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IGOR GUATELLI

Igor Guatelli is an Architect and holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy. He is an Adjunct Professor at Mackenzie University, Brazil, and a researcher at the GERPHAU laboratory of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure D'Architecture of Paris - La Villette and Université Paris 8, France. He coordinates the research group City, Architecture and Philosophy, where he conducts research on deconstruction, post-structuralist philosophy, urban condensers, and new processes of territorialization. igorguat@uol.com.br
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/0684027099625255>

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Abstract

Many are the *Schibboleths* of our modernity: ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious traits that should ensure the uniqueness of peoples and regions become traces of identification of the undesirable other. *Schibboleths* that could serve as a denunciation of an urgent need for hospitality become obstacles to its practice. Doris Salcedo, a Colombian artist invited by the Tate Modern in London in 2007, creates her *Schibboleth* to denounce historical processes of erasure of this other, especially the colonized, subalternized, exploited, expelled, exterminated other. The artist creates an installation that dives into the bowels of the institution, appropriating it through the indelible mark of denunciation of the historical violence produced by and across borders. The work is a trail of pasts, but also of possible futures, a fissure that separates and unites at the same time. It will be through this clash of civilizations united by the fissure that we will begin, alluding to Jacques Derrida's thinking as a methodology, especially his philosophy of traces, in a critical dialogue with the work and becomings.

Keywords: *Schibboleth*, Doris Salcedo, Traces, Fissures, Derrida

1 Introductory epigraph

"In the case of *Schibboleth*, I was very interested in the traditional perspective, which is the European triumphalism. They were allowed to build 'triumphal arches,' columns commemorating the successes of their battles, etc. For us, in the Third World, ruins remained. It is a work where you analyze the position of Third World people within the First World — we are always the vectors that carry drugs, diseases, crimes, everything negative. I was a Third World artist, the first to be invited to exhibit in that space [Tate Modern]. I had to take that look with me, I had to be negative there" (Salcedo, interview to Folha de São Paulo, 2008, our translation).

For some time now, museums have become temples through which certain imperatives of incessant capitalist modernization materialize and reproduce themselves — market, of historical reifications, of the circulation of capital through the culture industry — preserving logics while seeming to surpass or overcome them, or inserting themselves as gears of renewed strategies, of an updated microphysics of power, to paraphrase the title of Michel Foucault's work of the same name. However, it is through the active action of transgression of the limits imposed, made available or suggested by these places that are set up to receive any artistic manifestations, or what would be allowed for an installation inside one of the most renowned temples of our time, that the Colombian artist will go beyond certain limits by "ruining" it. Limits become thresholds when they reach a point of no return. Salcedo seems to have reached this threshold in order to denounce the borders that still persist between global metropolitan centers and the ruined peripheries they produce.

From inside one of these metropolitan globalized temples, the artist confirms it by corroding it. Perhaps she is telling that the decolonizing processes will only be possible through strange fusions and corrosive alliances. No longer from the outside or from below, from afar, but from the outside-in, from something that arrives from the outside, merging with what keeps it as an outsider. In *Schibboleth*, Doris Salcedo, a renowned Colombian artist¹ with exhibitions at the Guggenheim and MOMA in New York, creates an installation that dissonates from the languages most familiar and adjusted to this temple, indelibly cracking it; a work willing to speak and denounce politically, in a silently forceful way, a past that cannot be erased, attenuated, but torn apart to the point of becoming a trace of a cosmopolitical trail to come. A cosmopolitanism that preserves its borders and past marks as memories towards a future capable of showing them as a political problem. Borders are not insurmountable limits, but necessary thresholds for overcoming them. Thinking on the margins, of thresholds, shifting borders, spectral traces and remainders, as methodology for discussion, concepts from Derrida's philosophy have helped us to think critically about Salcedo's work.

¹ Salcedo was the first Latin American artist to exhibit at Tate Modern. The installation, exhibited from October 2007 to April 2008, was part of the Unilever Series.

2 Considerations on the title of the installation

Schibboleth is a word borrowed from Judaism. The title of Salcedo's installation/sculpture is probably related to the biblical episode of the crossing of the river Jordan, a crossing controlled by the Gileadites, a rival group to the Ephraimites, who created a test word to verify, according to its pronunciation, who was requesting passage, whether a Gileadite or an Ephraimite. According to Redfield (2021),

As a feminine noun it appears five times in the Hebrew Bible, three times to mean something like “howling flow” or “Aood” (Psalm 6g:2; Psalm 69:15; Isaiah 27:12); once to mean “ears of grain” (Job 24: 24); once, in the passage in Judges 12, which made it famous and which we will examine, possibly to mean stream, possibly ears of grain, but more immediately, in the context of the text, no big deal, since there it was used only as a pronunciation test by the Gileadites to identify their defeated enemy, the Ephraimites. (p. 2)

