twitter ¿no? E incluso habría ido a verla porque creo que hubiera sido súper viral, si esto pasara ahorita sería súper, súper viral. Pero creo que eso también es valioso, creo que eso está muy, muy padre

porque además lo está haciendo de que fuera el feminismo algo tan candente en México, entonces es una gran provocación, entonces pues a mí me hubiera gustado verlo, ese mi como que hubiera gustado haber formado parte de ese experimento comunitario que también está siendo ¿no? De alguna forma.

NATALIA: ok. Participante C, no sé si quieras decir algo como al respecto de lo que han dicho.

PARTICIPANTE C: bueno yo no me enteré de eso, o sea, en el 2010, uy no sé cómo era yo en el 2010, pero me parece, me parece muy interesante, no sé a mí me daría curiosidad saber cuáles fueron las reacciones. ¿La pregunta es cómo reaccionaría yo? ¿Qué me causaría?

NATALIA: pues, en realidad pensando en lo que dijo Participante B, de luchar con la publicidad de la Ciudad de México.

PARTICIPANTE C: me gusta mucho, porque precisamente son frases tan comunes. No seas mandilón, lloras como niña. O sea, estas frases precisamente, yo creo que llamarían la atención. A lo mejor mucha gente diría ¿qué es esto? ¿Qué están anunciando? O no sé, ¿están anunciando algún producto deportivo? Yo creo que sobre todo llamaría a la gente a pensar, si eran así, nada más las frases, yo creo que llaman a reflexionar y eso se me hace muy interesante. Y digo ojalá volviera a ser ahora que, como dice la Participante A, está todo esto un poquito más efervescente, o sea se me hace interesantísimo.

NATALIA: ok, la buena noticia es que seguido Cerrucha publica en sus redes sociales que busca modelos para ese tipo de instalaciones. Entonces si les interesa participar seguido ella, en Instagram se la vive publicando. Justo no les pasé esa información para que no llegaran con...Exacto. Sí todo el día está ahí. Y porque los martes le hago competencia, ella tiene su programa justo los martes a las siete de la noche, pero se quedan grabados sus programas. Algunas de las preguntas que tengo, bueno la de los carteles de la Ciudad de México, ya, un poco, la mayoría de las expresiones de arte o *artivismo* feminista están dirigidas a mujeres y son mujeres las que están siendo retratadas o representadas, ¿qué opinan de una propuesta que incluya a los hombres y que por lo tanto también está dirigida a los hombres?

PARTICIPANTE A: pues es confortativa. ¿No? O sea, sí siento que sería muy confortativa y se pondrían violentos, o sea sí se enojarían.

PARTICIPANTE C: ¿qué supone incluirlos?

NATALIA: ¿qué supone incluirlos?

PARTICIPANTE C: esto dices que está lanzado hacia los hombres.

NATALIA: ajá. Lo que pasa es que, cuando empieza el arte feminista en los 1960s y luego va a llegar a México y a todo el resto del mundo. Las críticas de arte, una de las cosas que decían era: 'el arte está dominada por *the male-gaze*, el hombre decide qué se ve y cómo se ve'. Entonces está a reventar el arte de desnudos que tienen una carga erótica que satisface el deseo masculino. Y las feministas, las artistas y las *artivistas* reaccionaron a este tipo de críticas, excluyendo o sacando a los hombres de sus representaciones o de sus performances o de sus trabajos y acá, Cerrucha, justo está dirigiéndose a hombres y a mujeres y lo pega en la calle en zonas en las que circulan hombres y mujeres e incluye a modelos masculinos. Entonces ¿qué opinan de este arte feminista que incluye a los hombres o creen que el arte feminista tiene que ser exclusivo para mujeres?

PARTICIPANTE A: yo creo que no, creo que también, creo que es para quien la artista quiera hacerlo, literal, porque es, es o sea en primer lugar como esto va dirigido a todos y todos somos parte de ello, porque cualquier persona puede pasar por la calle ¿no? Y ver eso. Este... entonces, en ese sentido es para todos y a quien ella quiere interpretar directamente, pues, ya es otra cosa, pero sigue siendo. Me parece que es una obra súper abierta, eso me parece padrísimo. Creo que, o sea igual podía, cuando decimos que interpela a hombres nos podemos preguntar ¿en qué sentido interpela hombres? ¿Los confronta sobre su machismo o clama también su liberación? Como que pensé en esas dos vías. Pensé en el 'ay, sí tenemos derecho a llorar' y dije como que: 'ay no, qué odioso sería eso', pero este, pero justo como todo esa, esa de todos los hombres son iguales, este...y creo que es una forma súper efectiva de provocar así el cuestionamiento en la gente aunque se enojen un montón y tal vez si ven foto de un hombre que se tatúa cuando bebo, golpeo a mi esposa, o algo así, eso es muy, muy confortativo, porque a pesar de que digan: no todos los hombres. No pues es la foto de un individuo, entonces no sé, me parece muy poderosa, me encantó.

PARTICIPANTE B: sí creo que como dice la Participante A, también el como incomodar ¿no? Pienso como mucho en esto que decías, de no sé si se ve en ese sentido, pero de que van a y destrozan como todas estas imágenes porque finalmente está causando una reacción a lo que están viendo. Entonces, y por ejemplo, en los casos, por ejemplo lo que pienso mucho es de que, como los, o sea, los cuerpos de los adultos, o sea no se les ve la cara y ya, al ver la cara de una niña, o sea ya lo vuelve más, como real, como que está ahí, porque finalmente es, o sea, a los otros sin cara, no, no es tan real como en la niña.

NATALIA: ajá. Sí.

PARTICIPANTE C: A mí me parece muy bien, me gusta la idea que incluya. O sea, de que el arte feminista no esté dirigido sólo a mujeres no por el miedo de ser aceptadas, ay que los hombres nos validen, si no porque creo que hace falta también mucha educación, también, a lo mejor, es que a veces hay hombres, que pues así los educaron y tampoco se dan cuenta de su machismo y del daño que. O sea, un amigo de mi hija le preguntó una vez: ¿oye, de verás ustedes caminan con miedo? No me lo había planteado. O sea, el era hijo único, hombre y cuando escuchó a unas amigas hablando, preguntó: ¿oye, de verás les pasa? O sea, no se había planteado muchas cosas, entonces, a mí sí me, o sea a mí sí me parece bien. Además, pues bueno, el mundo es mixto y en, de cara a esa educación, pues la verdad sí, sí me parece útil, me parece muy bien.

NATALIA: ok.

PARTICIPANTE B: ¿Sólo puedo dar un comentario rápido de eso? Obviamente es para todos, pero en el caso, por ejemplo, también lo veo en el sentido de en el caso de los hombres que luego, he escuchado mucho en este tipo de separatismo, que exigen que las feministas ideen un plan para los hombres, cuando también debería ser una iniciativa de ellos, o sea ellos proponer: ay, pues, o sea vi esto. Se animarán a platicarnos de su experiencia y escuchar. O sea, el escuchar, la experiencia de las mujeres, también importante.

PARTICIPANTE C: me gusta eso del diálogo sí. O sea, y creo que a veces no son conscientes de su privilegio. Entonces a mí me parece bien, si los pueden hacer reflexionar y que no vean esta confrontación. Que de hecho la hay, y de hecho sí tienen un privilegio, pero me parece como una cosa educativa como muy buena.

NATALIA: Ok, sí, un poco la discusión feminista, tiene que ver con esto que están diciendo, el hombre tiene un privilegio brutal en términos generales el hombre tiene más acceso a la educación. Entonces ¿por qué las feministas les tenemos que hacer la tarea? Pero, luego si nadie les hace la tarea o por lo menos les abre la puerta ni se enteran, entonces sí es, vamos la postura va a viene y es complicada todavía.

PARTICIPANTE C: no digo hacerles la tarea, pero invitarlos a pensar, por lo menos.

PARTICIPANTE A: porque justo también con esta cuestión de que esta realización es tan individual que incluso si les hiciéramos lo que creo que es interesante ¿no? Dicen a veces como que: ‘ay les están haciendo la tarea’, pero también hay intereses. Y hay gente a la que le interesa estudiar la masculinidad y es un tema fascinante, o sea realmente, entonces no es necesariamente hacerles la tarea, es a ver: yo quiero dedicar mi estudio a esto, pero no es lo mismo que la toma de consciencia esa es completamente subjetiva y nadie les puede hacer la tarea. O sea, literalmente. Pero sí, entiendo ese punto, porque sí es una friega, es una frieguita cuando dicen: ‘feminicidio, no sé qué (lo dice en tono de burla) Y yo les digo, a ver, es el siglo quién sabe cuántos, ¿no tienes google? En serio, antes de contestar: ‘¿no tienes Google?’ Para, es que yo lo hago, por lo menos para no verme en ridículo. En serio, cuando quiero escribir un Tweet y digo: a ver Shakespeare se escribe así y sí lo googleo. Bueno, también tengo como un privilegio y así de tener un iPhone, pero si estás en Facebook puedes abrir Google, eso seguro también.

PARTICIPANTE B: Cierto.

NATALIA: sí, ¿qué les... Les decía la Participante C que una de las palabras que no se pudieron borrar eran los insultos que incluían la palabra chingar. ¿Entonces qué implicaciones creen que tiene la palabra chingar en la tradición mexicana? Y ¿por qué creen que no se pudo borrar esa palabra?

PARTICIPANTE C. Pues sexual, ¿no? ¿No es violar?

NATALIA. Sí.

PARTICIPANTE C: bueno y de poder.

PARTICIPANTE A: pero ¿cómo?

PARTICIPANTE C: o sea ya te chingó es ya te fregó, pero creo que originalmente, sí es de violación, sí es sexual.

PARTICIPANTE A: pero ¿cómo las borraría? Ahorita el concepto se me fue.

NATALIA: les ponía tatuajes que decían ‘chinga tu madre’, era uno, ‘me lleva a la chingada era el otro que tenía la palabra’.

PARTICIPANTE C: chinga tu madre, es lo más fuerte.

NATALIA: ajá y les explicaba que en el de Querétaro me decían, que raro que no lo pudieran contestar cuando está, es tan común que sabes que la respuesta es: chinga la tuya.

PARTICIPANTE C: claro.

NATALIA: pero lo que yo les decía que sí, pero sí yo contesto eso sigo en el ciclo de proponer el violar a una mujer.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, claro.

NATALIA: ok, entonces les parece que chingar sigue estando relacionado con la idea de violar.

PARTICIPANTE C: yo sí.

PARTICIPANTE A: sí, pero también que si no las quiere borrar está pidiendo que las resignifique. O sea, justo hay muchas palabras que puedes resignificar, como puto, incluso, incluso puta, a pesar de que es como, bueno, no sé, hay los debates, pero chingar es una bien difícil de resignificar, por que no sólo está asociada con la violación que es ya gravísimo, sino también con, incluso el asesinato. Ya se lo chingó...

PARTICIPANTE C: de acuerdo.

PARTICIPANTE A: o sea sí, yo creo que es de las más. O sea, como en este plano para mí no suena grave. Ay, Chinga tu madre, pero ya pensándolo en serio, en serio, en serio, es como una de las palabras con más peso.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, ya me chingaron, es que ya te fastidieron.

PARTICIPANTE A: y está pero que por ejemplo decir pendejo, o así. O sea, chingar se utiliza para tantas cosas.

PARTICIPANTE C: Si te estafó, si te robó, pues sí.

NATALIA: Ok.

PARTICIPANTE B: ¿Y creen que se pueda resignificar?

PARTICIPANTE A: o sea sí un poco y ya se ha hecho una cierta resignificación al volverla tan...bueno no, no sé si es una resignificación al volverla tan dúctil. Cuando yo le digo a mi hermana chinga tu madre, definitivamente no le estoy diciendo esto.

PARTICIPANTE C: Estás diciendo vete a volar.

PARTICIPANTE B: bueno sí, como el chinga quedito, que estás moleste y moleste.

NATALIA: Sí, y no sé, me hicieron pensar en...no sé si se acuerdan o si les tocó creo que cuando dices, el ejercicio de resignificar, entonces la palabra vuelve a tener ese significado ese sentido. Incluso si ya no la usaron así. Pero Coca Light lo intentó en México con la palabra macho y, de las pocas veces en las que Coca ha sido demandado y todo el mundo se enojó. Por que su publicidad sacaba hombres siendo, no educados...siendo caballerosos y entonces ponían: macho es mi novio porque me abre la puerta del coche, macho es mi novio porque le echa hielos a mi coca, macho es mi novio porque llora en las películas románticas. Y entonces el público mexicano salió y dijo...

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, fue hace pocos años, ¿no?

NATALIA: sí, pues habrá sido como 5 años. Y como la propuesta era resignificar la palabra macho, lo que el público mexicano dijo es, es tan pesado el término macho que no me puedes pedir que, con publicidad, de la noche a la mañana macho significa ahora algo bueno. Entonces no sé si en el ejercicio de resignificar la palabra chingar vuelve a tener todo ese peso.

PARTICIPANTE A: claro.

PARTICIPANTE B: y a parte esto es súper peligroso, ¿no? De que es, o sea lo veo como usar también la publicidad de esa forma, o sea porque finalmente tampoco sabes cómo pueda afectar a cierta, o sea, por ejemplo, mujeres, si yo lo veo, entonces no sé, si se me hace una práctica muy peligrosa.

PARTICIPANTE A: pero ya lo han logrado y por eso, como el arte, creo, es como algo que siento, el arte se vuelve urbano también como en respuesta. Porque te venden la publicidad como si no fuera arte porque no afecta tu subconsciente y justo hace eso. Por eso el arte se tiene que volver así, también, de pum: te lo pongo enfrente y te modifico el pensamiento sin que tú lo quieras, tan lo ha hecho la publicidad que decimos Kotex en lugar de toalla. Pero sí, por eso creo que es interesante que, que, que ella haya podido utilizar todas estas palabras a pesar de que obviamente recibió backlash y Coca Cola no puede hacer esto, o sea bueno sí puede y lo intentan, pero no es lo mismo. No sé por qué, pero no es lo mismo.

NATALIA: perdón te interrumpí.

PARTICIPANTE A: no, no, no, es que como pienso un montón. Bueno, no un montón, sonó súper creído, me quedo pensando las cosas, si alguien se queda callado empiezo a decirlo en voz alta (risas).

NATALIA: es que justo eso que estás describiendo de la relación entre arte y publicidad es una de las observaciones que hizo Araceli Barbosa, a la par que empieza el arte feminista, tanto en EUA como en México, surgen las críticas de arte feminista y cuando empieza en los 80s en México está Araceli Barbosa y Gladys Villegas y otras. Barbosa lo que dice es que, el arte feminista, una de sus responsabilidades, es justo contra atacar la objetivación de la mujer en la

publicidad, entonces hay esa obligación por hacer, por imitar sus estrategias para cambiar esta representación de la mujer, pero como no tiene un fin mercantil, por eso esto que decías ella sí y Coca no, pues sí porque ella no me quiere vender absolutamente nada, no es una estrategia de mercado para convencerme de comprar, entonces creo que en ese sentido, este boom que hace el arte imitando a la mercadotecnia o a la publicidad, como no tiene atrás al gran capitalista puede ser más poderosa si lo logra. Supongo que, si a Cerrucha le dan el presupuesto de Coca, pues ella encantada. Sí. Y tiene otras intervenciones en la cámara de Diputados les ha ido a pegar cosas también, en los espejos del baño y así. ¿Qué opinan del cambio de estrategia? Les contaba, Participante C, que justo cambió de pegar imágenes a tatuar a la gente, porque se dio cuenta que en la versión anterior revictimizaba a las personas porque no le podían contestar, o sea le decía mandilón a un tipo y el tipo no le podía decir: ‘no soy mandilón’. Entonces por eso cambió la estrategia y para interactuar más con el público. ¿Qué opinan este cambio de estrategia y hay alguna versión que les parezca más efectiva? ¿Les parecen igualmente efectivas de formas distintas?

PARTICIPANTE B: pues yo creo que, en el sentido de...o sea por ejemplo de los carteles, obviamente estás llegando a más público porque no sé cuántas personas hayan atendido o si publicó después estas fotos como en algún lugar, pero creo que el alcance que tienes en la calle que, pues cualquiera puede verlo, creo que sí se me hace efectivo ambo. Pero creo que depende, tal vez, más a quien te estás tratando de dirigir, no estoy segura.

PARTICIPANTE A: yo estoy de acuerdo con participante B. Chance el impacto es más profundo en las que son más personales, pero pues también tiene que ver porque es más...son más cercanas y son más cercanas al origen de la obra, ¿no?, pero entonces la perfección que pueden tener estas personas con el tatuaje en el brazo es muy distinta a alguien que pase y seguro va a ser más personal. Bueno, no sé, eso es lo que yo pienso, pero no sé, se me hace que tuvieran, que tienen objetivos distintos, pero está padre que considere a la persona individual como lo más importante, no en ninguna población etiquetada ¿sabes? Como que siento que se rompe la etiqueta cuando está en la relación personal y entonces eso me parece súper valioso, es como decir, tú eres mucho más que, puto, que hombre y mujer y más incluso que la palabra persona, es todo lo que implica esta relación conmigo que siempre va a superar a las estadísticas de a ver cuántos hombres pasaron por enfrente de la pared y cuántas mujeres y cómo se dieron esas relaciones. O sea, sí va a tener mayor alcance, pero, no sé, no así de profundo, pues.

PARTICIPANTE C: pues a mí me gusta la idea de los carteles. Lo que dice la Participante A es distinta aproximación y a lo mejor, pero las dos funcionan.

PARTICIPANTE A: sí

PARTICIPANTE C: las dos funcionan diferente y me gusta la idea de interpelar, así como los muralistas, como una obra grande que puede ser vista por mucha gente, pero sí concuerdo tal vez con Participante A que a lo mejor distinta, pues distinta aproximación ¿no? Y creo que las dos son útiles, bueno, útiles no, pero las dos son valiosas y lo del cartel o el muro o mural se me hace, a mí, se me hace muy bonito.

NATALIA: ok, luego las participantes de Querétaro, lo que decían es que el tatuaje es de alguna manera, una analogía sobre la realidad que enfrentamos todos los días las mujeres con el álbur, o sea nosotras ahorita podríamos leer las imágenes y pensar en cómo las responderíamos y puedes ver una película o la tele mexicana y ver como alburean a una mujer y se te ocurren mil respuestas, pero la realidad cuando tu vas en la calle y te alburean corres, huyes lo más rápido que puedes y no te atreves a contestar. ¿Les parece que esta analogía sí aplica o más bien fue una percepción de ellas?

PARTICIPANTE B: creo que sí aplica.

NATALIA: ok, no sé si quieren decir algo más de la obra. Si quieren regreso a las imágenes para que las puedan ver.

PARTICIPANTE C: es que no sé si las voy a ver.

PARTICIPANTE B: ¿por qué no puso esa?

NATALIA: por falta de presupuesto.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, hay que horror. Y ahora menos.

NATALIA: sí. Frente se llama el viernes presentaron y cada viernes, en estos dos siguientes viernes, los subsecuentes viernes, Lorena Wolffer y Cerrucha y otras artistas presentaron un

proyecto que se llama Frente, que es una forma de hacerle frente a la carencia del FONCA y cómo van a sobrevivir ahora las artistas sin FONCA, que de todas formas el FONCA tenía problemas.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, sí tenía poco ahora menos.

NATALIA: Sí, tenía poco y era machistamente distribuido. Está interesante ver sus estrategias. El viernes pasado se presentaron varios colectivos de arte feminista y diciendo qué van a aportar en esta organización, hay de cine, de literatura, hay proyecto de creación literaria, Participante A, que me preguntabas, había unas de Ciudad Juárez que hacen arte callejero, y bueno a esas pobres les acaban de asesinar a una de sus integrantes en un feminicidio, entonces se rompieron un poco ahí, pero vale la pena ver el proyecto de Frente. Está interesante y ojalá salga.

PARTICIPANTE B: oye, una pregunta, sabes, bueno, está difícil, pero ¿habrá como pronto de algo de Cerrucha o de cualquiera de las que has dicho, Wolffer también que se presente?

NATALIA: Wolffer tiene un proyecto ahorita en línea que se llama 'Historias cruzadas'. Ya lo había estado presentando en físico, pero con la pandemia lo volvió digital, se llama historias cruzadas, historias desde casa, o algo así se llama en línea y recolecta historias y fotografías de las casas, como del día a día en la pandemia. Cerrucha trae lo de Arte: Arma de construcción masiva, y el 25 noviembre supongo que saldrán cosas porque es el Día...sí supongo que habrá cosas de todas las mujeres el 25 de noviembre tenemos mil cosas que mostrar. Pero bueno, les agradezco muchísimo estar aquí y nos vemos mañana.

Session 3. Mexico City. Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia. 21 October 2020

Voy a empezar, el proyecto de hoy es *Estado de emergencia, puntos de dolor y resiliencia*, fue bastante grande y colectivo y, denme un segundo, porque me aparece la pantalla de Zoom. Participaron Cerrucha, Lorena Wolffer y otras feministas, pero además justo permite como ver el progreso que tuvieron tanto Cerrucha como Lorena, que en la primera sesión les conté que Lorena empezó como performancera y luego decidió dedicarse a crear plataformas para dar voces a otras. Entonces justo esta exposición permite ver este deseo de Lorena Wolffer por dar voces a otras y el cambio que tuvo Cerrucha para buscar dinámicas de interacción como más directas.

Estado de emergencia es de 2018, lo coordinaron Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tyburczy (es estadounidense, ella se dedica a los estudios *queer*, tiene estudios sobre los museos y como la curaduría y museografía te obligan a ver el arte de una forma hetero-normada, como dato curioso ella estudió en el COLMEX y tiene un estudio buenísimo, bueno buenísimo y triste, de las despedidas de soltera organizadas por las señoras Lomas de la Ciudad de México, está bueno), María Laura Rosa (es Argentina, historiadora del arte feminista) y la otra que organizó fue Julia Antivilo que es feminista, *artivista*, historiadora del arte, es chilena pero vive en México y es la coordinadora de la parte del PUEG que se dedica a los estudios de género y arte, hay tres conceptos que me parece importante establecer antes de entrarle a la exposición, el primero es que, justo Tyburczy y Wolffer se consideran *queer*, María Laura Rosa y Julia Antivilo no sé cómo se identifiquen, pero sí son seguidoras de Judith Butler, entonces vuelvo a esto de que su comprensión del género es que es una cualidad performativa, pero, hace unas horas lo platicaba, me parece que estas mujeres han leído en su totalidad a Butler; Butler no ha sido muy clara o no siempre ha sido muy clara, su Libro 'El género en disputa' cambió los estudios de género, pero justo ella misma ha tenido que meterle prólogos para explicar lo que quería decir y si leen la primera edición del 89 y la última de 99 ella dice: 'a ver nunca dije que no existiera el cuerpo porque si digo eso no me puedo considerar feminista porque niego que exista el sexo femenino' pero mi propuesta es que el sexo es menos relevante en la formación de la identidad y aún así tiene trabajos en los que habla del cuerpo, en 'Cuerpos que importan' habla del cuerpo, pero viene de una tradición lacaniana, entonces es bastante más compleja su idea de la performatividad.

El otro es 'Capitalismo Gore' de Sayak Valencia, ese es el concepto con el que estas mujeres se siente afines, entonces qué quiere decir sentirse afines al capitalismo gore, a

diferencia de Rita Laura Segato, que es la otra gran teórica del feminicidio en América Latina, ella dice que el feminicida es una víctima de su contexto social, político y económico y que dadas las desigualdades está como per-configurado a ser un ser violento y Sayak Valencia dice que no, que por lo menos en el caso mexicano, lo que tenemos es un neoliberalismo, ella sí critica bien el neoliberalismo, no voy a decir quién no, y lo que dice ella es: México es un país centralizado, medio mal desarrollado aquí y allá y de repente llega el TLC y obligamos a los estados a modernizarse en cinco minutos y eso rompe por completo el tejido social y es el caso de Ciudad Juárez, rompen el tejido, lo vuelven capitalistas, mandan a las mujeres a trabajar sin decirle a los hombres: 'ya llegó la igualdad y tu mujer tiene derecho a trabajar'. Entonces de la noche a la mañana sus mujeres tienen independencia o libertad económica, relativamente porque los sueldos no son lo suficientemente altos, y hay una promoción de esta idea que el gran capitalista es el, la persona que más dinero junta, y en México las oportunidades para poderse enriquecer son prácticamente nulas, entonces te dedicas a la delincuencia como única opción y, en este entorno y en esta narco-cultura que hay en México el más capacitado para ser un buen capitalista es el más violento y, en ese sentido, la masculinidad empieza a enseñarse como una conducta violenta y el más masculino, el más macho y el más capitalista en estos términos será el más violento y el feminicidio es sólo una manifestación de hasta donde llega la violencia del hombre. Entonces así es como ellas entienden el contexto del feminicidio de México.

PARTICIPANTE A: perdón, pero no comprendí del todo cómo se contradicen esto con la propuesta de Segato. Porque no me parece que sean excluyente, creo que sean.

NATALIA: no son excluyentes, pero en uno es como una víctima del sistema y en el otro hay una promoción y no hay esta idea de victimización de los vulnerabilizados, es más bien como una promoción sistemática de la violencia, en Segato no hay una promoción sistémica de la violencia. Es como una consecuencia.

PARTICIPANTE A: me gustaría platicar más. O sea, es que de lo que yo tenía entendido de Segato es que justo dice que la, que el feminicidio es como un rito iniciativo para hacer parte de esta sociedad violenta y entonces, o sea que es como un mensaje a los pares. Eso es lo que, lo que, o sea me parece muy, como que me encaja muy bien lo que tenía entendido de Segato con esto que dices del capitalismo gore.

NATALIA: no sí, Segato si tiene esa, la gran ventaja de Segato es que ha hecho trabajo antropológico y ha entrevistado a feminicidas y sí, tiene la definición de violencia expresiva que es a la que pertenecería estos casos de la milicia y la policía asesinado mujeres como rito iniciático, pero en su concepción, estos hombres siguen siendo víctimas de un sistema violento, y en Valencia no hay ninguna victimización es tal cual una manifestación de lo que se les enseña. Sí, por ahí va más o menos la diferencia.

PARTICIPANTE C: Nata, una pregunta, estoy como mis alumnos que preguntó algo como de hace rato. El otro libro que dijiste donde Butler dice, se desdice o se corrige.

NATALIA: sí, no te preocupes. Se corrige en el prólogo de 1999 del *Género en disputa y Cuerpos que importan*.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, sí, *el Género en disputa* es el que se me fue.

NATALIA: ah sí, sí. El tercer concepto es el de liminal, que ya lo mencioné en la primera clase, pero no lo definí y de hecho Ileana Diéguez, quien es la teórica de la liminalidad va a estar presente en Estado de Emergencia, lo liminal es todo esto que sucede en las márgenes y para que sucede en las márgenes no literalmente te tienes que ir a las márgenes, puedes convertir un museo en un espacio liminal, el día en que llevas a un público a un museo que no está acostumbrado, inviertes las jerarquías. Esto que hace Lorena que pesen más las voces de las participantes que la de ella y ese tipo de dinámicas hacen de una obra que sea liminal, entonces sí va a ser importante el concepto de liminal. Otras detalles importantes de Estado de emergencia es que la contactó y contrató el Centro de Cultura Digital para el 25 de noviembre, le dijeron queremos una exposición de feminicidio y ella dijo: 'sí y te atienes a mis condiciones: no será una obra individual, va a ser colectiva que el discurso feminista tiende a la colectividad, no voy a usar ninguna de tus instalaciones culturales, tus instalaciones culturales las voy a usar de centro de atención a víctimas y voy a dar atención psicológico y legal a víctimas de violencia y talleres de defensa personal. Todos los eventos se llevaron en cabo en espacios públicos que tienen alguna forma de contacto con los feminicidios en la Ciudad México, esas fueron como sus condiciones, además no se llevó a cabo el 25 de noviembre, yo supongo que es porque Lorena no le encanta esta idea que sólo el 25 de noviembre y el 8 de marzo hay exposiciones de mujeres. Fueron cuatro días, del 10 al 13 de noviembre se llevaron a cabo, el nombre

completo es Estado de emergencia, puntos de dolor y resiliencia porque justo los espacios donde se presentó son puntos de dolor y resiliencia.

El primero, fue en Puente de Alvarado, previo a todos estos eventos artísticos ella había organizado conversatorios con un fin pedagógico y preparaban al público para el evento artístico que iban a ver, entonces aquí este punto de dolor va a ser de transfeminicidios, en un homenaje a dos casos de feminicidios. Uno es el único y el primero que México ha reconocido como transfeminicidio, que es el caso de Paola; Paola estaba atendiendo a un cliente, porque además son sexo-servidoras y él le dispara cuando se da cuenta que es trans y lo presencia una de ellas y ella va hacer todo el trabajo porque se identifique como trans-feminicidio, porque además la policía las va violentar, las va a discriminar, le van a hacer *deadnaming* que es uno de los impedimentos para que se considere traes-feminicidio. Entonces tuvo que entrar la CNDH para determinar que el Estado estaba ejerciendo violencia y que se consideraba trans-feminicidio.

PARTICIPANTE C: o sea usaron el nombre antes del cambio.

NATALIA: exacto, el otro es el de Alessa que sigue sin resolverse. A Alessa la encontraron las compañeras sexoservidoras en un hotel con signos de violencia sexual. Entonces tenían el conversatorio y luego tenían la obra de arte. Fue en este conversatorio donde Ileana Diéguez dijo: solamente desde lo liminal podemos entender la liminalidad, entonces aquí sí están en un punto de las márgenes, aunque Puente de Alvarado está cercano en la Ciudad de México, al final centro está codificado en márgenes y en poblaciones más aceptadas y menos aceptadas, entonces si tú no te metas con las márgenes, no hay formas en las que puedas expresar estar condiciones. Y esto se mezcla con esa idea de que las mujeres siempre estamos en un estado liminal, incluso hasta arriba de la jerarquía, somos vistas con inferiores, entonces la condición liminal está condicionada por la identidad de género. Lo que hicieron las trans es una lectura de poesía, voy a poner el video, no tiene imágenes violentas, pero sí.

PARTICIPANTE B: Natalia, ¿te puedo platicar algo rapidísimo? Es que no termino de entender el concepto de liminal y que estamos como al margen de ser consideradas dentro de una sociedad o algo así.

NATALIA: sí, también, entra con la teoría de la subalternidad, que oficialmente subalterno es sólo el que no está, al que no se le considera como un Otro o una Otra, y está esta idea de que

si eres una mujer blanca, que tiene estudios y un trabajo con salario dejas de ser subalterna y dejas de ser liminal. La realidad es que no, porque lo más probable es que tus compañeros varones no te vayan a ver como una Otra, con mayúscula, entonces sí, por ahí viene esta vinculación de lo liminal. Entonces voy a poner el video de Puente de Alvarado.

Las estampas dicen una mujer ha sido violentada aquí, entonces además se queda la evidencia de que este lugar estuvo ‘embrujaado’ de alguna manera por los feminicidios. En Puente de Alvarado, además coincide con que el punto de dolor es el punto donde trabajan. También esta idea de sacarlo obviamente participó quien estaba interesado, pero al final los clientes las van a buscar en este mismo punto, entonces la posibilidad de que llegaran y se encontraran a todas juntas hablando de la resistencia que resistir implica seguir viva por irónico que suene existe.

El tema de trans-femicidio está siendo muy complicado en México, Marcela Lagarde quien acuñó el término de feminicidio para distinguirlo de femicidio. La diferencia es que femicidio es el equivalente de homicidio pero cuando la asesinada es mujer, feminicidio es que te asesinan por una razón de género, entonces, hace tres meses le preguntaron a Lagarde que si estaba de acuerdo en que la ley protegiera a las mujeres trans y Marcela dijo: ‘son mujeres y, por lo tanto, si las matan sus parejas o gente que las había acosado, si el cuerpo aparece en algún lugar público como un signo de violencia, es feminicidio y luego, un mes después salió y dijo: ‘no, necesitan su propia ley’ y no tanto por ellas, sino porque salió todo este *lobby* por cambiar la ley de acceso a las mujeres a una vida libre de violencia, grupos TERF pedían que en lugar de usar la palabra mujer se usara la palabra cuerpo menstruante, que además excluye a toda mujer que no menstrúe, y entonces Lagarde dijo: ‘el pleito por tener una ley que incluya solamente la palabra mujer fue brutal, entonces, si me empiezas a modificar la ley el riesgo que nos echen para atrás todo es grandísimo’, en ese sentido, ella sugiere la ley para los trans-femicidios pero es en realidad para proteger la ley de las mujeres de aparentemente el cabildeo de las mujeres.

PARTICIPANTE C: entonces, perdón, decías feminicidio y ¿cuál era el otro término?

NATALIA. Femicidio lo hicieron Diana Rusell y Jill Radford en EUA y viene de una tradición estadounidense muy interesante, pero justo la violencia en EUA, que está muy mal, tiene tres diarios, pero es muy distinta, ellos tienen asesinos seriales que se les mete a la cabeza asesinar mujeres y cosas así. Entonces femicidio sí tiene una razón de misoginia pero sobre todo se refiere a cuando el cadáver pertenece a una mujer, entonces cuando en México decimos: ‘en

México hay doce feminicidios diarios' y salen los hombres con: 'a nosotros también nos matan', lo que se les debería responder, es a ver si estuviera hablando de femicidio y sal con tu a los hombres también nos matan, pero yo estoy hablando de feminicidio y no hay homicidio, a ti no te matan por tu género, a mí sí me matan por mi género.

PARTICIPANTE C: entonces, ¿femicidio puede ser por un asalto, no por cuestión de...?

NATALIA: exacto.

PARTICIPANTE C. Entonces, si ella es de la delincuencia organizada, suponiendo que ella fuera una capo, pero no es por condición de género.

NATALIA: exacto.

PARTICIPANTE C: entonces, en el caso de las mujeres trans sí es por condición de su género o su condición de mujeres o de trans.

NATALIA: justo también por eso se necesita la ley, porque son las dos y en la ley no hay nada que cubra esta identidad trans. Que en ese sentido la conferencia de Judith Butler cuando recibió el *honoris causa* en Guadalajara, ella habla de las trans y dice: las trans, además, representan una traición porque renuncian a su privilegio para voluntariamente volverse inferiores, entonces son vistas como locas. O sea, ¿por qué teniendo todo renuncias para ser inferior? Entonces ese factor, si es cierto, que hay que explorar la certeza de lo que dice Butler, si es cierto sí necesitan una ley porque hasta ahorita no están protegidas por esa parte. En una guerra, también hay femicidio y sería interesante distinguir entre homicidio y femicidio, porque las guerras nunca las hacen con perspectiva de género, como si fuera nada un tema de hombres y, bueno...dicen las sirias que no les vendría mal perspectiva de género.

PARTICIPANTE C: como las violaciones en las antiguas Yugoslavia.

NATALIA. Ahí sí es una razón de género. Si pudiéramos explorar si es una razón de género, pero cada país lo tipifica de manera distinta. México tiene muy buena tipificación, el caso, es que bueno Estado de emergencia muestra que da igual las leyes que tengamos, aparentemente no nos importa el marco legal.

El segundo punto de dolor, que supongo que estarán familiarizadas con él es en la UNAM, el caso de Lesvy Berlín, la intervención artística estuvo a cargo de Mónica Mayer. Mónica Mayer es la primera artista feminista en México, ella se define como artista, aunque últimamente habla del artivismo, pero más bien como que se ha sumado a las voces de las jóvenes. Ella empezó a trabajar en los 1970s, se enteró que existía la maestría y en género y arte, la primera maestría en eso, en Los Ángeles, en el Woman's Building, entonces se fue para allá y, estuvo en contacto con Judy Chicago, Suzanne Lacy, Arlene Raven todas esas artistas, entonces regresa a México en el 82 da unos talleres en San Carlos y de esos talleres surgen los tres primeros grupos de arte feminista que va a haber en México, Polvo de Gallina Negra, Tlacuilas y Retrateras y Bio-Arte. Sólo Polvo de Gallina Negra dura más, dura 10 años, los demás terminan el año en el que se fundan terminan porque no es fácil sobrevivir como artista feminista en México. Ella, es quien inventó o quién hizo el primer tendedero, entonces por eso les decía que hoy iba hablar del tendedero. Mayer propuso el primer tendedero, es su obra más famosa, no cobra por los tendederos, los ha montado en todo el mundo, y como instala, la instalación depende del dolor de las mujeres no se siente cómoda cobrando por ese tipo de trabajo. El tema de los tendederos permite una visibilización brutal, pero Mayer los trabaja distinto, Mayer empieza con una pregunta, entonces el primer tendedero literal empezó con: '¿qué es lo que no te gusta de tu Ciudad?' Y eso es lo que ella cuelga, porque a veces publicar los nombres, además de que luego los desprestigian por vendettas personales que eso es muy cruel por parte de las mujeres y muy poco sororo, si una está en un proceso judicial y se publica el nombre completo del acosador o del violador, o del criminal, pues, se viola su derecho a la privacidad y en automático recibe una sentencia menor, también por eso la nota roja, se ha pedido en el norte, que les encanta publicar la foto del cadáver, el nombre completo y hasta la fotografía del asesino, cuando ellos hacen eso están siendo cómplices de que el feminicida reciba una sentencia menor, y por eso se les ha dicho: '¿de dónde viene tu complicidad? ¿Qué clase de pacto machista tenemos entre medios de comunicación, policías y feminicidas?' Entonces ese un poco el conflicto que hay, la ley está del lado de las mujeres, pero la justicia no, entonces hay que darle la vuelta a la falta sororidad en la justicia.

Algo que caracteriza los performances de Mayer es que nunca son agresivos, Wolffer sí tienen performances que son más agresivos con cortadas y cosas así, Mayer apuesta más bien por una dinámica más amorosa, más cariñosa, tiene un performance de abrazos que se trata de sanar esta situación de violencia en la que estamos y en el caso de Lesvy Berlín no fue distinto, no sé si quieren que cuente el caso, supongo que sí lo conocen ¿no? La policía. Apareció Lesvy con el cordón del teléfono en el cuello y la PGJ publicó que había sido suicidio y entonces la

reacción del público fue, entre enojo y risas, porque, me quieres ver la cara y quieres que yo suponga que una niña puede sostener un teléfono estarse muriendo y seguir teniendo fuerza para sostenerlo hasta morir. O sea ¿a quién le quieres ver la cara? Entonces la respuesta de la PGJ, 5 horas después, otro Tweet, intentando hacer ver como que Lesvy merecía ser asesinada, que, para empezar quién merece ser asesinada, pero luego, además presentan una serie de mentiras y presentan un perfil completamente falso y de ahí va a venir el #SiMeMatan y una descripción de quien eres. En caso de que la PGJ te encuentre, pues mejor que exista un perfil real de ti. Entonces Mayer justo creó playeras moradas, por el significado del morado hoy en día, en el que les dibujo el perfil real de Lesvy, como está idea de enfrentar el perfil real con el que había creado la policía. Y todas con estas playeras, lo que hicieron fue intervenir la cabina telefónica en la que Lesvy murió para resignificar por completo el teléfono, porque a estas alturas es un año después, el teléfono es una amenaza latente para todas las mujeres. O sea si hasta en tu universidad te pueden asesinar, digo...Entonces hay que resignificar estos espacios. Entonces voy a poner el video, los papás de Lesvy son los que van a dirigir la conversación de aquí, María Laura Rosa y los papás están presentes, entonces es una escena bastante triste ver a los señores participar en la intervención del teléfono.

