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ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON MARCH, 7, 2021

Abstract

The images presented here are artistic-photographic experiments intending to deal with the overlap of news that affects me as subjectivity. Latin America is present in every news since it was produced by Argentinian newspapers, but some issues emerge that unite us as a continent. The images narrate facts resulting from a long period of exploitation but also of conquests and resistance. They synthesize the discourse transformation rituals in their materiality - the printed paper. They stitch together two layers: the facts narrated in the news and the affections and feelings this narrative generates. The transmutation seeks elements such as folds or fire to construct new meanings and invites us to think of new ways of dealing with the world.

Keywords: Transmutation, Narratives, Artistic experimentation, Latin America.

1 **Transmutation**

These images portray rituals for dealing with the world, specifically Latin America, from a Latin female body that transits between Brazil and Argentina. These images were produced by Argentinian newspapers that show narratives of the oppressive colonialist system active on our continent, and leave deep marks on women, black people, indigenous people, political refugees, and our environment. They show a continent in flames, with many conflicts, squabble narratives, and an imaginary that excludes the multiplicity of existences in our daily lives and that emerges in urban life.

The images also are an experimental exercise that attempts to give a new meaning to the news by showing what are the effects of these affections on the body. The exercise can become a mourning ritual intended to process information that represents an exploited continent and a population full of pain and scars. It can also be understood as a kind of ritual to emanate energies of celebration, strength, or even love for some facts and

affections emerging as a breath of hope, escaping the catastrophic colonialist-capitalist logic that we read in most of the media. So, as a grieving or breathing ritual, all these experimentation exercises are attempts to express the intensity of affections related to the exploitation and resistance processes in Latin America, which affect my Latinity - as a female and subjective body.

The images can also be seen as a way to resist the constant and aggressive information flood to which we are subject in our daily lives. However, there is a naturalization of these processes. In a short time surfing on digital media, we deal with issues endless that affect us: advertisements, murders, discussions about abortion, elections, wars in other countries, protests aggressively repressed, violence against women, against black and indigenous people, refugees movements, exiles, pandemic deaths, and many other examples of suffering. All this alongside the horoscope of the day, tips for a dream wedding, and low-carb or gluten-free recipes. And we go through all this misinformation without time to process, feel or digest, accumulating everything in the body, sickening our subjectivity.

However, it is crucial to remember that no media is impartial. There is a competition between economic and political interests in every news and media outlet. As a result, besides the fact that we are bombarded with information, we are caught in the crossfire of this narrative war, with reports brimming with subliminal messages. For Rivera Cusicanqui (2019, p. 13, our translation 1): "It's evident that in a colonial situation, 'the unspoken' is most significant; words cover up more than they reveal, and symbolic language prevails". Also, the most publicized media are those which have more resources and usually represent a white and colonialist narrative. This is very clear in the conservative media, but it is present in the progressive media as well because news that tries to represent a "minority" most of the time is not reported by this group, but instead from the white point of view, which is limited to negative and stereotyped information. The writer Chimamanda has already told us about the danger of a single story. In her words:

All these stories make me who I am. But to insist only on the negative ones make my experience superficial and neglect the many other stories that formed me. A single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story. (Ngozi Adichie, 2019, s. p., our translation).

2 Argentina, facts, and affections: the context of the photographic project

I did this photographic work at the end of 2020 while I was living in Argentina and the country experienced several progressive discussions and advances while facing the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been very hard in Latin America. During Alberto Fernandez's administration, many issues that Mauricio Macri's government (the previous president) ignored returned to the agenda: such as the abortion bill, the greatest demand from women which was finally approved; the large fortune tax law, that despite being approved still consists in a ridiculous amount compared to the wealth of Argentina's billionaires, but even so represents a symbolic step in the fight against social and economic inequality on the continent. Discussions about migration, violence against the native population, and gender violence were also back on the agenda. And this happened while the country was suffering catastrophic wildfires across its territory, affecting large parts of vegetation and communities that depend on this land.