The biblical passage in Judges 12 stands out:

And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; then said they unto him, Say now *Schibboleth*: and he said *Sibboleth*: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

Redfield continues (2021),

In times, cultures, and languages far removed from those of ancient Israel, the word *schibboleth* has come to mean the kind of test which was supposedly used to define: a test in which hard-to-fake signs separate identities and establish and confirm boundaries. Secondary meanings developed to a greater or lesser degree in different languages. The French usage is relatively close to the biblical history: Hachette defines *Schibboleth* as “test, épreuve décisive”; Le Grand Robert defines it as “épreuve décisive qui fait juger de la capacité d'une personne” (a decisive test that tests a person's abilities). German usage, on the other hand, is broader, like Duden's succinct entry for *Schibboleth*: “Erkennungszeichen; Losungswort; Merkmal” (identification mark; password, watchword, slogan; distinguishing mark). English is unique in having developed meanings for *schibboleth* that have gone beyond and displaced the biblical sense of the test-word or identifying trait. Extending beyond the German extension of the word for “slogan”, modern English gives *schibboleth* a range of meanings distributed between the poles of test-word and formulaic speech. The entry for *schibboleth* in the online resource Dictionary.com works like this: 1. a peculiarity of pronunciation, behavior, manner of dress, etc., which distinguishes a certain class or set of people, 2. a slogan; watchword; 3. a common saying or belief with little actual meaning or truth”. (pp. 2-3)

Salcedo's work, or its two versions [the before and the after which became during] of the installation, merge with the museum, merge with the support, the support and the work, the work and the support become inseparable. If the *parergon*² is the inside-outside of the work, an inscription made on the work, but which seems to already be part of the work, something beyond the work in the work, the work[s] by Salcedo are sequential ergonal *parergons*. The first work, the crack, merges with the museum, altering it; the crack, an invagination, a cut, is inscribed in the *ergon* — if we consider the museum as the *ergon*, now — to make it into another of itself, a supplement to itself (Fig. 1). In removing, extracting matter from the museum, Salcedo, following Derrida's proposal for the notion of supplement, makes the museum less of a museum. Therefore, it becomes more of a museum, another of itself, therefore, beyond itself, a *parergon* of what it was, or has been, or continues to be, but, already, as another one, a trace of itself.

² According to Derrida, (1978, p. 63, our translation) “a parergon comes against, beside and beyond the ergon, or work done, the fact, the work, but it does not fall on the side, it touches and cooperates, from somewhere outside, inside the operation. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board, above all on (the) bo(a)rd(er)”. From the original in French: “un parergon vient contre, à côté et en plus de l'ergon, du travail fait, du fait, de l'œuvre mais il ne tombe pas à côté, il touche et coopere, depuis un certain dehors, au-dedans de l'opération. Ni simplement dehors, ni simplement dedans. Comme un accessoire qu'on est obligé d'accueillir au bord, à bord, il est d'abord l'à-bord”