Y los otros dos puntos de dolor. Bueno, ahí hay una imagen de la madre de Lesvy y el teléfono intervenido.

PARTICIPANTE C: esto en la UNAM ¿las autoridades de la UNAM, me imagino, permitieron este evento, pero con eso de que es autónoma?

NATALIA: sí y el tema de que el agresor era empleado de la UNAM no facilitó las cosas, sí hay varias quejas con la UNAM sobre este caso. Tanto es así que cambiaron el NIUnaMenos y escribieron NiUNAMenos, sí las estudiantes tienen varias...digo, el paro reciente de la UNAM.

PARTICIPANTE C. Sí, sí

NATALIA. O sea, es que hay un respaldo a los acosadores brutales en estas universidades públicas. No sé en concreto cómo esté la UNAM. Sé que en la UAQ las alumnas lograron que se corrieran a los acosadores, pero el sindicato los devolvió.

Ahí está Mayer entregándole las playeras a los papás.

Y, los siguientes dos puntos en lugar a una zona donde había muerto, bueno donde habían asesinado a una mujer son lugares relaciones con la falta de acceso a la justicia que han tenido las mujeres, entonces el tercer punto de dolor fue en la suprema corte de justicia y, el grupo al que invitaron es un grupo que se llama Invasorix que son músicas de la Ciudad de México, ellas no tienen un género musical definido, más bien cantan y componen de acuerdo a la necesidad a la que quieren atender. Justo siendo muy coherentes del artivismo en el que en lugar de que insertas la pieza de arte al problema social, es que creo para atacar un problema social. Entonces en este caso compusieron un corrido, que tiene muchísima resonancia porque el corrido, bueno además que hay narco-corridos que son una oda a la violencia, el corrido es una tradición híper masculina en el que se han enaltecido a los héroes revolucionarios y se han creado unas utopías de las masculinidades y además sí hay historias de feminicidios en los corridos: Rosita Alvarez, La Cuca Mendoza y todos esos casos lo que cuentan es como una moraleja: si te portas mal, te van a matar, entonces justo lo que ellas hacen es apropiarse del corrido porque también las mujeres tenemos derecho a la tradición mexicana y hasta que ellas no lo hicieron el corrido no pertenece a una tradición femenina, o más complaciente con otros géneros.

Ellas cantaron sobre el caso de Mariana Lima Buendía, que también fue muy sonado y justo es el primer caso que la Suprema Corte de justicia reconoció como feminicidio, entonces también hay aquí un cuestionamiento a porqué si la SC tiene ese poder no han hecho más por resolver los feminicidios. Mariana era una abogada feminista del Estado de México, tenía un matrimonio ultraviolento, estaba casada con un policía, Hernández Ballina. Y, un día le habló a su mamá, le dijo que ya lo iba a dejar, que ya no podía más, preparó sus maletas y, al día siguiente le hablaron a esta señora y le dijeron que su hija se había suicidado entonces la señora desde el principio, Irinea Buendía, dijo: ‘yo no creo que mi hija se haya suicidado, mi hija lo iba a dejar, esto está muy raro’. La historia que contó Ballinas es que, llegó a su casa y encontró a Mariana colgada del tubo de la regadera, entonces que la bajó, la acostó sobre la cama, habló a la policía; nadie le cuestionó el, tú eres policía y sabes que no puedes tocar, modificar una escena entonces ¿por qué se te ocurrió bajarla? Y a partir de ese momento todo el caso va a estar lleno de inconsistencias, los peritajes no coinciden entre ellos, Hernández Ballina estuvo asignado a la investigación del caso, que eso ni de chiste se podría hacer, el marido no podría estar ahí. El Estado de México perdía información, entonces, Irinea fue con el Observatorio Nacional de Feminicidio a la Suprema Corte de Justicia y la Suprema Corte declaró que era feminicidio y sentenció por violencia institucional a las autoridades del Estado de México.

PARTICIPANTE C: Nata, perdón ¿en qué año fue esto?

NATALIA: ella murió en 2010, en 2015 la suprema corte de justicia lo declara feminicidio y, el año pasado o este, lograron capturar a Ballinas, entonces son como 10 años para llegar a la justicia.

PARTICIPANTE C: me voy a silenciar porque mi WhatsApp está dando lata.

NATALIA: tienen otras piezas musicales más divertidas y críticas, en su sitio de internet pueden encontrar sus piezas, esta es la letra de la canción por si alguien no cachó todas las palabras que decía. Pero es nada más la letra y, el último punto de dolor justo le tocó a Cerrucha intervenir, fue frente a la PGJ, ahora fiscalía general de Justicia. Lo que ella hizo es un *flashmob*, que es parecido a un *happening*. Un día antes abrió una línea de teléfono, a hombres y a mujeres, no marcó a un sólo hombre en el que las personas podían pretender estarle hablando a la PGJ y decirle a la PGJ todo lo que siempre le habían querido decir, entonces con todas esas mentadas de madre, porque es lo que son, ella contrató a un grupo musical y compusieron una pieza de salsa y se fueron a bailar las mentadas de madre frente a la PGJ. Entonces justo es lo que van a ver en el video.

Esta es la letra de la canción, sé que tiene subtítulos, pero Cerrucha no incluyó todas las líneas y luego ella mete trans-feminicidio en los subtítulos y, oficialmente en las llamadas nadie dijo trans-feminicidio. Cerrucha es la que trae el vestido negro y el sombrero.

Y fundamentalmente eso es Estado de emergencia, digo a partir de mañana pueden entrar al perfil de Cerrucha, ella regresó a la FGJ y justo en el *hall*, en el vestíbulo, les montó el memorial a Lesvy Berlín, por lo menos todos los días cuando los policías entran, hoy, se enfrentan a testimonios de mujeres víctimas de feminicidio.

Entonces, no sé qué tan útil vaya a ser, pero por lo menos saben que existen estos nombres. Y fundamental hasta llega mi parte, a más bien abro los micrófonos para ustedes. Si quieren que regrese a alguna de las obras, regreso, nada más me dicen.

PARTICIPANTE B: a mí es algo que se me hizo como muy, que, o sea lo de las, bueno el trans-feminicidio y que justamente está hablando una y entonces pasa una ambulancia, entonces digo, pues obviamente son como los sonidos de la Ciudad, pero se me hizo como una coincidencia muy interesante. Pero, me gustó mucho, por ejemplo, en el caso de Lesvy, pues me, es el caso como de las familias víctimas de feminicidio me parte aún más el corazón, o sea

ver como a los papás, siempre que veo como en marchas, entonces se me hizo increíble que hicieran algo y que los papás fueran.

PARTICIPANTE C: ¿puedo?

NATALIA: Sí, claro, Participante C

PARTICIPANTE C: me gustó muchísimo lo del corrido lo de que dices que era pues era una oda a la violencia machista y como recuperarlo, porque, no sé me había ocurrido, eso me encantó, también coincido con la Participante B en lo de Lesvy que estuvieran ahí los papás sí te rompe mucho, ¿no? Y lo de las calcomías que decías, de una mujer fue violentada aquí, pues se me hace fuerte también y también me gusta. Creo que también interpela a la sociedad y a los que pasa por ahí. Eso me gustó mucho.

PARTICIPANTE A: ay, pues, yo esta vez difiero un poco. La verdad es que no me gustó, sobre todo, es que no me parecieron tan contundentes, o sea obviamente me parecieron importantes e importantes, pero el primer video tal vez, es cómo hicieron los videos, pero el primero, por ejemplo, dije que, no, no veo que están recitando poesía hasta el final, y luego, el segundo, el de Lesvy, pues es que no, o sea va a sonar súper ojete, sí se me hace muy bonito, pero no me parece una obra, no me parece arte, ni siquiera pues ponerme así fina, sino como que me parece un círculo de diálogo y digo, eso no tiene absolutamente nada de malo, pero no entiendo como hay ahí una propuesta de que este formato ayuda a tratar este problema social porque, tal y tal y tal, sólo parecen ser como círculos de diálogo. El corrido me gustó mucho, pero igual si vas a hacer un corrido puedes hacer algo mucho mejor, no sé si ya le ibas a echar tantas ganas a estos puntos de dolor, este como que parecen llenos de... O sea este es el que me más me gusto, el baile y todo, pero me parecen llenos de lugares comunes y, aunque estoy segura que interpelan a gente, a mí, en ocasiones ya hay ciertas frases que a pesar de que comprendo su sentido, siento que las repiten sin sentido, ¿si me explico? Entonces...no sé, los últimos videos me gustaron más y bueno obviamente, en realidad sí me gustó, pero no como, o sea, no como lo otro que habíamos visto. Que era tan fuerte y potente, ¿no?

PARTICIPANTE B: creo que la Participante A tiene un punto en eso, o sea como comparado con los anteriores que habíamos visto, o sea el de, el de Wolffer, bueno que de todas maneras es de ella, de todas maneras creo que sí, sí veo, o sea sí me gusta, pero creo que sí me gustaban

los de los días pasado, pero lo que sí se me hace muy, también como interesante lo de justo lo de las estampas, porque a parte me recuerda mucho como la toma de espacios, por ejemplo de las bicicletas, los zapatos colgados, entonces eso me gusta mucho como la toma de espacios y que también quien lo vea, pues mínimo diga o sea se quede pensando.

PARTICIPANTE A: yo pienso que, siendo el tema tan fuerte que es feminicidios estoy segura de que, es algo mucho más impactante de ver, ¿no? O sea, igual me dan ganas de estar todas las partes de la Ciudad para ver esta clase de cosas, siempre, o sea con las cosas que nos presentas.

NATALIA: ok, si, porque justo tenía una pregunta sobre que les parecen estas estrategias, pero si en lugar de tomarlo como una obra de arte, lo tomaremos como una provocación para dar herramientas para otras manifestaciones ¿funciona mejor?

PARTICIPANTE C, ¿me repites la pregunta?

NATALIA: si fuera más bien como una preparación o curso propedéutico para manifestaciones, dar herramientas para las manifestaciones, para las marchas, para salir a pedir justicia...

PARTICIPANTE A: yo creo que sí, o sea definitivamente son puntos de encuentro importantísimo y creo que cada uno ilumina distintas, o sea justos al centrarse en casos concretos, iluminan distintas condiciones en las que se dan los feminicidios, entonces, me parece súper valioso porque abre el diálogo en cualquier, bueno no en cualquier, pero en todo caso, sí abre el diálogo y estoy, y creo que sí brinda, muchas, muchas, muchas herramientas, o sea creo que es muy, muy valioso. Chance, aunque lo que no me gustó tanto fueron los videos, o sea creo que, creo que hay algo ahí que se pierde, porque yo estoy segura de que hubiera estado ahí en persona o chance si el video hubiera sido mejor, me hubiera, bueno me interpeló mucho, pero me habría interpelado todavía más.

NATALIA: creo que ahí estamos justo enfrentándonos o revelando los problemas que tiene el *artivismo* en México. Si estudias *artivismo* en EUA, hídole tienen unas páginas de internet, unos registros increíbles, no sé si ubican a Judy Baca, que es una artista chicana en EUA, es raro porque las chicanas que de hecho por eso han tenido conflictos con las mexicanas, se

quieren sentir muy mexicanas y entonces regresan a sus raíces, pero regresar a sus raíces es a su abuela que hace año no vive en México y entonces pintan vírgenes de Guadalupe por todos lados y en México hace mucho que las feministas no pintan vírgenes, pero ella está haciendo un mural digital que además lo están pintando en físico. Entonces tiene un presupuesto brutal. Aquí el gran problema va a ser la falta de presupuesto, entonces sí, los videos pudieron tener mucha más calidad si hubieran tenido presupuesto, si algún medio de comunicación hubiera mostrado interés y hubiera hecho el registro de la obra. Mónica Mayer, por ejemplo, creó el primer archivo de arte feminista, y es súper útil para el estudio, pero pasa un poco lo mismo que Participante A. Te cuentan de la fiesta de los XV años, que fue la obra feminista más grande de los 1980s y la ves en el blog y no es que pierdas interés, pero no se ve la espectacularidad y toda la transgresión que fue, porque son fotos de periódico mal tomadas, entonces sí. El arte feminista en México llega hasta donde el presupuesto se lo permite y ese es un limitante importante que hay que reconocer, hay un límite presupuestal. Hay, además, en este mismo límite presupuestal, las estadounidenses generan estadísticas de sus intervenciones, pero generar estadísticas es muy caro. O sea, si yo dijera, bueno ya voy a vivir de limonera y entonces me voy a dedicar a medir estas obras porque al fin soy socióloga, pues, aunque lo quiera necesito un equipo para hacer este tipo de mediciones, no es solamente que yo ponga mi trabajo de caridad.

PARTICIPANTE C: y tienen que comer tu comer.

NATALIA: sí, entonces, está ese limitante, sí, tal vez concuerdo con la Participante A en que hay una carencia de registro, pero, les quiero preguntar si, que es derivado de lo que decía Participante A que me está haciendo pensar varias cosas. Pensando que en México la gente no se ha alfabetizado en la discusión feminista, incluso hay feministas que no se han sentado a leer ni un folleto del feminismo, el que hayan hecho conversatorios previos para encontrarse a la gente que anduviera en la calle no tiene en ese sentido su valor. Es decir, si hubiera llegado directo con la canción de Cerrucha, ¿qué tanto la gente la habría recibido como: entiendo de dónde viene y qué tanto la habría recibido como estas locas bailando en la calle? Nada más me están estorbando.

PARTICIPANTE C: veo ahí, perdón, un poquito más claro, entonces, el corrido, quizá por el tipo de músico, porque a todo el mundo le sonaba la tonada de Rosita Alvérez y porque si tiene la idea de contar una historia. O sea, en ese sentido, sí a lo mejor, la otra dice, ahí están estas

locas bailando ¿de qué se están quejando? Pero a lo mejor del corrido, por la pausa misma de la tonada, pero sí lo veo como más didáctico, si lo llega alguien, como tú dices, analfabeto sobre el tema del feminismo sí lo oye, porque la tonadita a todo mexicano le suena.

NATALIA: ok.

PARTICIPANTE C: esa es mi opinión.

NATALIA: ok, veo a la Participante B pensando, no sé si quiera decir algo.

PARTICIPANTE B: yo perdón, pero como mi internet está medio mal me perdí la primera parte de la pregunta.

NATALIA: pensando en qué motivó a que esta intervención artística pusiera tanto peso en los conversatorios previos, motivados por esta idea de alfabetizar en el feminismo para garantizar la efectividad o la eficiencia de las obras, no, ¿no hace más sentido? ¿Pensando en el público general que te encuentras en la calle, llegar con una exposición feminista sin ninguna introducción no generaría, por ejemplo, la misma reacción adversa a las pintas?

PARTICIPANTE B: sí, yo creo que sí y seguro lo generó, porque yo creo que la gente que fue al conversatorio, o sea la gente que haya ido a esos conversatorios, bueno eso es lo que yo pienso, no sé si haya pasado así, pero sí la gente que va a conversatorios feministas en general es gente que está interesada y no se escandalizaría con un performance. Probablemente si yo sé que existen esos conversatorios, sé que existen estas artistas, pues ya tengo como cierto marco referencial para comprender los signos y símbolos que son utilizados en el performance, entonces, cuando alguien se, o sea, de cualquier forma, estaba en la calle ¿no? Entonces tuvo dos públicos, quienes se preparan para una apreciación determinada de la obra y otros que se lo toparon.

PARTICIPANTE C: pero a lo mejor que se lo topan alguno puede reflexionar, alguno diría ahí hay unas locas hablando. Pero a lo mejor alguno sí le llega, sobre todo con la música. Pero sí es verdad que no hay mucho conocimiento del tema y que una gran mayoría podría decir: ‘ay, ahí están las locas con su relajo’.

NATALIA: ok. Cuando, después de ver el documental de Marisela Escobedo que tuve los conversatorios y volví a oír la pieza de Cerrucha, dije: ‘híjole, creo que sí les diría todo eso’. Tal vez están siendo un poco nobles con la PGJ, porque híjole.

PARTICIPANTE A: justo hoy vi el documental. Entonces, o sea sí ando como... ¿y sabes qué? Ahí hay un comentario en un video que dije como: ¡ah! Es que sentimos que no es suficiente ¿no? Lo dijo una señora, y dijo, no somos suficiente para salir en masa y pedir. Y ahorita en el 2020 ya salimos en masa, ya pedimos, ya quién sabe qué y aún así me siento tan insuficiente y chance por eso a veces siento que soy muy dura otras feministas ¿no? O algo así, porque, es que no parece que nada que hagamos es suficiente. Ni siquiera, o sea viendo el documental de Maricela Escobedo, dije no, pues es que yo no he hecho nada, obviamente comparado con ella, no he hecho nada, pero porqué tendría que yo buscar huesos de alguien que quiero para decir: ‘ah ya estoy haciendo suficiente’ cuando tampoco va a ser eso suficiente.

NATALIA: sí. Claro.

PARTICIPANTE B: o sea también se me hace medio derivado de lo que dice la Participante A es como esta carga de ser feminista, o sea me quedé pensando, no soy como suficiente feminista o, por ejemplo, veía un Tweet que decía como, como menospreciando a las feministas que llegan y que igual y te metes al feminismo después porque está de moda, entonces también eso me molesta un buen. Digo, claro que no te puedes creer lo primero que leas y sólo porque lees un artículo, ni mucho menos, pero sí tenemos también como una carga también de que todo el tiempo, o sea no sé, como ver noticias, de feminicidios y decir, no estamos como logrando, aunque sí, pero también se nubla todo como lo negativo. Y también esto me parece muy poderoso del *artivismo*, porque también, o sea no sólo genera consciencia, sino también creo que motiva, o sea mucho lo veo. A mí me gustó mucho, o sea Cerrucha me parece impresionante, o sea la verdad soy su fan, ya voy a poder seguir su Instagram. Entonces me encanta esta manera, me encanta la creación de espacios, eso súper falta. Pero por medio del arte también se me hace una forma de concientizar y de hacer ver como algo que se está logrado.

PARTICIPANTE C: mira ahorita con lo que está comentando la Participante A y la Participante B, a veces sí me preocupa como que hay este canon de quien es buena feminista y no, como la policía del feminismo, de quién sí es feminista y quién no, eres feminista de

primera, de segunda y de tercera, no eres suficientemente feminista o una buena feminista. Entonces bueno, creo que ahí hay un problema, a mí me desesperar, siento que he estado a penas, pero en dos lados del espectro porque me he desesperado con muchas mujeres que por ejemplo en marzo, antes de la pandemia, cuando la marcha, desacreditaba o descalificaban la marcha: ‘qué les pasa, son unas locas que sólo quieren el aborto’ y yo decía qué mal, no hay sororidad. Pero también, después, del otro lado, esa falta de comprensión. ¿Cómo te diré? Me desesperaron muchas mujeres, a mí me ha desesperado más la falta de sororidad que las reacciones de los hombres, porque finalmente ellos están en su privilegio, sino las mujeres poco sororas, pero también este canon de quién es suficiente feminista. Y tú, pues eres privilegiada entonces eres de segunda. Creo que en los dos extremos eso hace mucho daño. La Participante A se desespera porque no hace suficiente y hay otras que, en fin, no sé. ¿Quién define qué es buena feminista y no?

PARTICIPANTE B: sólo rapidísimo, Natalia, o sea se me hace como cañona esta idea de no hacemos suficiente no es que nosotras no hagamos suficiente, pues estamos gritando, marchando y todo, pero o sea el Estado, quien, bueno las autoridades, es quien no está haciendo suficiente entonces también es como esa impotencia y también eso se me hace súper interesante de, o sea los últimos, el último año, de la toma, las marchas, o sea la manera en que se ha manifestado y ha demostrado mucho poder, o sea mucho, mucho poder y que, o sea que sí puede llegar como la impotencia, pero creo que es algo súper, súper importante.

NATALIA: sí, ok, de aquí voy a derivar mi siguiente pregunta, efectivamente después de la marcha el 8 de marzo, el feminismo en México se ha empezado a dividir horrores, entre las que son TERF y las que no son TERF, las que son liberales y las que son de izquierda y así ha ido poco a poco. Al final Lagarde dio una conferencia y dijo es que no deberíamos estar juzgándonos entre nosotros. Pero sí hay una falta de compromiso de todas. Esto que decían Participante A y la Participante C, de quién es buena feminista y quién no. La Participante A mencionó, no hacer suficiente y hasta dónde leer y la parte del poder que mencionaba Pao. Al final, las feministas en la academia pues por muy académica que sea, cuando llegas como mujeres como Maricela Escobedo o las madres de Nuestras Hijas de regreso a casa que son las del campo algodonero, ellas evidentemente no están leyendo a Simone de Beauvoir pero están inmersas en la tragedia y sin ser abogadas, saben de las leyes con las que están defendiendo el caso de su hija mejor que nosotras y saben cómo no funcionan los mecanismos de justicia en este país. Entonces, en ese sentido, lo que dice Lagarde, es las académicas que son privilegiadas

y que tienen acceso al conocimiento sí tienen la obligación de leer, pero también tienen la obligación de difundir el conocimiento de una manera masticable, entonces mi pregunta es: ¿les parece que lo falta en México es una articulación entre el feminismo de academia, el feminismo de campo y el feminismo en el arte y en el *artivismo*?

PARTICIPANTE A: sí, o sea, sí, o sea. Llevo como pensándolo desde hace mucho y digo es que, también por eso luego está esta división tan grande en el feminismo, ¿no? Porque se piensa que no es, o sea yo estoy muy en contra del academicismo, ¿no? Pero me encanta la academia, o sea yo soy académica y no es que quiera: ‘es que el término correcto en realidad es tal’, pero sí hace falta que conozcamos un poco más de la historia no en un sentido académico, sino en un sentido de querer conocer otras historias ¿no? Historias de mujeres que se han preguntado desde diferentes lugares que pueden ser desde quiénes están buscando a sus hijas, hasta pensar que a las académicas no se les debe escuchar por ser privilegiadas, es una bobada por decirlo leve, porque sino se entiende la raíz de cada corriente, por ejemplo, a mí por ejemplo me molesta un poco que digan que a las feministas radicales las llamen TERF porque eso es reducir toda su teoría a una conducta determinada de ciertas feministas radicales y es como, a ver, no, la característica esencial del feminismo radical tal vez no es la transexclusión porque existen feministas radicales que no son tan excluyentes y sí se reconoce que la ignorancia es un grave problema en México porque existe, más que porque, ay, estúpidos ignorantes es por este elitismo que tienen las clases dominantes, por ejemplo, lo mismo pasa con el derecho, si el derecho no accesible la gente va a seguir ignorando lo que es el derecho, entonces sí creo el *artivismo* es una gran, el *artivismo* en ese sentido, creo que puede un vínculo importante entre la militancia y la búsqueda académica. O sea, de hecho, lo es, lo está siendo ahorita. Por ejemplo, la proliferación de infografías o de ilustraciones es como, yo creo que es muestra de ello ¿no? Y también otra cosa que me parece importante es que, por ejemplo, podemos romper las reglas, pero si no, si no hay una meditación o reflexión acerca de cómo las vamos a romper, para qué y qué sigue, hay una perdición muy, muy grande y por eso creo, o sea por ejemplo en la marcha del 16 de agosto del año pasado, que partieron de la glorieta de Insurgentes y quemaron las estaciones de Metrobús, a una amiga que fue una chilena o argentina, no me acuerdo, le dijo: ‘cuando nosotras hacemos marchas, planeamos qué vamos a destruir y sí destrozamos y sí quemamos, pero ya lo tenemos planeado’ Y en México las marchas ya se han vuelto algo predecible, tan predecible que reprimirlas está siendo más fácil. Entonces creo que sí hace falta no sólo, este, pues hace falta más diálogo, mayor organización y entender que el feminismo es un movimiento político cuya estructuración se hace con el trabajo de base, no

con, pues no con la mera voluntad de decirte sorora. Esa es mi opinión. Es que tripeó mucho la pregunta, fue cómo si...

PARTICIPANTE B: yo creo que sí. Que la Participante A tiene razón, bueno últimamente también he visto mucho este tema en Twitter, no me meto mucho, pero cuando me meto siempre está ese tema y lo que a mí me parece interesante del *artivismo* y que sí debería de haber una difusión, o sea yo por ejemplo que están empezando, o sea, no sé si ubiquen, hay una que se llama Mar Maremoto, o sea lo que hace son ciertos dibujos y son dibujos increíbles, o sea, hay otra que se me olvidó su nombre, pero que van proporcionando información, entonces también creo que el *artivismo*, o sea estaría increíble hubiera una difusión muy alta hacia el alcance, porque ella tiene bastante alcance, tiene ya como cien mil *followers* en Instagram y que tuviera un alcance así en redes sociales se me hace muy importante, porque tenemos que aprovechar estas herramientas y aún más en pandemia, porque también luego está cansado, si, o sea no sé. Si tú quieres llegar y buscar cosas de feminismo en internet, es más fácil que lo veas, y, por eso también creo que Participante A tiene un gran punto con lo de los videos, como los que vimos, sé que luego no hay como suficientes, pero creo que sí se puede, acceder a las redes sociales, o sea por medio de muchos programas que no necesariamente cuestan y para promover justamente todo esto que es *artivismo* y que la gente se acerque y haya este diálogo del que habla la Participante A.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí. O sea, la pregunta que hiciste, Natalia, de que, si hace falta más conexión, de academia, *artivismo*, activismo, etcétera, yo creo que 100% ¿no? Ahorita me viene, no sé qué ha pasado con la sede de la CNDH, no sé, me desconecté, creo que una, la esta señora Yesenia, creo que, no sé si se pelearon entre ellas y a mí me impresionaba mucho y si te rompe esta mujer cuando dice: y la que no, que no nos estorbe, tenemos derecho a romper y tenemos derecho, esto que menciona la Participante A, o sea es que tengo varias ideas, pero esto que menciona Participante A de que en Chile van con idea de qué van a romper, sin embargo aquí hay tanto coraje y tanta cólera que como lo controlas. Además, también hay otro efecto psicológico, a veces en la bola se hacen cosas que no harías y un grupo de chavos borrachos hace cosas que a lo mejor solitos no harían, entonces no sé, el enojo a veces no es fácil de contener, aunque sería lo deseable, ahora es predecible porque rompen todo y agraden y dicen: 'ay miren, estas locas', pero no sé cómo canalizar este coraje. Cómo le dices a la señora Yesenia que, cómo les haces masticar, difundir estas ideas, pues le violaron y le mataron a su hija, entonces es, hójole se me hace muy difícil, pero creo que esa conexión es muy necesaria,

porque si no nos quedamos nada más en una cosa de ira, de coraje y de que después no saben. Claro que pueden conocer más las leyes que otros, porque ellas se han enfrentado a los no's en los ministerios públicos, pero no sé cómo habría esa manera, voy a decir "pacífica", de... cómo se debe de asesorarlas, no porque las académicas superiores, no, lo que han sufrido es espantoso, la niña que violaron de 7 años y el violador está afuera. Lo que han sufrido es terrible y ellas están en la calle y se están partiendo la cara. Pero creo que esa conexión que dice Natalia urge, que es muy, muy necesaria y si el *artivismo* puede servir, pues qué mejor. Ahora no sé cómo hacerlo masticable, creo que es un gran reto, o sea no sabe quién Simone de Beauvoir, ni Butler, ni nada, a ella le mataron a su hija. No sé si me expliqué.

NATALIA: sí, efectivamente hubo conflictos en la OKUPA, esto que decía la Participante A, yo me considero feminista radical y no soy TERF y no me peleó con las que tienen una postura distinta porque creo en el diálogo, entonces generalizar hacia los feminismos es dañino. Pero hubo un enfrentamiento porque en el anti-grito las madres hablaron de patria, entonces las regañaron horrible y les dijeron que era matria y luego las madres no tuvieron problemas en incluir a los grupos LGBTIQ más y las feministas, algunas dijeron que no porque ellos son otra lucha por separado, entonces creo que el problema ha sido que han llegado una actitud de adoctrinamiento. A ver, te voy a enseñar como canalizar tu dolor y justo eso no, no es lo que se debe hacer. Porque si vienen de ciencias sociales, una de las primeras cosas que te enseñan es que tu sujeto de estudio sabe más que tú. Tú lo único que tienes que hacer es transformar ese conocimiento en conocimiento "académico", pero falta ese puente. Bueno a mí me parece que sí falta ese puente. O sea, sí, sí, rompe todo, pero es una discusión que a veces he tenido con Diana, no, es que está mal que rompan, pero es que tienes coraje. Me encantó eso que dijiste de ciencias sociales, tu sujeto de estudio sabe más que tú, pues sí, ellas saben lo que es el feminicidio de primera mano.

NATALIA: sí y, luego, hacer el conocimiento accesible, que esa parte, ahí sí no es sólo México, ironías de la vida, los mejores journal están en inglés entonces ya empezando por ahí, gracias, genera conocimiento en puntitos SNI y nadie accede a él. Pero, por ejemplo, creo que sí hay formas, igual y hay que ser más creativos, pero justo aparentemente somos bastante creativo, me parece que las tesis en Chile lograron canalizar muy bien el enojo contra los violadores y hacer un performance que a diferencia de las pintas, digo el Estado las está demandando, pero a diferencia de las pintas genera menos ruido alrededor y se queda y se replica una y otra, y otra vez. Creo que México tiene a Vivir Quintana y Vivir sin miedo sí más o menos rescata el

dolor que están sintiendo las mujeres en México, incluyendo a las madres. Sí hay esfuerzos, sí hay, pero falta su articulación. Mónica Mayer acaba de convocar a un concurso de cartas a madres de desaparecidas y casos de feminicidio y la convocatoria llegó a muy pocas personas, entonces sí hace falta, pues ponerse las pilas, creo que también es momento de sustituir a las vacas sagradas de la academia feminista por, bueno, no he visto mucha disponibilidad de las académicas ya consagradas por tender puentes, la verdad y concreto estoy pensando en una.

PARTICIPANTE C: ¿Cómo llegas y le dices a Yesenia: yo les voy a decir como canalizar su enojo? Híjole te arrancan la cabeza y con lógica.

NATALIA: si no, pero sí puedes entrevistarla, entender su enojo y entonces proponerles a las feministas que refleje ese enojo, porque justo a las feministas no les toca romper en nombre del enojo de esta mujer, pues esta mujer si quiere romper, pues que rompa, pero a las demás nos toca darle voz y que llegue a la justicia.

PARTICIPANTE B: Oye, Natalia, una pregunta de qué academicistas hablabas, es que la verdad yo no sé de feminismos en México, entonces, nada más si se puede saber.

NATALIA: sí, bueno en concreto me ha molestado un poco la postura de Marta Lamas. Incluso antes de que dijera lo de la prostitución que fue para patearla, cuando fue la marcha del ocho de marzo, fue muy juiciosa sobre este nuevo feminismo que es más pasión que teoría. Que dices, buah, o sea no lo sabes, porque no te has sentado a hablar con ellas y un poco esta idea de las grandes ya pasamos por ahí y lo sabemos todos. Pues sí, gracias, su experiencia es útil y efectivamente les debemos muchos derechos, pero justo no nos hemos quedado dormidas con esos derechos y creo que hay que reconocer, que la lucha feminista de la primera ola fue el sufragio femenino y luego fue el derecho a trabajar, pero nosotras estamos pidiendo el derecho a estar vivas, o sea, en qué momento la igualdad se convirtió en un arma en contra de nosotras, entonces creo que hay que tender puentes de sensibilidades, porque claro que estoy enojada, nunca me imaginé que llegaría a tener que pedir el derecho a estar viva.

PARTICIPANTE C: sí, sí está cañón.

NATALIA: sí, en concreto estoy pensando en ella.

PARTICIPANTE A: justo esto, por esto que dijiste del capitalismo gore y que es como una, no quiero idealización, pero de la violencia pues el otro día estaba pensando, de esta expresión de que los narcos son empresarios. Pues es que ahí no hay nada más tangible, los narcos son empresarios, cuyo producto es ilegal y por eso matan. Pero los demás empresarios también lo hacen. Entonces ¿cuál es ahí la conexión entre la violencia y el capitalismo que la mujer sale pateada y que me imagino que las ecofeministas pueden dar una respuesta muy articulada al respecto? No te rías, Pao, siempre acabo hablando de las ecofeministas, pero es que sí me parece casi, casi el patriarcado y el capitalismo, o sea no hay separación entre ellos y es por ello que estamos viviendo la situación que estamos viviendo, o sea porque es insostenible.

NATALIA: sí, en ese sentido, no sé si ya leyeron este (Feminismo for the 99%, A manifesto). Que esta es otra forma de acercar el conocimiento. Manifiesto feminista para el 99%. Los manifiestos son eso, cómo traduces el conocimiento feminista como algo tangible en la realidad, escribes un manifiesto, por hay va este manifiesto de Nancy Fraser y no sé pronunciar los otros nombres, pero está en español y está gratis en internet porque traficantes de sueño lo está difundiendo porque es una crítica al capitalismo, entonces que además te cobren una millonada por el libro era raro.

PARTICIPANTE C: Claro. ¿Se llama Manifiesto feminista?

NATALIA: Feminism for the 99% A Manifesto.

PARTICIPANTE C: pero Nancy Fraser. ¿No?

NATALIA: es una joya que va por donde dice la Participante A. Tengo una última pregunta, pero que opinan en esta tradición de romper con el patriarcado en el arte, una de las cosas que las artistas han querido romper es la idea del genio como este individuo que crea en solitario, que además es relativamente falso, ¿no? Porque Rembrandt y todos tenía talleres y formaban obras de sus alumnos y justo las feministas empiezan con la colectiva. Y esta obra es una gran síntesis de colectividad y quién es la autora y quién coordina, pues todas estuvieron metidas en todo momento y si bien Cerrucha montó lo de la PGJ no lo habría podido si Antivilo no hubiera estado ahí. Entonces ¿qué opinan de esta estrategia colectiva?

PARTICIPANTE A: me encanta, me gusta mucho, porque creo que sobre todo, porque esta cuestión de crear esferas, ¿no? Cuando hablamos de los clásicos y esa onda, pues sí hablamos de esferas, en realidad, no son autores solitarios, eran amigos entre ellos ¿no? Entonces justo creo que hacer eso es increíble, porque además pone de manifiesto que hay gente que se lo está perdiendo, o sea yo ayer, después de platicar contigo me quedé pensando como wow, o sea no es tan difícil conocer algunas de las feministas que admiro y, incluso, su amiga tal vez no, pero pues hacernos conocidas e intercambiarnos nuestros puntos de vista y creo, o sea no crea como un atributo esencial de la mujer, tal vez es un resultado de nuestra socialización o nuestra consciencia feminista que estamos súper abiertas a formar comunidades, entonces rompe también con este mito: el pero enemigo de una mujer es otra mujer, porque y, es como creación de esfera y que, sobre todo me parece que en colectivo, las realidades adquieren un grado mayor de eternidad, sé que suena redundante, sí, por ejemplo si yo creo en mi amigo imaginario es menos real que si 20 personas creemos en el mismo amigo imaginario, por ejemplo Santa Claus, entonces mientras más grandes y más colectivas sean estas obras... además son de todas, entonces tiene una significación, particular para cada una sí, pero, muy íntima con cada una, que no es lo mismo que llegar a ver la Mona Lisa y forzarte a que te guste porque es una gran obra de arte. Si no, ay yo le eché ese pincelazo. Y ya.

PARTICIPANTE B: a parte, creo que lo que me encanta del *artivismo* es que no necesitas, justo lo que decía la Participante A, la Mona Lisa, una apreciación o algo así de ay no, es que tú no sabes de arte. Justo me encanta, pero también me, o sea me parece súper importante la oportunidad de diálogo y de comunidad y yo también siempre he sido como de la idea de una horizontalidad, colectividad, porque finalmente o sea es totalmente necesario un diálogo y también quitarnos de la idea, o sea como de: un líder, o sea creo que, digo siempre se necesita como una especie de líder, de líderes hacia la cual ir, pero no significa que tenga que recaer en una sola persona.

NATALIA: ¿quieres decir algo, Participante C?

PARTICIPANTE C: mira, yo no sé si es una cuestión generacional porque estas dos niñas podrían ser mis hijas, Nata no, pero mira, esto el pero enemigo de una mujer es una mujer, igual y es una cosa antigua, yo todavía veo que falta sororidad, y todavía veo síndrome de la abeja reina, que yo ya llegué y yo soy La feminista como debe se ser, pero a lo mejor es un problema generacional, no sé si esto enriquezca el diálogo, ¿no? Pero a mí me parece muy bien

lo de la colectividad y donde no haya estos egos, ¿no? O sea que el arte sea, pues sea un poco de todas, claro habrá quien tenga más talento o no, pero en estas, o sea en estos performances e instalaciones y eso, pues participan todas y eso está muy bien, yo sí les diría que no olviden y subrayaría la sororidad, nada más. Está bien colectivo, pero hójole es que a veces el ego es humano, no es femenino, ni voy a decir: ‘las mujeres somos complicadas’, no, el ser humano es complicado y ese peligro me da ansias, a lo mejor es generacional.

PARTICIPANTE A: sabes algo que también noto un poco, que todas estas obras que nos has presentado tienen la característica de que son más o menos fugaces y creo que todo esto va, o sea, bueno, es una...mamada lo que voy a decir, pero creo que el paradigma de lo que es el todo, todo, pero en mi mente, el paradigma de lo que es la sustancia está cambiando de ser como objeto, sujeto al que se le predicen o del que se predicen cualidades a ser proceso, ¿no? Y pasa lo mismo con la cuestión de la identidad, con la cuestión de lo que es el género, de cómo se concibe el tiempo y en este sentido también cómo se concibe el arte, todo, todo está cambiando para que se aprecie mucho más el momento presente, el proceso, bueno y toda esa clase de cosas.