In November 2020, all these topics showed that, politically, the country was going through a very intense and significant moment. However, the media dealt with them in a polarized way: the ones against any progressive step gave distorted news, completely fascist op-eds, and tabloid images. Mainly when it comes to antiabortion and anti-large-fortune tax campaigns. On the other hand, progressives celebrated their agendas, but in a superficial way. Then, reading several newspapers on the same day, I realized how opposite the narratives were, with countless subliminal messages and many events difficult to digest.

At the same time that the world said goodbye to Trump, Bolivia was experiencing a return to democracy, electing Luis Arce as president and allowing the former president, Evo Morales, to return home (Evo was in exile in Argentina after being ousted). Venezuela kept sending migrants to Argentina, and several protests broke out across Latin America. All these issues affected my subjectivity, causing a lot of noise, and that's when I realized that I needed new creative ways to face them.

3 Rituals of expression: method

Considering this reality, appeared the necessity to modify this news, as I was able to unfold the reality with these actions. I decided to use the printed newspaper precisely because it allowed me more time to feel between one news and another. For some weeks, I used to buy the newspapers Clarín, La Nación, and Página 12, which are very well-known newspapers and offer different narratives about the same facts. Then, while reading the news, I would separate the ones that touched me the most, and by intuition, I would try to give a

new meaning to the chosen clipping. By doing this gestural ritual, I also re-signified my emotions about that fact.

The method and the process are formed together: once I had the clipping in my hands, I tried to understand the feelings generated by those subliminal lines. As a result, printed news materials have become raw materials. And based on that, I searched for elements to make the multiple meanings of that clipping appear. According to Deleuze, "The multiple is not what has many parts, but what is folded in many ways." (Deleuze, 1991, p. 14, our translation). The new sense emerged by folds, cuts, seams, and ink that could invert the news title's meaning. At times, the fire, a powerful transformative element, revealed the meaning. At this stage, I used fire to both emanate strength and energy to news bringing hope to it, as well as transforming into ashes the sorrow brought by them. Besides these transforming elements, I also used herbs, incense, glass, and many other objects that made sense during the rituals.

Finally, I photographed the whole process to generate new images to represent the intersection between the external layer (news, facts, and narration forms) and the internal layer (generated affections and feelings). It is important to emphasize how the project came together to create a transformation method that will continue to be used as an artistic tool for dealing with media that profoundly impact us. Finally, comes a project which opens itself up to new lines of transformation.

4 Final considerations: new lines of openings

Latin America: you are here! Impregnated by these images, which came from the Argentine media but could easily be from elsewhere, since the ills affecting us are long-standing consequences of exploitation and violence. Rafael Nahuel, murdered in Argentina for the color of his skin, just like João Pedro Mattos Pinto, 14 years old, Eduardo de Jesus, 10 years old, Ágatha Félix, 8 years old, and many other lives interrupted in the Brazilians social peripheries. The deforestation of 2020 in Argentina and Brazil has achieved an unprecedented scale and which is still intense in 2021, is one symptom of a capitalist system that stands above our lands, our environment, and our communities who have been massacred. Inequality, violence against women, indigenous people, and the black population have cruelly transformed and continually scars the continent.

Some images, on the other hand, represent processes of conquest and the struggle for democracy. Because our continent is not defined by layers of exploitation and suffering, but by resistance processes that, like sparks, light up transformative powers in many places. Fire in this project holds the power to transform pain into ashes, also to regenerate and open new paths for other desires and possibilities.

For Rivera Cusicanqui (2019), images have the power to build a critical narrative capable of unmasking distinct forms of contemporary colonialism. So for me, making images has the power to create new directions and to heal itself through the process, and seek new ways of expression that go beyond writing and connect with our subjectivities. This exercise is a method of transmuting facts and feelings, in the words of Peter Pál Pelbart (2011, p. 23, our translation): "In this affective economy, subjectivity is not an effect or an ethereal superstructure, but a living force, social quantity, a psychic and political potency". For this reason, the process described is an invitation to think about what affects us and makes our emotions seek new opening lines and different ways of re-existence.

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- <u>1</u> From the original in Spanish: "Es evidente que en una situación colonial, lo "no dicho" es lo que más significa; las palabras encubren más que revelan, y el lenguaje simbólico toma la escena."
- <u>2</u> Escola sem Partido is a Brazilian movement against the use of schools and universities for ideological, political and partisan propaganda purposes.