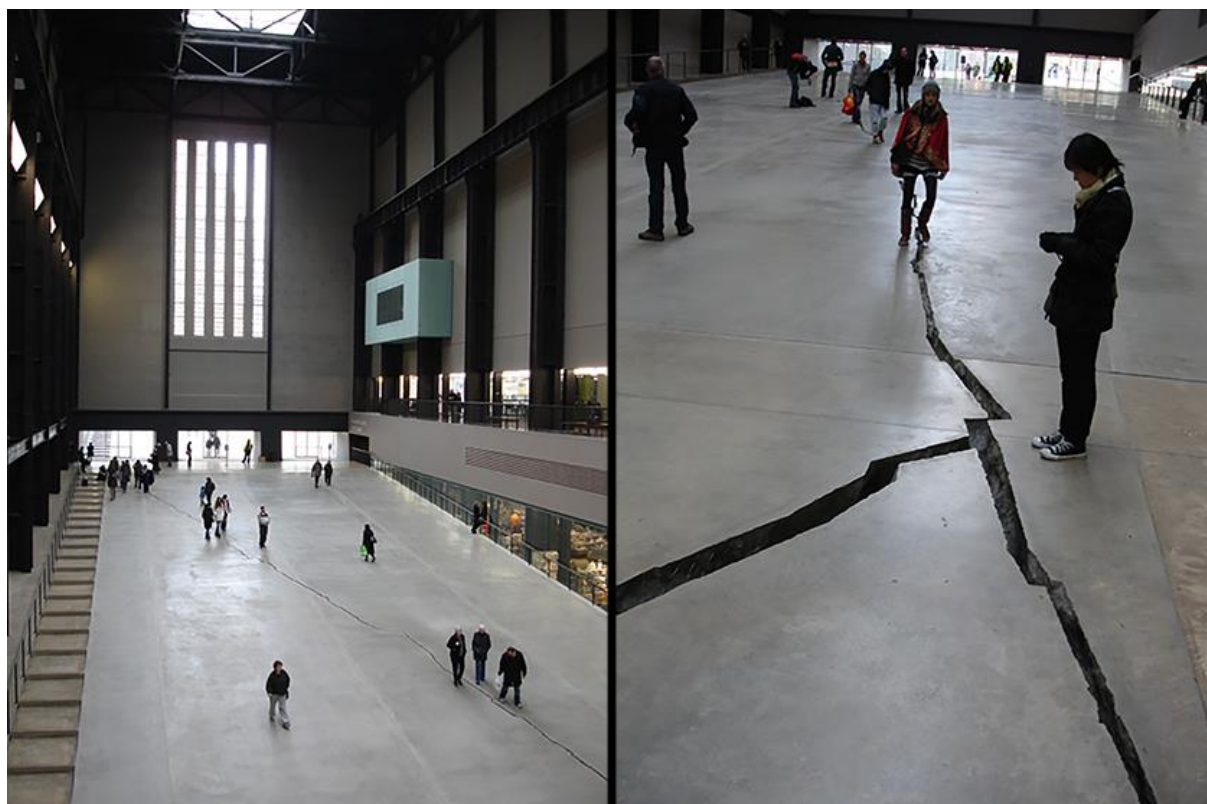


Fig.1: *Schibboleth*, Doris Salcedo. Turbine Hall, 2007. Source: Igor Guatelli, 2007

What remains of the work, the “work” of the work, the remainder³ of the work, when the crack is sealed, filled with matter, restores the level of the previous, “original” floor (Fig. 2). But, it is no longer the same floor. The floor becomes another floor when it is restored, restituted to its original level. Its discreet restitution, a mere filling of the crack, inaugurates the second work of art, which can be considered a trace of the first, turned gray by being filled. Unlike fire, extractivist actions, genocides, massacres, segregations, followed by acts of concealment, which have always marked the history of the erasures imposed onto Latin America — constituting true *parergons* of its history — from outside but inscribed as intrinsic traces of its constitution as a continent supportive of external marks — thus Salcedo’s second work, the mark on the floor, made ashes of the first, that is, it almost erased it by filling it in, by covering it up.

³ At first, Restance would be something like the *fait de rester*, that which remains, remaining as a residue, like *différance* would be the *fait de différer*. Nevertheless, it plays an important role in Derrida's discussion with Searle [this discussion appears in his work *Limited Inc.*, and later reappears in *Papier Machine*] based on the concept of iterability. Contrary to what the term suggests, Derrida prefers to use restance instead of permanence. It can be understood as a kind of permanence, but it goes further. For Derrida, restance is something that remains within the forms of communication — oral, written, artistic — over time, being able, at the same time, to show what belongs to it, but, at the same time, what already belongs to another context. It is about a cleaved identity of the object, differential, reproducible, and no longer the same thing; it would thus be an altered permanence.