PARTICIPANTE C: no sé, entiendo que este arte es efímero, pero no sé si podría, bueno no sé, existe también algo que permanezca más, no sé que supere el momento. Nada más eso, eso digo, pero entiendo que es arte efímero y tiene su valor y ahí no me pongo al tiro.

NATALIA: Sí, en ese sentido, tengo sobre lo que comenta Participante C de la falta de sororidad, creo que, ojalá fuera generacional, más bien creo que las generaciones más jóvenes están peleando por perder este mundo de egos, pero justo tiene que ver con la forma en que las mujeres se sumaron al mundo público y que para nosotras ya llega muy distinto. O sea, fue: quiero que me des espacio, quiero que me des espacio. Abren cuotas, empiezan a criticar el techo de cristal y el suelo pegajoso y quieren llegar a una empresa y ser CEO y más bien esta generación dice: ‘pero, si yo leo a las feministas, hacían una crítica de que el sistema era terrible ¿por qué eventualmente nos pareció como triunfo la famosa inclusión?’ Y la inclusión es sumo a las mujeres a un mundo masculino, no hubo una transformación del mundo público a un mundo femenino.

PARTICIPANTE C: totalmente, agarraron esas mañas y ese ser la jefa que trata mal a todo el mundo.

NATALIA: a la que le costó mucho llegar, entonces en su lógica es, yo estoy aquí por mis méritos, tú gánate tus méritos y te lo voy a hacer difícil porque para mí fue difícil, entonces justo yo espero que eso se acabe porque logremos desarticular el mundo público como masculino, pero sí creo que tiene que ver con las generaciones por las condiciones en las que las que lograron hacerse de espacios. Creo que va por ahí. Respecto a lo que decías, Participante A, tiene que ver con justo la crítica que hicieron al sistema que eso, ahí sí inglesas y estadounidenses se pusieron las pilas en criticar al mercado del arte como esta cosa terrible que al final hace de artistas increíblemente pasionales como emotivos, como Van Gogh, en una mercancía, entonces intentando oponerse al arte empezaron con el performance, y luego dejaron el performance, todavía se hace pero ya es menos común por dos cosas, uno porque los museos se hicieron de estrategias para seguir vendiendo performances, entonces ahora te cobran la entrada por ver un performance, te cobran el acceso a grabación, etcétera. La otra es que un poco especialista, Butler sí partió todo y entonces las feministas, incluyendo a Judy Chicago con su *Dinner Party*, dijo: ‘híjole, reduje a grandes mujeres a su vagina’ fue terriblemente esencialista y al final no era lo que queríamos, claro en ese momento se trataba de ser mujer y abrirse espacio en el mundo del arte. Pero sí las feministas buscan estrategias para escapar de la lógica del mercado y por eso cada vez parece más efímero el arte, porque cada vez que llegan con algo nuevo el mercado ya se las apañó para venderte un Banksy, así tengan que derrumbarte la pared, entonces sí, es un gato y un ratón.

PARTICIPANTE A: pero Banksy es como de lo peor que le ocurrió al arte contestatario, es súper vendido, me cae, tan, tan mal. Como que siento que es una simulación todo él.

NATALIA: pues, está el documental de *Saving Banksy* de cómo los grafiteros están dañando los Banksy para que no se pueda vender en las casas de subastas, pero entonces el grito de cómo te atreves a dañar un Banksy. Entonces sí va por ahí el tema del arte feminista y del *artivismo* feminista. De mí parte sería todo, no sé si alguien quiera decir otra cosa para los conversatorios. ¿No? Muchísimas gracias por haber formado parte de mis conversatorios, su participación será fundamental.

Interviews and Online Conversation Sessions Translated

Interview with Lorena Wolffer

Natalia Stengel 1: This project partially resulted from frustration, little after participating in the workshop you gave in Querétaro, I was with CONAVIM in the Gender Alert of Campeche. And I ended up being super disillusioned with the process, of how alerts worked; so, I turned to art and, now that I have started researching, I went on to study *artivism*. Hence, for my first question, in this context of so much violence, how do you select a manifestation of violence to work with? How do you make this selection?

Lorena Wolffer: How do you focus a play on certain conditions that have to do with violence? Look; first, I don't like the term *artivism*, and I do not use it because it assumes that projects that have a very different foundation and scope have the same effect, so there is a thing like to equate both, the strategies, and the repercussions of these projects, so it is kind of a weird thing, right? I think we talked about it a little, or I imagine, or I want to think that I did in the workshop in Querétaro. My link with art, I always say is there, but it is not the essential thing, nor am I interested in it being. From there, it is like...it is hard for me even to name it art, furthermore, to call it *artivism*. So, I use the term participatory cultural interventions. And cultural only because I am not interested in referring to art, but to culture, not to the meaning of art and culture, but the culture that we live in, the daily background.

But hey there is no selection process where I say, 'oh, now I'm going to do such a thing..'. So, this is not like a brainy, critical, analytical, cold process, where I think, 'sure, what I have to do is this'. But each project goes as if we were messing with the previous one and they are in general the result of everything that is happening, or that is happening to me, either one, and that concerns me and that one leads to the others.

Evidencias, which is what I understand you're interested in, came up because I have gotten closer to the law enforcement systems over the years. One of the many things I understood and acknowledged was that there is never enough evidence; well, the justice system and access to justice are null and void. But the issue of how to prove violence is very complicated. Hence, it came out a little bit from there. But it also came out in absolute defence of the first singular person and the subjective first-person experience. It is not the same as rape, like: 'I was raped in this way... and this happened to me... and it had this series of consequences' and that perhaps, or not, are comparable to yours or those of another girl next door.

So that, like they're not topics that... It is not like a cold selection, but they're like part of a very long conversation that you are having, that is changing. Maybe like modulating specific issues to pass on to others and others. And, I say, for me, living in Mexico and talking about violence against women is not a choice but a reality.

I started working many years ago doing performance, and performance led me almost immediately to violence. And working with a body led me almost immediately to violence, so that. There was never a choice, it was always like my reality determined it.

Natalia Stengel: Ok, yes, something similar has happened to me with the analysis. Because right now, you say that I am focusing on *Evidencias* and, yes, for a methodological issue, but I also interviewed Cerrucha a little over a year ago, and I ended up with *Estado de emergencia* (2018), and I have been exploring both works.

Lorena Wolffer: But for example, *Estado de emergencia* answers your question very clearly. A state of emergency is a response to the State. It is literally the State; it is a response to that, for me, is unsustainable for many. Isn't it?

Natalia Stengel: Yes. And, in that sense, also thinking about *Estado de emergencia* and *Evidencias*, right now that we started, I thought, ok, *Evidencias* is over. Yet, today that women are confined in their homes; it seems like what I saw the rebirth of *Evidencias*. Don't you get tired of things not changing over and over again?

Lorena Wolffer: It is exhausting and frustrating, and it also produces like a lot of wounds and a lot of anger. I think it is also essential to talk about the accumulated anger. And do not keep this image of always having benevolent thoughts. Because, in addition, since the first feminicides of Juárez occurred, in late '92 and early '93, it has been almost 30 years; there are thirty years of struggle in which many things have been achieved, but the reality is that the violence has only been growing. So, that is the consequence of the thirty-year work; it is

continuously and incomprehensibly increasing because it is brutal. Then it does tire me, but above all, it worries me deeply.

I am also concerned about the things we have been doing. I mean, I do not know, for example, the change in legislation. The existence of the: Law for Women to Access a Life Free of Violence Law, and its local versions, is good in Mexico City and in general, it is a fabulous law, that is to say in terms, for example, of legislation, we have exemplary legislation, just comparing it to that of England. I did a project a few years ago there, and I discovered that in England, they keep talking about domestic violence, reducing it to a domestic debate without establishing femicide as a crime but as a cause of homicide. Having access to the law that sets types and modalities of violence was a monumental achievement. For me it is a huge achievement because it distinguishes the types of violence; physical, psychological, sexual, etc., and the place where violence occurs, right? Violence at work, at home, at institutions, etc. And that exemplifies that we have made a lot of progress, but the reality is that access to justice is still practically nil, therefore it is terrible. Furthermore, that lack of access to justice or the impossibility is precisely what has caused this to continue increasing. That is because there is permission and an agreement where killing women is feasible and acceptable.

Natalia Stengel: Yes, I do not know how much you agree. I have just read Marcela Lagarde and Rita Laura Segato. And I found it interesting that somehow what Rita Segato says is that it is not even the murder of a person; femicide in the head of a femicidal is just damaging his property as women belong to men. In reality, it is the elimination of male property.

Lorena Wolffer: Yes, there are several parts, or there are texts by Rita Laura with which I defer. However, I do agree with that. I think so. There is a notion of belonging that is undeniable.

Natalia Stengel: Ok. When you exposed *Evidencias*, there was some reaction, besides that in Querétaro of not getting any objects, —which would had surprised me if there had been any recollection of objects in Querétaro—, but any other reaction that you remember as a characteristic when installing *Evidencias*? Good or bad?

Lorena Wolffer: I mean, there were a lot of reactions. For example, the first time was at the MUAC, in Mexico City, and there also was this approach, as there was also in Tijuana at SEJUT, about not only arriving with your object, but you placed and curated it. Many of the people who donating objects, did not necessarily have their written testimony, right? Then many came and dictated their testimonies to us while we were installing the exhibition. So, a lot of things were happening in this process. I mean, there was, for example, a woman who came and was wandering for a while, which is something that happens a lot in my projects. There are always women or participants who are there quite a time before deciding to enter or not; by the end, there are some that do and others that do not. There was a woman who spent hours staring, observing who and what they donated. It was a sort of process for her. Eventually she came and we explained to her: 'hey, you can put it in the display case wherever you want'. She came to the display case and talked to another of the participants and then they stood there talking for a while. The next day, she came back, and the next day bringing different objects. Then you see that it worked for her. She found a sort of reparation to such degree that she came back two more times, right?

I do not know. I think... There was a girl who donated crockery and her story was that one day, at her house, a friend of her roommate wanted to sleep with her and when she rejected him; the next day she woke up and at her bedroom's door she found bowl with that guy's urine. So, she was donating all the crockery. Years later, she wrote to me and told me that she wanted the crockery back, that she felt that she had already gone through the process and getting the crockery back was part of it. She asked me if I did not mind giving it back. I told her that of course not, and I have returned it already. It is the only occasion someone asked for an object back. But let's say that in general, what always happened, during the recollection of the objects displayed, were moments of catharsis and recognition of those who were there. It was always challenging.

In fact, we had put a reception period at the museum before and after the assembly, then we had the option of going during the installation and, even so, when we arrived and found each other, there were like forty new objects. I was working with my students at that time, they helped me taking out each object and reading the testimonies. It was an arduous process. There were two experiences, for some it only was starring and reading the testimonies and then, for those who donated their objects. Yes, it was a very complicated thing to do, but at the same time, it became a space of healing. You brought your object, recognised others, and there could be like a sense of relief when letting go everything linked to the object, hence, it was also a restoration act. So, I mean, in that sense, there are many stories of women who came in crying or, that, when sharing their story told they fell apart. But suddenly, they were already getting 'rebuilt'. There are a lot of anecdotes like that. Also, suddenly, some others were harsh, like those give relatives or survivors of femicide. For example, in Guadalajara, there was the sister of a girl who was murdered by her partner, and she took some pills that were significant according to the context; the guy first

poisoned her dogs and then he killed her. She took the pills like the ones used to poison the dogs. And yes, there are a lot of stories. I mean, each of them and each woman. But those were the ones that came into my mind. When they brought the objects... A girl had some coins because her partner beat her every time she made some noise, and once, she made noise when dropping the coins. In summary, each story always brought a lot of pain. Like, you are at times exempt, and you see and have an emotion reaction to each object. Nevertheless, it was different for each one of the people who donated an object, from the survivors of the violence to the relatives of victims of feminicide, all the pain they felt, and all frustration at the justice systems and everything we already know. So, they are very loaded spaces.

Natalia Stengel: Ok, and would you say that the work is sort of focused on the women who donated the objects or the viewer who came to see the objects?

Lorena Wolffer 6: No, for me, the core part of *Evidencias*, and in general of the interventions I coordinate, are always focused on the participants. What remains is as it is, as the vestige, the document, the record of that exchange. But the core part has to do with that, with putting the broken record together. I do not know, when I think about the things that they brought and the exercise of taking it to a museum and putting it there...it is about them and much less about the audience that only observes it, perhaps as a part of justice, it's not that it is less critical, but it does occupy a different place. It is secondary.

Natalia Stengel: Ok. In Querétaro, on the day of the inauguration, you did an open forum. In all the places where you opened it, did you do that kind of forum?

Lorena Wolffer: Mmm, that presentation in Querétaro...*Evidencias* was part of this forum, a gather of museums. So, I think that forum had more to do with the event than with the dynamic of the exhibition. With *Evidencias*, typically, nothing happened during the inauguration. And well, about Querétaro, talking about different formats and experiences, in Querétaro, and when I did the following two versions in the big format, because I also did some small ones in public spaces, but at SEJUC in Tijuana and at the Raúl Anguiano Museum in Guadalajara, what I did was to collaborate with feminist collectives to collect the objects. That is, thinking about the experience in Querétaro and the risk that represented for many entering a place and exposing themselves when revealing that they were victims of violence...I worked with collectives that helped me gather objects, so they had the alternative of taking the object to the place on behalf of a woman. The public collection of objects remained, but also the option donating them through collectives, in a short and private way without nobody seeing you. You could do it without exposing yourself. To be honest, that led to multiple experiences because then they were no longer alone with me, but with many; all those who were receiving and collecting items at that time. In addition, we collected many more items. In other words, with both dynamics we gather a lot of objects. However, it ended up being multiplied exponentially, and I started making categories of the pieces of evidence, like families, the family of shoes, the family of knives, etc.

Natalia Stengel: Ok, yes, I kind of detected that pattern, that familiarity of objects. In this idea of multiplication of experiences, would you say that the work produces sorority?

Lorena Wolffer: Yes, I think so, of course. I think there is, like what I said before, this mutual recognition: I validate your experience and you validate mine. That moment when you find someone in a similar circumstance; and I am bringing an object and someone else is bringing a similar one. There is a process where whatever credibility you have had before, ceases to exist. There is an exchange in recognition of experiences. On the one hand, between those who donated the objects and then, with the collective ones and with those who ended up coordinating with me the collection of the objects, of course.

Because, besides, you are always acting like a retaining wall. I would not think, as it has been done in other projects, mine and other people, it is necessary to have therapists to accompany. Although in the MUAC, yes, now that I remember there was a workshop of a girl who worked with victims of sexual violence, with survivors of sexual violence, but, eh (brief pause) being there at that moment transforms you into that, a companion. While someone is sharing their testimony you blend immediately with the experience of the other and you accompany and contain it. I wouldn't think my role is to be like the doctor because I'm not a therapist, but there is like a... (pause) a generation of unions or links while the retelling of stories that so strong.

Natalia Stengel: And also, a little bit, with this feminist awakening, or I don't know how to call it, where there are now a lot of women calling themselves feminists, I've seen the adverse reaction, especially from men, although I've also seen women, with this idea that they complain about everything, that things are not so

bad, and that they are exaggerating them, and that kind of attitude. At any point in *Evidencias* did you have a similar attitude of questioning the denunciation?

Lorena Wolffer: Well, when I presented *Evidencias* for the first time, at the MUAC, which I don't remember when it was, I think it was 2010, producing these kinds of projects was politically incorrect. So out there, the acceptance of feminists was something that simply did not happen, it was not possible to see at all that it was going to happen. It was not at all (brief pause). There was not this new situation where you openly talk about feminisms, and everyone smiles, and we are all supposed to agree. That didn't exist at all. On the contrary, it was, I mean, for example, I was accused of, like 'why are you still talking about that?' Or as if violence was something that only affected some people. And I would say every time, I would say, 'but this is what happens to us, and it happens every day,' but it didn't seem to have an echo. So, from the outset, yes, there was like that rejection, and it was not that they did not like me or my job, there can be people very critical of what I do, and it is okay. But it was a criticism towards creating feminist art. Something that I have talked about a lot with others. That happened to Mónica Mayer or too many other colleagues. Am I right?

So, in that sense, from the beginning, it was transgressive to make *Evidencias*. It was like going against the current cultural institutional mandates and also social mandates. It was pretty complicated. For example, the new situation, at least in appearance, is more inclusive. It became odd, and it still surprises me. And in that sense, all this that you mentioned now was accompanied by that: 'what are you complaining about? what are they talking about?' I did not know, for example, the whole conversation inside Sicilia's movement, about whether or not violence against women was being talked as a phenomenon different to the widespread violence and there was a refusal from Sicilia and his group to do so, it was like: 'What are you talking about? There are more serious things'. So, what happened at that time, and that still happens, was that there was this belief of widespread violence much more serious than violence against women. At that time, we did not talk about violence against women, we talked about it in the background, when it was not recognised as something different, with a series, well linked to a series of phenomena other than generalised violence, as a consequence of the war on drugs.

Natalia Stengel: yes, ok. Aren't you a little afraid that this feminist acceptance will go out of fashion, and then all this will remain pending?

Lorena Wolffer: Well, look now, with the time of the pandemic, we have no idea what is going to happen, because right now, that enormous force and like feminist avalanche, little by little, seems to have calmed down and we do not know what is going to happen. So, for now, it doesn't exist anymore; literally, it is not even that the day after tomorrow it ceases to exist. That is, with a pandemic in between, it no longer exists and as I said at the beginning, for me, for some of the colleagues with whom I work, the problem is not to think of a single emergency, but of the multiplicity of emergencies that are one over the other. Now we are not only talking about violence against women, which is the same as always, but that is also to say, anything else ... I will go back a little bit. In this furore, and in this, who knows what the word is, in this particular moment of Mexican feminism, for me there was always a dislocation that is irreconcilable, there was, on the one hand, the narrative of 2019 the year of feminisms and women and ta, ta, ta and, later, in reality, the numbers continue to increase and those two ideas coexisted happily without one affecting the other. And from there, it was already madness because clearly, 2019 could not be the feminist year if they kept killing us, if they kept killing us as always and more and more, more and more and more. Then I would also be very critical of the scope of this feminist wave because maybe what they lacked was time for it to start having effects in real life, but the truth is that I did not have them accounted for.

The day before yesterday, for example, I remembered that along with these statements of 2019, feminisms and such ..., the number of schools and faculties at UNAM that went on strike for violence against women came up. Just because it was unsustainable for the girls who had been unemployed for five months the strike ended during the contingency. So, I would tell you, my fear it is not just that it will or will not happen, the fear is that everything that must happen has not happened either. It has happened in terms of enunciation and that, perhaps as articulation, but not in reality or it has not affected reality enough.

Natalia Stengel: Yes, okay. These are all my questions. I do not know if you want to say anything else.

Lorena Wolffer: Mmmh. Well, the truth is that I had not thought at all about *Evidencias* during the lockdown. So, it is good to have this conversation because, of course, let's get it back. I mean, one of the things we have been talking about, or well, one of my concerns, is the one I just told you, the one of the dislocations between narrative and reality or narratives and reality. However, my other topic of obsession, lately has to do with what strategies needed to challenge violence against women. Because the scope of what we have done has been changing and that, while ten years ago it was essential to tell our stories in the first person, today it is no longer effective. I did not go to the Zapatista meeting in December, but what many friends told me is that, like there were

two days when women told their stories and all of them, some, from the first or second generation of feminism, maybe not all of them, but a lot of them isolated themselves. You start singing a song in your head; you start talking to someone because it's unsustainable; we no longer can listen to the stories of violence because that has also been normalised. That was also part of the strategies of *Evidencias* when working with testimonies.

So, the testimonies do not have the political power that they did at another time because there have already been so many narratives of violence that we have heard of, that like so many other things, that it has been normalised. So now, what to do in the face of this thing that is happening. The conclusion of this conversation that some feminists had yesterday was like, what do we do in the face of the issue and all the cases of violence in Mexico? The conclusion phrase was, we did not leave, after the 8M and the 9M, we did not leave, and here we are. And, the question I would ask, in recognition of how strategies must necessarily change because it's been a few years, almost 30 years since we started fighting head-on to eradicate violence against women, now the question is: How do you transform this scenario into a reality of global confinement? What can we do or what are we going to do, each one, from their home, from their space, for those who can not stay at home, because well, also in Mexico, let's say that it is a country with so many inequalities that there are many people who do not have the slightest privilege of staying at home, but how is that going to change? How is this reality going to change what is now so difficult for women to live liveable lives?

So, it is a moment of questioning.

Natalia Stengel: Yes, okay. I don't know if I want to think about how it's going to change, but...

Lorena Wolffer: You have to... Also, I do have, like, I do not know if you listened to Naomi Klein and Angela Davis' lecture, and if not, it is available online. It's called *Surviving-Rising Minorities*. So, I do believe in what Naomi Klein says about the enormous potential of these moments of crisis as moments of possible transformation. This idea that, what was impossible yesterday, today turns out to be possible and although these moments, they can be part of the waters for horror, that is if you need to rescue your business or transnational company and blah, blah, blah. It is also the time to transform many things, and perhaps this is the time. Yesterday we were also talking about okay, all that has not existed in Mexico City, it is here now because the government declared the Gender Alert and then, nothing happened, absolutely nothing has happened. I mean, it is an empty statement. So, why don't we ask right now, at this time of lockdown, why don't we start doing those things that we did not even think could be done before? Why don't we ask what work needs to be done to get a specialised police force? Why can't we women who only serve women, with a gender perspective? Why not put that on the table right now? So, I do think, I am sure, that our responsibility is to imagine other ways and try to make them happen.

Natalia Stengel: Perfect, yes, okay. Thank you so much.

Lorena Wolffer: It was nothing.

Interview with Cerrucha

CIUDAD DE MÉXICO, 05 DE ENERO 2019.

Natalia Stengel: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. As I mentioned via email, I am doing an MPhil in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies at King's College London. I am working with your work, *In/Visible*, to measure the impact that feminist art can have on reducing gender-based violence.

Cerrucha: Yes, well, *In/Visible* was one of my first projects. The most recent was *Azúcar Rabiosa*, which is a project commissioned by Lorena Wolffer, for a larger project called *Estado de Emergencia*; the Centro de Cultura Digital and the CENART appointed her, Jennifer Tyburczy and María Laura Rosa to do a series of conversatories concerning femniicides and transfemniicides. They said yes, but under some conditions: we are going to take it to the public space, and we are taking it to the spaces related to this issue. Then they selected four points. The project is called: *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* in Mexico City. One was in the Superior Court of Justice, another was in the Attorney General's Office, another was where Alessa Flores was murdered, and another where Lesvy was murdered at CU. Then they conferred with the public space; they created a 'living room' in the public space to have a conversation, and at the same time, they commissioned a collective or an artist to carry out an action. I was in charge of the Attorney's General Office, so I did *Azúcar Rabiosa*, for which I opened a phone line to which anyone could speak, leave a message as if you were talking to the PGJ regarding its performance in towards femicides and transfeminiicides, and how they felt about it. With those testimonies, I did a salsa song, and we went to dance at the PGJ on the day of the intervention with that salsa song, on November 14th. I really like that project because I'm trying to start changing how we talk about violence... if you want, I can show it to you. The song lasts twenty minutes, I'm not going to show it to you in full, but for you to get a glimpse of it. It is a project that I'm going to continue experimenting in terms of dancing, salsa and protest.

Natalia: Do you compose the music?

Cerrucha: No, the music is on the soundtrack so that you can listen to it. (The recording of the salsa is heard in the background).

Natalia: Are they dancers?

Cerrucha: They are participants in general.

Natalia: What was the PGJ's reaction?

Cerrucha: They took pictures of the people who were there.

Natalia: That is terrible.

Cerrucha: I mean, you see, here is the movement. Is... You don't see it, but hey, it is in front of the PGJ, we are here, and across the sidewalk, there was a tent, where a conversation was held, moderated by Julia Antivilo.

Natalia: Did the PGJ know they were going to go?

Cerrucha: Yes, but they did not know much. That is, as they did ask for permission to be there in front for a project, and also because Lorena is well known, so they were not going to mess with her, but it is not that they knew that we were going to insult to them, they did not think we were going to be dancing.

Natalia: Yes, my experience with the PGJ is not very good either.

Cerrucha: No, no, nobody's.

Natalia: We arrived with a letter from a deputy, and it was of no use for us to get an interview.

Cerrucha: No, forget it, an interview... (showing another one of her artworks) This one is still there right now, which are photomurals. This is "Deconstructing Us", and it is literally about how we construct and deconstruct gender. So, I have been doing interviews for two years with people who are already feminists or fighting for women's rights, whether they call themselves feminists or not. So, I wanted to see what tools they've been generating to rebuild and deconstruct, which is what we have been doing. Then I took photographs of the people I was interviewing and an audio testimony. So, I separated them by themes: the body, feminism (what are

feminisms) ... I also tried to make the information very digestible for people not related to feminism. So, it is a collage from the imaginary of protests and everything related to the Mexican feminisms that I have taken. So, this is one of the photomurals and here is a QR that you can scan and listen to this audio. Then this one is right now in the street, downtown. If you leave the subway station "Salto del Agua" you will see the market of San Juan, and it has three headquarters: Arco de Belén, this one and these others together. This one is called 'Hermana, yo te creo' (Siste, I believe you) because it has the main banner. This one is called 'Estamos Unidxs' (We are together. Unidxs is the neutral form). This is a 30 meters mural in like a containment fence, which means we are united, cool, but you shall not pass. Because they all come from a different context, some were together but others were not, I was taking this photograph based on seeing it from behind, and that is in the subway station "Salto del Agua", between line 1 and 8. This other one is called 'Tenemos que abortar el sistema heteropatriarcal' (We have to abort the hetero-patriarchal system); it is at the door of the Gozadera, it is missing this small part, but it was raining a lot, and it also has heritage value, this building is a national heritage. I could not go any further since my restorer friends would cut off my hand. Are you going to be here for more days?

Natalia: We will be coming and going.

Cerrucha: Well, then this is the route. This is the subway station "Salto del Agua", which is the pink line. As you leave, you go to the left, the first street is López, and this is the market, what we see right now is the main building, inside you will see the other building. This is the Plaza de San Juan, and there is Gozadera's spot, which is the feminist hub of Mexico City. So, this project took two years of doing interviews. I went to the International Meeting of Women Who Fight in Chiapas. I don't know if you attended.

Natalia: No, the one I found out about was the one in Morelia, but there was not much available on the internet.

Cerrucha: If there is another of the Zapatistas meetings and you can attend, highly recommended. There, I was able to take many interviews, photos and so on, and at the beginning of 2018, I applied for an arts residency at the Centro de la Imagen, which was recently inaugurated. It was the first time they had a calling. The residence was called: 'Me sobra barrio' (I have neighbourhood to spare. Similar in meaning to being street smart), so you had to link the Centro de la Imagen with a quadrant of the Historic Centre. I did it at the Gozadera. So, I started doing workshops, instead of just coordinating an intervention. Like, I had all this material; I was doing more interviews, but already in the Gozadera, and then it was a workshop, in which people were interviewed, sometimes they were together, sometimes they were not, then it was more like discussion and, the second part was to create a visual discourse, like guiding them to be. There are photos of them, mostly women; there are also some men; anyway, there are photos of them, but with feminist visual imaginary, etc. Then we draw how we wanted to represent ourselves. These were like sketches, which in the end, because I already do them in Photoshop, are not that great. So, for example, this one is very literal: you have to abort the heteropatriarchal system, this is just as it is, intact as a result of a workshop. That is what they wanted and why: because it's like an older person seeing what the younger ones are doing, they're helping, they're getting up.

Natalia: Transgenerational encounter.

Cerrucha: Others, I kind of decided what I put on it. And there, I started to put text from some of the interviews so that they would be more relevant for them. So, they were put there because it is a public space, I am very interested in reaching that audience because it is precisely that audience, the one I am aiming to reach with this project. In fact, here, where we wheatpasted the mural, I went a week before to see the texture of the wall again, and I had to leave in a rush because I parked in a forbidden area. I took the car and left. Then, I thought: the Police will take my car, I must leave as soon as possible. Then I got in the car, and in front of me, a guy was beating a woman, literally like that, brutal. The girl stopped at the car, leaving blood everywhere. And I thought: what should I do? Do I get off? Will this guy have a gun? Like, he started walking over there, I got out of the car, I called the police. For me, it is very latent. It is mind blowing that this is normal. I mean, people did come, but only because I quickly started giving instructions: you come here, and you go there, and you do not leave us, and I spoke to the police.

The other guy ran away, and I said: 'Damn!' If this guy comes back, hell no! Fortunately, the cops arrived very quickly because this is a 'bad' area. By day, it is not that bad, but at night it gets worse. That is Plaza de San Juan, sometimes there are felonies and other times you will get mugged. Anyway, they arrived very quickly. They grabbed him because he was not that far. Then I realised: he saw my car's tag number, he saw me, they are arresting him, but they are not putting him in, they are only going to take him for a while, and they will release him, and this girl I do not know does not seem very strong. I got scared of the guy's probable retaliation.

Natalia: Also, if you do not denounce, nothing happens, right? You must make an official report.

Cerrucha: Sure, then they left, but I could not accompany her anymore. So, I do not know if she filed the complaint or not. And you just say to yourself: ‘terrible!’ Same, when we wheatpasted the mural—it was a two-day job— Suddenly, in the parking lot, two guys arrived silently, the caretaker also super discreet; everything seemed chill, then a third guy came, took off his shirt and yells: ‘oh, stop me *carnal*’. Another one arrived, and they start to fight, out of nowhere like this: tatatatata (imitating the sound of the blows). I had an assistant at the time and both of us were like, stop, please. They finished and left.

Natalia: How about the Fight Club?

Cerrucha: Yes, dude. Calm. Super normalised violence. The caretaker’s daughter, who must be in her twenties, was very calm. I said to her, ‘What is up with that?’ and she replied: ‘they must have fought for something, but everything is fine, and they are already happy’. So, I kept working. I have a lot of material and a lot to do. When I finally ‘activated’ the mural, I arrived with a hooter, and I made a tour of the photomurals while transmitting the audio about feminisms, which I also have to re-edit, (Lorena’s speech can be heard in the background)

Natalia: Is your goal to work in Mexico City mainly, or do you intend to leave?

Cerrucha: No, I intend to leave, but after seven years of being in Canada, and although I have been here for four years, two were about a tug-of-war with my ex and stuff, so it’s like two years of being here and starting to move elsewhere.

Natalia: Would you work with the same images? Would you generate new ones for other places? Would it be for other projects?

Cerrucha: Right now, I will move these, I am going to keep generating. I have two years of two-hour interviews, and over fifty interviews.

Natalia: As part of my doctorate, I had to teach about your work, *In/Visible*. I had difficulty explaining Mandilón (a man dominated by her wife or her couple, a pussy whipped). They understood him as a coward, which only makes the connotation of effeminate worse because if he is a man with female attributions, to say coward is to say that women are cowards. And, from there, I thought about other questions. Specifically, about that one. The phrase plus the fact that looks a little feminine until you see his man’s face. Is that intentional? The ambiguity of his back?

Cerrucha: Yes. Because it is the concept of feminizing something, that is, a body, you’re feminizing it with the word. Also, from the first glimpse, you see that person has very feminine attributes stereotypically. So, yes, it is intentional, but that is how the person is. That is how he is. Those images are not modified almost at all, that is when I was starting with that project, I tried with the first instance to put it with makeup: the tattoos, or do it like these scratch-smells, but it did not work. So, they are not modified further than the tattoo itself.

Natalia: I have a question about why with ‘Todos los hombres son iguales’ (all men are equal) and ‘Mi esposo sí me deja trabajar’ (my husband does let me work) you cannot see their heads?

Cerrucha: Well, because of this matter that it can be anyone. I mean, ‘Todos los hombres son iguales’, it is very intentional to remove his face, like every man could be him. I was also interested in having phrases that were sexist everywhere. Even if it was very subtle, it is something that is used a lot here. The ‘Mandilón’, I’ve translated it as pussy whipped, it is used in a similar way.

Natalia: But it would be the same for ‘Machismo’ which was translated as chauvinism, which is not the same, because we have chauvinism in Spanish. That part was hard for them to understand.

Cerrucha: In fact, I started that project in 2010. Since 2009 I was working it at the university in Canada, nobody understood anything, that is, everyone said to me: ‘What is that? I don’t understand anything. I cannot relate’. And I was like: ‘I know, you’re not the audience’. But neither my classmates nor the teachers understood, they are super conceptual in that school, so that part was difficult there. Hence, I came, I put it here, and of course, it makes all the sense that I’m here, in fact, I think, I came back for different reasons, but a fundamental reason is that here I feel helpful, what I am doing is useful in Latin America, from my perspective. I am also interested in

being in many different places. I do not want to limit myself to being in Mexico or Mexico City. But it is necessary for specific contexts.

Natalia: Right around there, I was going to ask you if a similar project would do something like what JR does: where people send his photo, and he prints them and is filling the world with images.

Cerrucha: I love what he does. That is why I wanted to do photo mural for a long time, and this is the first time I can make large photo murals, but for that, you need an infrastructure and a good amount of money, and a patron, and is very clear to me, this guy has, because with no brands ... I do not know where he gets the money. He does not say anything about that. He has photos of Angelina Jolie and all her friends. I do not mean he was born in that context, but he already moves in that context, and he can do a lot more. So yes, I would love to do many things. I think the economic side here in Mexico is very limiting, but I feel that also, to me, what has happened to me with the FONCA (the art scholarship) is that I apply with a project, and they say: 'this part is too ambitious'. 'Deconstruyéndonos' (Deconstructing us) has had many twists, it keeps its essence of making feminisms more digestible, bringing different audiences, represent them in the public space, but I did propose to do it in different areas of the global south, for FONCA, but they would not give it to me. And in other projects, the feedback they have given me is: 'it is too ambitious'.

Natalia: Won't the gender discrimination factor also be there?

Cerrucha: Not necessarily, I do not know, because I have not been on that jury. But for another PECDA (state's art scholarship) project they did tell me, someone who was on the jury told me: 'I saw your project and not because I know you, but because it was a perfect project, I advocated for it, but as feedback, I tell you that they said, it was too ambitious'. So, I do not think it was gender but more about that 'ambition' stuff. So, what do you want me to do? I will tell you that I will take a picture in a frame to see if you believe me.

Natalia: Do you have any way to measure the impact of the work you are doing? Or do you keep track of that?

Cerrucha: Not right now. Maybe... I will tell you about another project that I am doing that goes in that direction. I would love to, but since I am a single person and I am trying to move heaven and earth by myself to be able to: pay bills, eat and then I am always short of cash and distressed, and that does not let you create, but the only way I have found so far, is to make it as personal as possible. I started doing workshops before the projects, so that is why, for example, there is a workshop, which I did not make once, but several times, to several people, that I keep in touch with: at least some, I am not going to force things either obviously. I realise: what is my scope?, which is very subjective, but the fact that a person came during the workshops, a participant to say: 'how cool, this is the first time that I can feel part of a project that I know is for me because I like to dress as a woman, I am a man, and I do not see it from a political perspective, I just like it, and it is the only space where I have felt I could belong'. I know something is working. The testimonies of the participants when we are finishing a workshop: 'Ah, I liked it' or 'I have addressed gender issues, but I had never approached it in an artistic way'. This one from the Gozadera, in that mural, was one of the feedbacks: 'I had never been able to express this in this particular way, and that also connects me with others around here, that is, we did it together'. One of the participants, in the last presentation at Centro de la Imagen, because we did several, we made a conversation, then I kind of receive his testimony, and I know that I am doing something right, that it has been a good experience, that has left him something, that this same person on New Year has sent me a message: 'how cool was meeting you'. I know that is already cool, so that is how I measure the impact of my job. And still being in contact, like I always try to be careful enough to establish communication: I do not want to use the community, how to do it while still intervening in specific neighbourhoods, doing something there, what is my role, always thinking about how I am perceived there; I am always apprehensive about that, and I realize that most artists are not, so I sort of know I am there. I talk and they tell me it is cool. It is difficult too, right now, what I promised with "Deconstruyéndonos" is: you are giving me your time, you are letting me take your picture... as in all projects, nobody will provide you with anything in return, I tell them: I promise to give you the photos so that you as a participant can use them as you please, as long as it is not 'profit-making'. I will give them in high resolution, and they can distribute them wherever they want. Like starting to see a 'creative common' in specific ways, but also not being as: I am going to give all my work. I rather start doing an exchange and that is the way to measure it, but in a very long-term, because I know that, that person has a relationship with the community. Or when they come back from other projects. But it is something I am really interested in. I started doing the workshops because my work is going to have an impact. Still, since I cannot measure it, I will not go direct to the street, I have the workshops to gain a notion of how impactful they might be, then I go to the streets. Through the workshops, at least I know that I touched five people, but I do touch them, and I do know, and that is something much more tangible.

I organised a festival of murals in Holbox, and the idea was that, well, the one they sold me at least, was to participate with this bunch of people; do something outrageous at Holbox, of all the environmental impact that the different hotel chains will produce, or are producing, by invading Holbox. To make a little protest. Then, of course, I signed up. However, it was not nearly as good as they told me, and that is bullshit. In the end, the project was: go and do a makeover on Holbox so that more tourism can come, and we put more sidewalks and stuff, because in the end, that is what those people wanted. But yes, you always notice the intention, I say since you have experience.

Natalia: So, related to this, do you think about a particular social class with your work? Or have you seen that there are different reactions to your work depending on social class?

Cerrucha: I think there are different reactions, depending on the people's socioeconomic strata, the cultural background, but I definitely aim to reach a low or medium-low socioeconomic level. I'm also learning, with this audio about feminisms, I wonder: who can understand it? Let's be honest. Then there is the heteropatriarchy, but we must go and break down the issue and raise awareness. Hence, it ends up being a project inside a project. It is like a campaign. So, what do I do? Am I doing an artistic campaign? What am I doing? In ultimately terms, yes. I would go out there, I think it has more utility, but I am thinking, how to reach certain audiences. On the other hand, you cannot say: I must simplify a topic so much, because you should not infantilise people either; that is, people have their baggage and can perfectly understand what they are being told. Mostly, the artwork depends on where and how you place it; furthermore, how you approach to the artwork is also influential. *In/Visible* was like you are on the subway, or on the street, that is already for everyone; I mean, clearly if you go to Polanco (an upper-class neighbourhood in Mexico City), then it is not for everyone; it is clearly the elitist side. Hence, where I place it is more accessible, but it was not that socio-economically framed. Finally, if you are someone interested in visiting a gallery, because you are not going to dedicate yourself to something that specific, it will be easier for you to find the material (*In/Visible*) familiar. Everyone knows what to do with a newspaper; the newspaper is taken, read, leafed through. I am very interested in using this kind of means; how I use it is usually related to the social use of the material. If you can spot a billboard, then you can see photo mural. Something comes to you, something may or may not reach you. For me, after seeing a photo mural where there is a large group of women saying: women's house for dignity, means women will fight for dignity. I mean, one of them has wolf-like teeth, she is in rage. Therefore, you can appreciate, there is a movement, and something has to move you, depending on your background, clearly.