Gesture list

1 Control

"The serious risks of having the school taken over by combative ideologism." La Nación newspaper. November 18, 2020.

The journal article talks about the risks of critical education, understood by "La Nación" as the use of the school as a space for militancy. It is similar to the *Escola sem Partido* movement arguments, in $Brazil^2$.

THE TYING GESTURE: Feeling of oppression, overcontrol on education.

2 Opinion

"What is published in the media when the opinion is not public?" La Nación. newspaper. November 18, 2020.

The text is about what the media says when the opinion is private and limited to groups, decentralized from the mainstream media.

THE INVERSION GESTURE: clippings to invert the meaning of the news and think of other possible questions.

3 Share

"The Fortune Dance." Página 12 newspaper. November 19, 2020.

Newspaper article about the discussion of the taxation of large fortunes in Argentina.

THE GEST OF SHARING: clippings with the image of the news representing a distribution of resources that are extremely unequal in Latin America.

4 Red

"Three years after the murder of Rafael Nahuel" Página 12 newspaper- November 25, 2020.

Journal article about the murder of Rafael Nahuel by the State. Rafael was Mapuche (The Mapuche are an indigenous people from the south-central region of Chile and southwestern Argentina) and the episode happened at the act of removal of the *Lafken Winkul Mapu* community, demonstrating how colonialism remains present.

THE GRIEVING GESTURE: the color red representing the blood on the narrative of the Mapuche peoples, on the lands of the indigenous people.

5 A good path

"In peace, Bolivia returns to the path of democracy." Página 12 newspaper- November 19, 2020.

Newspaper article about the elections in Bolivia, with the victory of Luis Arce and the hope for better times.

THE GEST OF HOPE: the fire-burning herbs that have the power to open new paths, to symbolize a breath in difficult times, and to emanate a will for democracy to open a space in Latin America.

6 Toy boat

"The dramatic case of the Venezuelan children who were returned to the sea by Trinidad and Tobago." Clarín newspaper. November 25, 2020.

The Trinidad and Tobago government throws 16 Venezuelan minors into the sea, including a baby, along with their mothers who had entered their country illegally.

PLAYFUL GESTURE: Transformation of the news and the sorrow into paper boats, symbolizing a wish that these children were playing and not suffering the violence of being thrown overboard.

7 Sculptures

"Ways of being a woman and breaking free from social cages: exhibition at PROA." Clarín newspaper. November 18, 2020.

SNews about the women artists' work who give new meanings to oppression.

ART GESTURE: the transformation of these social cages into sculptures.

8 Regeneration

"Record fires in Argentina: 2020 is already the year with the most fires in the 21st century." Clarín. newspaper. November 1, 2020.

Newspaper article about the effects of the large-scale fires in Argentina. The colonialist project also affects the environment and leaves permanent marks on our ecosystems.

GREGENERATION GESTURE: This gesture begins with fire and ends with the news, simulating a desire for the regeneration of our vegetation and ecosystems.

The images below illustrate the gestures list of transmuting newspaper clippings into new images, based on the affect that the news generated on the author's subjectivity.





CONTROLE



OPINIÓN Luciano Roman

Para entender el cierre indefinido de colegos, los intendocencia militante, cal ver hago decencia militante, cal ver hago falla assumir este dator has escuelas especialmente en la provincia de Buenos Átres—han sido cospadas recombativos, que recenso en luchar que en educar. Se ha apropiado del sistema ante la mirada importente o cómpilice del Estado. ¿Cualles son las consecuencias? Una enseñanza cada vez más degradada, alumnos abandomados y una profesti nod-

Ahora han batido un récord his tórico mantuvieron las escuelas cerradas todo el año por cuarentena, sin discutir siquiera las trágicas consecuencias de una medida que mon el algo a la consecuencia de una medida que mon volver a las aulas se convirtió en un acto de milliancia. Cuando regresen—algún día— el sistema tendrá menos alumnos y menos docentes.