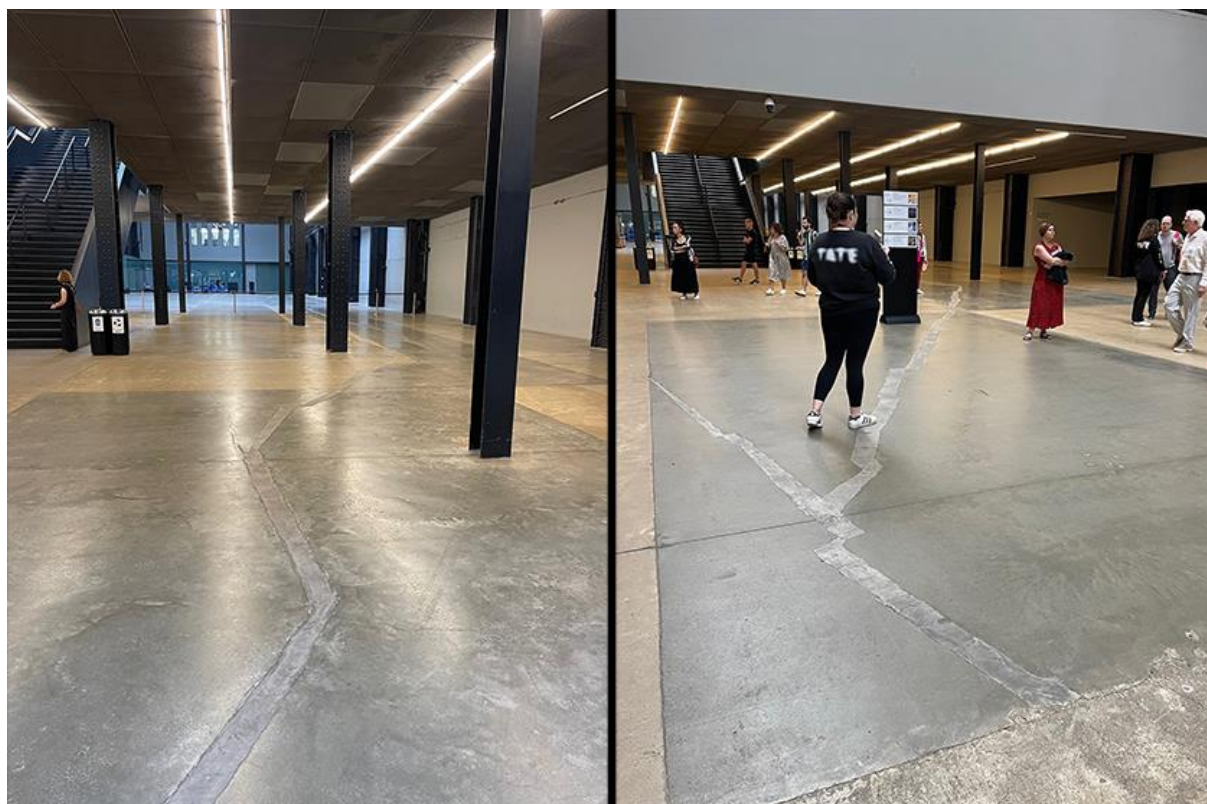


Fig.2: Trace of *Schibboleth*, Doris Salcedo. Turbine Hall, 2022. Source: Giovana Giosa, 2022

However, can we really talk about a colonial past? The colonial past may never have been passed, when it passed, but only transmuted, like in Salcedo's work. Latin American colonialism persists as another, always transmuting when being overcome, apparently. Its erasure only reveals that it still exists, just under different guises, other forms, other procedures. The erasure of indigenous peoples, the widespread fires in the Amazon and the Pantanal, brutal actions against black people, women and vulnerable populations on the continent confirm the persistence of the fire that never stops burning and producing ashes, as a reinvigorated realization of colonialist processes; ceaseless subtractions, just like *Schibboleth*.

The artist's work does not embellish the monumental, vast (another *parergon*) exhibition hall of the Tate Modern⁴, it assaults it, perhaps as an allusion to the centuries-old atrocities suffered by Latin Americans. Nor does it sentimentalize, mystify, or instrumentalize this suffering. As a crack, a wound or, later on, as a scar, it remains in a discreet intermediate position at first, between an abstract, polysemic denouncement, (let's consider it as the first work) and the mourning, a "living-dead" work of art that remains there as a spectral register of it-self and of history. It mourns itself and the atrocious history of Latin American continent, haunting the English and, thus, the Europeans. Installation or sculpture, the work is a sculpted sculpture, opened in the floor, a negative installation that abyssees, that puts assumptions of what installation or sculpture is into abyss. An installation-sculpture, a sculpture-installation, the work arises from the excavation, from an abyss in the center of the great void, a work that abyssees not just the Turbine Hall or the Tate Modern, but London and the United Kingdom, as well as Europe altogether. Salcedo excavates in order to expose, exposing the bowels of the museum, the continent (or is it of colonialism?).

The work exposes itself as it positioned itself between sculpture and installation, as it cracks one of the temples of contemporary art. The work ex-poses what it had posed by posing itself in another form, with another "accent," another stress — *S[ch]ibboleth* —, as it is erased. It remains exposed when posed in another position, now as cinders of itself. The wound heals, but the discomfort remains. It remains as an indelible stain on the history of the place, or the continent. It is interesting to note that the work, from its origin, sets itself as a possible "*avenir*," by assuming that the fissure created would be filled in again. If Derrida thinks of the oppressed of the

⁴ *Tate Modern*, a museum housed in an old power station built between 1947 and 1963. Decommissioned in 1981, the building was renovated by Herzog & De Meuron. Salcedo's installation, measuring 167 meters, occupied the former "Turbine Hall" of the power station, a space measuring 155x23x35 meters.

world with compassion and friendship, the artist rapes and violates the white cloak of the Turbine Hall to denounce oppressions of all kinds. Salcedo's work is not just to be seen, but experienced. It is also an invitation to interaction; the public can touch, penetrate, demean it — as it was, in a way, when the patch is filled.