But I am interested in seeing what this project derives into... In fact, right now, with the millions of things that I must do, it is to divulge it, because the Centro de la Imagen did not make any dissemination. It sucks. So, I want to look for journalists and, with the curator, who is an expert, named: Ignacio Prat, also curator of "Me sobra barrio". I have to go there and talk to the people at the market, because there are all the butchers and the rest of the market workers, and we could sit with them and ask: does it tell you something? Does it not? Well, that is fine too. It is also like an excuse. Art becomes an object, a project, but also a reason to get together and establish dialogue, just like what the photograph did for me; 'Can I take a picture of you? No,' it does not matter, I have already approached, I have already talked to you, and I am that. Things have already become so violent that approaching people is violent because you distrust, you do not know why they are coming. It depends on how you handle the camera.

Natalia: with your work, do you not feel, in a sense, and considering that I come from the design school, where one of the problems we have is that most of our students are women, and at the same time, they are also the main object of advertising, so with your work, when you put it on the street while using newsprint, you do not feel that there is also an intention to take over this space that has traditionally reinforced stereotypes, violence?

Cerrucha: Of course, it is about reappropriating the spaces that publicity has taken, and it is also the language, the language of advertising is to speak the same language that your consumer is saying, and it is efficient; Why the heck, us activists, are we not doing it? In some regard, we are doing it, but why are we not doing it strongly? So why not do it in a very conscious way? And that's why I used tattoos, right now they are becoming fashionable, but ten years ago they were not. Since I was very stigmatised, I am stigmatising that phrase, right? It is using that: I am marking you. Who is marking you? Well, popular language, because it is something we know. It is definitely about using different media for another purpose because they are very functional. That is why I also say: let's go big. Much more in Mexico and in Mexico City, you must move heaven and earth to be seen. One of the projects of the 2R, the network of appropriations related to tattoos as well, are photographs of women with tattoos, but about things we want to see, such as: 'I go alone down the street'. We also did a performance about that at the Zócalo (the Zocalo is a very busy place in Mexico City, especially for public demonstrations), for the performance we brought speakers and megaphones. Still, the Hare Krishnas were more; they were showier because they came

in colours, and they were louder. You must compete with a lot of things that are happening at the same time, so you have to do a monumental thing so that people see that is urgent, to make them turn and watch; being repetitive, for example. In few words you have to look for specific strategies for people to notice it, because otherwise it goes unnoticed very easily. After all, there are so many stimuli that ...

Natalia: yes, I instead thought: what if all women were interested, would they turn and see this side? That we could all focus on what is essential for the people and to understand all this female subalternity?

Cerrucha: I would love to, but I think that not all women look for that, and I am telling you because, in the mural, this one that is on the subway, which is another thing that I love, unlike a gallery, people go and talk to you. I asked one lady at the subway: "What do you think?". She responded: "Well, terrible, right? I think it is fatal, these women there and with their skirts, I am very good at home, and I like it, and I do not like people telling me otherwise." That is very messy, that way of thinking is deeply intrinsic. I mean, it is clear to me that we have to do more in that regard.

Natalia: I had a reading of the image of the girl, that you may tell me is out of proportion, but being the only one out of four that is looking at the spectator, as two things; one, that she is challenging the idea that it is not a girl's game, and two, being that she is the only one staring, suggests that younger people would not necessarily have to grow up with these stereotypes. Does it match?

Cerrucha: Yes, it does. The same happens with one of image from the second series, which is a kid being tattooed, originally part of the first series. I took that one simultaneously, but I could no longer include it because of the usual lack of budget as I printed eight thousand pieces and putting one more was too much. But yes, of course, it is the most literal thing, and it does not bother me that it is like that; how adults tattoo the new generations. It is also why we must fight.

Natalia: Well, if we think that six-year-olds do not know the difference between anger and sadness because crying is forbidden, it must be literal. The part of the work of new masculinities has substantial gaps.

Cerrucha: Very substantial, on both sides, uneven, but for both sides, it is messed up. The necessity of being the provider, having to get married and so on. I see it with my cousin, and suddenly I say: "crap". How he suffered from breaking up with his ex-girlfriend, and they were going to get married. I mean, with all their privileges and everything, but they are also having a bad time dealing with it.

Natalia: I think that the inclusion of men in your work and others that I have been seeing is fascinating. Because feminist art started in the '60s, with all these angry women, I mean, thanks to them, there is access to universities and rights, but they did not include men. Men were this great enemy. I understand where the idea comes from, but the lack of work with them prevented the effects.

Cerrucha: yes, the fact that it has happened in such a disproportionate way, the conversation is very advanced when it comes to feminists and, with men is like that it is already there. However, when you start talking to dudes, even if they want to talk about it, it is challenging, because there is like something ... because, yes, it is like 'I already saw that we discovered other issues and you are just finding out that there is something wrong'. It is like: 'take all the time you need; we are going anywhere'. But in the end, we cannot move anywhere because we need to do it as a society, not as a single part. There are many things that we must consider and explain. For example, I cannot conceive that a person of 60 years bonds (romantically) with a person of 20? Because it is an abuse of power, for me, it is obvious, and then there is the gender issue. In most cases, it is men who search for younger girls.

I have discussed it with my feminist colleagues, and we pointed out how obvious it is. Yes, we can say, well, where do you draw the line. And my friends tell me: 'you should do a workshop on feminisms for men'. And my first reaction is: do your fucking homework. Why me? Aside from being afraid to go out on the street, I have to do your fucking homework. Come on, dude! All philosophers (referring to women philosophers), studying multiple sources and philosophical currents, and men simply respond with: Oh, I do not know-how.

Natalia: Well, taking the art out of the museum and the gallery with these themes can be a way for them to get into these themes.

Cerrucha: Of course, it is with all the intention. On the other hand, it is necessary to listen to the other side. Although it costs a ton and it is frustrating, it is essential to listen to the other side when they say: 'I want to do

something about it, but I do not know where to start, give me input'. And to say yes, we also have to give them input.

Natalia: Yes, and thinking about this work you have on femicides, what is that input that should be shown to men? That is, in this type of work, the one you have on feminicides; how are men invited to become aware of the feminicidal role they could have?

Cerrucha: The work consists of talking about it. They could have talked. I phone line was opened for everyone and I told as many as I could: 'please speak to this line'. It was shared at least forty thousand times on Facebook and social media. Do you think there was a man? Not a single man spoke called because it does not concern them. And I feel that it concerns me because I feel fear every time, I leave this place and see some strangers with polarized glass and, I am afraid. Then it does affect me, but dudes are nothing more than, well, I will support them. No, jackass, no. It is like those phrases: I help you in the kitchen. No, stupid, it is not what we are looking for. They still do not understand that role, and regarding your question... it is like go, be with us, dance, they could have talked, but they did not talk, they went dancing, yes, like helping our group look bigger, ok, cool. But finally, this work itself is starting to bring out that rage in a different way, dancing is enjoyment, and it is life, so it is all about going and expressing my anger and my resentment, but also about doing it in a non-festive way because it is not partying, but still I celebrate that I am alive. That is what you take away from me, then I am going to fight back with that. What you take away from me is the enjoyment of the street, it is the community, it is life itself, the pleasure of being able to be calm. That is why I am getting more into dancing, more into things that I like, because all the feminist circles are complicated, because it is about deaths, and because we are, if you see the more extensive scope, scared. Then, we cannot talk exclusively about these things and keep feeding that terror, we have to find out other ways, and dancing may not be the right one, but we have to start somewhere. There will be other platforms in which men have no space. In others, I am very interested in their involvement, but I feel that it has not rung a bell yet. They have not realised that it concerns them enough for them to act and go to a workshop. The workshops were open to men. The only ones who attended were trans men, but no heterosexuals. For "Deconstruyéndonos", heterosexuals were banned, but not from talking. But it is easier for us to express because the feeling of resentment and violence is in full bloom. You feel it in your body all the time.

Natalia: There is no official definition of what leads a man to be the victimizer: some say it is a ritual of masculinity, others say it is related to how women took over the public space. But in the end, the perpetrator still does not have an elaborate speech, and there are not many coincidences between Ciudad Juarez and Estado de México (federal entity). Where is the perpetrator? How do men work on the issue of femicide?

Cerrucha: I think they are in diapers. You cannot tell people you are a victimizer. It is the worst thing you can say to them: you are a bloody serial killer. And moving away from that, when I say, 'that literal thing, you just said, it is sexist,' I am not telling you: 'you are a shitty male, but you are just sexist'. What that person interprets is, 'see, you told me I am bad. No, you are not bad, that action is not correct, but what that person heard was: I am bad, my actions are sexist, I do not understand why and therefore I do not want to listen to you, then communication is cut off, with something as incredibly banal. Just as we continue to feed those particles of what can create a victimizer, we can begin to deconstruct that. But they are present. If we let those comments exist, they are going to stay current. That is why I am very interested in working through the subtleties of everyday life. Those are the droplets that you cannot take away so easily. Because I can tell you: 'alas, it seems ridiculous that we have gotten into our head that we have to shave;' however, I still do it, I am against it, and I will continue to do it; when I see it in someone else's body I say, cool, perfect, it carries its weight in mine. That is precisely what "Deconstuyéndonos" says; at what point have you managed to remove certain things, and which ones are you constantly dealing with? But I think it requires work, and how much are you willing to do, and men are not willing to do it. Because they have a much more tangible benefit from it, so, of course, they are not willing to do spoil the party for their friends, to go and say, 'Hey dude, this stuff you are saying is messed up,' because it results on - Oh, do not invite him anymore. Since I must feel it on the surface, I am willing to be excluded.

Natalia: I was thinking of the phrase: 'all men are the same,' which somehow conditions them to be violent, but on the other hand, if I compete for a position against a man, he will take the vacant position. This exact phrase has given them many privileges and conditions them to remain the same.

Cerrucha: Now that you mention it, yes, I think it does condition them. The phrases that we use: 'my husband does let me work' is oppressive, it is evident, those about men benefits them and oppress them at the same time, so, they rather accept the status quo, 'we are all the same', in the end, is cool because I get a benefit. I do not benefit if my husband lets me or does not let me work. Finally, there is 'permission'. So, that is it; we are asking

them to leave their privileges behind, to recognize their privileges and that those privileges are oppressing somebody else, and that is not right. No one wants to acknowledge their privileges or say they are screwing someone else because it is not their intention either.

Natalia: No, it is no conscious takeover of this heteropatriarchal power.

Cerrucha: But who is telling us to get into these complicated things?

Natalia: Those are all my questions. I do not know if you want to say anything else.

Cerrucha: Well, right now, I am more interested in the starting point of *In/Visible*, in its beginnings, about marking the skin as you are marking society. Is it permanent? How do you start to erase it? Etc. But finally, I realized that I was re victimising. Because with this project, you are putting phrases that are fucked up, and you mark them again. That is why I started with the performance, in which I tattoo you, but I delete it if you give me an alternative. Because I love tattoos, I love the metaphor behind it, and I also love direct contact with other people, so that is why this project was called 'Taxo'. It is about getting a sexist or racist tattoo and start collaborating in rethinking the language. Let us say this: How would we say it differently and get the anger out of you because there is more to it; inclusive language, and we are not going to say 'chinga tu madre' (Mexican expression which means rape your mother, but the context may differ depending on the situation, it is used to tell someone else to stop bothering). I agree, but then, what the fuck do we say when you want to send a person to hell? You do not do it? What do you tell that person? I see myself trying to find that alternative when you have all this anger, but you cannot let it go. I am going to say something absurd, something I stand against. And at the end of the day, that is also why I'm very interested in the message, because, I mean, you know it: as you speak, you think. That is how you act, and that can go backwards, the power that language has. But then, how do you make it effective? If there is no receiver: how do you do it? And that it does not get you angry and that you do not oppress someone else. It is made for that, that is the sole purpose of an insult, to tell you that you are shit. So, how do I do it without being racist, without being classist, without being sexist? Then, I have my themes: you are shit, fuck, and I do not know what else to say.

Natalia: because the verb "chingar" (screw someone else) is super violent.

Cerrucha: Then all those expressions: 'yo no me rajo' (Mexican expression, that means I do not cowardly quit) because those who quit out of fear are women, as only they have a 'raja' (exterior of the vagina). Everything is violent from that perspective. When I came back from Montreal, or well, being in Montreal, I was more aware of those expressions, and I avoided using them, but since I am here, I understand when my friends use those expressions. I am such a 'puta' (whore), and when it is okay to say it and not to say it, right? When it is a claim, you start to see all those blurring lines that are interesting, too. Like ¡La Marcha de las putas' (Whores' demonstration): 'You are calling me a whore? Ah yes, well, I am going to show you, prick'. It is putting the issues to work and making that turn, and now there is the queer, but with C, 'cuir' (as in Spanish). It is no longer colonialist.

Natalia: Thank you very much.

Session 1. Querétaro: *Pieces of Evidence* by Lorena Wolffer, 12 October 2020

The other ones will eventually arrive.

Let me explain to you the dynamic. You have already seen the conditions to be part. All the artworks we are going to study dealt with gender violence. None of them presents violent images; however, today's has some testimonies that might be disturbing. So, in that sense, if any of you feel uncomfortable, you can leave at any moment.

My research aims at determining the rhizomatic effect that feminist activism has. This is the alternative I could propose due to the pandemic.

I will introduce the artwork, trying not to express my opinion but being aware that objectivity is impossible, and I will invite you to dialogue about the painting. Suppose any of you have any problems having the camera on (I hope nobody has problems because I need to analyse your reactions). In that case, you can use the chat to comment on anything that you think about while observing the artwork. I would only ask you to be respectful of each other. So, I will share my screen.

I will try to be as brief as possible because the important part of this is for me to listen to you.

The first artist I am working with is Lorena Wolffer. Some of you mentioned her in the forms. She is Mexicana; born in 1971, spent some time in San Francisco, but worked in Mexico. She is one of the few feminist artists working during the 1990s and called herself a feminist. In the 1990s, it seemed like the feminist struggle was not necessary anymore. She started doing performance. One of you actually mentioned one of her notable performances. 'Mientras dormíamos' was a performance in which Wolffer decided to change the way she was working. It was a performance about feminicide; it also answered the critiques done to feminist art demanding awareness about feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. So, during this performance, she drew over her body all the wounds found in the corpses of the murdered women from Juárez. While performing, she noticed that she didn't represent the victims of feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. She was a privileged white woman with a foreign surname. So, she stated: 'I stopped using my body. What I had to say was no longer the core. I started creating platforms where several voices could be heard'. She still has some performances but different; now, they are personal, and it is more like a healing therapy for her after spending so much time with victims of violence. She worked in refuges for women victims of violence.

When interviewing her for my thesis, I learned that I had a problem. While researching Mexican feminist art, I noticed that they are no longer doing art but *artivism*. Chicano/a artists coined the concept of artivism in the 1990s along with Zapatistas. The Chicano/as had a national movement; later on, they heard about the book by Gloria Anzaldúa. So, they were looking for an artistic production that validated their identity. They felt an affinity with the Zapatistas and looked for them. That is the origin of the neologism. In the beginning, Wolffer had no problem with the term *artivism*. However, as institutions began controlling *artivism*, Wolffer had issues classifying her work as *artivism*. She calls what she does as cultural projects of social intervention highlighting that what interests her is to modify the culture and society. It is also influenced by Suzanne Lacy's theory about new public art. In a book edited by Lacy, they analysed how public art escapes from the chauvinistic practices of museums and galleries.

Other authors she quotes are Judith Butler to define gender as a performative quality. Sayak Valencia, a Mexican author, was also mentioned by one of you in the forms who defined gore capitalism. And Ileana Diéguez works with the concept of 'liminality' to explain the effects of *artivism* as marginal projects, far away from the institution.

The project with which I am working is *Evidencias*. She started it in 2010 and finished it in 2016. The first time, she presented it at the MUAC. What she did was to take advantage of the prestige she had to make a public calling to all women who had suffered gender violence. She collected the objects with which they had been harmed and the testimonies about the violence they suffered. Besides, women could decide where to place their objects inside the museums. At the MUAC, it was really successful. Nevertheless, she faced some unexpected events. Like women arriving without their testimony, they dictated it at the museum transforming the intervention into something different, into a safe space where women could share their stories and find comfort. They started exchanging experiences and stories. While at the MUAC, she noticed that she needed to take out the exhibition. Hence, she organised exhibitions at the Alameda Central and the Parque España with the idea of taking art to liminal places. So, now I will read to you some of the testimonies accompanying the objects. There are some, like the hammer and the machete, that could be easily related to violence. Others narrated a more subtle story. And some women only realised they were victims of violence when sharing their stories.

READING OF A TESTIMONY.

All these objects are still together. Although once finished the exhibition they could ask for their things back. Now she could classify all the objects knives together, beer bottles, etc. She has 237...well, 236 because she gave back one of them.

After Mexico City, she moved it to other cities. She also recognises the centralisation of feminist efforts. She presented at the Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro during the First Conference on Museography. In this city, the experience was completely different. She did the same she had done in Mexico City, published an open calling, but received no objects. On the inauguration day, Wolffer placed white pieces of paper saying: 'there should be an object here. Since Querétaro was part of a conference, she had an open forum following the inauguration, and she asked about not receiving any object. I was able to participate during that experience. The women present said that, in Querétaro, because everyone knows everyone and is a small community, they were afraid of being recognised while donating an object and a testimony. Hence, considering what happened in Querétaro, Wolffer noticed she had made the women presenting their things vulnerable. After that, she collected the things through NGO's helping women victims of violence. So, she inserted her project into the psychological and legal process. It became part of their healing process.

This object is of psychological violence. TESTIMONY.

Also, trying to escape the artist strategies --since museums barely exhibited them--, feminist artists stopped wanting to be exposed at certain museums. The testimonies have no definite format. Wolffer did not intervene in any of them.

Of the 237 objects, 180 are about domestic violence, 104 are about physical violence, 82 are psychological, four are about feminicides. One hundred thirty-eight women had been harmed by their partners, while 38 mentioned some institution. This enumeration of what was presented is just for you to know what happened, although Wolffer refuses to reduce the stories of violence into numbers because each one is different. Furthermore, during her interview, she expressed being surprised by how we are living a feminist boom since 2019, we have unique laws, but there is no more justice or equality for women. So we need to articulate better what is happening to women with the legal mechanisms.

This object shows physical and psychological violence. TESTIMONY. These are the kind of extraordinary objects. By the end, it is just a bottle of saliva. But there are thousands of things, crosses, and urine (we will see that); then, there are some heart-breaking and, finally, others identified with gender violence.

There are a lot of beer bottles, and all the stories are related to alcoholism. However, the answer is relative when asking several feminists worldwide, mostly Marcela Lagarde, who defined 'feminicide' using Diana Russell and Jill Radfords theory, about the relationship between violence and alcoholism. According to them, in some cases, it is related, and in others, it is not. This is because violence against women has different causes.

TESTIMONY

several testimonies are claiming that they called the police and denounce yet, nothing happened after denouncing. They couldn't access justice.

The coins are a case related to feminicide. She told me about the object she receives in Guadalajara. The relatives of the victims donated it as she was murdered. They brought her a bunch of pills. A guy used the drugs to murder his girlfriend and her dogs. TESTIMONY.

This is the last object I will present. Of the 237 objects, one of them was returned. A girl contacted her in 2018 and asked for her crockery back. Her story is that there was a time in which her roomie invited her boyfriend over, and she didn't want him sleeping at their place or having sex with him. When she woke up, she found outside her room all her crockery with urine. However, she contacted Wolffer and explained that her process was over, and she wanted the plates back. So, Wolffer did as she is exposed to the will of the women donating objects.

This one is an example of psychological and patrimonial violence. TESTIMONY.

Also, all these stories help make the idea that the minute women exit the private sphere, they are seen as perpetrators ruining the social order. The last thing I want to show you is a video. The problem with videos is that you cannot see them correctly; however, I will share with you the link. After the video, you will have the floor.

Done. Also, if any of you have any questions and I know the answer, I will gladly respond.

PARTICIPANT 1: Well, I don't know, I feel furious while watching these kinds of exhibitions. At the same time, I think it is super cool that there are ways for us to see them. I am not surprised that she did not receive any objects in Querétaro and that women were afraid. However, what makes me angry is that you can see this exhibition and notice...well, not noticed because we all know this happens, but we live in a country that doesn't want to see what is happening...I mean, many people state that women are being murdered, but men are also being murdered. They question our protest if we damage public property. It is infuriating to see these exhibitions, but people who don't want to learn don't visit them. That is what I see. Hence, I also think it is cool she took the exhibition outside museums. So, you can go to the park and be surprised by an exhibition like this because not everyone likes museums.

Participant 2: can you hear me? I think my connection is not good.

Natalia: a bit disconnected, but we can hear and understand you.

Participant 2: great. What seems interesting to me is that the exhibition presents evidence of forms of violence that are not only physical. For example, one of the urines was shocking for me because it is about belittling women. I think it is an interesting way of making evident these kinds of contexts. And just like Participant 1 was saying, the fact that in Queretaro she couldn't get any object...it is a narrow-minded culture...well, I don't know if I can say this, but society here is more conservative with traditions rooted in Catholicism; status is important, they don't want to be seen and criticised. That is why I also like the idea of taking it to public spaces. It is a noble cause.

Participant 3: uff, I was touched by many. I mean, I was moved by several testimonies. I am here using my stress ball. However, this is common in Querétaro and Guanajuato (I am from Guanajuato, although I have lived here for 33 years). Recently I commented out loud and to my family on sexual abuse, and their reaction was to remain silent. I mean, two of my brothers and my sister told me: 'Don't say any of this to your other siblings'. That is a culture of silence; we are being structured by silence. I have been using art as well. While watching it, I kept thinking about which objects I would donate; I would bring an object created by me. I broke up with my first boyfriend after he called me 'dirty whore'. I ended things with him but what he said was really painful. I had been able to work with it, but I finally overcame that experience when I painted about it; I painted like a piece of poop from which flowers are growing. It was a dream. The painting and a lot of therapy finally helped me. This depreciation, or this symbolic violence of wanting to destroy what we do, minimise it, not listen to it or urinate it. I have a similar experience, and, in my opinion, it is one of the harshest experiences, not being seen, appreciated (starts crying). The thing is that I was insulted by a guy who was working with gender studies and new masculinities, so it was excruciating for me. Art offers the possibility of expressing it. Instead of ripping my heart, I use my stress ball, physical activities or art. I believe it is not a personal issue of the girls who contributed with evidence; neither is it a couple or family matter. I mean, on my behalf, I do identify with several stories. I love listening to my siblings telling me that I couldn't talk about sexual abuse with my other brothers; they most have prohibition inside their minds. In conclusion, I do identify with several testimonies because art is not outside of us.

Natalia: thank you very much, Participant 3. Would anyone else want to say something?

Participant 4: Yes. Me. Well, first, let me see if I can structure what I want to say. Yes, the tales and the narratives are heart-breaking because they are daily experiences; they shared a day-to-day event. And I am thinking about the narratives; I wrote some bits of them because I work with narratives. It is really interesting that these testimonies, for example, the personal telling of the couples' life, the family life. I believe that here, in all the couples' life there is a silent pact. I had a doubt. When was this exhibition in Querétaro? I didn't know, well, it is not like I should have known, but I wonder, when was this, Natalia?

Natalia: it was in 2010.

Participant 4: Ok. Yes. I laughed when I heard that nobody donated anything to Querétaro. Thinking about the society here, there is a whole issue with the queretaneidad; it is a small city, everyone knows everyone. Nevertheless, violence is here, and there is a silent pact of not saying anything. I am astonished by how no one says anything until one starts pulling strings when talking with friends or relatives. However, I think it is essential to talk about it; sometimes, you cannot speak because the silent pact is there; it is perceivable in a different context. We have to think about the time and place because I wonder how it is visible, and we should be talking about it with our closest circle; that would be an achievement. If I think about it from the academic perspective, to which I belong...but one thing is to discuss it in academia, let's say, the narrative exercise and another one is how to take it to reality. There are issues that these feminisms should take to reality because it is different from having in a book. How can we achieve that the youngsters start talking and writing from their own experience? The academy is always far from reality, right? I am not saying that all scholars; however, at least from the literature perspective, how can we achieve that works like this one by Wolffer, that also touches really interesting topics of the public and private matter, is seen by many? Sharing it is hard work because it implies many processes since it would be different for each person who has suffered violence. Aside, I think all of us have experienced some sort of violence, right? I don't know. I will stop now because I could keep talking and talking. One other thing I wanted to add is about the objects. For example, the hammer, machete, and beer bottle are one thing; nevertheless, aggression is different when used as body fluids. Saliva urine is not only an object but also something that came from inside. I am relating this with a research project a student is

conducting about the narco narratives. We are analysing the verbs, well, the violent verbs, and there are many books about the narco narratives, and it is interesting; it is making me think about other things. I will stop here.

Participant 5: Well, now I do want to talk. Well, I was thinking since the moment you said it was in 2010, I was 15 years old, I was studying at a catholic school, an Opus Dei school. Hence, these kinds of exhibitions were unknown to me. Actually, they seemed irrelevant. That is why almost all my friends are feminists now or are trying to enter this universe because we were taught to remain silent. Many have suffered some sort of violence; I have friends who have suffered sexual violence and that, due to the education we received, they couldn't tell anyone. I have been a feminist for a longer time, and most of my friends trusted me and told me what happened. However, they were unable to notice they were suffering violence. These kinds of exhibitions would have been good to teach us about violence because we don't have accessible information and you are scared to talk. If I had had access to these exhibitions when I was 15, it would have been helpful. I think it would have been easier for my friends and me because we grew old without knowing. I feel that now, thanks to social networks, girls have more access to information. My experience was completely different.

Natalia: thank you a lot. Participant 6, I don't know if you would like to say something. You are not obligated to talk.

Participant 6: Yes, I would like to. Can you hear me?

Natalia: yes.

Participant 6: Ok, several things happen to me when watching these exhibitions. The first one is that I consider it a good example of how art answers society because what the artist was commenting in the video, the idea of giving voice to women who lost their voice due to violence through art, I think it is really important. I also believe that when they question us about damaging public property, it is unbelievable that they overlook the violence we are experiencing. I am conflicted, not only with this topic but also with other social issues. My feminist speech always asks why we have to demand them to stop murdering us? In a way, these exhibitions make me tremble and think, how can we explain everything happening to us? Hence, I have to show the objects with which women were harmed or even murdered to notice how to normalise violence. It could be coins or even urine, not necessarily a gun or a weapon. That dual nature of objects conflicts with me. I think it is really interesting that women get a voice through art; meanwhile, it is conflictive that society does not notice it.

Natalia: perfect. Thank you. I have some questions derived from what you were saying. There is a book by Suzanne Lacy about the damage to public property that may give you arguments to defend why you damage monuments. The book is English; we should translate it. You have already answered my questions. What do you think about the availability of these testimonies? Do you think it is still important to access the testimonies?

Participant 1: just the ones of this exhibition or in general?

Natalia: in general.

Participant 1: Well, I think it is super important, at least for me. Now that you talked about the exhibition, as Participant 6 said, it answers what society is doing. It is no longer enough to talk about what is happening to our friends or us. We have to show daily objects and experiences for society to understand. Hence, it is always important to access the stories to learn about and, sometimes, realise that you have also been a victim. Like participant 5 was saying, I didn't study in a Catholic school, but...Mexico, right? So, as I grew older, I have noticed I have been a victim of physical and psychological violence, but it is hard to show. So, when you access all these stories from women who had ovaries (who were brave enough) to share, you can notice that what you thought was normal is not normal. I think we need more testimonies. I mean, I see it in Queretaro; women are using social media to share and denounce. So, it is necessary to see it more often, not to start a revolution but to notice it has happened to all of us. I also think that it has happened to all of us. Hence, I think they are really helpful.

Participant 3: I like the experience of the girl who asked for her crockery back.

Natalia: well, yes, Lorena was more like a curator.

Participant 3: yes. I liked that because she assumed she had an alternative for that object to stop being painful, right? Sometimes I cannot stand being in front of testimonies of violence, of feminicide. I couldn't listen to some testimonies; I like the crockery experience because artworks are like therapy. I think the subject needs to know there is an opportunity to transform pain into art or into something that changes it. We need to sublime it, express it. It is not only ethical. It depends on the women wanting to share.

Participant 2: I agree with participant 3. What she said at the end. This exhibition allows women to do it. They allow to share an object that presents the violence they experience, and they can experiment with it differently. With the pottery, I think who changed? She or the thing? The fact that Wolffer allowed her to get it back. I think these exhibitions are really pertinent because they make visible every type of violence we are unaware of.

Natalia: ok. What do you think about the objects exhibited in a museum or public place instead of being filed by police? The fact that the pieces of evidence were not actually transformed into evidence.

Participant 4: Well, in my opinion, if they had been taken to the police, we would have never learned about their experiences. They would have been classified as something not seen by anyone. So bringing them into a museum, make them public is better. Sure, we should also think about who goes into a museum; it is limited to a specific public, confident people. That is why I thought it was pertinent Wolffer also exposed it in public parks as she could reach people walking by. I think making these stories visible is still necessary; it is important to talk about them. Until talking about it is as regular as talking about football. Because violence affects us in several ways, it should remain inside a museum or only as an exhibition. It should be part of our daily life. We need to be aware that violence is always there, that it happens 24/7. And that is it.

Participant 5: you said that some of these objects...well, you mentioned that some of the women did go to the authorities, right? So, the exhibition also exposes the inefficiency of the police. So it is also a way to reveal that. So I think it is important for them to be told.

Participant 6: yes, I also think it is important what we were saying a while ago. We have to make public the private. Sadly, some of these objects would be considered as evidence, but others wouldn't. For example, the crockery is not likely to be considered as evidence. So, it is also limited what can we use to denounce violence. We are also discussing psychological violence. Many of these objects were used to inflict psychological violence. The same with the coins: he hated the noise, and that was reason enough to harm her. To take that private experience to the public sphere, I think it is relevant. Like, participant 5 said, some did denounce.

Participant 3: yes, for me, women need to share—subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the first person allowed to show the violence. The object is meaningless without their experience. I think we could change culture with these exhibitions. We need art everywhere.

Natalia: Ok.

Participant 6: I remember I watched an exhibition about raped girls a while ago. They used the victims' shoes and placed them in the public square; it went primarily viral through pictures on Facebook. It was shocking to see the innocent shoe of an innocent girl who was raped. And I think that speech, the one taking the private to the public sphere, raises awareness and is helpful for our feminist struggle. I mean, we don't know what else to do to show what we are experiencing.

Natalia: ok. And my last question. Would you demand that after these exhibitions, there was a dialogue? What would you order from these spaces to feel safe?

Participant 3: I would love to talk with the cow owner exposed to the aqueduct. The cow was decorated with a green piece of fabric during the protest in favour of abortion. It looked better with it. Hence, I would like to know what the owner of the cow thinks. I like that activism because it was collective. Someone bought the fabric, another one fix it and, finally, someone hanged it from the cow. Because until today, the only thing that has been discussed is the reaction and the threats from the deputy Elsa Méndez. She has already threatened 14 young girls, she denounced them in her Face, and the right-wing is threatening them and insulting them; they are even sending them pictures of feminicides and so on. But the interesting dialogue would be with the artist and not with the deputy.

Participant 1: I would like to place these exhibitions outside the churches of Querétaro. Inside universities. To make it easy for people to find them. I would have loved to see this exhibition at my university because you don't expect it.

Participant 2: I think, aside from universities, it would also be good to show them in those spheres where we are asking for more representation and places with no access to technology or information. I mean, for example, specific communities that never go to museums, I think these exhibitions should reach them. We should encourage those women to raise their voices as well. About feeling safe, we should guarantee that for every woman wanting to participate.

Participant 6: I think I would also ask for the freedom of artistic speech. By the end, feminism emerged from the need to stop oppression, but it is not always easy to express. Well, I am a filmmaker, and in many narratives, when you know that your movie will reach a specific market, you avoid some topics or scenes that you know your audience won't stand. So, I don't know; I think it is complicated. Hence, I would demand freedom of speech, the freedom to talk about a topic just the way it is, without metaphors or censorship.

Natalia: perfect. I don't know if anyone would like to say anything else. Thank you so much for being part. See you tomorrow.

Session 1. Querétaro: *Pieces of Evidence* by Lorena Wolffer, 12 October 2020

The other ones will eventually arrive.

Let me explain to you the dynamic. You have already seen the conditions to be part. All the artworks we are going to study dealt with gender violence. None of them presents violent images; however, today's has some testimonies that might be disturbing. So, in that sense, if any of you feel uncomfortable, you can leave at any moment.

My research aims at determining the rhizomatic effect that feminist activism has. This is the alternative I could propose due to the pandemic.

I will introduce the artwork, trying not to express my opinion but being aware that objectivity is impossible, and I will invite you to dialogue about the painting. Suppose any of you have any problems having the camera on (I hope nobody has problems because I need to analyse your reactions). In that case, you can use the chat to comment on anything that you think about while observing the artwork. I would only ask you to be respectful of each other. So, I will share my screen.

I will try to be as brief as possible because the important part of this is for me to listen to you.

The first artist I am working with is Lorena Wolffer. Some of you mentioned her in the forms. She is Mexicana; born in 1971, spent some time in San Francisco, but worked in Mexico. She is one of the few feminist artists working during the 1990s and called herself a feminist. In the 1990s, it seemed like the feminist struggle was not necessary anymore. She started doing performance. One of you actually mentioned one of her notable performances. 'Mientras dormíamos' was a performance in which Wolffer decided to change the way she was working. It was a performance about feminicide; it also answered the critiques done to feminist art demanding awareness about feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. So, during this performance, she drew over her body all the wounds found in the corpses of the murdered women from Juárez. While performing, she noticed that she didn't represent the victims of feminicide in Ciudad Juárez. She was a privileged white woman with a foreign surname. So, she stated: 'I stopped using my body. What I had to say was no longer the core. I started creating platforms where several voices could be heard'. She still has some performances but different; now, they are personal, and it is more like a healing therapy for her after spending so much time with victims of violence. She worked in refuges for women victims of violence.

When interviewing her for my thesis, I learned that I had a problem. While researching Mexican feminist art, I noticed that they are no longer doing art but *artivism*. Chicano/a artists coined the concept of artivism in the 1990s along with Zapatistas. The Chicano/as had a national movement; later on, they heard about the book by Gloria Anzaldúa. So, they were looking for an artistic production that validated their identity. They felt an affinity with the Zapatistas and looked for them. That is the origin of the neologism. In the beginning, Wolffer had no problem with the term *artivism*. However, as institutions began controlling *artivism*, Wolffer had issues classifying her work as *artivism*. She calls what she does as cultural projects of social intervention highlighting that what interests her is to modify the culture and society. It is also influenced by Suzanne Lacy's theory about new public art. In a book edited by Lacy, they analysed how public art escapes from the chauvinistic practices of museums and galleries.

Other authors she quotes are Judith Butler to define gender as a performative quality. Sayak Valencia, a Mexican author, was also mentioned by one of you in the forms who defined gore capitalism. And Ileana Diéguez works with the concept of 'liminality' to explain the effects of *artivism* as marginal projects, far away from the institution.

The project with which I am working is *Evidencias*. She started it in 2010 and finished it in 2016. The first time, she presented it at the MUAC. What she did was to take advantage of the prestige she had to make a public calling to all women who had suffered gender violence. She collected the objects with which they had been harmed and the testimonies about the violence they suffered. Besides, women could decide where to place their objects inside the museums. At the MUAC, it was really successful. Nevertheless, she faced some unexpected events. Like women arriving without their testimony, they dictated it at the museum transforming the intervention into something different, into a safe space where women could share their stories and find comfort. They started exchanging experiences and stories. While at the MUAC, she noticed that she needed to take out the exhibition. Hence, she organised exhibitions at the Alameda Central and the Parque España with the idea of taking art to liminal places. So, now I will read to you some of the testimonies accompanying the objects. There are some, like the hammer and the machete, that could be easily related to violence. Others narrated a more subtle story. And some women only realised they were victims of violence when sharing their stories.

READING OF A TESTIMONY.

All these objects are still together. Although once finished the exhibition they could ask for their things back. Now she could classify all the objects knives together, beer bottles, etc. She has 237...well, 236 because she gave back one of them.

After Mexico City, she moved it to other cities. She also recognises the centralisation of feminist efforts. She presented at the Museo de la Ciudad de Querétaro during the First Conference on Museography. In this city, the experience was completely different. She did the same she had done in Mexico City, published an open calling, but received no objects. On the inauguration day, Wolffer placed white pieces of paper saying: 'there should be an object here. Since Querétaro was part of a conference, she had an open forum following the inauguration, and she asked about not receiving any object. I was able to participate during that experience. The women present said that, in Querétaro, because everyone knows everyone and is a small community, they were afraid of being recognised while donating an object and a testimony. Hence, considering what happened in Querétaro, Wolffer noticed she had made the women presenting their things vulnerable. After that, she collected the things through NGO's helping women victims of violence. So, she inserted her project into the psychological and legal process. It became part of their healing process.

This object is of psychological violence. TESTIMONY.

Also, trying to escape the artist strategies --since museums barely exhibited them--, feminist artists stopped wanting to be exposed at certain museums. The testimonies have no definite format. Wolffer did not intervene in any of them.

Of the 237 objects, 180 are about domestic violence, 104 are about physical violence, 82 are psychological, four are about feminicides. One hundred thirty-eight women had been harmed by their partners, while 38 mentioned some institution. This enumeration of what was presented is just for you to know what happened, although Wolffer refuses to reduce the stories of violence into numbers because each one is different. Furthermore, during her interview, she expressed being surprised by how we are living a feminist boom since 2019, we have unique laws, but there is no more justice or equality for women. So we need to articulate better what is happening to women with the legal mechanisms.

This object shows physical and psychological violence. TESTIMONY. These are the kind of extraordinary objects. By the end, it is just a bottle of saliva. But there are thousands of things, crosses, and urine (we will see that); then, there are some heart-breaking and, finally, others identified with gender violence.

There are a lot of beer bottles, and all the stories are related to alcoholism. However, the answer is relative when asking several feminists worldwide, mostly Marcela Lagarde, who defined 'feminicide' using Diana Russell and Jill Radfords theory, about the relationship between violence and alcoholism. According to them, in some cases, it is related, and in others, it is not. This is because violence against women has different causes.

TESTIMONY

Several testimonies are claiming that they called the police and denounce yet, nothing happened after denouncing. They couldn't access justice.