Todo este proceso ha disparada a niveles catastróficos los indice dedeserción y ha provación la péridida de puestos docentes, además de acelerar el retiro de muchos maestros y profesores. Pero, ade más, cuando las escuelas reabras se encontrarán con alumnos que han peridio ritmo de estudio, har extraviado la disciplina escolar han olvidado aprendizajes y hasta han sufrido regressiones. Se encon barrada de la contrata del la contrata de la contrata del la contrata de la contrata de

Muchos costos ya empiezan a vislumbrarse, otros se verán con el tiempo. Pero tal vez sea necesario analizar la cultura sindical que late detrás de esta debacle educativa.

En la industria privada, los sindicatos tienen claro que "sin empresa no haytrabajadores". Por eso la buedocente. Tácitamente, ha consentido la degradación salarial de los maestros a cambio de una menor exigencia profesional. Es un sindicalismo dispuesto a poner el grito en el cielo si se intenta acortar el receso, pero que hace silencio frente a la tercentia da la deservión perolar.

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Tal vez sea necesar analizar la cultura sindical que late detrás de esta debacle educativa

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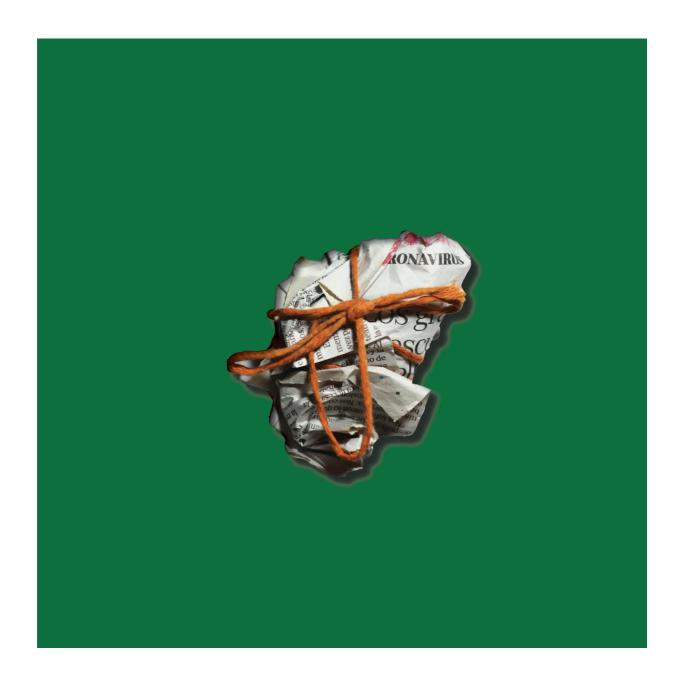
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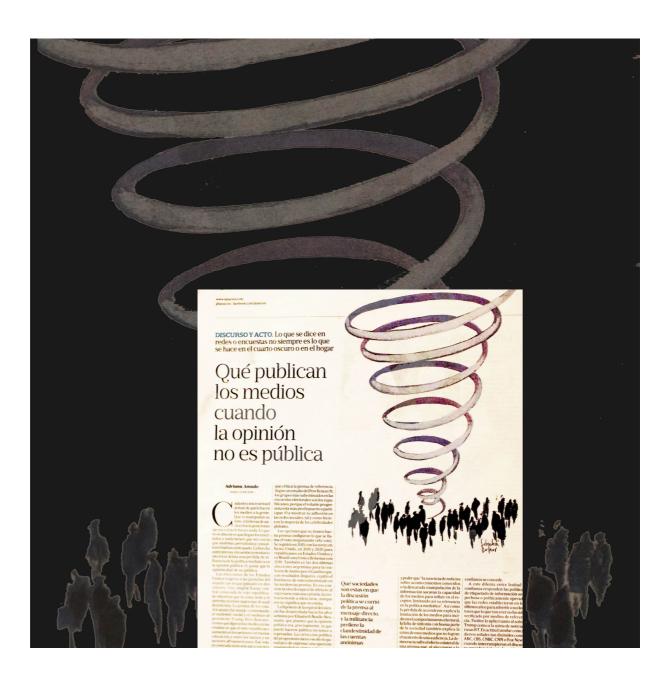