Still, it is an invitation to another, to any other who interferes and transforms it into another of itself, a sign of contamination, the desire for contamination, for exchange, miscegenation, and transmutation. Fused to the floor of the Turbine Hall, the work is mixed-race since its inception. Perhaps this is a discreet sign of a democracy to come, as advocated by Derrida. The [in]discreet restitution repair made to the floor after the work had been on display became the becoming of the work, a work in the process of becoming since its “birth.” Erased, or almost erased, it hasn't disappeared, it persists with an aura that enlivens the place, desacralizing the idea of an authorial architecture, an object that must maintain its integrity and inviolability hovering above its “mundanity.” Salcedo's work, and its trace, democratize the place by impregnating it with traces of others.

Persistent colonial traces in Latin America have been, at the same time, erased and promoted, both leading to tragic processes and scenarios, but also to the denunciation of their specters, their persistent cinders, cinders resulting from the history impregnated into it, allowing them to be insistently retold, immemorial remains of a memory that cannot be erased. Cinders that contain genetic material that must remain alive in memory. Cinders are what remains of history, but also what must be kept, guarded, so that this history always returns as a memory trace, as mourning, as vigil, as, perhaps, the beginning of another story, just like the immense crack and its quasi-erasure.

Cinder remains, cinder there is, which we can translate: the cinder is not, is not what is. It remains *from* what is not, in order to recall at the delicate, charred bottom of itself only nonbeing or nonpresence. Being without presence has not been and will no longer be there where there is cinder and where this other memory would speak. There, where cinder means the difference between what remains and what is, will she ever reach it, there? (Derrida, 1987, p. 230, our translation ⁵)

Cinder is *différance*, something between what was and what is, and perhaps what can still be from this remainder. By being what remains, but already being another, through the cinders we can [re]think its history and imagine its future. Because it is no longer what was, the cinders are the maintenance of a before that must be thought of from the now, of what it is and what it can be in the light of that past. Cinder “remain beyond everything that is, remain beyond what was, unpronounceable in order to make saying possible although it is nothing” (Derrida, 1987, p. 57, our translation ⁶).

No longer the given entity that they were, cinders are another (of that entity), another *ergon*, making it possible to [re]think what the entity was, or what history was, a history re-opened by what remained and remains of it, and which therefore makes it possible to rethink it, and not just being retold, informed, and reproduced. The “work” of the work by Salcedo, the patch, cinder of the “original” entity, remains as a remainder of the first installation. It remains as another, but retains traces of what it was. Through it, we can think about what it is now in the light of what it was; and what it was from what it remains and has become, more silent than what it was, from where it originated, but perhaps, for this reason, more intriguing. [Re]thinking history from what is almost invisible, silent, residual, remaining, in short, remainder, becomes even more challenging and disturbing.

At the moment when the thing no longer speaks, or just whispers, sighs, like a stain and faint mark of its own self, cinder of its violent expression, the possibility of constructing a thought that has not yet been thought opens up. From cinders, through cinders, history is [re]assembled from what remains of it in order to think about the future. The cinder is another of the entity, perhaps an in-between, an intermediate moment, as the patch on the floor seems to be. But as an in-between of what was and what will be [full restitution?], this uncertain, dissonant, conflicting, “unfinished” moment, of discreet and modest restitution, seems to be the most fecund for generative thought.

⁵ From the French original: “Reste la cendre. Il y a là cendre, traduit, la cendre n'est pas, elle n'est pas ce qui est. Elle reste de ce qui n'est pas, pour ne rappeler au fond friable d'elle que non-être ou imprésence. L'être sans présence n'a pas été et ne sera pas plus là où il y a cendre et parlerait cette autre mémoite. Là, où cendre veut dire la différence entre ce qui reste et ce qui est, y arrive-t-elle, là?”

⁶ From the French original: “reste imprononçable pour rendre possible le dire alors qu'il n'est rien.”

Remainder is the supplement of the entity, keeping traces of what it was, but already being another, simultaneously. Thinking about this temporality of the entity is thinking beyond what it is and has been as a given representation and meaning, as a figure of identity. Perhaps cinders are figures of otherness, through which a thought beyond what has already been thought can unfold. The patching of the floor of the great hall is the *intermezzo* between what was and what would be if the floor were completely redone, which would erase the traces, this disjointed instant of the work, remaining only between what was and what has become. The stain that remains is the specter of the crack, the fissure opened by the artist, there is no totalizing return. The stain that tarnishes the integrity of the floor is the lava that cinders the fissure by filling it. Or perhaps a gush, a joy, a Latin *jouissance* as blemished vein, to be kept as a historical trace of the veins of blood caused by colonizing violence.

As time passes, Salcedo's intervention gradually becomes the specter of what remains of it. We could suppose an inversion: the repair made to the floor has become Salcedo's other work, the becoming, a discreet stain, permanent *jouissance*. The stain/*jouissance* that remains in the *Turbine Hall* allows us to keep looking back towards a future, almost like the allegorical figure of the *Angelus Novus*⁷ [from Paul Klee's canvas], created by Walter Benjamin (2013) to discuss the concept of history, especially to illustrate the storm of modernity, and the destructions, erasures, ruptures promoted by the "progress" it engenders.