The coins are a case related to feminicide. She told me about the object she receives in Guadalajara. The relatives of the victims donated it as she was murdered. They brought her a bunch of pills. A guy used the drugs to murder his girlfriend and her dogs. TESTIMONY.

This is the last object I will present. Of the 237 objects, one of them was returned. A girl contacted her in 2018 and asked for her crockery back. Her story is that there was a time in which her roomie invited her boyfriend over, and she didn't want him sleeping at their place or having sex with him. When she woke up, she found outside her room all her crockery with urine. However, she contacted Wolffer and explained that her process was over, and she wanted the plates back. So, Wolffer did as she is exposed to the will of the women donating objects.

This one is an example of psychological and patrimonial violence. TESTIMONY.

Also, all these stories help make the idea that the minute women exit the private sphere, they are seen as perpetrators ruining the social order. The last thing I want to show you is a video. The problem with videos is that you cannot see them correctly; however, I will share with you the link. After the video, you will have the floor.

Done. Also, if any of you have any questions and I know the answer, I will gladly respond.

PARTICIPANT 1: Well, I don't know, I feel furious while watching these kinds of exhibitions. At the same time, I think it is super cool that there are ways for us to see them. I am not surprised that she did not receive any objects in Querétaro and that women were afraid. However, what makes me angry is that you can see this exhibition and notice...well, not noticed because we all know this happens, but we live in a country that doesn't want to see what is happening...I mean, many people state that women are being murdered, but men are also being murdered. They question our protest if we damage public property. It is infuriating to see these exhibitions, but people who don't want to learn don't visit them. That is what I see. Hence, I also think it is cool she took the exhibition outside museums. So, you can go to the park and be surprised by an exhibition like this because not everyone likes museums.

Participant 2: can you hear me? I think my connection is not good.

Natalia: a bit disconnected, but we can hear and understand you.

Participant 2: great. What seems interesting to me is that the exhibition presents evidence of forms of violence that are not only physical. For example, one of the urines was shocking for me because it is about belittling women. I think it is an interesting way of making evident these kinds of contexts. And just like Participant 1 was saying, the fact that in Queretaro she couldn't get any object...it is a narrow-minded culture...well, I don't know if I can say this, but society here is more conservative with traditions rooted in Catholicism; status is important, they don't want to be seen and criticised. That is why I also like the idea of taking it to public spaces. It is a noble cause.

Participant 3: uff, I was touched by many. I mean, I was moved by several testimonies. I am here using my stress ball. However, this is common in Querétaro and Guanajuato (I am from Guanajuato, although I have lived here for 33 years). Recently I commented out loud and to my family on sexual abuse, and their reaction was to remain silent. I mean, two of my brothers and my sister told me: 'Don't say any of this to your other siblings'. That is a culture of silence; we are being structured by silence. I have been using art as well. While watching it, I kept thinking about which objects I would donate; I would bring an object created by me. I broke up with my first boyfriend after he called me 'dirty whore'. I ended things with him but what he said was really painful. I had been able to work with it, but I finally overcame that experience when I painted about it; I painted like a piece of poop from which flowers are growing. It was a dream. The painting and a lot of therapy finally helped me. This depreciation, or this symbolic violence of wanting to destroy what we do, minimise it, not listen to it or urinate it. I have a similar experience, and, in my opinion, it is one of the harshest experiences, not being seen, appreciated (starts crying). The thing is that I was insulted by a guy who was working with gender studies and new masculinities, so it was excruciating for me. Art offers the possibility of expressing it. Instead of ripping my heart, I use my stress ball, physical activities or art. I believe it is not a personal issue of the girls who contributed with evidence; neither is it a couple or family matter. I mean, on my behalf, I do identify with several stories. I love listening to my siblings telling me that I couldn't talk about sexual abuse with my other brothers; they most have prohibition inside their minds. In conclusion, I do identify with several testimonies because art is not outside of us.

Natalia: thank you very much, Participant 3. Would anyone else want to say something?

Participant 4: Yes. Me. Well, first, let me see if I can structure what I want to say. Yes, the tales and the narratives are heart-breaking because they are daily experiences; they shared a day-to-day event. And I am thinking about the narratives; I wrote some bits of them because I work with narratives. It is really interesting that these testimonies, for example, the personal telling of the couples' life, the family life. I believe that here, in all the couples' life there is a silent pact. I had a doubt. When was this exhibition in Querétaro? I didn't know, well, it is not like I should have known, but I wonder, when was this, Natalia?

Natalia: it was in 2010.

Participant 4: Ok. Yes. I laughed when I heard that nobody donated anything to Querétaro. Thinking about the society here, there is a whole issue with the queretaneidad; it is a small city, everyone knows everyone. Nevertheless, violence is here, and there is a silent pact of not saying anything. I am astonished by how no one says anything until one starts pulling strings when talking with friends or relatives. However, I think it is essential to talk about it; sometimes, you cannot speak because the silent pact is there; it is perceivable in a different context. We have to think about the time and place because I wonder how it is visible, and we should be talking about it with our closest circle; that would be an achievement. If I think about it from the academic perspective, to which I belong...but one thing is to discuss it in academia, let's say, the narrative exercise and another one is how to take it to reality. There are issues that these feminisms should take to reality because it is different from having in a book. How can we achieve that the youngsters start talking and writing from their own experience? The academy is always far from reality, right? I am not saying that all scholars; however, at least from the literature perspective, how can we achieve that works like this one by Wolffer, that also touches really interesting topics of the public and private matter, is seen by many? Sharing it is hard because it implies many processes since it would be different for each person who has suffered violence. Aside, I think all of us have experienced some sort of violence, right? I don't know. I will stop now because I could keep talking and talking. One other thing I wanted to add is about the objects. For example, the hammer, machete, and beer bottle are one thing; nevertheless, aggression is different when used as body fluids. Saliva urine is not only an object but also something that came from inside. I am relating this with a research project a student is conducting about

the narco narratives. We are analysing the verbs, well, the violent verbs, and there are many books about the narco narratives, and it is interesting; it is making me think about other things. I will stop here.

Participant 5: Well, now I do want to talk. Well, I was thinking since the moment you said it was in 2010, I was 15 years old, I was studying at a catholic school, an Opus Dei school. Hence, these kinds of exhibitions were unknown to me. Actually, they seemed irrelevant. That is why almost all my friends are feminists now or are trying to enter this universe because we were taught to remain silent. Many have suffered some sort of violence; I have friends who have suffered sexual violence and that, due to the education we received, they couldn't tell anyone. I have been a feminist for a longer time, and most of my friends trusted me and told me what happened. However, they were unable to notice they were suffering violence. These exhibitions would have been good to teach us about violence because we don't have accessible information and you are scared to talk. If I had had access to these exhibitions when I was 15, it would have been helpful. I think it would have been easier for my friends and me because we grew old without knowing. I feel that now, thanks to social networks, girls have more access to information. My experience was completely different.

Natalia: thank you a lot. Participant 6, I don't know if you would like to say something. You are not obligated to talk.

Participant 6: Yes, I would like to. Can you hear me?

Natalia: yes.

Participant 6: Ok, several things happen to me when watching these exhibitions. The first one is that I consider it a good example of how art answers society. What the artist was commenting on in the video, the idea of giving voice to women who lost their voice due to violence through art is really important. I also believe that when they question us about damaging public property, it is unbelievable that they overlook the violence we are experiencing. I am conflicted, not only with this topic but also with other social issues. My feminist speech always asks why we have to demand them to stop murdering us? In a way, these exhibitions make me tremble and think, how can we explain everything happening to us? Hence, I have to show the objects with which women were harmed or even murdered to notice how to normalise violence. It could be coins or even urine, not necessarily a gun or a weapon. That dual nature of objects conflicts with me. I think it is really interesting that women get a voice through art; meanwhile, it is conflictive that society does not notice it.

Natalia: perfect. Thank you. I have some questions derived from what you were saying. There is a book by Suzanne Lacy about the damage to public property that may give you arguments to defend why you damage monuments. The book is English; we should translate it. You have already answered my questions. What do you think about the availability of these testimonies? Do you think it is still important to access the testimonies?

Participant 1: just the ones of this exhibition or in general?

Natalia: in general.

Participant 1: Well, I think it is super important, at least for me. Now that you talked about the exhibition, as Participant 6 said, it answers what society is doing. It is no longer enough to talk about what is happening to our friends or us. We have to show daily objects and experiences for society to understand. Hence, it is always important to access the stories to learn about and, sometimes, realise that you have also been a victim. Like participant 5 was saying, I didn't study in a Catholic school, but...Mexico, right? So, as I grew older, I have noticed I have been a victim of physical and psychological violence, but it is hard to show. So, when you access all these stories from women who had ovaries (who were brave enough) to share, you can notice that what you thought was normal is not normal. I think we need more testimonies. I mean, I see it in Queretaro; women are using social media to share and denounce. So, it is necessary to see it more often, not to start a revolution but to notice it has happened to all of us. I also think that it has happened to all of us. Hence, I think they are really helpful.

Participant 3: I like the experience of the girl who asked for her crockery back.

Natalia: well, yes, Lorena was more like a curator.

Participant 3: yes. I liked that because she assumed she had an alternative for that object to stop being painful, right? Sometimes I cannot stand being in front of testimonies of violence, of feminicide. I couldn't listen to some testimonies; I like the crockery experience because artworks are like therapy. I think the subject needs to know there is an opportunity to transform pain into art or into something that changes it. We need to sublime it, express it. It is not only ethical. It depends on the women wanting to share.

Participant 2: I agree with participant 3. What she said at the end. This exhibition allows women to do it. They allow to share an object that presents the violence they experience, and they can experiment with it differently. With the pottery, I think who changed? She or the thing? The fact that Wolffer allowed her to get it back. I think these exhibitions are really pertinent because they make visible every type of violence we are unaware of.

Natalia: ok. What do you think about the objects exhibited in a museum or public place instead of being filed by police? The fact that the pieces of evidence were not actually transformed into evidence.

Participant 4: Well, in my opinion, if they had been taken to the police, we would have never learned about their experiences. They would have been classified as something not seen by anyone. So bringing them into a museum, make them public is better. Sure, we should also think about who goes into a museum; it is limited to a specific public, confident people. That is why I thought it was pertinent Wolffer also exposed it in public parks as she could reach people walking by. I think making these stories visible is still necessary; it is important to talk about them. Until talking about it is as regular as talking about football. Because violence affects us in several ways, it should remain inside a museum or only as an exhibition. It should be part of our daily life. We need to be aware that violence is always there, that it happens 24/7. And that is it.

Participant 5: you said that some of these objects...well, you mentioned that some of the women did go to the authorities, right? So, the exhibition also exposes the inefficiency of the police. So, it is also a way to reveal that. So I think it is important for them to be told.

Participant 6: yes, I also think it is important what we were saying a while ago. We have to make public the private. Sadly, some of these objects would be considered as evidence, but others wouldn't. For example, the crockery is not likely to be considered as evidence. So, it is also limited what can we use to denounce violence. We are also discussing psychological violence. Many of these objects were used to inflict psychological violence. The same with the coins: he hated the noise and that which enough to harm her. So, to take that private experience to the public sphere, I think it is relevant. Like, participant 5 said, some did denounce.

Participant 3: yes, for me, women need to share—subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the first person allowed to show the violence. The object is meaningless without their experience. I think we could change culture with these exhibitions. We need art everywhere.

Natalia: Ok.

Participant 6: I remember I watched an exhibition about raped girls a while ago. They used the victims' shoes and placed them in the public square; it went primarily viral through pictures on Facebook. It was shocking to see the innocent shoe of an innocent girl who was raped. And I think that speech, the one taking the private to the public sphere, raises awareness and is helpful for our feminist struggle. I mean, we don't know what else to do to show what we are experiencing.

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Natalia: perfect. I don't know if anyone would like to say anything else. Thank you so much for being part. See you tomorrow.

Session 2: Querétaro: *In/Visible* by Cerrucha, 13 October 2020

The artist with which I will be working today is Cerrucha, well that is her pseudonym. First, I will work with *In/visible*, and then I also worked with two other projects derived from this one. So, I will also propose an exercise for today. Cerrucha is Mexican, and she belongs to the young generation of feminists. She is younger than Wolffe,r but she has worked with her. She studied in Canada and called herself an activist. Yesterday that we discussed the issues about graffiti; well, that is why she uses a pseudonym. She is active on Instagram; she has a project called 'Arte: Weapon of Massive Construction' where she interviews artists; the first one was Lorena Wolffer; her assignment is amazing. I would only ask you to wait until I finish with the conversations to follow her on social media.

She studied Canadian photography and visual art. She primarily works with photography and street art installations similar to the ones created by French artist JR. I don't know if you know him, but he is also really active on Instagram, but he has a ca budget Cerrucha hasn't. She has changed her work dynamic. For example, recently, she had a project that included street art done during the feminist protest because that sort of graffiti is also street art; street art has to be pasted or painted where it is relevant. If it is criticising the government, then it has to be where civil workers may see it. It plays with being illegal.

In/Visible is the artwork she created for her thesis in Canada. The second version of *In/Visible* is an adaptation. I am only working with the first phase, from 2011, because the second phase was addressed to an international audience, so that it would be impossible for me to trace the reactions. Therefore, I am only focusing on the Mexican case.

Her pseudonym is a mix; it is not an orthographic mistake. She mixes saw (in Spanish) and *cer* [to be in Latin]. She defines herself as: 'sawing others' minds, breaking fixed concepts and harvesting questions'. That is her objective. *In/Visible* consisted of a series of pictures, initially five. However, she couldn't include the last one due to a lack of budget. I did have it in my analysis because I think it is relevant. These four images are conceived for Mexican society. She originally included 2000 copies printed in Offset over newspaper paper covering 8.5km of Insurgentes Sur and Salto del Agua and Tacuba subway stations. She used bombing when you cover a big part of the city in the shortest time possible. She picked these places because there she could find the audience she was looking for. Although she instead works with populations in vulnerable conditions, since she was dealing with stereotypes and gender roles, she looked for the working class. In that part of Insurgentes, one can find a lot of business. All the images are of people with fake tattoos of different stereotypes. For example, this one says: 'all men are the same'; referring to the idea that all men are machos; hence, they have no other alternative. Therefore, being macho. She chopped off the head of the man in the pictures.

The following image said: 'my husband does let me work' and what is a reality in Mexico. On average, 12.8% of women still ask for permission to work. Even worst, some think that because they have permission, they are free. Although 12.8% is not that high considering other issues we have, 47.6% of Mexican women feel working neglects their children. Therefore, women feel guilty about working and entering the public sphere. Besides, there is a critique done by Teresa Incháustegui, who noticed that women didn't start working because of feminism but due to the economic crisis of the 1980s. So, the way of thinking hasn't changed. I guess that is why female salaries are lower than men.

The third one said, 'you are henpecked'. Henpecked, I guess because Mexicans surround me, it needs no explanation. Nevertheless, it is one of the most complex terms to translate. It has to do with men behaving like women and doing women's responsibilities. There is a socially convened connection between femininity and household chores.

The fourth one said, 'this game is not for girls'. It is the only poster where the photographed person looks directly at the audience. Amongst the four signs, this one was the one the people damaged the most; in many cases, they tore the girl's eyes. Street artists know that their artwork is exposed to people's damage; it is part of the work. However, there is no way to know if this is the one they damaged because it was the one that bothered them the most.

The fifth poster said, 'you cry like a girl. Although the boy is not looking directly at the spectator, you can see his face rejecting his tattoo. He is also about to cry.

Both phases of *In/Visible* are confronting the patriarchal social order. I defined patriarchy using Marcela Lagarde's work. She defines patriarchy or patriarchal oppression as: 'women's generic oppression, meaning that women are oppressed because they are women; no mattering their class, language, age, race, nationality or therefore, oppression. Thus, in the patriarchal world, being a woman is being oppressed'. Obviously, today we would have to change the word race for the term ethnicity.

After the installation of *In/Visible*, she noticed she was re-victimising. She had no idea how the public reacted; she didn't interact with the audience aside from the day in which she pasted the posters. She also noticed how her models could not answer to the tattoos, so she was re-victimising them. Finally, she noticed that she wanted to do, or more coherent with feminist *artivism*, to get close with the audience. So she keeps doing

this kind of street art; the last one was in Mexico City; instead of criticising, she presents a positive image of women or a sense of *sororidad*.

In the last transmission, 'Art: weapon of massive construction', she interviewed an artist from Ethiopia doing a tv show about female empowerment. While interviewing, the Ethiopian artist had internet problems, and Cerrucha used the time to explain how she conceives *artivism*. For her, *artivism* thinks first in the social cause and later decides on the artistic strategies. Therefore, it is not an artwork with social content; they prioritise the social utility.

After the installation of *In/Visible*, she adapted it, and I will show you the photographs of how she did it. It would be amazing to have videos. I propose to do the same exercise. So, she used the tattoos and all her work about stereotypes and gender roles, and tattooed people. If the people could answer to the tattoo before it dried, she erased it or modified it. If they couldn't, they kept the tattoo for two weeks. This meant they had to think about it for two weeks, leading them to think deeply about the impact of insult or role on their lives. Hence, my proposal is for you to answer the tattoos using Zoom's chat.

I think the exercise also invites us to think about the gender connotations of specific insults. For example, this one says, 'you are a fagg'. Obviously, none of the participants is insulted by this, so I suggest transforming it to the feminine form 'you are a whore' with a completely different meaning.

Cerrucha presented this new dynamic during a workshop, and she called it *Texō*, which in Latin means to weave; she did it at the Centro Cultural España. The second time, she presented it at the Festival CompArte organised by the Zapatistas at the Universidad de la Tierra. For that occasion, she called it 'May your mouth become pork rind' with the idea of stopping the insults and stereotypes from becoming real. Clearly, the dynamic was different as working with Zapatistas is a whole other experience. Apparently, it was easier to answer to the tattoos at the Zapatista sight; it might be related to how Zapatista women live away from mainstream culture. One of the exciting things that happened is how difficult it was to answer the word '*chingar*'; I am hypothesising its relevance for the Mexican context.

This one says 'feminazi'; the photograph is from the Universidad de la Tierra in Chiapas. 'Feminazi' is becoming a favoured insult. But, then, this one 'you certainly are menstruating'. The hardest part about studying *Texō* is that she cannot reveal much information because she must guarantee the participants' security. Therefore, even when interviewing her, she cannot reveal a lot of information.

This one says, 'become desirable'. I chose these pictures not so much due to the insults but because it was easier to read the tattoos. In others, you can see a tattoo, but it is not clear what they said.

So, to close and start with the dynamic, it is important to mention that what Cerrucha does is a well-known tradition in feminist art. For example, one of the first Mexican feminist historians who worked with Mónica Mayer and Maris Bustamante, Araceli Barbosa, explained a lot of symbolic violence in publicity—mostly thinking about Mexico City, which is overcrowded with advertising. Hence, one of the battles that feminist art must fight is to present a counter-narrative to that symbolic violence using the power of the image. So, Cerrucha continued with this feminist tradition.

If anyone wants me to go back to any of the pictures, please let me know.

Participant 4: Do we have to answer as if someone was saying that to us?

Natalia: Yes, if you want, I can give you some minutes. The one said 'qué puto eres' que could use it as what a lesbian you are. The other ones are feminazi; clearly, you are menstruating and become desirable.

Participant 1: I feel like I am missing the irony; it is not literal.

Natalia: ok, don't worry, I'll take note. Let me know when you want to move on to the conversation. Ready? Do you want me to start with a question, or do you have something to say? Ok, thinking about yesterday's discussion about taking art outside the museum, what do you think about the street art techniques for feminist art?

Participant 3: there was a lot during the protests. For example, in Querétaro, there were two whores' demonstrations (the name is *la marcha de las putas*), and there were many expressions such as: 'you are a whore'. I think they achieved deconstructing the stigma around that word. Even the experience is quite empowering.

Participant 2: I agree. I think taking these efforts to the public sphere help reflecting about the issues. And including men. For example, while answering to the tattoo, suddenly one thinks what we would answer. However, when you are walking or in any situation and someone screams at you, you get blocked, and it becomes harder to answer.

Participant 1: I am taking some classes on documentary photography, and they showed us an interview with an English cartoonist who considered himself a magician because he changed people's minds. He explained that artists are magicians and that the words they use are spells that can change people. Hence, he said that advertising people are evil magicians because they fooled people to make them buy. Nevertheless, he kept explaining that art is that kind of magic. So, I can easily relate to this. It is like both proposals had an impact on me. You have *artivism* on the streets spelling people and making them read phrases that make them go like 'Oh my God!'. Like we are now questioning, what would I really say? So, you question yourself a bit. I mean, I think like participant 2 was saying, it was really hard to answer the insults. Even if seven women surround us, you need time. It is horrible when it happens to you on the streets; we all have experienced it, they tell you something, and you get frozen. Once you are home, you can think about a possible answer. It is difficult to think and make sense of all this; however, art charms people. In fact, I would like to share the video with you, but I don't have a way to contact you.

Participant 4: yes, I also consider...well, answering the question about how important art is, or street art...these phrases belong to the oral tradition. In the oral tradition, you insult someone in a relation amongst equals, and it is normal. However, seeing them written, furthermore, written in someone's body, they are like highlighted and catch the eye of people walking or running. I think, in the first instance, they force us to stop and look. It is like walking and suddenly stop and stare and think. Like if we were victims of an ice bucket. To see those phrases written and phrases we have heard; the transition from oral to written...

Participant 6: I also believe that outside a museum, on the streets, like what we discussed yesterday, is also essential. It reaches a different part of society, the one on the roads, and it is not limited to the same society used to museums. I forgot the term, but this strategy you explained in which the city is changed in a fast-track shows movement...but gender violence is like that. You visit the subway one day, and it is entirely different because a woman was murdered there. Then, on Thursday, you see the subway again, and there is a picture with a message. So, I think it is similar.

Natalia: participant 5, I don't know if you want to say something about this topic or you rather wait for another question.

Participant 5: it is only that they already said everything, I think. I mean, it is what we were discussing yesterday. I believe it is important to take out these artworks from museums for everyone to see. People need to see it, and they don't have access. Or people don't understand that their insults and words can harm someone, and these artworks raise awareness. Although it is conflicting to think that men are watching this, and they just laugh.

Participant 4: sorry, a little about what I was saying and what participant 5 is saying. I think it is important that men see this, even if they mock, but they see it. That is my opinion.

Participant 3: yes, placing it from one day to the next one has a surprising effect. It is like a revolution. I am not sure, but it made me think of an intervention several years ago at the Diana the hunter in Guadalajara, and it worked because it was a surprise. Or when they painted the fountains with blood or the use of glitter on the streets and against the police. It was a revolution, and I think even the women who did it were not expecting it. They don't expect a deep commotion when changing the icons. For example, in Querétaro, they painted the aqueduct and the legislative chamber; nobody was offended by what they did in the room. Nevertheless, about the aqueduct, they did get offended.

Natalia: concerning what you said about men, they react laughing. I have a question I also asked Cerrucha. What should feminist *artivists* or artists expect from their work when including men? Because it is clear that we have been living 2000 years inside a patriarchal system. Let's say less considering the relation there is between the modern forms of patriarchy and capitalism. However, art, literature and social sciences focused on men and satisfied the male gaze. So, many feminist artists reject the idea of creating art for them or doing the homework for it to be easier for men. What do you think about it?

Participant 4: well, I don't know. There is also the matter; some academics have learned to observe from a male perspective. For example, Laura Mulvey, in her article about films and pleasure, explains how we look at movies from a male perspective. I think that same thing happens when looking at art. So, I think this matter, which I was discussing with some colleagues, about how we learned to read the world, requires us to know to look at things from a different perspective. I think we need another education to have a different perspective. If

not, it would be more like, 'look, we are studying women's activism'. How are we looking at it would be the question for me?

Participant 1: I believe, now considering what you said and what you asked, I have two ways of looking at it. I mean, I am learning to say what I like and want. However, from one side, I would like to say 'no', women should create only for women because it has been a long period of oppression. On the other side, I can appreciate that we still live in a patriarchal system; so, I think it is important to address men to realise it. Maybe it is a utopia; it would be only for women in an ideal plan, and everyone would get it. Well, I wouldn't need any of this. Nevertheless, we still live in an unequal society, so I think we should explore that. Always being aware of what we are doing to guarantee men and women understand it.

Participant 3: I think it is also addressing the man. For example, an answer to 'I am the whore that gave birth to you' has several levels. Well, I have two boys, and when I watch the little boy with the tattoo, 'boys don't cry'...I think it is huge aggression against boys, but it is an aggression against the feminine in them. I make the difference between women and the feminine since the feminine includes men. When I say: 'the whore who gave birth to you', I am the whore because I told my children or partner. I also think about it on a different level, like about the mother earth; I mean, I am the whore who gave birth to you, and you are abandoning me, exploding me, extracting from me, destroying me. It is the mother earth being prostituted. So then, I think yes, inside men, there is a feminine side unknown, neglected. I think men need to revindicate their feminine side.

Participant 5: I believe it should address them considering everything you said. We don't want to change feminists; we want them to think the same way they will help us destroy the patriarchy. It is not a fight between genders, men against women; I think it is a fight to break the limits like patriarchy. I have had several discussions with my friends about this point. However, I don't think feminism is only for women; I think it is for men. They need to break the barriers that don't allow them things like crying. I don't know how to say it. I don't believe it is a gender battle; it is a battle against patriarchy, and men should be included, or we will be stuck.

Participant 6: I think, and considering what was recently said, I believe that part of the movement is separatist, and some are unavoidably separatists. Nevertheless, feminist communication trying to raise awareness, divulge artistically shouldn't. This is precisely what cannot be separatist. On the contrary, art is not separatist. We are looking to spread the work to raise awareness. What is expected from men is for them to be interested beyond curiosity. The objective is for them to be interested in the movement.

Participant 2: I think they have already expressed a lot of interesting points. However, going back to *artivism* and what Nat said initially, I believe the answer is there. If we want men to understand, to start questioning, we need it. Each artist can touch different spheres or topics, and they should be included to be part of the discussion; I mean, they should use what they already have. So, I think she is for everyone.

Natalia: Ok, thank you. What do you think about the issues she had with the word *chingar*?

Participant 1: how? I didn't understand.

Natalia: in the workshop *Texō*, Cerrucha had a lot of issues with the word *chingar*. Why do you think that happened?

Participant 3: Because it is normalised. I mean, the verb *chingar* is used for everything. I believe it is like *wey* which we use for everything, and it is not offensive. So, *chingada*, *me chingaron* and *chingaste* are really varied in meaning, and violence is normalised.

Participant 1: I think it is used less specific with women. If I got tattooed with one including the word *chingar* or the one claiming 'clearly you are menstruating,' I would be more offended by the second one. Both are offensive, but I think the second one is more addressed against women, and the other one is more general.

Natalia, ok, s, you don't think it is associated with raping a woman anymore.

Participant 4: no, I don't think so. I mean, because right now, we should revindicate the *chinga tu madre*, remove the 'madre'...well, I don't know, if they say father instead of mother, then it has that connotation again like these expressions. I mean, going back to *chingar*, I am thinking. If they tell you 'chinga tu madre' you

answer 'la tuya'. I don't know why they didn't answer that way. But now, I think it still has a violent connotation against women.

Participant 2: yes, exactly. Like this term, participant 4 was saying, *la chingada* is part of us and the culture, but it is a painful term with a long history. I am trying to remember the book 'El laberinto de la soledad' where Octavio Paz explains the origin of the term and how it is being used every day.

Participant 3: I am trying to remember a discussion I had long ago with my partner, like thirty years ago. I wasn't offended, but he said, 'I am the child of a raped woman; surely I had to find for myself with the daughter of a raped woman'. So, I laughed because I normalised the term, it wasn't offensive like when a former partner told me: 'shitty whore'. It took me years to forgive him; I believe it was until I went to the whores' demonstration. However, *chingada* is so normalised it is less offensive. However, we should de-normalise that violence.

Participant 2: well, something brief just to add to the discussion around the term. I feel like Mexicans have a relation of love and hate with this word and its use is unavoidable. So, it is part of who we are.

Participant 5: the problem is that I am a really rude person. I mean, I use a lot of insults, and, to be honest, I use the word *chingada* quite often. I don't usually say 'rape your mother'. I try not to use it, but I hadn't really thought about the word's meaning. I think it definitely has a violent connotation against women. Now, thinking about it, I would say the proper thing to do would be to stop using it, even if it is a normalised term. I mean, I use a lot of insults in my regular life, but it is something I should change.

Natalia: Perfect. From the interactions, Cerrucha had while pasting the artworks, she witnessed how a woman was beaten down, and the people's reaction was to do nothing as those things happen. Another response was while pasting it in the subway. She asked a woman what she thought about the intervention, and she said: 'terrible. They come and tell me I should go out of the home where I am comfortable. Hence, she changed her strategies. What do you think about the change of system?

Participant 5: for me, it has more meaning. It becomes more personal when you get tattooed than when you are reading it. I mean, when they shout these phrases to you while on the street, it is already like being tattooed. I also believe it was helpful that those who couldn't answer had it for two weeks to think about it. Maybe they don't even consider it as an insult, and they needed to think about it.

Participant 1: I liked it both ways. I mean, the second one wouldn't exist without the first one. On the one hand, I think like participant 5, the second one is more shocking. I mean, I don't know. I believe they had a different impact, but the second one was more personal. Both worked. The bombing strategy that we have already discussed surprises you, and people may react differently. Some may like it; others may not. Everyone will process it differently. At least the lady saw it and responded to it.

Natalia: I don't know if anyone would like to say something else to close the conversation.

Participant 6: I was thinking about the similarities of the tattoos and an analysis I am doing. When a person gets a tattoo, they have given consent, right? So, you think about it, and then you ask for it because it will stay in your skin forever. So, it was really interesting to think about consent—the idea of getting something without consenting.

Participant 1: yes, and that, in a way, it is harming the body. The fact that they were there and got a tattoo is kind of violent. I mean, if it is harmful when someone insults you getting it tattoo reaches other levels.

Participant 6: yes, it would be like, 'I am getting a tattoo of something I wouldn't allow'.

Participant 3: yes, I think that during a workshop, it is not allowed to label someone, and it should be that way on the streets.

Participant 4: what caught my eye is the typography she is using. I don't know a lot about typography, I don't know which style this is, but it is getting my attention. Let's say it is in the skin. The tattoo, for me, is more a matter of images, not letters. I know it is not a real tattoo, but the message and the typography cause me something. I would like to learn more about typography, I don't know the types, but I think that is something we should analyse.

Participant 1: Yes. Now that you are mentioning it. I didn't think that much about it, but then I realise that people are marked after doing something terrible in the movies and everywhere. So, for me, it is also interesting that she chose that type and size. As participant 6 was saying, consent is essential but being so violent is also interesting.

Participant 2: yes. Now I think about what participant 4 said. I want to go back to it. Since the artwork is about stereotypes, I think she also used typography to question the stereotypes and beliefs. As participant 1 was saying, we have seen the typography everywhere with a negative connotation. When we see a criminal or someone who did something evil. Hence, I do believe it is related to stereotypes.

Participant 1: yes, la from the mara, I think it is the same style. I mean, maybe it is unrelated but, that is the connection I made.

Participant 4: well, I don't know. The capital letters looked like emblems. It made me think about classic texts, especially due to the curves. The initial letter. That is why I think about a text, like those old ones. Of course, now I am thinking about it, which is why I could relate to it. The phrases are also very old. If we explore the country's story, phrases like 'my husband do let me work' well, it is as old as the text. So, for me, the typography looks like an old book.

Participant 2: like of something enrooted, right?

Participant 4: yes, like an antique.

Participant 1: like a religious text.

Participant 2: I believe it is playing with both, right? Because I would recognise this part like of something antique. The other one, like the girl', I feel I have seen it in movies or things that have stereotypes. So, in conclusion, in general, it is an exciting *artivist* project that makes you think.

Natalia: for these, she used more modern typography.

Participant 2: yes, I think she plays with it, with what we are.

Natalia: great. Would someone else have something to say? No? Perfect. Thank you very much.

Session 3. Querétaro, *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*. Coord. by Lorena Wolffer, María Laura Rosa and Jennifer Tyburczy. 14 October 2020

Well, I will start. I hope participant 3 arrives at some time. Participant 6 told me she wouldn't be coming, so I designed a different methodology for her. Today we will be looking at the final artwork I am analysing. It was pretty big. Once we finish, I will send you the final form; it is the same three questions you answer at the start because I want to see if your perception of gender violence changed.

So, I will send you the form, Suzanne Lacy's book, and share my presentation.

Now, let me share my screen.

The project was named *Estado de emergencia*. It was organised in 2018 and coordinated by Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tyburczy, María Laura Rosa and Julia Antivilo, who w, as also involved. It is essential to define three fundamental concepts for the artwork and are present throughout the whole process.

The first one is that, although they had people from the USA and South America (Argentina and Brazil), the concept with which they worked was femicide and not femicide. The thing is that femicide only refers to the murder of a woman; it is the same as homicide, but the victim is female. So when men complain and say: 'we are also being murdered', we could answer yes, and if we were discussing femicide, it would be possible to compare. On the other hand, femicide is when a woman is murdered due to her gender. Marcela Lagarde coined the term and included it in the Penal Code; she wrote the Law to Access a Life free of Violence when she was a deputy. She established seven characteristics to consider murder a femicide. The first one would be any sign of sexual violence (either by a partner or stranger because it is common for police to avoid classifying it as a femicide when it was the partner) if she had any sign of wounds or mutilations after being murdered. Second, suppose there is a story of violence before the murder if there is an emotional relation. If they were a couple or if there were any news of sexual harassment. If the supposed victim was uncommunicated or kidnap. Suppose if the corpse is exposed in a public place.

For *Estado de emergencia*, they worked with four cases of femicide for which the law was really important. Without it, they would not have been classified as femicide.

The second concept, which I also consider necessary is how they defined gender. They understand gender using Butler's definition. Butler has been constructing her definition and, as a matter of fact, if you read the first edition of 'Gender Trouble' and the last one, in the introduction, she clears out that she did not reject or denied the existence of sex. Therefore, she couldn't be a feminist. She says that sex is less relevant in defining gender identity and that forcing society to fit into a binary system is impossible because nobody is 100%, man or woman. Besides, it is a performative act. That is how they understood gender. Lorena as an artist, María Laura Rosa as an art historian, Julia Antivilo as an art historian and activist and Jennifer Tyburczy considers herself as queer. Wolffer as well. Tyburczy analyses the museums using a queer perspective; for her, museums force us to read the artworks from a binary order.

The third concept important to understand in the artwork is gore capitalism, defined by Sayak Valencia. There is a confrontation amongst feminists. Some agreed with Rita Laura Segato, an academic who studies femicide and femicide and the Mexican authors about femicide. The most significant difference is that Rita Laura Segato explains how men committed femicide as victims of their context. Mexican researchers don't consider men as victims. For them, in countries like Mexico and Colombia, masculinity is associated with violence. Hence, when a man acts violently, he is reaffirming his masculinity. For them, the neoliberal capitalist system is a narco-State; male's violent behaviours validate. Hence, he is not a victim, but we have an education that systemically promotes the murder of a woman.

Wolffer was called by the Centro de Cultura Digital and asked to do something for the 25 November. Lorena agreed if they accepted her conditions. She didn't organise anything inside the cultural institutions. Instead, she used the buildings to give legal and psychological advice for victims of gender violence. She transformed it into a collective project. So, you can observe how Wolffer modifies her art to create platforms. Cerrucha also participated, and you will be able to watch how her work changed.

The events took place from 10 to 13 November. It makes sense that it was not organised precisely on 25 November because she has criticised how women only exist on 8 March and 25 November. Those two days there are exhibitions everywhere. The rest of the year, women are invisible.

The places where it was organised were called spots of pain and resilience. The first point was in Puente de Alvarado (play the video). It was there and invited members of the trans community. This idea we have been discussing taking art out of museums to reach a pertinent audience is well appreciated with why they took it to Puente de Alvarado. The idea was to confront the men hiring sex-workers, trans and cis. Is participant 3 already here? Yes, if you want to take out your stress ball because there are testimonies of femicide. If it is too much for you, you can leave.

In Puente de Alvarado and all other locations, they had a conversation with experts. It had pedagogical intention. Ileana Diéguez, whom I mentioned in the first session because Wolffer works with her concept of liminality. Diéguez explained that femicides and transfemicides are liminal; hence, it is possible to

understand what is happening in these places only from liminality. The transfemicides that were honoured were Paola's, the first case of transfemicide in Mexico. A guy murdered her while she was working. At daylight, he shot her. Kenya Cuevas witnessed her murder and has been talking about it. Because police also mistreated them, they deadnamed Paola and disregarded it. It was classified as a homicide until the Human Rights Commission intervened to be considered transfemicide. Nevertheless, there isn't a law to protect trans women. When Lagarde was asked about this, she initially said that the law for women protects them as well. Two months later, she claims they needed their one law not because of the feminist lobby against trans as they were trying to change the word woman. Hence, Lagarde said, 'if you affect the law, we should make another one because it is important to keep the word woman'.

The other honoured case was Alessa's that is unsolved till today. Alessa's body was discovered inside a hotel. Her friends have done all the research. However, another problem is that the place where they are being murdered is the same as where they work and live. Hence, this intersection has marked their daily existence.

The second spot of pain was at UNAM in honour of Lesvy Berlín. I don't know if you have heard about this case; it was widely covered. Lesvy's mom, Araceli, is now an activist against femicide. Berlín appeared murdered inside the UNAM with a phone cord around her neck. The Attorney's General published on Twitter that Lesvy committed suicide. They pretended for everyone to believe it was possible to commit suicide like that. Since it was unbelievable, they posted a second Tweet trying to justify why Lesvy was murdered; they described her as an immoral woman that got what she was looking for. As a reaction, there were many demonstrations at UNAM, and the #SiMeMatan became a trending topic. A woman published their profiles on social media to avoid the police creating a fake profile. At this point, Tamara Ibarra mentioned that universities have protocols that are not working and are favouring gender violence. Mariana Berlanga discussed the artistic side and, María Laura Rosa, who coordinated the conversation, stated that the objective of being there, next to the phone booth, was to re-signify the spot.