2 OPINIÃO |







| DISTRIBUIÇÃO |

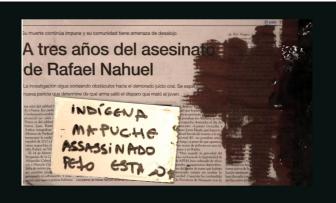


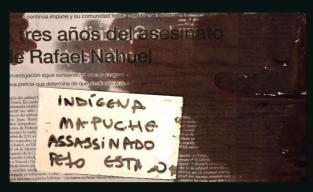






| VERMELHO |







Su muerte continúa impune y su comunidad tiene amenaza de desalojo

A tres años del asesinato de Rafael Nahuel

La investigación sigue sorteando obstáculos hacia el demorado juicio oral. Se espera una

nueva pericia que determine de qué arma salió el disparo que mató al joven.

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Los padres de Rafael Nahuel reclaman justicia.

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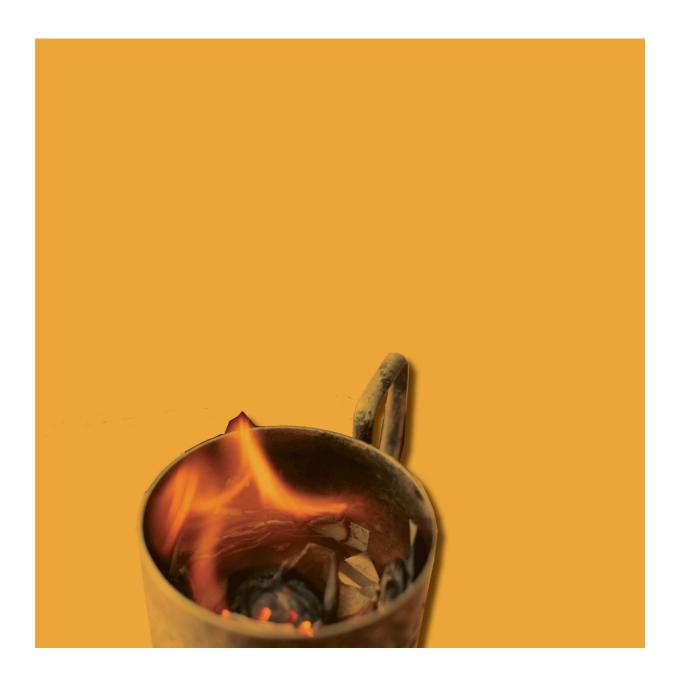
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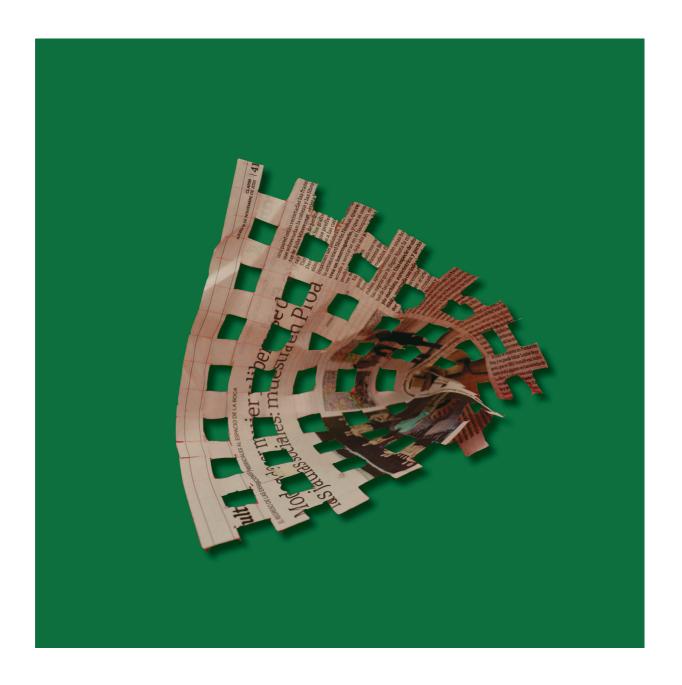






| ESCULTURA |







| REGENERAÇÃO |