Perhaps a little carelessly, but speculatively, with a certain amount of caution, this legacy of the work *Schibboleth* could be considered as a revenant of the work itself, a union of specter and event, a phantom of the work that appears in an un-predictable way, a surprise, something unexpected re-appearing as a second work, a transfigured *Schibboleth*, at the limit, inverted. It's not an *ergon*, it's not the work, although it retains traces of the work. Perhaps we can think of what came from and remained of the work, of the *ergon*, as another ergonal parergon, nameless, unpronounceable, a nearly nothing, present as non-presence, as non-work, trace that differs from the "original" work, at the same time deferring to it as a memory of it, as what remains of it already being another. No longer *Schibboleth*, that discreet figure of differentiation, the identifying feature of differences capable of revealing the other from what they are incapable of being the same, but perhaps a *s[ch]ibboleth*, a differentiation not from their insufficiency, but from their irreducible otherness, with an inverted destiny, to remain.

3 A work from the political *mi-lieu*

Iterating, Salcedo's *Schibboleth* produces a crack, a border, to then remains as *dissemence*, a hybrid concept invented by Derrida and found in Glas (1974). *Dissemence* is the combination of *Semence* [seed, semen] and *Dissémination* [dissemination]. The stain that remains after the floor has been repaired resembles a *jouissance*, a gush that, rather than fertilizing something, remains the dissemination of a denunciation, of a violent act necessary for a future that overcomes what remains of Eurocentrism. Salcedo's installation remains a *différance* of itself, *jouissance* as a *différance* of the fissure. As already mentioned, even "undone", it remains as trace, mark, remainder, margin, as dissemination without fecundation, a splurge, a stray postscript, which can be seen as a preface to something yet to come, without a name, which only gives way even though it resembles a border mark. A work that disappears by refusing to disappear and in this way produces itself as another of it-self, which goes beyond itself and impregnates itself in the place, preserving and altering both the place and it-self [Hegelian *Aufhebung*].

The term milieu, medium, but also ambiance, takes on another meaning in Derridean thought. A play with "*hymen*" and "between", the term gives rise to a series of undecidable announcements in *La Dissémination* (Derrida, 1972). If we're talking about *jouissance*, about gushing, we mustn't forget that the violence with which the crack tears through the large exhibition space disappears with the

⁷ Aphorism IX, in "On the Concept of History": "There is a painting by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. An angel is depicted there who looks as though he were about to distance himself from something which he is staring at. His eyes are opened wide, his mouth stands open and his wings are outstretched. The Angel of History must look just so. His face is turned towards the past. Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair, to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high. That which we call progress, is this storm." (Benjamin, 2012, p. 14). It can be seen that, with his back to the future, the "the rubble-heap before him" is already the past. The ruin that announces itself as the future ahead is the ruin of the past. Salcedo's work, ruin as an allegory of ruin, which also denounces the "civilizing" cultural ruin by [literally] ruining a cultural institution, remains as a memory of past and future in the Tate Modern, without interruption, without restitution, an indelible mark. "[...] There has never been a document of culture which is not simultaneously one of barbarism[...]" (ibid, manuscript 447, p. 187), says Benjamin, and he continues, "[...] But from what can we save what is already gone? [...]" (ibid, manuscript 473, p.188).

recomposition of the floor. This recomposition, much discussed here, produces the effect of a *milieu*, an in-between, a highlighted strip, with another tone, another color, in the middle of that huge slab. This *milieu* appears as a *hymen*, a between-times, between the present and the past, between the present and a former future, a ghost. The hymen occurs between, the between is the hymen, a necessary condition for a new political dissemination to begin. The hymen, one of the Derridean supplements, like a parergon, is an inside-out of the “work”, an in-between, an intermediate state, something that exists to announce the future, something like a latent becoming.

It takes an action, in a certain sense a “violent” action, for this becoming to set in motion and give way to a transformed other. This mark that remains of the work, preserved on the floor fifteen years after the work was exhibited, is the inaugural gesture of a possible renewed hospitality. Through a work that speaks to humanity, without internalizing it, Salcedo makes a violent incision that opens up an in-between time, a supplementary spacing [separation-union/wound-scar] within that place, without closing in on itself, surviving its own end by disseminating like a trace without a *télos*. Close to Derrida, “the mimed operation does not, however, sum up the outside inside the inside; it does not plant the theater inside the enclosure of a mental hideaway nor reduce space itself to the imaginary. On the contrary, in inserting a sort of spacing into interiority, it no longer allows the inside to close upon itself or be identified with itself”⁸ (1972, p. 286, our translation).