The artist here was Mónica Mayer. Some of you already know her. Mayer was the first feminist artist in Mexico. She started working in the 1970s. She studied for her master's degree at the Woman's Building. She met all the USA feminists (Judy Chicago, Suzanne Lacy, Arlene Raven, and all). She came back to Mexico in 1982 and taught some workshops on feminist art. From those workshops, three feminist art groups emerged. I will play the video of what she did. Unlike other *artists* and artists, Mayer prefers to work with happy and loving dynamics; she has some denunciation artworks and has worked with victims, but she is usually less violent than others. She is famous because the clothesline was her idea, but nobody gives her credit. Now you can find a clothesline at every university in Mexico. However, they have been deformed. Mayer started the clothesline with a question: 'What don't you like about your city?' Then, she hung the testimonies in a clothesline. She doesn't charge for installing the clothesline because she doesn't want to make money out of the suffering of women. It is worth noting that Wolffer and Mayer study deeply the topic they are working with. As we know them, the clothesline has become a weapon; sometimes, when denouncing the name of the rapists, if he is facing a trial, he gets fewer years because his right to privacy has been violated.

What Mayer did was take purple t-shirts to the UNAM with Berlín's profile to confront the profile created by the police. Then, led by Berlín's parents, participants walked through UNAM and intervened in the university and the phone booth where Berlín was murdered. (Video playing).

The red stickers you can see in the video were used in the four spots of pain. Not only in UNAM. About the media complicity, lawyer Gabriela Amores gave a workshop for the Museo de las Mujeres in Mexico City. You can watch the videos on Facebook. There, she explained that in the case of femicides it is unlikely there will be any justice; hence, she gave a workshop advising what to do to avoid any issues. The problem with the media is that many publish the name and face of the murderer, helping him to get fewer years. Thus, therefore is a conspiracy between media, the government and violent men.

The third spot of pain was in front of the Supreme Court of Justice. You will see a difference between the other two points. It is no longer a place where a woman was murdered; it is a place that should guarantee access to justice. Jennifer Tyburczy coordinated the conversation. Lulú Barrera was part and stated that there is a strategic autocracy trying to avoid access to justice. Andrea Medina and Soledad Novoa described the institutional violence families face when denouncing a femicide. In that sense, Netflix recently released the documentary about Maricela Escobedo, a paradigmatic case about femicide and the lack of justice.

Invasorix was in charge of the artist event. They are musicians without a genre as they compose according to the context and the needs. For this case, they wrote a corrido. We will listen to it, and then I will tell you about the case. It makes sense for them to use a corrido. First, because it is a genre men have used to build heroes, especially after the Revolution. When a corrido tells the story of a woman being murdered, even before the term femicide existed, women are portrayed as deservers of getting murdered; they work like a lesson telling women what to avoid staying alive. You can listen to the corridos of Rosita Álvarez, Güera Chavela, Belén Galindo. So, I will play the video.

Well, they also gave the lyrics to the audience to invite them to sing. Here are the lyrics. They were singing about the case of Mariana Lima Buendía, and it makes sense they did it in front of the Supreme Court of

Justice as it was the first case they classified as femicide. It took several years. Mariana Lima Buendía was married to a violent man who hit her on several occasions. She decided to leave him, called her mom and told her she was going to arrive. Ballinas, her husband, was a police officer, and he murdered her and framed it a suicide. The whole investigation was corrupted. So, corrupted Ballinas was in charge. Hence, Mariana's mother decided to look for justice. She finally arrived at the Supreme Court and, in 2015, they declared it was a femicide and that the Estado de Mexico's government had been corrupt. So, it is highly relevant that they sang it there. If they can do so many things, why haven't they? Why haven't they done enough to stop femicides?

The last spot was in front of the Attorney's General Office, and Cerrucha coordinated. Previous to her intervention, they organised the conversation. Julia Antivilo coordinated the conversation. Wolffer was also there. They concluded that the only thing women have to face femicides and gender violence is feminism. Hence, the conclusion of *Estado de emergencia* is not that now women should be violent against men; it is understood that women are angry, but they didn't encourage them to murder men. Cerrucha organised a *flashmob*. A day before, she opened a phone line to which people could call pretending to be calling the police concerning femicides. Only women called, although it was also open for men. With those calls, Cerrucha composed a song they danced in front of the General Attorney's Office. It was a salsa song.

You cannot listen to the last part. Cerrucha is the woman wearing the black dress. There you have the lyrics because Cerrucha's subtitles are not precise. The idea was to use joyful music to celebrate they were alive; meanwhile, they insulted the police for being so inefficient.

And that was *Estado de Emergencia*. Now is your turn. I can go back to any of the videos.

Participant 2: I only have a question because my WIFI connection failed. Why did they dance outside?

Natalia: oh, they didn't honour a victim. Cerrucha opens a phone line for people to pretend to call the police, then she composed a salsa song, and they danced it in front of the General Attorney's Office. The phone line was open for men and women, but only women called.

Participant 1: I don't know if I can start. The project made me angry. I felt it like... on the one hand because based on the videos, I saw not many people went; more people should have gone. On the other hand, the last one shocked me the most; I feel like the irony of celebrating being alive, dancing and listening to a sorrowful song. And, I don't know, I was reading the lyrics, and I think I am lucky to be alive. However, I am saddened by the situation we live in, which we are used to now. That makes me really angry. That the parents of victims of femicide have to go to the places to be noticed. I am angry. By the end, somehow, it works. It makes me feel. However, I don't understand why the police don't get it or don't care. Obviously, it wasn't enough; we are still pretty bad.

Natalia: does anybody want to say something else?

Participant 3: well. I have to mention that yesterday I had a terrible headache; I took two or three painkillers. And today, again, because this topic is too powerful. And just today, I learned about three more cases denounced, but agency 4 minimises the violence. They minimised rape, harassment and blame the girl or make her responsible: 'You are an adult, no? Can't you negotiate?' Besides, the agency supports the rapists. We have a severe problem. The case of Mariana Lima Buendia took them ten years to capture the murderer; after her mother's pain. This video says nine daily femicide, but today, we have 12 daily femicides; the problem is increasing. This year violence rises more than 50%, and there are no responses; so, yes, I imagined myself dancing outside the offices. I think that would make it more bearable. I have been to other performances about femicides, but I can't stand the femicides narration. Hence, I instead do it differently. People don't even notice what they dance. The corrido, to transform our corridos and the telephone line, was fantastic. Useless, corrupt and more. I mean, I think it was an excellent strategy to insult them because I really don't know what else could we do. I don't know what we are going to do with the police. Even having amazing laws, justice is paralysed.

Natalia: only a quick correction. The number nine daily femicides is not a mistake; it was the number in 2018. Besides, we know this number because of María Salguero, not the authorities because they don't share that information. So, we cannot trust the government about this issue.

Participant 2: well, I only wanted to say something. For me, Cerrucha and the rest of the *artist* projects we just saw has an aspect of healing. It is like they must work with it to heal. I can't imagine being Lesvy's parents. They have to go to be able to speak. They went to the place where their daughter was murdered. I would like to think it was healing for them. Her *artivism* goes that way; so, I also believe that it is important that we have these conversations. We need them to understand, support and do something.

Participant 1: I want to add something. I, personally, don't believe there is healing. I see this case; it was in 2017 and 2018, they are back. For me, it is not possible that they are healing because they have experience injustice, nothing has been solved, and the fact that they have to go back there to ask for justice is not healing. But, on the other hand, what is clear for me is that we are afraid. I mean, after this, I feel powerless and terrified to see what is happening and then say: 'one more day, one more day being afraid of going out, of someone close to me getting murdered and nobody would do anything'. So, to be honest, what I feel is fear.

Participant 4: well, yes, I think that is generated, and the fear is there. Because we live with fear, as Susana Rotker says about the fearful citizens, the fear has been constructed by societies, mainly in Mexico, where we live. I mean, sadly, now we live for, by and in fear. One way or another, either something happened to us, or we are just waiting for it to happen. I thought that through these artworks, through these spots of pain and resilience, it is possible to map the violence. First, I do believe people could have known about the event and avoided it. Second, I think it is possible to recognise or remember, for example, the phone booth transformed into a memorial to be aware that a feminicide happened there, a woman was murdered, and there hasn't been justice. I also think it is important and another way to give voice, but there is a difficult process for the parents that we don't know, right? And then, I was thinking about the songs, the corrido and the salsa; I see them as an effort to re-signify the reality. I am sorry, I am looking at my notes. It is like giving another meaning to the tradition of corridos. Furthermore, contemporary corridos are about organised crime, an apology of violence. There is a lot of discussion about the corrido; however, in the last years, this male role, these masculinities and the women's role transmitted through easy to remember songs...the same with salsa, like the Sonora Dinamita. The lyrics stay with you. So, it is like taking something from the inside of the hetero-patriarchal order and changed it. I mean, for me, the last lyrics, the salsa lyrics, made me experience a lot of emotions because, on the one hand, the rhythm invites you to dance. But, meanwhile, the lyrics express the anger due to our useless authorities. And yes, the lyrics moved many things in me. So, that would be my commentary.

Natalia: thanks.

Participant 5: for me, what I felt was fear. I mean, considering everything we listen to about feminicides and gender violence, I am afraid of going out. So, observing it with people close to me or the places where it has happened moved me, and now, I feel more afraid. And I think it was interesting to choose the places as they are the places where violence happened. I mean, some are places where nobody expects to find a feminicide, the school. Schools should be a safe space, and clearly, it isn't. And to think about all the other places where feminicide could happen, like one of the girls in the video said, they want to lock us in. However, for example, now, during the lockdown, cases of feminicide have increased, so, inside or out, the side we are in danger.

Natalia: Ok, my first question is related to the sort of feminist boom we have today worldwide. Seeing so many angry women protesting doesn't that make you feel safe?

Participant 5: I will speak again. Well, this was the first year I went to a demonstration. And when I went before the pandemic, literally a week before the lockdown, I had never felt so safe surrounded by so many people. We were all women, obviously. I did see a man accompanying his wife, but he was respectful. We were so many; it was the first time I felt safe while walking downtown and amongst so many. I like going to concerts and clubs, but I don't feel safe, even with my friends. Hence, I believe it is excellent, so many people support feminism; although, we still need to educate feminists. So many are there just because it is fashionable, calm, and everyone is welcomed, but it is important that they informed themselves if they enter.

Participant 1: for me, it was the same. The first demonstration I went to, two years ago, was in Spain. Seeing so many women together in the same place made me feel empowered. It was an impressive feeling. It was like, in here anything could happen, but we will rule. It was amazing. However, I feel like something else happens. For example, in the last protest in favour of abortion, you find others like you. I mean, it was cool to see so many people, but when you leave...well as a matter of fact, in Spain, after the demonstration they had the case of the *manada*, I don't know if you have heard about it. It was shocking when they said they wouldn't do anything to them. I mean, it was not the protest of 8 March. The government decided not to do anything. All the women in Barcelona went to the protest. I couldn't believe the movement against injustice. I am still amazed by what happened. In Querétaro, there was the case of the girl who was murdered, did you hear? They thought she was kidnapped, no, sorry it was in Morelia, they had a protest, and only 20 people went. So, there is a big difference. But, nevertheless, for me, it is amazing when you see all the women together; people even move aside to let us walk. It was incredible.

Participant 2: well, I just wanted to add something. I have also been to demonstrations, and the sense of safety is still there, but once it is over, the fear is back. I don't go anywhere because I don't feel safe. I mean, I still have that anxiety of getting back home. I think that for me, my sister, mother, friends and any other woman. I honestly think that these moments of unity are great, but I still feel fear. And sometimes anger from which we demand.

Participant 1: yes, now considering what participant 2 said, I remember feeling fear of a man throwing acid at us or the police. We were all together, and yet we were afraid. I feel like the police and the government make you feel like it is wrong you are there. So, yes, a bit of fear. Now, the recent one for abortion, the men driving were threatening. I did So feel fear of being hit by a car. Even with all that people.

Participant 3: I see many differences between demonstrations in Chile, Argentina, Spain, and Mexico. I do think that in Mexico, there is more noise and less creation. I feel like when you go out, you transform your fear. Well, I will talk about my experience. When I design a poster, I think, how will I do my sign? What will I say? How will I paint it? I mean, I am creative, but it is better to think about it than just arrive and start shouting. Once again, compared with Chile, Argentina, and Spain, I believe they are more creative in other demonstrations. It would be suitable for feminists to have more creative projects, songs, etc. Well, there is one song, I don't remember the name of it, but it has become a sort of hymn. Some posters are really creative. So, I think we need to encourage creativity to elaborate this fear and...well, I will share a secret. I was once walking, and I saw the green fabric, it was really cheap, so I bought nine metres and donated it to the organisers of the demonstration. My idea was to create several kerchiefs to intervene statues. However, the girls created a considerable scarf and used it to intervene in the statue of a cow. So, that made me really happy because it was a collective action. Someone saw it, bought it, cut it and placed it. It indeed was collective. I found it healing for me.

Natalia: my following question will demand some imagination from you. Imagine being in a similar situation, in a place where we all know a woman was murdered. Do you think these strategies are enough to change how we interact with these places?

Participant 2: I do think it changes; the space is transformed. Because I don't know, I think it gets another meaning from the moment a woman or a girl is murdered to the moment the space is intervened. So, for me, it would be impossible to keep inhabiting that place in the same way. For me, it wouldn't be like reanimating what happened there because I wasn't there, but it would be transformed.

Participant 4: yes, for me too. I think this question about how I would interact with this space. I do believe it is important to look at these spaces differently. I am also thinking about architecture and monuments; they were built based on a hetero-patriarchal narrative. Let's think about the famous Santiago de Querétaro. For example, the famous Santiago is riding a horse all around the city, and it is an absurd story. But it is like thinking about the history and the plates forcing a narrative. Those are the official stories that seemed to matter, so I think why not start building a different architecture, a different way of walking through the city and seeing these daily places? Nobody cares about a phone booth, but I think that if we start seeing things differently, we could rewrite history considering all our memories. If we don't want the official history to minimise specific stories, it is worth changing the official narrative. So, I guess I would intervene in the place where a woman was harmed. I mean, if we can honour Santiago, who murdered mores in Querétaro, we could do it. It is so weird the history we are telling...the history built by the government, but we say so little about daily life and everyday women, which should be what matters.

Participant 3: well, me, instead of modifying the places, I would say to women...because I go back to the example of Argentina; there is someone who goes missing or is raped they all protest. Here, women and men do nothing, there is a feminicide, and only 20 people appear. We see the mothers looking for their children, and we mistreat them. And they have been exposed to the worst kind of violence, so I think it is about giving them dignity. The dignity that was taken away from them. I would make a calling to everyone creative to create for them. In Argentina, they dance with the dead, and you had the crazy women of the Plaza de Mayo. In here, those protesting are still being judged. I have seen the mothers doing embroidery, but I think we should be building art for them to make it short.

Participant 5: I think...oops, something went wrong. Can you hear me? Sorry. I think, for example, if I was a student at UNAM and I had experienced the feminicide of someone inside the university in a place I usually see, then clearly, I would not feel safe. I mean, the situation is hard enough, and that would make it harder. I think that, for the people who know someone died there, these kinds of interventions are like reappropriated the space.

Not to minimise the murder but to change its meaning: she was murdered, and we are looking for justice...we will do something for here. It is about re-owning the place and not returning it from a simple phone booth to a memorial.

Participant 1: I think I would change it. Like participant 5 was saying. If I were studying at UNAM, I would do something because that place changes entirely. I mean, I wouldn't allow people to use the phone still. I don't know if out of respect, but like something weird. So for me, it would change completely. Every time I walk there, it is no longer a phone; it is a weapon, the witness of a feminicide.

Natalia. Participant 3, I don't know if you were talking about Las Tesis or Vivir Quintana. What do you think about these projects being a collective creation opposing the artistic speech of the solitary genius?

Participant 3: I was talking about Vivir Quintana. Nevertheless, Las Tesis are great; they influenced the whole world, and it is a collective creation.

Participant 1: I think, for me, the collective quality is really important because you give authorship to other voices and many voices are stronger than one. You can also observe it is not a person thinking one way, but several. The fact that they do these kinds of actions, I think, is amazing, and they should keep doing them.

Participant 2: exactly, this approach that every artist has through different projects I think also contemplates who is narrating. The part that is being told and what they want to express. So, I think all forms of activism are really important. Even more today. Who is speaking? What is she trying to express? Doing it in a collective is important because one person does nothing. I mean, some artists did. But art done by a collective is like a participant 3 was saying. So, by the end, it becomes something collectively.

Participant 4: yes, me too. I think the matter of working in a collective is very important. I would go back to the initial question about women confronting the authorities altogether, which provides some safety. Hence, I think they are linked. In literature, for example, many writers like Cristina Rivera Garza talked about community. The concept of the writer is being discussed. Rivera has some exercises of inviting several writers. And talking about violences, you have the book about pain. She writes about Marisela and her daughter, and then the text is intervened. It is interesting how different writers and artists respond. So, you start having a community, finding friends. And you can also observe this in art and the idea of activating an artwork by taking it to the real world. This is also what we do; as women, we create webs and groups where we feel safe. Hence, in my opinion, these projects are really interesting, and I think that now, in recent years, many disciplines are questioning this idea of genius. Before you had editions, now, they are all writers. Today, I was listening to an interview with Verónica Gerber, which work is interesting because she takes texts from different disciplines to create a new one. So, yes, I was also thinking about that how it is affecting other areas. I hope this goes further and affects humanities.

Participant 5: I think collective creation is also linked to the idea of belonging and unity. When you belong to something, you feel bigger. You find others that think like you. You are fighting for something that makes sense; so, you stop feeling crazy or alone—literally, the idea of belonging. So, I do believe working in collectives is important.

Natalia: perfect. I don't know if someone wants to say something too close.

Participant 3: you will say I went off-topic, but this is my opportunity. I saw a question on Facebook criticising the damages after the demonstration in Querétaro. The question was: how is abortion-related to feminicide? I thought it was an important question because it seems like one is referring to death and the other one to sexuality. However, it turns out that in both cases, women's bodies are objectified, harmed, and they cannot make any decisions; they are treated like slaves. That is how slaves were forced into having children, which they sold. If you cannot decide about your body, you cannot decide about your life. So, I respect them a lot, I come from a really Catholic family, and they are all pro-life. However, you have to respect the opinion of who isn't. Those who don't want to be pregnant, mostly girls and teenagers, shouldn't be forced to give birth. I mean, the majority are girls between 10 and 14 years without the possibility of making a choice. So, when they say prevention of teenage pregnancy, I answer: 'rather prevention of rape'. So well, I know your topic is feminicide, but I think they are both related.

Participant 1. I have two things. One is a doubt. What is the name of the author about gore capitalism?

Natalia. Yes. I'll write the name.

Participant 1. On the other hand, about what participant 3 said, I got a really useful explanation to understand the issue and explain it to those close to me. They are also really conservative. Until a man stops taking decisions over my own body, I will never be free. Then we can argue if people can have whichever opinion they want. I should decide over my own body, or I won't be free.

Natalia. Yes. I don't work about abortion, and I have never worked with the topic. But I try to be informed. And I am convinced that a country with feminicides cannot be a pro-life country. So, I think that there is a whole in the narrative. I mean, what participant 1 said about being afraid a car might hit them because he supported the pro-life movement is incoherent. So, I get it. However, because I have never studied the topic, I would be starting from zero.

Participant 2: I would only add, going back a little to the topic about art and museums. I think it has already been saying. There is little or no representation of women artists in museums, and I think one of the forms asked about whether we had seen exhibitions in museums. And to be honest, I haven't. I mean, these spaces are addressing a certain class. However, I think it is really important to discuss the issue.

Natalia: yes, the Mexicans have questioned the lack of representation. However, not as much as the artists from the USA because they have the Guerrilla Girls dedicated to publishing all day long about the misrepresentation in museums and the BLM movement. For example, Karen Cordero, a feminist art historian, went to the JUMEX museum and complained about being invited only on 8 March and how only 21 or 27% of the art belonged to women. They instead spend their money on exhibitions of dead artists than on the promotion of living artists. I think it has to do with the art market. Men sell their art more expensive. So, the market makes it harder.

Participant 2: and the kind of art they are selling. Also, discussing what participant 3 was saying, women are still being codified. We still experience the male gaze. So women will be seen as an object because she is represented and that is what sells.

Natalia. Would anyone want to say something else?

Participant 5. I had a doubt. Yesterday you told us something about Cerrucha and having to wait. I don't remember what.

Natalia. For you to wait for me to follow her on social media. Anything else? Thank you so much. I will send you the form. Have a lovely night.

Session 1. Mexico City. *Pieces of Evidence*, by Lorena Wolffer. 19 October 2020

The procedure is as follows: I will introduce the artworks I am analysing, trying not to influence your opinions. Therefore, I will not make subjective remarks. Afterwards, I will open the discussion. No session has lasted more than two hours. The last artwork is the longest since it is a very big artistic project on feminicide, but the other sessions have lasted around an hour. Perhaps you may already tell that the artworks I am working with deal with gender violence. However, not one of the pieces portrays explicitly violent images. However, there is violent content. If anyone of you feels disturbed at any given time, you are allowed to leave. It is important to mention this.

Let me share my screen.

Well. The first artist we are going to look at today is Lorena Wolffer. Some of you already mentioned her in the questionnaire. She is from Mexico City. She has been active for several years and became a famous performer. She is one of the few women artists that acknowledged herself as a feminist during the 90s. The concept came out of circulation around that time, under the belief that feminism had triumphed: the feminist agenda had gained recognition and achieved its goals. She still calls herself a feminist, then, is awarded a grant to go to San Francisco where she lives for two years. There, she identifies that a lot of Mexican feminism, or the negation of feminism, comes from the USA. She notices the link.

One of the performances she did is called "While we were asleep" is very interesting because it is a conversation with Marta Lamas. Lamas said that she was astonished by the claim of women artists that they cared about feminicide, yet they had not worked with the issue. Lorena's performance was precisely on feminicide. She appeared, cut herself, or traced in her body the wounds presented by several bodies of women from Ciudad Juarez that had not yet been considered cases of feminicide. But the problem was right there. While she worked with this performance, she realized that she was far from these women. She is an artist, after all. Her platform is wider than that of the women of Ciudad Juarez. Her last name is that of a European. Her skin is white, her eyes, green. There are ethnic differences that drive her away from the women of Ciudad Juarez. She is going to change her entire artistic language. She still works with performance, but her performances are, above anything else, a healing process for herself. She has talked about it. Being near violence ends up damaging her, psychologically. Physically, her jaw gets stuck as a result of these experiences. That's why she uses performance as a way of healing. She says, in her own words: "My body stopped being important; what I had to say stopped being the body. I committed myself to create platforms where many voices could be heard".

Wolffer's artwork I am working on, precisely, was one of the first ones to include different voices: "Evidencias", which she presented between 2010 and 2016. Among the authors that Lorena often mentions, and I think that it is important to discuss it in a feminist forum, is Judith Butler. Butler's definition of gender is Lorena's own. These ideas that gender is performative, that sex is not as determinant as it was earlier thought to be, and that a hetero/normative binary frame has been imposed upon men and women. Sayak Valencia, who is Mexican, is the creator of the concept "gore capitalism" that I will explore in the last session and the other author is Ileana Diéguez, who is Mexican-Cuban, is a professor at UAM (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana), and she works with the concept of originality, precisely to analyze feminist art and activism. Activism is about artworks meaning to come close to the margins to be closer to the population that is far away from the system. Now, a project may be liminal even within a museum. What matters is the interaction and the type of public with which one is working, if it breaks the institutional barriers, then it has to do more with that than with the physical space.

And I had the fortune to be able to interview her, which got me into a little...

PARTICIPANT A: Natalia, excuse me; I have a question: what if I am not familiar with the concept of activism?

Natalia: Oh don't worry I will define it. Actually, it got me into trouble because I was trying to study feminist art when I noticed that they were making activism. Then I started studying activism. But then I go to Lorena Wolffer and she comes some tells me I don't consider myself an activist. So I was left like: Now, what? It makes sense however that she doesn't conceive herself as an activist. Activism is a geologist created by the Chicano and Chicana artists community. That was certain tension already between them and the USA even before the recent migration crisis that we have had. And Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicana author, a fantastic feminist, publishes a book titled "Borderline" where she talks about this Latin or Chicana identity. Besides, she belongs to those families that, being Mexican, we're left was stranded in the United States when it became the owner of that territory. So she didn't even migrate. However, she suffers discrimination because she is not blonde. Her book became the voice of Chicanas and Chicanos, therefore it became prohibited in the United States. So, when Chicana and Chicano musicians became aware of that book, they found it interesting that art and its creation could become uncomfortable and provoking, and they started creating music that would challenge the system. They learnt from the Zapatistas in 94, contacted them, and they had a meeting in Aguascalientes II, Chiapas. It was in that gathering that they came out with this term, "activist", that may be either an artist or an activist using

artistic strategies with an activistic porpoise. That is activism. Wolffer considered herself an activist there for a while until the term was hijacked by the museums that commenced to equate such projects. That is why now she names what she does “social projects of cultural intervention”, because, she explains, she is very interested in the cultural impact that they have. She is still active within the art milieu, but she does not have... Her concern is not artistic, and she does not care if the great art critics say that it is art or the opposite. The term “social projects of cultural intervention” belongs to a marvellous united stationer feminist artist. Her name is Suzanne Lacy, and she provided the term in a book titled “New Public Art”, where she talks about public art and fine interaction of the public with art, and this idea that we hold that since public art is funded with the taxes, therefore it should be more of more significance. Today, with the Black Lives Matter movement, the book from 93 becomes even more relevant.

One of the first artworks that she, Lorena, did, already thinking of it as a platform, was Evidencias: this is it. She first presented it in 2010 in MUAC and it consisted of... she made a public call to action directed to women who had suffered any kind of violence. They were invited to donate whichever object that had been employed to violent them, accompanied by the testimony that would provide the context for the object. And their experience was great in the MUAC. Many women arrived and she also discovered that there were many experiences that she did not expect at all. Some women would not bring their written testimony but would tell it there, thus transforming it into something else, an exchange where the others would try to console her. Other women would walk around, finding out from the distance what was it all about, and in the end, would join... and would come back three days in a row bringing different objects each time. She found it pertinent to take the artwork to the public. First, in Mexico City, she presented it in Parque España and the Alameda Central. There, she followed the notion of liminality, that art ought to be where you least expect it but where it is most needed. In the end, the audience of museums is the same and the audience of feminist museums is even smaller and always the same people.

So, I will show you the objects and read the testimonies, I don't have all of the objects because the exhibition is too big.

TESTIMONY

So, these objects, the hammer and the machete may easily be related to violence. Others are difficult to picture in a violent scene. There are, besides, many types of violence listed in the law. There is psychological violence, community, symbolic, physical, and economic violence. And there is femicide violence. I will address it when showing the femicide violence objects. After taking it to the parks of Mexico City, she took it to Queretaro's Museum of the City, where she did the same. She published a call for action and not one woman came in reply. Therefore, she wrote, in white sheets, “There should be an object here”. Since the artwork was displayed in the frame of a conference, after the inauguration, she talked to the participants and asked why no one had donated any objects in Queretaro. The women explained: “Queretaro's is a narrow-minded closely knitted society, where everybody is acquainted with everyone else; the call for action had been public and we were afraid that someone would see is come with our object because they knew what we were doing coming here”. From that moment onwards, Lorena stopped making public calls to action; she now addresses the audience through social organizations and not for profits already dealing with women victims of violence. This way, she inserts Evidencias in the healing process helping the victims of violence reconstruct their story and providing the whole psychological input of these projects and this way nobody has to know who donated the objects.

This object reads: TESTIMONY

And then, there is saliva and pee amongst the objects. Once again, these are not thought of as everyday protagonists of stories of violence. The artwork was also exhibited in Guadalajara, in public parks and in the Raul Anguiano Museum, and the Tijuana Cultural Center, and then she went back to Mexico City, where it is now part of the MUAC's archive.

Another of the things that seem interesting about Evidencias is that Lorena did not have control upon almost anything. The women would chose where to exhibit their object; therefore, the curatorial process depended on them. In an interview, she told me the story of a girl who arrived to her house where she found the boyfriend of her roomie. The guy tells her that he wants to have sexual intercourse with her. She rejects him and goes to sleep. The next morning, she woke up to find her crockery all peed by the guy. She, then, donated it. By the time that Evidencias was over, the girl wrote to Lorena and told her that her healing process was over and that the crockery had now a new meaning for her; she wanted to recover it. Lorena gave it back to her. So, there is freedom in Evidencias. Out of the 237 objects, 236 remain in the collection. No other woman has asked to recover her object.

This one with the saliva says: TESTIMONY

It has several beer bottles, due to their relation to alcohol and, even if the women chose where to exhibit it, she ended up doing it herself while she traveled because she didn't travel with the donors.

TESTIMONY

Out of the 236 objects, 180 are related to domestic violence or violence against a partner, 104 relate to physical violence, 82 to psychological violence, 4 to femicides. 138 of the stressors are partners of the victims, 38 are

parents, including fathers and mothers. The rest mentioned an unknown aggressor, policemen, female professors, secretaries, male and women, and some civil servants.

Most of the objects I have here are related to aggressions committed by partners, although this one is clearly a daughter brought hit by her father, and I describe this a little to help you realize what may be found in Evidences, precisely because it is also a way to resist the way in which Mexico transforms women victims of violence in just another victim. Each year, the statistics (on gender violence) are published and no one knows the story behind the statistics. So, that's kind of the point.

This one is of a feminicide. The four, obviously, were donated by relatives or friends of the victims. Another one of those related to feminicide, was donated in the Raul Anguiano Museum, as well. The sister (of the victim) came and felt in confidence, among other victims of violence, to tell the story of her sister. The boyfriend poisoned her and their dogs with pills. So, she donated the pills employed to poison her sister. This object doesn't say how the feminicide occurred; it says that she is not here anymore.

TESTIMONY

I mean, it is obvious that violence increased until the guy killed her. The testimonies don't have an established format and the relationship between feminist artists and artistic institutions has been a hassle. Lorena often complains that women artists only exhibit in March 8th and November 25th. The rest of the year, women artists are expected to support themselves God know how, but they must be ready for those two days. And then, galleries and museums can claim that they care about gender perspective, while the art collections are mostly composed of artworks produced by men. There is a brutal gap. And they limit a lot the creative freedom and demand of the artists in general, but of the feminist artists in particular, a very concrete type of expression. Feminists are tired of that. So, it is, more of an exchange where feminists say: "You don't like me and I don't like you, because that way I am able to do whatever I want. A museum would have demanded that the testimonies were more or less uniform. Lorena did not give them any format whatsoever: she let them the way they had been placed because the point was to give voice to the victims and that came before positioning herself as the great Mexican feminist artists. And she may be one of the great, indeed.

TESTIMONY

And before playing the video, in this interview, as she has said as well in other interviews, what startles her is the lack of articulation between the juridical reality and the social reality of Mexican women. (I'll send you some more materials; I don't want to influence your judgement). Lorena, then, acknowledges that we have a fabulous law. LAMVLV is exemplary. Very few other countries in the world have such a great protection mechanism. Nevertheless, the violence record has increased ever since the law appeared. Then, there is an obvious gap between law and social reality. Evidences also plays within that limit because, in the end, all of the objects could be employed as criminal evidences for a police investigation. However, they are here, and they can't be said to be stored because they are activated by the testimony of the victim. But Lorena Woñffer is going to work a lot with how we deal with reality, that doesn't reflect the legal work made by feminists in that area. So, I will play a video. With it, I finish my collaboration and open the microphones to you. I am going to continue sharing the screen, if you want to see any of the objects.

Finally, on the examples of violence exerted by mothers, there are several stories of mothers calling their daughters fat, warning them that if they dress, groom, and behave in a certain way, they will not be able to get a partner. That is the kind of violence denounced about mothers, in most cases.

Well, the floor is yours.

PARTICIPANT A: You start, Participant B.

PARTICIPANT B: I don't know. I don't know what I will say. It made me think. If you want to start, go ahead.

PARTICIPANT A: Well, I don't know. Just like you, I don't know what will I say. I mean, I am smiling because I am nervous, precisely. The... the keynote provoked me something very, very different, and it is conflictive, right? Then... because... because... because it is never alike when you see it. Ehm... As when you listen to it, even when you experience something very different, because many times, precisely, we don't know that we are experiencing processes of violence, right? So, the fact that those... Well, that it may be taken to certain scales where, oh, my!, it is identifiable. For instance, uno of the testimonies that said "It was then when I knew. When he came in drunk and started hitting my daughter", I mean, at that moment you have to realize. Probably, there are even earlier instances of violence when she could have noticed, but like this, not only the socialization of violence, but, well, the difficulty to admit that one is such a situation. But, besides, my attention is drawn in the... like... next step, which is to give away the object used to exert violence and preserving it to become part of a kind of healing. I do think that is one of the things that surprised me. I mean, for instance, because, of course I don't think, I mean, most likely, it may be explained psychologically in a way that I can't formulated, and it makes no sense for me to do it now, but, for instance, the sister with the pills, right? What

made her think that she ought to take those pills... or... then, that was what impressed me and caught my attention.

PARTICIPANT B: Me too, I mean. Like... To me... This fact, that they are material objects... For instance, one of them that impressed me a lot was the one of the coins. Because it transported me directly. I mean, you are wearing pants and the coins fall from it. The sound they make... I got goosebumps. Because, yeah. The fact that they are something material make totally visible the violence of women, right? And the fact that all these spaces are created to make it visible. I mean, I think that's very heavy, and the fact that such objects may be used to exert any kind of violence is very powerful. I mean, even if it is psychological, and even if it is psychological, also, seems to me more difficult and strong, but I think that it may even be, I mean, like, receptive, it may be even stronger in psychological issues and, yeah, I think that is all for now.

NATALIA: It is all right. I have some questions. Do you think that it helps understand if one is in a situation of violence to see a similar situation in someone else? Why?

PARTICIPANT A: Sorry, Natalia. Can you repeat the question?

NATALIA: Yeah, of course. The question is whether when you are immersed in a situation of violence and you don't realize it, does it help to read a testimony, for instance, telling about your same story, for you to take notice?

PARTICIPANT A: Yes, yeah. I think that it does. Totally. And I think that is one of the aims of visibilization, all the times that (those stories) are told. I mean, I do think that the narration of one own's life is part of the construction of them. So, if we do not have the narrative elements to formulate that we are feeling violated, we will lack the hermeneutic elements necessary to interpret a situation of violence and, of course, because some times, it happens a lot mostly within violent families, when a person grows or relates to other families or other milieu, and then they notice. That typical "This did not seem normal to me", that which made me feel bad for a reason made me feel bad". Well, maybe it is normal, but unhealthy or not good. I think that it helps a lot to identify these situations. I think that, actually, it has helped me avoid certain situations.

NATALIA: OK.

PARTICIPANT B: I mean, I think that there is an attachment. I don't know if necessarily when you are experiencing violence it is easy as when... I mean, maybe you can kind of see it, but you don't take any action in what you are experiencing. I mean, I see it a lot in that right moment, because it is very difficult also, because well you're within a situation that, perhaps, well, one could say it was normalized. Then, it is also difficult to escape this cycle. But I do think, as Participant A, about these issues. It is not that, I mean, seeing, in hindsight, to say "Now I realize why it had made me feel bad", and besides the fact to have a, someone with whom you may share and even talk about these types of situations. It is super valuable. Because it is not that easy just to reach a woman and talk about this issue due to fear of being judged or fear or inability to express yourself, I don't know. So, I think it is very important to do it, well. That rooms are created where one might share these kinds of experiences, right?

NATALIA: OK

PARTICIPANT A: May I add something?

NATALIA: Welcome.

PARTICIPANT A: Ehm. I think that, precisely because of the last thing that Participant B said, there ought to be places where these experiences may be shared because despite what happened in Queretaro, the fact that the call for action reached people willing to tell their story, it does talk about a need, there, to tell those stories.

NATALIA: Following up on Participant B's last comment, do these places to tell stories about the violences suffered by women have to be solely composed of women?

PARTICIPANT A: I, for instance, think in the aim of the platform. I think that there are platforms that seek to conciliate within a community, for instance, right? So, in that sense, it cannot be entirely separatist. But, I, to begin with, think that, moreover if such delicate issues will be dealt with, like this, I think so. I prefer women exclusive environments.

Bless you! My dog is here.

PARTICIPANT B: I also think that it does depend a lot like on the type of violence. Because if we talk like “Oh, I don’t know. That sounds like a difficult question”. Because the fact is that I don’t know if the relatives may enter to this space, I mean, speak, or if that is another space to talk about, I mean, a femicide within the family. But I think that, more likely, that would be another space. So, I find it difficult to say: “Yeah, it should be exclusive for women”. Yes. But I do think a lot like in this about the relatives, I mean, fathers, mothers, brothers or sisters, that also need these spaces.

NATALIA: OK. Who do you think should see this exhibition? Besides the women, the day they go to donate, after the exhibition was left in the museums, for whom would it be pertinent to see it?

PARTICIPANT A: I think that everyone. I mean, yeah, everyone, everyone, the politicians! (Laughs). But I do think that it is, ahhh, a problem that does affect the entirety of the population. Not only because of the femicides. Even because of the types of violence that are visibilized in it. For instance, not only the issue of femicide, but the subject of alcoholism, that is a delicate problem in Mexico, and if you add up a poor emotional education, then, well, I think that this kind of exhibitions make it plain that such experiences are quite common, indeed. Common and different simultaneously. So, rightly, it is not the same what the artist, for instance, experiences, than what women of Queretaro live through, or women from other places. Right? I do think that it would be a matter of a lot of people experienced it to realize that violence fits almost any given sociopolitical context, no?

PARTICIPANT B: Yeah. I also think that everyone. And, more than anything, I think that it opens a space to like question everything surrounding it and even see that, well I mean a little what the Participant A said, anyone can suffer these kinds of violence and also that they are not alone. I mean, I think that is like very important, that it can be felt within some, any person may feel within a place where there is people that have been through, perhaps, something similar, and they may follow and help each other visibilize, even the stories of people that are not being told in that moment.

NATALIA: OK. When Lorena presented it for the first time, there were less testimonies available. There was no digital social media. Well, yeah. But they still were these gigantic things that everyone has. What do you think about the availability of testimonies nowadays?

PARTICIPANT B: Sometimes, I think them a little dangerous, more than anything due to the person and also due to the fact that it starts being used as their testimony. I forgot the word, I can’t recall if the right expression is “revictimization”. I mean, it’s like... I think of many... I mean, it is not the same, necessarily, but influencers, for instance. What happened with... we all saw that certain influencer was suffering, or for many, she was suffering a certain violence, then everybody started talking about that and I think that it may like... come to affect more that person, or well... that woman. Although, I think that is a very good tool in the sense that, for instance, I think of, what is its name?, I mean, of persons talking or giving their testimony and that helps them heal in a certain way, like taking those objects to a museum, then I think that it has, I mean, both sides. Well, a little harder.

PARTICIPANT A: I think that, that... let’s see... I have always been a defender of dynamics such as the Me Too movement, and that sort of thing, but afterwards I think that precisely the fact that, as women, we have a hard time vocalizing realities that are common precisely because, well, due to this tendency to remain silent and not just... socialize our experiences makes it so that if the first one... the first contact of certain persons, women in particular, with the communities, with the communities of women, is exclusively in these terms of narration of violence, I think that an undesirable consequence could be the definition of identity exclusively as victim. But, I think that, really, I think with the multiplicity and the celerity of the social media, the politics of these sort of situations has allowed for those realities to be talked about as common, a lot less ugly and serious, right? I mean, if you already told, even though, I don’t deny it: it is very, very difficult, but if you already told that you have been subject of violence, then you know that your word has a power to tell the things you like and, in that sense, it may be a first step towards the formation of communities of women.

NATALIA: Well, my last question is: what do you think of these objects being in an artistic exhibition and not in the file of a police investigation? What do you think about the fact that Lorena did not take any of the women to the general attorney, to denounce their aggressor? The objects remain in the museums and in the parks where they were exhibited. Are they useful in any way?

PARTICIPANT A: I think that, I mean, yeah. Well, I think that it is all right. Because it will have a greater reach if it is in a gallery or a museum than if it remains filed in the offices of the local police? That is, I think, because... because I have no confidence in the police, as institution, no? And I think that it is that, on the one hand. On the other, it must be, as well, a matter of due process of the victim or of the sister of the victim. I don't know if they give the evidence back to you after the resolution of the case, truly. I don't know that. But, for instance, the one of the plates that were donated first and then they were recovered. Those who are entitled to decide about those sorts of objects are the victims, the rightful owners of them. That's what I think. I think.

PARTICIPANT A: I think it very, well, powerful. It is like powerful that they are exhibited in places, precisely for the same reason PARTICIPANT A argued. In the case of the local police, I mean, it is the first thing. I mean, what happens in the local police offices is that they are going to make you sound like you provoked it all. So, besides, the victim also undertakes a juridical process for each person, but the fact that it is given the visibility that you do not even get before an attorney, I mean, not even before the world, but as a victim, I think that's very powerful. And I don't know the case of absolutely every person, but women bringing their objects, if and how it helped them heal, in a certain way. I mean, the part that is also something psychological. But it is like a step to bring an object and accept what happened. I think.

PARTICIPANT A: Because, besides, it is like, the, the,,, the fact of associating every... each violent incident with an object. I also feel that it like transports a woman outside of herself, right? In a certain way, I think, because it is not only the... the... I am, I mean, it is not my fault, but it is... there are external objects used to damage me. Then, well it is not only the guilt. And it can't just be the victim's guilt. Yeah, yes. It implies a separation from the event.

PARTICIPANT B: Yes.

NATALIA: I don't know if you would like to say anything else, derived from the questions. I want to thank you for coming.

Session 2. Mexico City. In/Visible by Cerrucha. 21 October 2020

The artist about whom I will talk today is Cerrucha. I will add one extra artist tomorrow, but basically, I am working with Lorena Wolffer and Cerrucha all along.

Cerrucha is a feminist *activist*; she identifies herself as an activist. She is younger than Wolffer. So, unlike Lorena's, she belongs to this generation with no issue with being recognised as a feminist. Her pseudonym is not an orthographic mistake. It is a mix of the word saw and *cer*, in Latin, that means to be. Hence, she defines herself as a mental saw that breaks preconceptions and leads to questions. She is highly active on Instagram. Right now, she has a show called 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva' (Art: weapon of massive construction') in which she interviews artists and *activists* from the south part of the world. She started in Mexico, and now she is working with artists from Africa. Two weeks ago, one of the artists lost her online connection during the show, and Cerrucha used the time to explain *activism*. And, for me, it was a clear explanation; she stated that *activism* detects a social issue and thinks about how to solve it using art, instead of having artwork and then insert it into the social reality, because their main concern is the social issue, not an aesthetic concern. She studied photography in Canada, and she mixes photography and street art. Like JR, a French artist, he is pretty famous and even has worked on the Mexican border; he prints giant photography, which he pastes on different walls. When I interviewed Cerrucha, she confirmed JR influence in her work. However, she does not understand how JR funds his projects, although he is linked with everyone worldwide. Meanwhile, Cerrucha works with feminist topics, and Mexican arts do not have enough support. I don't know if you heard about how FONCA disappeared, so probably the arts will be more precarious.

She developed the project I will be working on in Canada, although it was not conceived for Canada. It was her thesis. It is divided into two phases. I am only working with the first one since the second one was thought for a universal audience and had material from everywhere; it would be too crazy to analyse that universal project. However, I am interested in your insight because I am not from Mexico City, but you are; hence, I think discussing it with you will enrich my analysis. She used a strategy called bombing which consists in covering the most significant part of the city during the less amount of time; it is usually done throughout the night resulting in the town waking up completely different. She bombed 8.5 km of Insurgentes Sur and the subway stations Salto del Agua and Tacuba with this exhibition. She worked with four images; actually, they were five. Unfortunately, due to budget restrictions, she could only work with four. Nevertheless, because of the meaning of the five images, I did include the fifth one in this presentation.

So, these are the five pictures. The exhibition is called *In/Visible*, referring to the invisible roles, the labels used to name the invisible and latent people.

This one says, 'every man is the same. In none of the versions, it was possible to see the head. Obviously, it refers to the idea that all men are sexist and that we are condemned to machismo because it is natural for them.

Then she had this one. Like the last one, you cannot see the head of the woman. This one says, 'my husband does let me work'. More than being a label, it is a reality in Mexico as 12.8% of women ask for work. Furthermore, they believe getting this permission is something positive; it results from a liberal husband. Although 12.8% is not a really critical statistic considering other issues, it is linked to different problems. In Mexico, 47.6% of women feel that working means being a careless mother; hence, there is guilt involved in the female decision of entering the public sphere.

This one says: 'you are a henpecked husband'. In this case, you can see his face. The line you can appreciate is accidental as it resulted from the poster being folded. She had a lot of trouble translating the term, henpecked since she designed it in Canada. She translated it as pussy whipped.

These three posters of adults are somehow complementary as they represent patriarchy. The conceptualisation of patriarchy I am using is the one given by Marcela Lagarde since she is the author of the term feminicide, so it was possible to generalise. She defines patriarchy as: 'the patriarchal oppression is generic, meaning it is an oppression based on the fact that we are women, no mattering our social class, language, age, race, nationality, occupation, for patriarchy being a woman means being oppressed'. The only annotation I did to this definition is to change the term race since it is no longer being used in social science; we are now aware that it is irrelevant as races do not exist. Instead, I used ethnicity because it is pertinent to discuss discrimination and racism based on our ethnicity in Mexico. The other two images Cerrucha had also referred to patriarchy, but she worked with children. This one says: 'This game is not for girls'. However, in this case, you have a girl looking directly at the spectator. These were the four she could exhibit in Mexico City.

The fifth one says: 'you cry like a girl'. She included this one in the second phase. You also have children, a little boy looking at the spectator and the tattoo artists in this one.

Here you can appreciate how her installation looked like. I am really interested in knowing your opinion because she pasted it next to other publicity posters. I don't know if you can notice it anymore, but being an outsider, every time I visited Mexico City, I felt overwhelmed by the number of available images.

Street artists know their work is exposed to the weather and the people's reaction, just like the feminist graffiti. The idea of the girl was the most damaged; you can see how someone tore her eyes.

After this installation, she noticed her work was re-victimising people by pasting labels that could be true without giving the people the possibility to answer. She could not appreciate the people's reaction beyond the moment in which she was pasting her poster. Hence, Cerrucha has been looking for strategies to interact more with the public to know how people answer her artwork. She kept working the same way; the final installation was in the subway train that crashed a few months ago. Nevertheless, it is different to *In/Visible*; instead of criticising, she proposes invitations to *sororidad* and female unity. So, she has also modified her street art language and now, she has workshops and another kind of public interaction.

So, considering her new strategies, I would like you to propose your activity. First, I will ask you to answer some insults Cerrucha used in one of her workshops. Then, you can use the chat to respond to them. This dynamic was inspired by the fact that she did not allow the people involved in *In/Visible* to answer to the tattoos. Hence, she tattooed people, and if they could adequately respond to the label, she erased or modified the tattoos. She worked this way at the Centro Cultural España during a workshop to eradicate gender violence; she found that people had difficulties answering any accent, including *chinga*. During the conversation sessions in Querétaro, they were surprised about this as it seems really easy to respond to '*chinga tu madre*' (rape your mother) with '*la tuya*' (rape yours). I was not at Cerrucha's workshop; however, I think that if you answer that way, you perpetuate the cycle of violence. Furthermore, I do not think that answer deconstruct the word *chingar*. The other version of this intervention was presented at the Universidad de la Tierra during the Zapatista Festival *CompArte*; in that one, they could erase all the tattoos. I think it has to do with all the actions taken by the Zapatistas and the fact that they are isolated from mainstream culture. Hence, my proposal is for you to try to answer Cerrucha's tattoos.

This one is masculine, so I propose to translate it to 'how lesbian are you'.

PARTICIPANT A: well, for me, it is curious because the first reading I did of this tattoo was as a synonym of a coward. So, somehow, there are several meanings intertwined depending on each person.

NATALIA: yes, sure. If you instead think about it in that sense, it is perfect. This one says *feminazi*, a commonly used adjective to call feminists. This one says, 'surely, you are menstruating'. All these images are from her intervention at the Universidad de la Tierra. One of the challenges of analysing this version is the protection of personal information. Cerrucha cannot share a lot of information about the workshops. This one says: 'be desirable'.

Do you agree for me to give you 5 minutes to answer this one, and then we can discuss it.

PARTICIPANT A: which was the one before the last one? Sorry.

Natalia: That one was, indeed, you are menstruating.

Natalia: Ready? Do you want more time?

PARTICIPANT B: yes, please, a little.

Natalia: If you don't feel comfortable doing it, you can avoid it.

Participant B: no, no, it is perfect. It is just hard.

Natalia: Ok, perfect.

Participant A: I am writing what I would like to tattoo instead and the explanation. Is that ok?

Natalia: yes, sure. I would analyse it as well.

PARTICIPANT B: ok, well, if I can't explain it, I will just say it.

Natalia: Hi, participant C.

PARTICIPANT A: Ufff, now I even want to get a tattoo.

Natalia: you can try with henna and see how you feel with the tattoo. I guess it is also part of the experiment. This was an artistic intervention in which Cerrucha, the artist we are analysing today, tattooed with insults, but

if people could answer, she erased them or modified them; so, they are trying to do the same. We translate it to the feminine version, so it could be you are such a slot or yo lesbian. The other one is feminazi; indeed, you are menstruating and make yourself desirable hence, if you won't answer the tattoos online, like if you were erasing the tattoo.

Participant C: ok, I will try to answer some.

Natalia: thank you.

Participant C: oh, using the chat. Wait, I don't know what I did. Sorry.

Participant A: should we send it to your private chat or the public one.

Natalia: no, please to the public chat. Thank you. Unless you want to send me something private.

Participant C: Nat, I can't find my chat. It says Anáhuac. No, wait, it says I have to start again. Sorry, I am useless.

Natalia: what do you mean? You can't see what Participant A published?

Participant C: no, I can only see a small frame. I can see that participant A changed her hair. Hi, participant A.

Participant A: move your mouse. You will see something.

Participant C: no, nothing. I can only see Anáhuac, click on Zoom.

PARTICIPANT A: oh no, that means you did not log in through Zoom but through your mail. Look for the Zoom app.

PARTICIPANT C: oh, I only clicked on the link. This has never happened to me before. Yes, Zoom Meeting Anáhuac.

Natalia: ok. I am reading your answers. I do not know what Cerrucha is. I got through this exercise. I think participant A's answers are really creative and significant. She is already immersed in the discussion and, in that sense, I would ask you if you are aware those in the feminist will only appreciate your answer environment=

Participant A: Yes, but I also think that you are asking me about my body. Hence, I would tattoo this. If a man shouts these insults on the street, this is what I would answer. I won't lose my time explaining what is wrong and explaining the concepts. So, yes, I am OK with it.

Natalia: ok. Perfect.

Participant a: Yes, that would be what I answer. And I would also ask for my free tattoo.

Natalia: ok. Then I have Participant B's answers. Ok, I only have one observation. I think people calling feminists feminazi have no clue who the nazis were, so I don't know if you want to add anything.

Participant C: I can't write in the chat, but I will share my answers. I like the exercise. I would work with the insult 'what a whore'. Y would answer: 'Oh, you have no imagination'. I would ask for a tattoo saying: 'oh, you have no imagination. I am free to do what I please. That is it; I wouldn't answer anything else. Because I am free. Sometimes being free is read like being a whore, right?'

Natalia: Ok, yes

PARTICIPANT C: yes. I don't know, anyway, it is not original at all.

Natalia: well...I can't share my opinion.

PARTICIPANT C: well, that is what I see. However, I am not a whore. I am my owner. I am not sure I understood the dynamic.

NATALIA: yes, yes, yes. The exhibition we are discussing is this one. I will contextualise it a bit for Participant C, the previous work before the tattoo. She had four images, well five, but she could only paste four around Mexican City in Avenida Insurgentes Sur, Salto del Agua and Tacuba. And the images were these four: you cry like a girl, this game is not for girls, you are henpecked, my husband lets me work, and all men are the same. Hence, what follows is for me to ask you questions. Oh well, if anyone wants to say something about this artwork, go ahead. Yes, participant B.

PARTICIPANT B: precisely what you were saying. There is always publicity in Mexico City. And I started thinking about it and to be accurate, after living here my whole life, I am not that impressed. I mean, I walk by or drive, see them, but they don't call my attention. So, for me, it is interesting how she appropriated the space. But, I am not sure if I am speaking on behalf of all the Mexicans living in Mexico City. You just walk by without noticing, so it is like conquering space.

Natalia: Ok, would anyone want to say something else?

PARTICIPANT A: I love it. The one about all men being the same...I actually feel like I have seen this exhibition. Like participant B said, sometimes you don't even notice, but...when was this?

Natalia: In 2010.

Participant a: yes, I used to walk that same street back then. So, it is interesting which kind of people will be touched by this exhibition. Now, I think I would have known about this exhibition, even without being the one who spots it, through Twitter. It would have become viral if it was happening today. Besides, I think she is valuable because it was done before feminism was so popular in Mexico, a significant provocation. I would like to see it, to be part of the communitarian experiment.

Natalia: ok. Participant C, I don't know if you would like to say something.

PARTICIPANT C: Well, I didn't know about it; I mean, in 2010, I don't know how I was in 2010. However, I think it is interesting, and I am curious about the reaction. So, the question is, how would I react? What would I feel?

Natalia: in reality, thinking about what participant B said, the idea that it fights with publicity...

Participant C: I like it because she uses such common phrases. Don't be henpecked; you cry like a girl. I mean, these sayings would call my attention. Maybe a lot of people would say: what is this? What are they selling? Or is this a sporting event? I think it would lead people to believe it is an invitation to rethink, which is interesting. I would hope that it would be replicated now. As participant A said, it would be more popular today.

Natalia: Ok. The good news is that Cerrucha is constantly posting on the social networks that she is looking for models for these kinds of installations. Hence, if you are interested in participating, look for her on Instagram. I didn't provide you with that information to avoid influencing your opinion. Also, I am competent on Tuesdays as she has her show at seven, but you can watch the recording. Some of the questions I have, well, the one about the posters in Mexico City...most of the feminist art or activist expression are addressed to women, and it is women the one being represented or photographed. What do you think about a proposal that includes men and is addressed to men as well?

Participant A: I think it is confrontative, right? I mean, I feel like it is confronting, and I guess men could react violently. They would get mad.

Participant C: what does it mean to include them?

Natalia: to include them?

Participant C: do you think this is addressing men?

Natalia: yes. I mean, the thing is that when feminist art began in 1960 in the USA and then in Mexico and the rest of the world. The art critics, one of the things they said was: 'the male gaze dominates art, men decide what we see and how we see it'. Hence, art is crowded with naked women with an erotic connotation that satisfies the

male desire. And Feminists, artists and *artists*, reacted to this critique, excluding men from their representations or performances. In this case, Cerrucha addresses men and women by pasting it on the streets where both gender walk by and having male models. Hence, what do you think about feminist art that includes men, or do you think it has to be exclusively for women?

Participant A: I disagree; I think it is for whomever the artist wants to because this problem affects us all in the first instance. Anyone can walk on the streets, right? And seeing this...Hence, in that sense, it is for everyone she wanted to speak to directly. I think it is a widely available artwork, and that is amazing. When we say it speaks to men, we could ask which way it is talking to men? Is it confronting or liberating them from sexism? I think it is both ways. With: 'yes, we have the right to cry', and I thought: 'oh, how boring it would be, but this, one of all men being the same, I think it is a super-effective way to provoke people questioning themselves. Even if they get angry, I think that maybe, if they see a photo of a man saying 'when I drink, I hit my wife' or something like that, it is confronting even if they answer with not all men. It is the image of a subject, so, I don't know, it seems really powerful. I loved it.

Participant B: yes, I think that, just like participant A is saying, they can get uncomfortable, right? I think a lot about what you said; I don't know if they get it the same way. However, this idea of them destroying the images shows a reaction. Hence, for example, in some instances, I think that the adult's bodies, which you can't see the head and then seeing the girl's face, become more real.

Natalia: Ok.

Participant C: for me, it is okay. I like the idea that they were included. The fact that feminist art is not only addressed to women and not because they fear being rejected or want to be validated by men, but because education is needed. Sometimes some men were educated in sexism, and they don't even notice the harm they inflict. I mean, once, a friend of my daughter asked her: 'do you really walk with fear?' He was an only child, and when he heard his friends talking, he was surprised. He never questioned certain things. So, for me, it is good that this was addressed to men as well. Besides, the world is mixed, and considering how we are educated, I find it very useful.

Natalia: Ok.

Participant B: can I just say something really fast? Obviously, it is for everyone; however, I also think that sometimes men, I have heard, demand from feminists to consider them when it should be their initiative. They should propose a plan to be part of. Maybe with these kinds of projects, they would feel encouraged to share their experience and listen. I mean, listen to the experience of women, I think that is important.

Participant C: yes, I would like the dialogue. I mean, sometimes I think they are not aware of their privilege. So hence, for me, it is excellent that there is a calling for them to think, to question themselves because they are a privilege.

Natalia: yes, ok. In a sense, the feminist discussion has to do with everything you are saying. Men have a lot of privileges; in general terms, they have better access to education. So then, why do feminists have to do the homework for them? However, if no one does the homework and opens the door for them, they don't even notice. So, it is not defined how to include them.

Participant C: I disagree with doing their homework, but invite them to think

Participant A: right, because the matter relies on an individual realisation; hence, if we did the job for them, it wouldn't work. Right? They sometimes say: 'you are doing their homework', but it is meaningless if they are not interested. And there are some interested in studying masculinity, and it is a fascinating topic. So, it is not necessarily doing their homework. It is more like, look, I want to dedicate my study to this, but it is not the same as being aware; awareness is completely subjective, and no one can do it on their behalf. However, I get it; it is an annoyance when they say: 'femicide and whatever (like mocking)'. I answer: 'Look, we live in the century who knows what, don't you have Google? Seriously, before you open your mouth, can't you search in Google? At least to avoid looking ridiculous'. Honestly, before I publish any Tweet I confirm with Google, I ask myself: is this how we write Shakespeare? And I google it. Well, I am also privilege to have an iPhone and so on, but if you have Facebook, then you have Google, for sure.

Participant B: Totally.

Natalia: Yes. I was telling you that one of the words that couldn't get erased was *chingar*. So, which implication do you think the word *chingar* has for Mexicans? And, why do you think it couldn't get erased?

Participant C: Well, it has a sexual connotation, no? Isn't it rape?

Natalia: yes.

Participant C: well, and it is also related to power.

Participant A: but, how?

Participant C: When I say: 'ya te chingue' it means that you are screwed. Initially, it was related to rape.

Participant A: but how would you erase it?

Natalia: yes, she tattooed people with phrases like 'chinga tu madre' or ¡me lleva la chingada'.

Participant C: 'Chinga to madre' is the strongest.

Natalia: I was explaining to you that in Querétaro, they were surprised it was so hard to answer when you can easily reply: 'chinga la tuya'.

Participant C: right!

Natalia: however, if I answer like that, I keep the cycle of rape.

Participant C: yes, sure.

Natalia: ok, so do you think the verb *chingar* is still related to rape.

Participant C: I do.

Participant A: yes, but also, we could re-signify the word. There are many words we can re-signify, like *puto* (faggot), even *puta* (whore). Even considering the debates. I don't know if there is a debate, but *chingar* is particularly difficult to re-signify since it is not only related to rape but to murder.

Participant C: agreed.

Participant A: yes, I think it is one of the hardest. I mean, for me, it does not sound so bad. But, like, *chinga tu madre*; however, if you stop for a while and think about it, it is really strong.

Participant C: yes.

Participant A: yes, we have other words like *pendejo* (dumb) and so on. But we use *chingar* with so many meanings.

Participant C: yes, you are screwed, someone assault you...and so on.

Natalia: Ok.

Participant B: and do you think it can be re-signified?

Participant A: I mean, I think there has been already some re-signification when using it, so...well, no, it is not a re-signification the fact that it has several meanings. However, when I tell my sister: 'chinga tu madre', I don't mean 'rape our mother'.

Participant C: yes, you are saying: 'go away'.

Participant B: well, yes, and then we have the *chinga-quedito* when you are bothering someone a lot.

Natalia: Yes, and I don't know. You made me think...I don't know if you remember the re-signifying exercised. Coca Cola Light had a campaign in Mexico where they tried to resignify the word macho; one of the few times, Coca made a mistake. Their publicity showed men being chivalrous accompanied by phrases like my boyfriend is macho because he opens the car door for me, my boyfriend is macho because he drinks coca with ice, my boyfriend is macho because he cries at the movies. The Mexican audience was angry and said...

Participant C: oh yes, it was a few years ago, right?

Natalia: right. Like five years. The proposal was to re-signify the word macho. However, the Mexican public said something like macho has so many strong connotations, and it is so problematic you cannot change it so quickly and transform it into something positive. Hence, I am not sure there is an effective exercise to re-signify the word chingar.

Participant A: right.

Participant B: besides, it can be dangerous, right? I mean, I see it like using publicity this way, because finally, you don't know who and how you may affect people—for example, women. So for me, it is a dangerous practice.

Participant A: but it has been achieved through art. I think that it is like something you have to feel, and in that sense, urban art is the answer. They sell you publicity like it wasn't art because it doesn't affect your subconscious, though it is precisely what it does. That is why art has to become that, and it also has to be like boom: I place it in front of you and affect the way you think without you knowing. I mean, Kotex has done it. That is why I think it is interesting that she (Cerrucha) could do it with those words, even if she received backlash and Coca Cola couldn't. I mean, they can, and they try, but it is not the same. I don't know why; it is not the same.

Natalia: I am sorry I interrupted you.

Participant A: no, no, no, it is only that I think a lot. Well, not a lot; it sounded so cocky. I keep thinking things, and when there is silence, I start thinking out loud.

Natalia: What you are describing the relation between art and publicity is one of the subjects worked on by Araceli Barbosa. When feminist art began, either in the USA or in Mexico, the feminist art critics began working. Amongst them we can name Araceli Barbosa and Gladys Villegas. Barbosa stated that one of the responsibilities of feminist art is precisely to attack women's objectification in publicity; hence, there is an obligation. The strategy of imitating their techniques to change how women are represented without a marketing intention. Consequently, Cerrucha achieved it while Coca Cola couldn't. Because she doesn't want to sell anything, she is not trying to convince us to buy something. Not having a prominent capitalist behind makes more accessible the boom for art. Though, I guess if Cerrucha receives a budget like Coca Cola's, she would be delighted. She has other interventions. She went to the Chamber of Deputies and pasted messages all around. Now, what do you think about the change of strategies? From wheatpasting to tattooing people to avoid re-victimising? In that way, she could observe how people react. Do you think it is equally effective?

Participant B: well, I think...for example, the posters, obviously you are reaching a bigger audience because I am not sure how many say them, but you can reach many people. However, I think the change was effective. I guess it depends on whom you are trying to get.

Participant A: I agree with participant B. Maybe the impact of the second strategy is more profound because it is more personal; nevertheless, it is also related to how close you get to the artwork, right? It would be more personal than for those walking by. Well, I am not sure; it is what I think. I can perceive she had different objectives with each; however, it is cool that she considered the individuals more relevant and not in a specific and labelled population. I feel like the label is broken when it is that person, so I believe it is valuable. It is like saying, you are way more than a 'faggot', more than a man or woman, more than a word. It has to do with the implications of the label and who I am because we are always more than a statistic. So with the posters, you'll have a bigger audience, but it would not go that deep.

Participant C: well, I like the idea of the posters. However, what participant A is saying is a different intervention. I think both works.

Participant A: yes.

Participant C: they each work differently, and I like the idea of having an interpellation as muralists did. Like a great artwork can be seen by many, but I agree with Participant A that it may be different. It is an other approximation. I think both are useful, well, not useful; both are valuable. The idea of the poster on the wall is nice for me.

Natalia: ok. Then, the participants from Queretaro stated that the tattoo is, somehow, an analogy of how in real life, women confront the *álbur*. I mean, now we can see the pictures and think about how we would answer, and you can watch a movie or the TV and watch how a woman is insulted and think of possible answers; however, in reality, when it happens to us, you run as fast as you can, and you don't dare to answer. Do you think it is possible to see this analogy, or it was a personal perception?

Participant B: I think the analogy is there.

Natalia: ok, I don't know if you would like to say something else about the artwork. I can go back to the images.

Participant B: what was the reason for which she didn't include that one?

Natalia: lack of budget.

Participant C: oh, how terrible. And now it is even worst.

Natalia: yes. Frenta is the name of the project they presented last Friday. Lorena Wolffer, Cerrucha and other artists presented Frenta, which is a way to confront the weakening of FONCA, and it is how they now plan to survive. Even if FONCA didn't work correctly...

Participant C: yes, it had little, and it has less.

Natalia: yes, it had little, and it was sexist. It is interesting to observe their strategies. Last Friday, they introduced several feminist art collectives explaining how they want to contribute to Frenta. There are people from films, literature (Participant A, you were asking about literature), some were from Ciudad Juárez (and those poor girls recently experience the feminicide of one of them). It is worth watching. I hope it is successful.

Participant B. I have a question. Well, right now, it is hard. But will there be anything by Cerrucha or Wolffer soon?

Natalia: Wolffer has a project called 'Historias cruzadas'. She had been working with it physically, but with the pandemic, she transformed it into a virtual project. She just added 'Historias cruzadas, historias desde casa'. She is collecting stories and pictures of how people are living the lockdown. Cerrucha has 'Arte: arma de construcción masiva'. I guess for 25 November they will do something. Thank you very much for being present.

Session 3. Mexico City. Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia. 21 October 2020

I'm going to start. Today's project is *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia*; it was a huge and collective project.

Give me a second to figure out the screen sharing.

Cerrucha, Lorena Wolffer and other feminists participated. Aside from their objectives, it is also possible to track Cerrucha and Lorena's artistic evolution. As explained during the first conversation, Lorena started as a performer and then dedicated herself to creating platforms for others to speak. This exhibition allows us to see Lorena Wolffer's desire to amplify others' voices and how Cerrucha challenged herself to propose more interactive dynamics.

Estado de emergencia is from 2018, coordinated by Lorena Wolffer, Jennifer Tyburczy (an American queer studies expert who explores how museums, curatorship and museography force you to see art in a hetero-normative way). As a curious fact, she studied at the COLMEX and has an excellent article, excellent and sad, of bachelorette parties organised by the ladies Lomas of Mexico City), María Laura Rosa (an Argentinian feminist art historian) and the other who organised it was Julia Antivilo, who is a feminist, activist, art historian; she is Chilean but lives in Mexico and is the coordinator of the part of the PUEG that is dedicated to gender and art studies.

There are three concepts that I think are important to understand the project. The first is 'queer'. To my knowledge, only Tyburczy and Wolffer are queer; I do not know about María Laura Rosa and Julia Antivilo. However, they all are followers of Judith Butler. Hence, they understand gender as a performative quality. It is important to consider that Butler has not been very clear or has not always been very clear about the performative quality. Her book 'Gender Trouble' changed gender studies; nevertheless, she wrote prologues to explain herself. If you read the first edition of '89 and the last of '99, she states: 'Let's see I never said that the body did not exist because if I say that I cannot consider myself a feminist since I would deny that there is the female sex, but my proposal is that sex is less relevant for the identity and still has works in which he speaks of the body, In 'Bodies that matter' she speaks of the body; since she comes from a Lacanian tradition, her idea of performativity is much more complex.

The other concept is 'Capitalismo Gore' by Sayak Valencia, which is the concept with which these women feel related. So, what does it mean to agree with gore capitalism? Rita Laura Segato, the other great theorist of feminicide in Latin America, explains that the man who commits feminicide is a victim of its social, political, and economic context. Given the inequalities, he is conditioned to be a violent being. Meanwhile, Sayak Valencia explains that that is not the case for the Mexican case; we have neoliberalism. She criticises neoliberalism well, unlike someone we know. What she says is: Mexico is a centralised country, half poorly developed here and there and, suddenly, NAFTA was agreed, and we forced the states to modernise in five minutes which ultimately broke the social fabric. In the case of Ciudad Juarez, with a broken social fabric, turned into capitalists, they sent women to work without telling men: 'equality has arrived, and your wife has the right to work'. Then, overnight their women have independence or economic freedom, relatively because the salaries are not high enough. There is a promotion of this idea that the great capitalist is the person who earns the most money. In Mexico, the opportunities to become wealthy are practically nil, so crime seems the only option. In this Mexican environment and this narco-culture, the most qualified to be a good capitalist is the most violent; masculinity began to be taught as violent behaviour and the most masculine, the most macho, and the most capitalist in these terms is the most violent. Hence, feminicide is only a manifestation of how far the violence of man reaches. So that is how they understand the context of Mexican feminicides.

PARTICIPANT A: sorry, but I didn't quite understand how this contradicts Segato's proposal. Because I don't think they're exclusive, I think they are.

NATALIA: they are not exclusive, but in one, he is like a victim of the system, and in the other, there is a promotion, and there is no idea of victimisation of the vulnerable. It is rather like a systematic promotion of violence. In Segato, there is no systemic promotion of violence. It is as a consequence.

PARTICIPANT A: I would like to talk more. I mean, what I understood about Segato is that feminicide is like an initiation rite to be part of this violent society and then, so it's like a message to peers. To my knowledge, that is what little I know about Segato's hypothesis. And it seems to be in line with gore capitalism.

NATALIA: No, yes, Segato does have that. The great advantage of Segato is that she has done anthropological work and has interviewed men convicted of feminicide. And yes, she has the definition of expressive violence in which these cases of the militia and the police murdering women is an initiatory rite. However, in her

conception, these men are still victims of a violent system. In Valencia, there is no victimisation; it is a manifestation of what they are taught. So, yes, that is the difference.

PARTICIPANT C: Nata, a question, I'm like my students who asked something about a matter explained like a while ago. What is the second Butler's book you mentioned?

NATALIA: yes, don't worry. One is 'Gender Trouble' with the prologue of 1999 and, the second one was 'Bodies That Matter'.

PARTICIPANT C: yes, yes, the 'Gender in dispute' is the one I wanted.

NATALIA: oh yes, yes. The third concept is liminal, which I already mentioned in the first session, but I did not define it. In fact, Ileana Diéguez, who is the theorist of liminality, was a participant in *Estado de emergencia*. The liminal is all this that happens in the margins; she is not referring to the physical margins. You can transform a museum into a liminal space the day you take an audience to a museum that is not used to it; you reverse the hierarchies, what Lorena does when giving preference to the others voices, and that type of dynamics make a work liminal.

Another important detail of *Estado de emergencia* is that Wolffer was contacted and hired by the Centro de Cultura Digital for 25 November. They told her we want an exhibition about femicide. She said: 'yes, if you abide by my conditions: it will not be individual work, it will be a collective effort, as the feminist speech is a collective one, I'm not going to use any of your cultural facilities; I will use your cultural facilities as a victim care centre and I'm going to give psychological and legal advice to victims of violence and self-defence workshops. All the events were held in public spaces that had some connection with femicides in Mexico City'. Those were like her conditions. In addition, it was not held on 25 November; I guess it is because Lorena does not love this idea that only on 25 November and 8 March there are exhibitions of women. It was four days, from November 10 to 13. The full name is *Estado de emergencia: puntos de dolor y resiliencia* since all the spaces where it was presented are points of pain and resilience.

The first was in Puente de Alvarado. Before all these artistic events, they organised conversations with a pedagogical purpose and prepared the public for the artistic event. So, here this point of pain was related to trans femicide, in a tribute to two cases. One is the only and the first case recognised by the Mexican authorities as trans femicide, which is the case of Paola. Paola was attending a client, she was a sex worker, and he shot at her when she realised that she was trans. One of the transept women witnessed and followed the denunciation process where they were also discriminated; they suffered deadnaming, which is one of the impediments to be considered bring-femicide. The CNDH then had to intervene to determine that the State was exercising violence and considered trans-femicide.

PARTICIPANT C: that is, they used the name before the change.

NATALIA: exactly. The other is Alessa's, a case that remains unsolved. Fellow sex workers found Alessa in a hotel with signs of sexual violence. They had the conversation, and then they had the artwork. It was in this conversation where Ileana Diéguez said: only from the liminal we can understand liminality, so here we are at a point on the margins, although Puente de Alvarado is close in Mexico City's centre, in the end, the centre is coded in margins and there more accepted and less accepted populations. Then if you do not mess with the margins, there are no ways to experience these conditions. And this is mixed with the idea that women are always in a liminal state. Even when they are on top of the hierarchy, they are seen as inferiors, so the liminal condition depends on gender identity. What the trans women did is a poetry reading; I'm going to play de video; it doesn't have violent images.

PARTICIPANT B: Natalia, can I tell you something really fast? I don't quite understand the concept of liminality. Is it that we're kind of on the sidelines of being considered within a society or something like that?

NATALIA: yes, that too, it comes in with the theory of subalternity. Officially the subaltern is the one who is not, who is not considered as an Other, and there is this idea that if you are a white woman with education and a good salary job, then you are no longer a subaltern, and you stop being liminal. But, in reality, it is not like that because chances are your male peers won't see you as an Other, with a capital letter, so yes, that is where this bonding of the liminal comes from. Then I am going to play the video of Puente de Alvarado. The stickers said a woman was raped here, so there is also evidence that this place was somehow 'haunted' by femicides. In Puente de Alvarado, the spot of pain is also their workplace. Also, this idea of taking it out involved whoever was interested. In the end, the customers will look for them at the same spot; then the

possibility that they arrived and found themselves all together talking about the resistance that resisting implies staying alive no matter how ironic it sounds exists.

The issue of trans-femicide is very complicated in Mexico. Marcela Lagarde, who coined the term feminicide to distinguish it from femicide, has explained it a little. Femicide is the same as homicide, but the victim is a woman; feminicide is when a woman is murdered because of her gender. So, three months ago, Lagarde was asked if she agreed to use the same law she wrote to protect trans women. Lagarde said: 'they are women and therefore if they are killed by their partners or people who had harassed them, if the body appears in some public place as a sign of violence, it is feminicide'. A month later, she came out and said: 'no, they need their law'. It is not so much because of them, but because of all this lobby to change the law of access to women to a life free of violence. TERF groups asked to substitute the word woman for menstruating bodies. Lagarde said: 'the lawsuit to have a law that includes only the word woman was brutal, then, if you start to modify the law the risk that we will be thrown back everything is great', in that sense, she suggests the law for trans-femicides, but it is actually to protect the women's law from seemingly lobbying women.

PARTICIPANT C: So, sorry, you said femicide and what was the other term?

NATALIA. Femicide was done by Diana Russell and Jill Radford in the US, and it comes from a very interesting American tradition. However, it is highly related to the US, which is different since they have serial killers and other factors involved in murder women. Then femicide does have a reason for misogyny, but above all, it refers to when the corpse belongs to a woman. On the other hand, when in Mexico we say: 'in Mexico, there are twelve feminicides a day', and the men come out with: 'we are also being murdered'. Because we have 'feminicide', then we can claim that we are discussing a gender issue. If we said femicide, then yes, we may compare.

PARTICIPANT C: So, can femicide be by an assault, not by matter of...?

NATALIA: exactly.

PARTICIPANT C. So, if she belonged to organised crime and is murdered during her illegal activities, it would be femicide?

NATALIA: exactly.

PARTICIPANT C: So, in the case of trans women, it is because of their gender or their status as women or trans women.

NATALIA: Yes. That is also why they need the law. In that sense, Judith Butler's lecture when receiving the *Doctorado Honoris Causa* at Guadalajara was about gender violence. She stated trans women: 'in addition, they represent a betrayal because they give up their privilege to become inferior voluntarily, then they are seen as crazy'. I mean, why if you have everything you wish to become 'inferior'? So, if that is true, t, they do need a law because they are not protected so far.

On the other hand, in a war, there are also cases of feminicide, and it would be interesting to distinguish between homicide and femicide. Wars usually do not have a gender perspective. However, if women are seen as spoils of war because of their gender, we would discuss feminicide and not femicide. Think about the Syrian conflict.

PARTICIPANT C: such as the violations in the former Yugoslavia.

Natalia. Yes, behind it, there were gender issues. However, each country classifies the crime differently. Mexico has a very good classification. However, *Estado de emergencia* showed that it does not matter our laws; apparently, we do not care about the legal framework.

The second spot of pain, which I guess you will be familiar with, was in the UNAM, in memory of Lesvy Berlín. Mónica Mayer oversaw the artistic intervention. Mónica Mayer is the first feminist artist in Mexico. She defines herself as an artist, although lately, she speaks about activism, but rather as she has joined the voices of young women. She started working in the 1970s. She found out a master's degree in art and gender, the first master's degree in that subject. After that, she moved to Los Angeles and studied at the Woman's Building. There she was in touch with Judy Chicago, Suzanne Lacy, Arlene Raven, all those artists. Then she returned to Mexico in '82 and organised some workshops in San Carlos. They founded the three first feminist groups Polvo de Gallina Negra, Tlacuilas and Retrateras and Bio-Arte in those workshops. Only Polvo de Gallina Negra lasted ten years.