Even if we strip the work, for a moment, of some of its *parergons* and *schibboleths* — the artist’s signature, her origin, nationality, and dates — there remains the violence of the act in the other’s house, which, despite this, for this reason, welcomes it, hosts it for a while and, without failing to cause a certain strangeness, hosts its traces, apparently, for an indefinite period, making it part of the place, but keeping it disjointed. If, when it was “inaugurated,” the work had a signature attached to the object, now it has acquired, as a trace, an unsure wandering, just a “probable trace” of what it was and what it might become.

In his work “*Mémoires d’aveugles*,” Derrida (1990, p. 6, our translation) suggests “dissociating the signatory from the subject of the self-portrait.”⁹ In this way, the author’s identification with the work “*reste probable*,” that is, it would remain uncertain, removed from any internal reading, the object of inferences and not of perception, retaining a hypothetical character. What remains of the work *Schibboleth* wanders in that space, part of the place and at the same time out-of-place, a stain assimilated by the place that still retains traces of its otherness; *ethos* of another aesthetic hospitality.

No homogenizing unity, but disjunctive, dissonant, conflicting integration. Salcedo takes the place to a *mise-en-abyme*¹⁰ by creating borders and edges where totality and unity prevail. Like a *khôra* (Derrida, 1993), the crack establishes the experience of vertigo and chaos in the serenity and uniformity of the enormous emptiness of the *Turbine Hall*. If, in principle, it was a hospitality of visitation, conditioned to a length of stay, the permanence of its traces altered the condition of hospitality, making it apparently unconditional. As well as allowing a violent action — a crack equivalent to an earthquake — to be consummated inside, it kept the marks generated by this act as an inheritance, if not permanent, at least lasting. From a hospitality of passage, we have thus migrated to a hospitality of permanence.

Place of perpetrations and their memories, the *Turbine Hall* itself has become a *milieu* over the course of time. Accumulating marks from past interventions, it appears like a temporal palimpsest, a support for inscriptions from different times. The floor seems to exist as a support for prints, a kind of stencil, or an immense limestone similar to the old stones used in lithographs. The floor of the Turbine Hall resembles a large lithography. Or, by creasing the floor, was the artist’s *Schibboleth* a support for a woodcut to come? Salcedo’s sculpture/installation became a painting on the Turbine Hall floor, muralist art. Once again, like a *khôra*, a place “that receives, so as to give place to them, all the determinations, but it possesses none of them as its property” (Derrida, 1993, p. 25, our translation), the floor of the enormous area seems to receive everything without allowing itself to be subtracted to the domain of meaning of any of the inscriptions.

⁸ From the French original: “l’opération mimée ne résume pas le dehors dans le dedans, elle n’installe pas la scène dans la clôture d’un réduit mental, elle ne réduit pas dans l’intériorité, elle ne laisse plus celle-ci se refermer sur elle-même, s’identifier à elle-même”

⁹ From the French original: “dissocier le signataire et le sujet de l’autportrait”

¹⁰ “narrative in abyss”: first used by André Gide when talking about narratives that contain other narratives within themselves.

A *milieu* generated by the fissure and its filling, which is permanently realized through the exercise of an *époque*, the radicality of an *époque* of history (Derridean thought, as a game of the trace, as *différance*, in a sense needs an *époque*), whose task is to remain in suspension and suspend any and all primordial meaning, opening itself up to unprefigured registers and transmutations. The “violent” and “radical” *Schibboleth* (yes, a feminine word in the Bible) is an active example of *époque*, a political phenomenon in suspension and therefore capable of making us think about the persistent brutality that permeates our history and constitutes it; that remains as an unerasable, unforgettable force, a camouflaged, almost hidden expressiveness, but adherent enough to the interrogation of the constituted historical field, a half-place, a *mi-lieu* between what was and what becomes.

The end of Salcedo’s installation is the beginning of its transmutation as a deviant memory, *au-delà* (beyond, for beyond) of what it was, an *au-delà* in suspension; a fissured structure that becomes a prosthesis of connection (*strictire*), life as death, death as another life, without addresses, without [an] end, or perhaps with an apparently unmotivated end. In his work *Circumfession* (Derrida, 1991), on his return from Moscow, he (a) noted the end of the revolution. The “end of the revolution,” for him, did not refer to a specific date, a specific episode, but probably to a historical flow, a duration comprising countless revolutions in Europe from the 1917 revolution, through the “Velvet Revolution” from November to December of 1989, in Czechoslovakia, to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November of 1989, narrated like a diary, in short sentences. History, for him, must be seen and discussed not from or through its most visible episodes, but from its events, from its in-between, from what cannot be immediately appropriated and given full understanding, a self-evident context, but, on the contrary, from what suspends it. A problematization of the issues that shape history, of the story of the issue, rather than an exposition of the essence of history.