The others ended their funding because it is not easy to survive as a feminist artist in Mexico. She is the one who invented or who made the first clothesline, so that is why I told you that I was going to talk about that artwork today. Mayer proposed the first clothesline, although she has not overseen every clothesline. She has installed them worldwide; each installation depends on whatever the women want to express. The clotheslines allow brutal visibility, but Mayer works them differently. Mayer begins with a question ‘what do you not like about your city?’ And that is what she hangs up. She is aware of the risks ongoing in the name of a rapist or sexual stalker; it can be read as personal vendettas or interfere with a legal process. Although, at the same time, denouncing all together and looking out for each other is an act of *sororidad*. Nevertheless, we have to understand that if we publish the name of a guy who has been denounced, we violate his right to privacy and can help him. After all, media helps men, and we have to ask our news and media: ‘Where does your collaboration come from? What kind of macho pact do we have between the media, police and feminicides?’ So, that is a little bit of the conflict that there are with a clothesline, the law protects women, but justice does not. Something that characterises Mayer’s performances is that they are never aggressive. Wolffer does have more aggressive performances; meanwhile, Mayer instead bets on a more loving, more affectionate dynamic. She has a performance of hugs that is about healing.

I do not know if you want me to talk about Berlín’s case; I guess you do know it, right? (Participants asked for an explanation)

The police... Lesvy appeared with the phone cord on her neck, and the PGJ published that it had been suicide. The public reacted with anger and laughter because they wanted us to assume that a girl can hold a phone long enough while dying. In other words, who do you want to trick? PGJ answered the public reaction 5 hours later with a Tweet, trying to make it look like Lesvy deserved to be murdered. Again, who deserves to be murdered? They created a fake profile of an immoral woman. Hence, women around Mexico reacted and published in social media: #SiMeMatan and described who they really were—transferring the idea that if they were murdered, the PGJ could not create a fake and immoral profile of them. Considering this, Mayer made purple T-shirts because of the meaning of purple today, in which I draw Lesvy’s real profile. With these T-shirts, they did intervene in the phone booth where Levy died to completely resignify the spot, as it was a latent threat to all women. Let me play the video.

Lesvy’s parents are the ones leading the conversation here. Maria Laura Rosa was also present. And the other two points of pain. Well, there is a picture of Levy’s mother and the phone tapped.

PARTICIPANT C: this at the UNAM? Did the authorities of the UNAM, I imagine, allow this event?

NATALIA: yes. A second issue was that the aggressor was a UNAM’s employee. There are several complaints with the UNAM about this case. So, much so that they changed the NIUnaMenos and wrote NiUNAMenos. Yes, the so, yes they have several... I mean, the recent strike of the UNAM.

PARTICIPANT C. Yes, yes

NATALIA. I mean, there is no support against the sexual predators at these public universities. I don’t know precisely how the UNAM is. I know that at UAQ, the students achieved to fire them, but the union returned them.

Mayer is hitting the T-shirts to the dads.

And the following two points, instead of the spot where women were murder, there are places related to the lack of access to justice that women have had. Then the third point of pain was at the Supreme Court of Justice. Invasorix, a group of musicians, was invited to coordinate the event. Invasorix doesn’t have defined musical gen. Rather, instead, they sing and compose according to the social issue they are dealing with. Just being very consistent with *artivism*, you answer to the social problem instead of imposing your artwork. So, in this case, they composed a corrido, which has a significant social meaning, well in addition, now we have narco-corridos that are an ode to violence. The corrido is a hyper-male tradition in which the revolutionary heroes have been glorified, some utopias of masculinities have been created and, also there are stories of femicides in the corridos: Rosita Alvarez, La Cuca Mendoza and all those cases promoting feminicides as a moral act. So what Invasorix did was reappropriate the genre because women have the right to the Mexican tradition. They sang about Mariana Lima Buendía, which was also very well-known and is the first case that the Supreme Court of Justice recognised as feminicide; hence, there is also a questioning about how much the Supreme Court could do but has not. Mariana was a feminist lawyer from Mexico; she was married to an ultraviolent policeman, Hernández Ballina. One day, she spoke to her mother and told her that she would leave him and could no longer stand him. She packed her bags ready to go, but she was told that Mariana committed suicide the following day. Since day one, Irina Buendía did not believe her daughter committed suicide: ‘I don’t think my daughter committed suicide. My daughter was going to leave him. This is very weird’. Ballinas explained

that he came to his house and found Mariana hanging from the shower pipe; he pulled her down and placed her on the bed; then, he called the police. Nobody questioned him about being a police officer and messing with the crime. From that moment, the whole case will be full of inconsistencies. The forensic reports were not consistent. Hernandez Ballina was assigned to the investigation of his own case. The State of Mexico lost information. Hence, Irinea and members of the National Observatory of Femicide went to the Supreme Court of Justice. Finally, the Supreme Court declared that it was femicide and sentenced the authorities of the State of Mexico for institutional violence.

PARTICIPANT C: Nata, sorry, what year was this?

NATALIA: she died in 2010. In 2015, the Supreme Court of Justice declared it was a femicide. Last year, they managed to capture Balinas. So, it took like ten years to get to justice.

PARTICIPANT C: I am going to silence myself because my WhatsApp is noisy.

NATALIA: (Invasorix) they have other more fun and critical musical pieces on their website. This is the lyrics of the song in case someone didn't get all the words they sang.

Cerrucha oversaw the last spot. It was in front of the PGJ, now Attorney General's Office. She organised a flash mob, which is like a happening. She opened a phone line for people to call a day before, pretending to be talking to the PGJ. She didn't get a single call from a man, though it was open to everyone. You can guess most of the messages she got are insults against the police officers. Later, she hired a musical group, and they composed a piece of salsa and danced in front of the PGJ. Let me play the video.

These are the lyrics of the song. I know it has subtitles, but Cerrucha didn't include all the lines and then she put trans-femicide in the subtitles and officially in the calls, nobody said trans-femicides. Cerrucha is the one wearing the black dress and hat.

Fundamentally, that was *Estado de emergencia*.

If you want me to go back to any of the works, come back, just tell me.

PARTICIPANT B: to me, it is something that was done to me as very..., I mean, during the performance about trans-femicide there is an ambulance passing by, because obviously, it is common in the city, but it seemed like a very interesting coincidence. But I really liked it. For example, in the case of Lesvy, it broke my heart to see her parents whenever I see the relatives of victims of femicide in the demonstration; it was always really powerful for me.

PARTICIPANT C: Can I?

NATALIA: Yes, sure, Participant C

PARTICIPANT C: I really liked the *corrido*, especially considering what you said about it being an ode to machismo. And I also liked how they recovered it, because... I don't know it had happened to me, but I loved that. I also agree with Participant B about how Lesvy's parents break your heart. Right? And the stickers that you mentioned make the artwork strong. I think it leads society and those passers-by to think about the problems. I really liked that.

PARTICIPANT A: Oh, well, I differ a little bit this time. The truth is that I did not like it. Above all, I did not find the project powerful enough. Sure I found it important, but the first video may be how they made the videos, but for example, I did not see the reading of poetry complete. Then, the second, the one about Lesvy, will sound super rude, yes, the presence of the parents make it very beautiful, but it does not seem to be an artwork. It does not seem like art to me. It looked more like a dialogue that has absolutely nothing wrong. Still, I do not understand how this proposal or format helps treat this social problem because it only seems like circles of dialogue. I liked the *corrido* a lot, but even if you are going to do a *corrido*, you can do something much better. I do not know. If you were going to dedicate so many efforts to these spots of pain, something is missing... In other words, this is the one I liked the most, the dance and everything. I am sure that they questioned the people, but even the phrases were really repetitive. Do I make myself clear? Then... I don't know, the last few videos more, and well obviously, I actually did like it, but not like, I mean, not like the other things we had seen. Those it was so strong and powerful, right?

PARTICIPANT B: I think Participant A has a point in comparing it to the previous ones we have seen... I think yes, yes, I see, that is yes, I mean I liked it, but I think I do like the better ones of the past days. However, what

still seems interesting for me is the stickers. The idea of taking the places, like we already go with our bikes or hanging shoes, is the idea of leaving something that will stay.

PARTICIPANT A: I think, being such a strong topic, feminicides, it should have been something much more shocking to see, right? I mean, they used several places of the city and yet, it seems weak.

NATALIA: OK, yes, I had a question about what you think about these strategies. If, instead of considering it as a work of art, we think of it as a provocation to give tools for other protests, does it work better?

PARTICIPANT C: Could you repeat the question to me?

NATALIA: if we think about the project more like preparation or propaedeutic course for demonstrations, giving tools for protests, going out and asking for justice...

PARTICIPANT A: I think so. Definitely, they are crucial meeting points, and I believe that each one illuminates differently. That is to say, just by focusing on specific cases, they illustrate different conditions in which feminicides occur. But, then, I think it is super valuable because it opens the dialogue in any, well not in any, but in any case, it does open the conversation. So I think it provides many, many, many tools; I mean, it's very valuable. What I didn't like so much were the videos. I mean, I think we are missing something because I'm sure I would have liked it better and questioned me more if I had been there.

NATALIA: I think you are right about noticing some of the problems that activism has in Mexico. Studying activism in the US is amazing; they have some internet pages and incredible records. I do not know Judy Baca, a Chicana artist in the US. It is weird to see the Chicanas because they want to feel very Mexican. Then they return to their roots but returning to their roots means referencing Mexico, their grandmothers, so they paint virgins of Guadalupe everywhere. In Mexico, feminists have not painted virgins for a long time. Anyway, she is making a digital mural which she later paints on a wall. You can admire the vast budget she has. In Mexico, the big problem is the lack of funding. So yes, the videos could have had much more quality if they had a budget if some media had shown interest and had made the work registration. Mónica Mayer, for example, created the first feminist archive and art, which is super helpful for the studio, but it is a little bit the same as Participant A. They tell you about the Quinceañera party, which was the most outstanding feminist work of the 1980s, and you see it on the blog, and it is interesting, but you cannot appreciate how spectacular it was. Not even how transgressive it was, because what we have are newspaper photos. Feminist art in Mexico goes as far as the budget allows, which is a significant limitation that must be recognised. There is a budgetary limit. There is also, within this same budgetary limit, the information available. Even as a sociologist who wants to document these projects, I would have to do it as a charity job.

PARTICIPANT C: and they have to eat.

NATALIA: yes, then, there is that limitation. Yes, maybe I agree with Participant A that there is a lack of registration. However, I think they organised conversations before the artistic interventions are valuable because Mexicans do not study feminism, in some cases not even feminists. Do you think they influenced how people appreciated the artworks? Or do you think a project such as Cerrucha's song would have been straightforward for people who were passing by?

PARTICIPANT C: For me, sorry, it is a bit clearer corrido. Maybe because of the type of music, because the song sounded like the tune of Rosita Álvarez and because of the idea of telling a story with music. I mean, in that sense, yes, maybe, it would have been confusing to arrive at the flash mob dancing to a song like Cerrucha's. However, perhaps the corrido is more didactic. So if someone comes, as you say, illiterate on feminism and listen to the tune sounding so Mexican, it would be easier.

NATALIA: OK.

PARTICIPANT C: That is my opinion.

NATALIA: OK, I see Participant B thinking, I don't know if I want to say anything.

PARTICIPANT B: I'm sorry, but as the WIFI connection fails, I missed the first part of the question.

NATALIA: Thinking about what motivated this artistic intervention, do you think it was appropriate to make the conversations before the artwork so relevant? Thinking about the general public, without the introduction, wouldn't this prevent an adverse reaction to pints?

PARTICIPANT B: yes, because I think the people who went to the conversation, well that is what I believe, I don't know if it happened like that, but yes, the people who go to feminist discussions, in general, are interested and wouldn't be shocked by a performance. If I know these conversations and these artists, I will understand them because I already have a specific frame of reference to understand the signs and symbols used in the performance. Nevertheless, when someone is walking by, not necessarily, right? Then they had two audiences, those ready to appreciate these projects and others who stumbled upon them.

PARTICIPANT C: but maybe they might consider it as crazy talking if you run into it. However, with music, it might be easy for them to understand it. But, indeed, there is not much knowledge about the subject, and a large majority could say: 'oh, cray feminist with their demonstrations'.

NATALIA: OK. After watching Marisela Escobedo's documentary, I had the first conversation session about Cerrucha's *Azúcar Rabiosa*. One participant said: 'Uff, maybe they are a little noble with the PGJ, because hey.

PARTICIPANT A: I just watch today the documentary. And do you know something? They say something in that documentary that describes how we feel. A lady said it: we have not done enough, we go out all together and yet, is not enough. And right now, in 2020, we are all out protesting. We have already asked politely. And who knows how many other things we have done. But yet, nothing seems to be enough. Compared to Marisela Escobedo, we have not done anything, but: how much is needed? When are we going to feel like we have done enough?

NATALIA: yes. Of course.

PARTICIPANT B: Based on what Participant A says, there is a feminist burden. Sometimes, I feel like I am not a feminist enough. I saw a Tweet that said something like, like...belittling the feminists who are recently participating, and people claims it is only because it is fashionable. That bothers me a lot. I mean, of course, you cannot believe the first thing you read or think that just because you read an article, you are an expert. I mean, it is like they don't know or watch the news of feminicides. Yes. We are not achieving as much as we would like, but this negativity does not help. However, *artivism* seems very powerful to me because it generates awareness and, I think, motivates us. Cerrucha's seems impressive. To be honest, I am her fan; I will follow her on Instagram. So, I love this way of creating spaces. I think that is something we have been missing. And, by doing it through art, it seems that it is easier to achieve our goals.

PARTICIPANT C: Look, right now, with what Participant A and Participant B are saying, sometimes I do worry that there is like this canon of who is a good feminist, a sort of feminist police stating who is feminist enough, who is a first-, second-and third-class feminist. So well, I think there is a problem there—a disparity. I feel like I have been barely part of the feminist movement. Still, I have been on the other side (the conservative one). For example, during the March demonstration, it is unbearable how women discredited or disqualified the protests, saying things like: 'what is wrong with them; they are crazy. They just want to abort'. There is no *sororidad*. On the other side, I have experienced a lack of understanding. How can I explain it? Like a lack of *sororidad* also on that side. And men as well who do not recognise their privilege. Who defines what is a good feminist and not?

PARTICIPANT B: just speedy, Natalia. The idea that there is a feminist canon, that nothing is good enough; because we are protesting, screaming and everything. However, the government, well, the authorities, are the ones not doing enough. So, I feel powerless, and that is why I found this work so interesting. They are blaming those that must be to blame. I think it is something super, super important.

NATALIA: yes, OK, from here, I'm going to derive my next question. Effectively, after the protest on March 8, the feminist movement in Mexico fractured between TERF and non-TERF, liberals and left-wing. In the end, Lagarde gave a lecture and explained we should not be criticising one another. But there is a lack of commitment to all of them. Participant A and Participant C said, who is a good feminist and who is not? Participant A mentioned not doing enough and how far should we go. In the end, academic feminist also needs to be in touch with women.

Compared with women like Maricela Escobedo or the mothers from *Nuestras hijas de regreso a casa* who are the ones from the cotton field case, they are obviously not reading Simone de Beauvoir. Still, they are immersed

in the tragedy, and without being lawyers, they know the laws with which they are defending their daughter's case better than us. They understand how justice mechanisms are not working in this country. The academy has not done enough. So, in that sense, Lagarde says that the academics who are privileged and who have access to knowledge do have an obligation to read. Still, they also have the responsibility to disseminate knowledge more efficiently. So, my question is: do you think that what is missing in Mexico is an articulation between the feminism of academia, activist and feminist art?

PARTICIPANT A: Yes. I have been thinking about it for a long time. I can appreciate this major division in feminism. Because you believe it is not my battle. I'm very much against academicism, right? But I love academia, I mean, I'm an academic, but we do need to know a little more about history, not in an academic sense, but in a feeling of wanting to know other stories, right? Stories of women who have wondered looking for their daughters.

Nevertheless, I think that particular academics should not be listened to because they are privileged and remain isolated, because otherwise, you don't understand the root of each current. For example, I am annoyed that radical feminists are called TERFS because it is reductive to the behaviour of certain feminists. The essential characteristic of radical feminism is not trans-exclusion. Some are, but that is based on ignorance. In Mexico, academia is elitist and exclusive, and that is problematic for feminist academics. The same thing happens with the law; if it is not accessible, people will remain ignorant. In that sense, *artivism* can be an essential link between academy and activism. I mean, it is a link right now. For example, the proliferation of infographics or illustrations is like; I think it is proof of this, isn't it? And also, another thing that I think is important is that, for example, we can break the rules, but there is no apparent reason for doing it what follows. It is senseless. For instance, in the demonstration of August 16 of last year, we walked from the roundabout of Insurgentes and burned the *Metrobús* stations. A friend of mine, I think she is Chilean or Argentinian, I do not remember, said: 'when we protest, we plan what we will destroy. So, yes, we destroy, and we burn, but we already have it planned'. And in Mexico, the demonstrations have already become somewhat predictable, so predictable that repressing them is more accessible. So, I think we need more dialogue, more organisation and understanding that feminism is a political movement whose structuring is done with grassroots work. It is not merely calling us *sororas*. That is my opinion.

PARTICIPANT B: I think so. That Participant A is suitable. Well, lately, I have also seen a lot of this topic on Twitter, I do not log in that much, but when I get involved, there is always a topic that I found interesting. There are some expressions that I think are *artists*, and I considered that they should be divulged. For example, a young artist recently starting to work; I do not know if you have heard of it, she is called Maremoto. She is an illustrator, and there is another one whose name I don't remember. They are providing information; I think what they are doing is also *artivism*; however, nobody would know about them without spreading their work. Even so, she has a pretty good audience; she already has like a hundred thousand followers. Social networks for these projects are essential because we must take advantage of these tools and even more in the pandemic. Nevertheless, I think she might also get tired. It is pretty easy to go online and find these feminist contents things on the internet. That is why I also believe, like participant A about the videos, like the ones we saw. I know they are not enough, but I think you can access social networks through many programs that do not necessarily cost and promote *artivism* so that people come and there is this dialogue.

PARTICIPANT C: Yes. I mean, to answer the question you asked, Natalia. I think we need more connections between academia, activism, *artivism*. I believe 100%, right? Right now, it comes to me; I do not know what has happened with the headquarters of the CNDH. I do not know; I am disconnected. I think one of them, Mrs Yesenia, I believe, I do not know what happened; I think there was a fight amongst them, and I was very impressed by seeing a woman who says: 'we have the right to break, and we have the right to burn' got broken. This is what participant A mentions. There were several ideas, but the one mentioned by participant A, about how in Chile they go with an idea of what they are going to break... However, here there is so much courage and so much anger that you cannot control it. In addition, there is also another psychological effect, sometimes following the mass, there are things done that you would not do. It also happens amongst a group of drunken kids. I do not know; anger sometimes is not easy to contain, although it would be desirable. It is predictable because they break everything and like and people say: 'Oh look, these crazy ones'. But I don't know how else to channel this courage. How do you tell Mrs Yesenia that there is a better way to assimilate this reality, to spread her ideas; her daughter was raped and murdered at her university. So, it is complicated for me to think about telling her to control her anger. The connection is very necessary, but those mothers know the law better because they have faced it. They have confronted public prosecutors, so even if they are aware of the proper way to do things, the 'peaceful process' they have realised that it does not work. So, how can we advise them when they know seven years old girls are being raped? What they have suffered is terrible, and they are on the street shouting. But I think that connection that Natalia says is urgent, that it is very, very necessary and if

artivism can serve, then great. Now I don't know how to make the information easier to assimilate; I think it is a big challenge. However, it is different to simplify what Simone de Beauvoir or Butler said than explaining something to the mother whose daughter was murdered.

NATALIA: yes, there were indeed conflicts at the Okupa. As Participant A said, I consider myself a radical feminist, and I am not TERF. I do not fight with those with a different position because I believe in dialogue, so generalising towards feminism is harmful. But there was a confrontation because, during the *anti-grita*, the mothers shouted for the *patria*, and feminists corrected them since they were supposed to shout the *matría*. Furthermore, the mothers had no problem including LGBTQIA+ groups, and some feminists rejected the idea. There has been an attitude of indoctrination. It is like I'm going to teach you how to channel your pain. This is nonsensical because if they come from social sciences, one of the first things they teach you is that your study subject knows more than you do. All you have to do is transform that knowledge into 'academic' learning, but that bridge is missing. Well, it seems to me that that bridge is missing. I mean, yes, yes, they break everything, but it is an argument I have sometimes had with Diana. It is not wrong for them to break.

Participant C: I loved what you said about social sciences; your study subject knows more than you. Yes, they know what femicide is from first-hand experience.

NATALIA: yes. The following challenge is to make the knowledge accessible. That part is not only for Mexican feminists, ironies of life, but the best journals are also in English; hence, starting from there, if you want to be a researcher and qualify for the SNI, you need to publish in English. But, for example, I think there are creative ways to achieve this. I believe *Las Tesis* in Chile managed to channel the anger against the rapists and make a performance that, unlike the e graffiti, generated less discontent from the public. However, they said the same as graffiti. In Mexico, we have *Vivir Quintana* and *Vivir sin Miedo*, rescuing the pain women in Mexico experience. There are efforts, yes there are, but the articulation is lacking. Mónica Mayer has just called a contest of letters to mothers of disappeared and cases of femicide, and the call reached very few people. We need to be more proactive; I think it is also time to replace the sacred cows of the feminist academy by, well, to be truth and concrete; I'm thinking of one who needs to be replaced.

PARTICIPANT C: How do you come in and say to Yesenia, I'm going to tell you how to channel your anger?

NATALIA: you can't. But you can interview her, understand her anger and then propose to the feminists different ways to support their rage. The mothers can break and burn; the rest, we should be more supportive.

PARTICIPANT B: Hey, Natalia, one question of which academic were you talking about. To be honest, I don't know a lot about feminism in Mexico.

NATALIA: yes, well, in particular, I was a little annoyed by Marta Lamas' position. Even before she said her comments about prostitution, I had an issue with her. During the demonstration of 8 March, she was very judicious about this new feminism that is more passionate than theory. It was obvious she has not talked with contemporary feminists. And well, yes, we should be thankful to that generation of feminists, we indeed owe them many rights, but we have not fallen asleep with those rights. We must recognise that the feminist struggle of the first wave was women's suffrage, and then it was the right to work, but we are asking for the right to be alive. We are questioning at what point equality became a weapon against us? Then I think we must build bridges of sensitivities because, of course, I am angry; I never imagined that I would have to ask for the right to be alive.

PARTICIPANT C: yes, yes, it's canon.

NATALIA: yes, I'm thinking about her in particular.

PARTICIPANT A: one other thing. Because of this thing, you said about gore capitalism and that it is like one, I don't want to idealise, but I think narcos are businessmen. Well, there is nothing more tangible there. Narcos are businessmen whose product is illegal, and that is why they kill. But so do the other entrepreneurs. So, what is the connection between violence and capitalism that women kick out and that I imagine ecofeminists can give a very articulate response to it? Do not laugh, participant B. I always end up talking about ecofeminists. However, it does seem to me almost, almost like patriarchy and capitalism cannot be separated. That is why we are living the situation we are living in. And it is unsustainable.

NATALIA: yes, in that sense, I don't know if you've already read this one (Feminism for the 99%, A manifesto). This is another way to bring knowledge closer together. Feminist manifesto for the 99%. Manifestos are that, how do you translate feminist knowledge as something tangible, you write a manifesto. This manifesto by Nancy Fraser, and I do not know how to pronounce the other names. Still, it is in Spanish and accessible on the internet because dream traffickers are spreading it as criticism of capitalism.

PARTICIPANT C: Sure. Is it called the Feminist Manifesto?

NATALIA: Feminism for the 99% A Manifesto.

PARTICIPANT C: but Nancy Fraser. No?

NATALIA: it is a gem that goes where Participant A says. I have one last question. What do you think about this tradition of breaking with patriarchy in art? One of the things that artists have wanted to break is the idea of genius as this individual who creates alone, which is also relatively false, right? Because Rembrandt and everyone had workshops. And this work is an excellent synthesis of collective efforts; roles were not that clear. So, what do you think of this collective strategy?

Participant A: I love it a lot. Because I think that mostly we are discussing the creation of spheres. Right? When we talk about the classics, in reality, we are talking about spheres, not lonely authors; they were all friends. Hence, I think that doing that is incredible. Besides, it manifests that some are not taking advantage of these opportunities. I mean, yesterday, after the discussion, I thought something like, 'wow, it is not that hard to meet some of the feminists I admire'. Even become their friend and exchange ideas. I don't think it is because we are female. Maybe it is because of how we socialise or our feminist awareness. Still, we are open to creating communities and demystifying the idea that a woman's worst enemy is another woman. In a collective, the different realities become eternal; I know it sounds redundant; however, if I have an imaginary friend 20 people believe in, it becomes more natural, like Santa Claus. On the other hand, collective artworks belong to everyone providing them with a share meaning aside from the individual and private one. It is not the same as the Mona Lisa because we are supposed to like it, appreciating something you contributed to creating.

Participant B: besides, something I love about *artivism* is that you don't need what participant A was saying. To appreciate art, you must be an expert. However, *artivism* offers the possibility of dialogue, of belonging. I have always favoured the idea of horizontality, collectiveness. By the end, we need dialogue to erase that idea of the leader. I mean, we always need some sort of leadership, but that doesn't mean it has to be a single person.

NATALIA: Do you want to say something, participant C?

Participant C: look, I don't know if it is a generational matter because these two girls could be my daughters, but this idea of a woman being the worst enemy of other women is probably an old conception. However, I still believe we need more *sororidad*. I can still appreciate the queen bee syndrome. Like, I got here, and I am how feminist should be. So, maybe it is a generational issue. I don't know if this enriches the dialogue. However, for me, the idea of collectiveness and setting aside egos is fantastic. I mean, it sort of belongs to all of them. Sure, there might be someone more talented in these performances and installations; nevertheless, they are all participating. I would only remind them about *sororidad*. Collectiveness is cool, but sometimes the ego is human, no female because I won't say 'women are complicated; it is human, and humans are complex. So, it is a danger present in collectiveness that keeps me nervous.

Participant A: do you know what else I notice? All these artworks you have introduced to us have the characteristic of being temporal. I mean, it is nonsense what I will say, but the paradigm of the substance is changing. The same happens with identity; with gender-defined according to time and context, we do the same with art. Everything is changing.

Participant C: I don't know. I know that this art is temporary, but it leaves something that remains that overcomes the moment. However, I understand it is ephemeral.

Natalia: Yes, and in that sense, about what participant C is saying, the lack of *sororidad*, I wish that was generational. However, I think the younger generations are fighting against this world of egos. Nevertheless, the women that triumph did it in a male public sphere. I mean, they fight to earn the right to specific positions. They achieved the quotas, and then they faced the crystal ceiling and the sticky floor. That is why new feminists are questioning why the movement criticised the system, so the goal was never to be part of the system. Inclusion is

problematic when the public sphere is still male. We have not transformed the world into a female public sphere.

Participant C: totally. Those women learn the male way, and once they become the boss, they mistreat everyone.

Natalia: it was tough for them to get there. Hence, they believe the other ones must struggle as much as they did. I do expect that to change because that would mean we were successful in disarticulating the public sphere. I do believe it is a generational matter because of the conditions they face. Now, about what you were saying, participant A, it has to do with their criticism about the system. British and American feminists were influential in criticising the art market like this terrible thing that promotes artists as passionate as emotional, like Van Gogh, as of merchandise. Hence, they used performance to confront the system. Later, they abandoned performance; it is still being practised, but less because the art market manages to 'own' performances. The other thing is that Butler did change everything, including feminist art. Even artists like Judy Chicago with her *Dinner Party* recognise her work reduced great women into a vagina; it was essentialist. Relevant for that moment. So, yes, the feminist is looking for strategies to escape the art market logic, which is why it becomes more ephemeral. It is always escaping the art market that manages to transform something like Banksy into a product.

Participant A: ah, but Banksy is like the worst that happened to political art. He sold out. I hate him. I think he is a simulation.

Natalia: Yes, well, you have the documentary, *Saving Banksy*, about how street artists are damaging Banksy to avoid the art market selling the street art proposals. And yes, feminist art and feminist *artivism* are doing something similar. So, on my behalf, that would be all. I don't know if you would like to say something else. I am thankful you agreed to be part of my conversation session.

Narrative exercise from Querétaro, 19-21 October 2020

Pre

Post

How would you define the violence lived in Mexico⁴⁹⁵

Violence against women is ancestral, structural and has to do with misogyny, machismo, patriarchy, racism, classism. Violence against women in Mexico has increased due to gore capitalism, organised crime, and the COVID pandemic.

I think it is necessary to recognise the history of violence against women in Mexico: pre-Columbian, during colonisation, independence, the Reform, Revolution, Christianity, and in the last 40 years of neoliberal governments. It is also necessary to recognise the history of violence in our families. There have been many legal advances in equality, non-discrimination, and prevent violence and femicide. However, the laws do not work because of a judicial system and prosecutors' offices that do not exercise justice. Twenty years of institutional training has not changed the institutions, officials, or structures. The Regime change of putting 'first the poor' has not yet recognised that women are there and have not made legislative changes: decriminalisation of abortion, marriage equality, justice for girls and women. A change in collective subjectivity is necessary when damaging a painting is more socially condemned than the rape of a girl or femicide. The feminists' protest is becoming more numerous and aggressive without having a response from the State.

Alarming, sad, part of everyone's day-to-day life.

Extreme and unacceptable.

For me, the situation is unacceptable; the data we have in all aspects shows a reality that goes beyond what is credible. For me, Mexico has become a country I don't recognise anymore. Something that shocked me deeply is that we recently became the country with more child abuse cases worldwide, which makes you think about everything that happens behind the door of many houses and how the situation is becoming more and more overflowing every day. The violence in Mexico makes me live every day in fear of not returning home, just like other families whose daughters are no longer there and are waiting for their return.

I believe that violence has always existed, especially gender violence, but the ease of access to information has made me more aware. In that sense, it seems to me that we live in a catastrophic moment since we are the most violent country in America.

It is a violence that begins at home when parents do not allow their daughters to go to the same places and at the same hours as they do with their sons; the moment they attribute a woman's 'respectability' to her clothes. It is violence observable when a child knows his dad cheating on his mom, and when mom complains about it, the kids get upset about how they 'are talking like that about my dad in front of my sisters'. It is violence in which having an emotional & sexual past with someone makes you a

Due to Coronavirus, femicide and all forms of violence in Mexico increased: alcohol and other drug use augmented and mental health problems. Lockdown, mass layoffs, poverty, and uncertainty are breeding grounds for the country's history of violence. From colonisation to the most recent wars, patriarchy has the power of violence and the death of women (although it is said pro-life, in practice, it is pro-death).

Suppose women do not have the right to decide on their bodies and their lives under equality in all areas. In that case, violence will continue because culturally, women will remain considered a mean (to be for others: incubator, cleaner, voluntary and free caregiver), hiding all the value of their work.

Alarming, sad, unfair, and unpunished.

As a constant problem that has reached the point of being considered as something quotidian.

What is experienced in Mexico is inhumane; women share a collective fear due to everyday violence, which must be eradicated in one way or another. The country's situation is like few others in the world, and that is very hard. Mexico not only has states of emergency every now and there; Mexico is an emergency country because it is a generalise situation every day happening in the entire nation.

It is complicated, systemic, and powerless.

Outrageous to know how it is supported by so many political institutions and the media. It seems like a mockery to see how groups of people, often associated with the victims of femicides, must come together to demand and force the attorney general's office (which in theory is the enforcement of justice) to punish feminicides. It seems a mockery that a collective & group of activists come together to make visible a social problem before the media, which cannot fulfil their function.

⁴⁹⁵ All the transcriptions of the participants answers were written respecting the original ones. None of them were proofread or edited to keep their value as social evidence to be analysed.

where. It distorts you because men believe that having sex changes you; it takes away your innocence. It is violent where your boyfriend does not want to take you with his friends because 'they will see you' and instead of demanding his friends to respect you, he hides you, leaves you at home as if you were his. And, like a toy of his, he believes that if he humiliates you and makes you regret your past before him, you will change, and you will be a better toy.

Dreadful. I'm tired of living in fear for myself and others.

Saddening. It is incredible how acts of violence as heinous as cold-blooded murders continue to be committed in the twenty-first century. Human dignity is not at all an important issue, much less than what society is aware of.

How would you define violence against women?

The harm caused to women is physical, mental, sexual, patrimonial, symbolic and even deadly because they are not considered as subjects with equal rights. This is in all spheres: family, school, health, education, social participation, culture, politics. To be objectified, not considered a political subject, owner of your body and your decisions regarding your sexuality, health, participation, etc., exposes her to violence at all stages of her life.

It is the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional damage caused to women because of objectification and deep disrespect for the feminine: the ability to give life and take care of life. By controlling their reproduction, their whole life is controlled: their sexuality, time, and creativity. All means are used to keep them oppressed and exploited: violence by economic, political, social, and cultural means. Media and art play a significant role: they produce and reproduce subtle violence (romantic love, for example) or explicit violence (*feminicidal* and use of narcotics). The absence of dialogue with women as agents, citizens who defend their lives, creates an unbearable discomfort that is reflected in indirect actions.

I think it's such a "normalised" thing that many people don't realise how common it is.

It is an abuse against the female sex, which exists systemically in the country and is instilled in us since we were little. It is verbal, psychological and physical abuse just because they are women.

Something so common that people no longer take it seriously.

As a social problem that needs more attention and the creation and improvement of a judicial system that does not consider us important enough to protect us.

As suppression of the rights that we as human beings have, inequality is experienced in all areas of daily life: social, political, economic, physical, artistic, sexual, educational, etc. It is a form of discrimination against who we are.

It is gender-based hate, just because based on gender. There are different types of violence against women, but they are justified because we are women.

When a person decides to violate a woman simply due to her gender, assimilating her as weak and easy.

It is a problem of the system of our country, and I have come to think that it exists worldwide. The structure of our culture has led to systematic patriarchy where the opportunities, freedom, and integrity of women are lower than that of men.

It is limited to the violence caused by a man suffered by any woman because she is a woman, including emotional, physical and sexual violence.

Violence against women is any thought, manifestation, speech, or omission committed towards a woman that puts her dignity or mental & physical health at risk inflicted by someone from the opposite sex or an institution. It can be, but it is not limited to finding omissions in the penal system to avoid punishing the murderers or aggressors of any woman. For example, to abuse a woman physically, verbally, or emotionally. To expose the identity of an aggressor, to reduce his penalty for his crime, to *vulnerabilise* a woman because of her gender & sex.

As a result of a historical process that was never questioned or confronted and today is still not taken as seriously as it should.

Acts and behaviours that corrupt & diminish the dignity of women in countless types and ways. Therefore, not only is it retrograde, but it should have never existed.

What would you do (or what do you do) to stop or confront gender violence in Mexico?

I educate with a perspective of equality, human rights, and non-discrimination. I take part in collective actions to promote equality and non-discrimination laws. In addition, I am trained in Somatic Experience to take care of women affected by violence.

I have been an activist, teacher, researcher. I keep accompanying feminist collectives, and professionally I am certified as a therapist. I'm sure art heals.

I educate myself; I try to dialogue with the people around me who live in a position of privilege.	I denounce what I notice among my family, friends and acquaintances, especially in matters of language, as a sort of manipulation that in some ways are part of these everyday <i>machismos</i> that sometimes we do not realise that they are wrong. I go to feminist demonstrations. I informed myself about the causes of violence and the Mexican context of femicides; I try to share factual information about the situation. I try not to be complicit in the manipulation that exists by the media, by the general public and men who seek to silence stories and women.
I attend the protests, create discussions with my acquaintances and try to raise awareness among them.	By being active in social networks, talking about the issue, seeking to inform about this problem to get more people to join the cause.
Every day I fight against the <i>micro-machismo</i> reproduced by people around me: family, friends, acquaintances, etc. I never remain silent when there is inequality and violence, whether in the workplace, personal or social sphere. I develop audio-visual products where people can evaluate and understand normalised situations, and that should be discussed. I also try to get involved in projects and events where the issue is being discussed. I would like to say that what I do is on a large scale, but I think, for now, the reach I have is not that big compared to what other women do.	Every day, I fight against the nearby situations I face. If I see violence somewhere, I do not remain silent, and I do something about it. I am active in social networks in whatever possible way. For example, I open spaces for dialogue with people learning to understand better or exchange ideas. In the same way, I always implement spaces free of violence in my work and the topics of the audio-visual projects that I work to make this situation visible, and I always accompany them with the reflection part. I have been doing activism without realising it, with these audio-visual projects, with poems and essays that I write from time to time. So, I'm excited to keep doing it because I know its impact is real. In general, the proposal of activism in all its forms seems the most interesting and a way to connect with people to create spaces for reflection. Activism is a pure expression of many women's feelings, bringing about tangible changes in situations and people.
I inform myself, and I try to permeate those around me to raise awareness of gender-based violence and join the protests.	I am part of a collective, and, above all, I inform myself and look for sources to support my speech.
I would punish violence much more severely, create complaints, open spaces to share testimonies about violence in relationships and approach younger girls to provide support during their growing process since it is before adolescence when they usually encounter more problems.	I try to be informed and read a lot about the subject to respond to it and support any argument against feminist movements. A little more challenging to do, but very coherent, is to cut contact with friends who do not support female empowerment and consider feminist demonstration as an act of 'vandalising' public spaces and that question 'the way' of being angry. That's my secret... I'm always angry.
I question myself, and I try to question others to deconstruct those beliefs, practices, and facts that harm us so much.	First, I question myself and try to work on my understanding of women's inclusion and empowerment. Then I question those close to me, talking about normalising behaviours that threaten women and their dignity and safety (among other aspects).

Narrative exercise form, Mexico City, 28-30 October

Pre	Post
How would you define the violence lived in Mexico	
Alarming	Getting harder and harder
It seems to me that it becomes a way of life. We are used to living in a situation, whether public (e.g., drug trafficking) or private (e.g., domestic violence), of ongoing violence.	I would describe it as a latent pain. Sometimes it seems that it is a wound that can never heal.
Untenable	Structural
How would you define violence against women?	
As crushing the dignity of women.	Terrible. Alarming.

I would define it as an expression of power and oppression that deprives women of their freedom and health (mental, sexual and psychological).

I find it difficult to respond with a blunt definition, but I think of it as an act against a woman for being considered inferior, weak or submissive. This is exercised through sexual, physical or psychological harm.

The most severe problem of the many crises we are experiencing.

Omnipresent.

What would you do (or what do you do) to stop or confront gender violence in Mexico?

I teach and participate in workshops.

I participate in workshops, training and divulging knowledge about the issue. I will keep talking and demanding change.

I participate in this type of conversation; I am active within women's groups so that no woman feels alone. I also bring different women together to come up with accurate proposals on how to help women in these situations.

I, along with my friends, create open spaces. Spaces for dialogue and to learn more. After the conversation, I definitely want to promote activism as a way of approaching feminism.

I write, study, disseminate cultural and feminist ideas. I support those I can.

I study gender studies, foster critical dialogue and promote the creation of community spaces.