If, for Salcedo, in the same interview given to the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper, in a scathing critique of the world, “we live well with horror,” her work was (or is, and continues to be) an experience of looking through the in-between, through the medium, through the traces of the object and of history, through what survives of it and from it, through its life and death and in-between them — its *revenant*. It is still a chance to look beyond its pure presence or mere reconstitution; the work lives its death without exhausting itself, to re-appear as a ghost that cannot die. Perhaps this is not a genealogy of the work or the artist, an extensive biography with dates and information about the artist’s production and life, but a reflection based on her traces, her marks, her blurred context, present and absent, inside and outside the European, Latin American context, in between them, on her history ex-appropriated by the place, expropriating it.

In his first published work, “Penser c’est dire non,” Derrida says:

The *now* is always a tension between, on the one hand, the already past, which has just passed and is retained, since if it hadn’t been retained, we wouldn’t be able to perceive the originality of the now and its actuality in relation to the past; and, on the other hand, between the *now* that announces itself and is anticipated in resistance.¹¹ (Derrida, 2022, p. 78, our translation).

4 Final considerations

A scar, the scar of a wound that refuses to be forgotten, erased, the work of the work by Salcedo remains (*maintenance*) as a rature, an erasure, but also as a flaw (*rater*) and a wound (*blesure*), simultaneously. An indelible mark — like the ancestral and current marks of Latin America, which cannot be erased — that establishes a present that refuses to go, that refuses to be a trace of the past, remaining (*maintenance*) a now (*maintenant*) that announces itself as a retention of the past, supplanting its pre-seen qualitative being, foreseen to have a duration. Salcedo challenges the very notion of duration, a duration that denies its own duration, its foreseen temporality. The artist seems to refuse to leave, she seems to deny the proper temporality of an installation, she seems to deny the time of the hospitality offered. The non-being of the work, which becomes a being-another, asserts the negativity needed for us to reflect on the eternal now (*maintenant*) of a past that still remains, which is renewed through actualizations, and substitutions. Latin specters remain in the Tate, the past cannot be reified, reconciliation seems impossible. *Revenants*.

¹¹ From the French original: “Le maintenant est toujours une tension entre d’une part le maintenant passé, qui vient juste de passer et qui est retenu, car s’il n’était pas retenu nous ne pourrions pas percevoir l’originalité du maintenant, son actualité par rapport au passé; et d’autre part entre le maintenant qui s’annonce, qui s’anticipe dans une protention.”

In different ways, with, through, and alongside a presumably ephemeral art installation, the possibility of other temporalities-territories was addressed. Through it, we speak of a ghost, of ghosts — the logos of the absent according to Derrida — that haunts the work itself, the place and which carries the reverse of eschatology through the indelible stain of a past present and a future present at the same time. We speak of an ethos of the residue generated by the intruder and resulting from it, the graft, an intrusion that, beyond that particular location is the chance of turning something foreign to oneself into a “metatechnique, art of combinations, supplementations, substitutions, permutations, prostheses, regenerations, inscriptions, transfers, transpositions, transactions”¹² (Nancy, 2017, p. 60, our translation).

Schibboleth, by Salcedo, is a metatechnique, an inscription, a prosthesis that emulates semantic supplementation by splitting the territory and suggesting other transpositions — historical, political and geographical trans-positions. Topological, the work splits to suggest other proximities. And, even from what remains of it, it joins in order to remain disjointed. As Derrida says, “proximity does not suppress distance, it is not the opposite of distance, it reconciles the distant, but as distant, it keeps it as distant”¹³ (Derrida, 2021, p. 101, our translation).

We are talking about a spacing that opens up another time by breaking with the unity, uniformity, and banality of the historical space and time. May the stigma — the re-mark — left on the *Turbine Hall* not be a condemnation, but an opening to another world; a world where the colonizer is marked by the colonized as a denunciation of an unpostponable and urgent decolonization. An aesthetic, political in-between, a *mi-lieu* between what has been and what will be, already being, between “the corpse and the breath”, as Cioran would say, a quasi-place that, while separating, unites, a place-medium of interpenetrations, interpenetrations between the outside and the inside, between the exploiter and the exploited. Between an out-side that enters, ingresses, and merges, while keeping itself as a singularized trace of another, an embodied grief of something that must remain, imprinted as a mark of a colonizing historical violence that [still] remains.

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¹² From the French original: “métatechnique, l’art des combinaisons, suppléments, substitutions, permutations, prothèses, régénérations, inscriptions, transferts, transpositions, transactions...”

¹³ From the French original: “la proximité ne supprime pas l’éloignement, elle n’est pas le contraire de l’éloignement, elle rapproche le lointain mais comme lointain, elle le garde comme lointain...”

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