

**Paloma Ayala**

**selected works**

[info@palomaayala.com](mailto:info@palomaayala.com) / [www.palomaayala.com](http://www.palomaayala.com) /  [@palomito.a](https://www.instagram.com/palomito.a)

# Paloma Ayala

b.1980, Matamoros, Mexico  
Lives in Switzerland since 2010

[info@palomaayala.com](mailto:info@palomaayala.com) / [www.palomaayala.com](http://www.palomaayala.com) /  [@palomito\\_a](https://www.instagram.com/palomito_a)



## Biography

Paloma Ayala is a visual artist interested in empowering the relationships between domestic and political contexts. Paloma's projects nourish visions of connection between human and more-than-human spheres, they dream of emancipation from marginalizing dominant structures, and emphasize practices of care across different topographies and borders. Her favorite spaces to work range from kitchen to river shore, from international crossing bridge to agricultural land, from community meeting to *aqueelarre*. Her work takes the form of publications, videos, installations, reading/cooking sessions, and workshops directed to different public, including humans outside of cultural institutions.

Paloma's work is rooted in her home, the eastern US/MX border, simultaneously blooming in her current base in Zurich. She has completed a Bachelor in Fine Arts (Universidad de Monterrey, 2002), a Community Education Degree (Arte AC, 2003) and a Master in Fine Arts (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, 2017). She currently co-curates the queer feminist and BIPO- focused independent art space [Les Complices\\*](#), in Zürich.

Selected Exhibitions:

[Karachi Biennial 24](#), Karachi 2024

[Into the Rhythm: From Score to Contact Zone](#), ARKO, Seoul 2024

*Alimento*, La Cápsula and SAE Greenhouse ETH, Zürich 2023

[Here and Now: Anti-colonial Interventions](#), Ludwig Museum, Köln 2022-2023

[Underland: Emotions are Oceans](#), RADIUS Center for Contemporary Art and Ecology, Delft 2022

*Habitar Tierras Fronterizas*, MACT Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Tamaulipas, Matamoros 2022

[Picking out images from my soul's eye](#), DISTRICT Berlin 2021

[Monument to Use de Space \(Use it, you must\)](#), PLATTEforum, Denver 2020

[Auf der Suche... Nach Zürich](#), Helmhaus Zürich 2019

She has been an artist in residency in KIOSKO Santa Cruz BO (2024), [U-jazdowski Centre for Contemporary Art](#) Warsaw (2022) and [Platteforum](#) Denver (2020), among others.

Articles:

«Привет Complicx, das ist ein Loveletter 4U», by Vic Kiefer for *RosaRot: Zeitschrift für Feminismus und Geschlechterfragen*, Nr. 60

«An der Grenze zwischen Wahrheit und Fiktion», by Vic Kiefer for *Die Republik*

<https://www.republik.ch/2021/01/16/an-der-grenze-zwischen-wahrheit-und-fiktion>

«Artist Profile: Paloma Ayala», by Cori Anderson for *DARIA Denver Art Review, Inquiry, and Analysis*

<https://www.dariamag.com/home/paloma-ayala?rq=paloma%20ayala>

# Se sirven tamales de “PECHITOS”

(We serve “TITIES” tamales)

Ceramic steamers, food, banner and lecture performance

2024-2025

— The first thing that attracted my attention in Bolivia were the termite nests. They look like brown human breasts, hard and porous, unevenly shaped, raising from the clay grounds of Santa Cruz... grounds heavily damaged by deforestation and by the growing city. As anyone who knows me knows, I am a fan of tits and I am a fan of food. Yet somehow it never occurred to me to compare human tits and cooking pots until I came to learn about termite nests.

In this project, Paloma explores the dynamics that regulate relationships between territory structures, and working bodies with tits in non-urban spaces. The morphological, imagined or poetic relations between the design of a termite and human tits; the reproductive labor done by women artisans in the region of Santa Cruz BO, and the knowledges created by both termites and artisans in their relation to the environment, inspired the making of ceramic steamers, a series of cooking events and lecture performances.

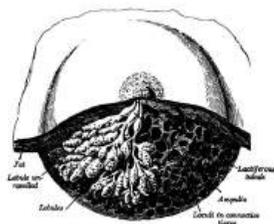
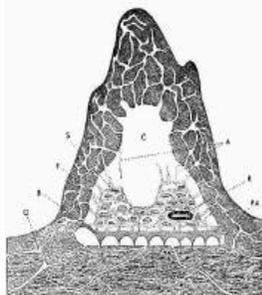
For years, Paloma has developed story-telling sessions where food is the unraveling element to discuss human-environmental relations. *Tamales*, a type of steamed corn bread, have become essential to tell these stories. Two *tamales* steamers were produced with the Mujeres Artesanas de Cotoca, a women ceramist association working in a small town near the city of Santa Cruz. The making of these steamers required knowledge of clay quarries and soil, of termites, and the thermoregulatory system of the nests. Further encounters with entomologist Miguel Ramos, anthropologist Mitsy Ramirez, and artisan Isabel Ballejo, facilitated the making of the design and its production.

The tissues in both termite nests and mammary glands, are imagined as spaces of vulnerable interactions, where exchanges of knowledge and materialities take place, and where one feels in contact with ancestry, history, and land. What invisible and visible matters do we exchange with environmental agents and what mechanisms and structures can we imagine to emphasize these relations?

Developed during a residency in KIOSKO Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

A lecture performance with the steamers and *tamales* was presented in KIOSKO (March, 2024) and in La Cápsula Zurich (Jan 2025)

Supported by ProHelvetia.



Images:  
Ceramic steamer designed after termite nests  
and research images of tits and nests in the region of Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Left: Termite nest and mammary gland diagrams



Indocino, circa. 1540 (interve.

Los organismos enactuamos  
el territorio,  
nos auto-producimos constantemente  
y  
nos reproducimos para establecer  
relaciones entre nosotres  
y el entorno.



“In these relationships,  
organisms en-act the  
territory, we constantly self-  
produce and reproduce to  
establish relations between  
ourselves and  
the environment.”

Images:  
Lecture performance realized in  
KIOSKO, Santa Cruz

Left: dinner with tamales and banner  
designed for events

Photos Maria Edith Pereira, 2024



## KARAOKE READINGS

Participatory video installation and pedagogical/performative program  
2024-2025

Guided by the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, self-described as “chicana dyke-feminist, tejana patllache poet, writer, and cultural theorist”, visual artist Paloma Ayala reframes Anzaldúa’s poetry into a karaoke format that invites to sing along, read together, listen and participate.

Musicalized in collaboration with border musician Luna León, this version of Anzaldúa’s texts recognizes the importance of reading her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: La nueva Mestiza* (1986) under the lens of the contemporary problematics of the Mexican/US border. Anzaldúa’s texts are barely discussed or known in Matamoros, the mexican so called “sister city” right next to Brownsville Texas, area where she was raised and is now buried... also where both Luna and Paloma are from. The karaoke encounters act as an educational program where a set of readings and performances are hosted. The first KARAOKE READINGS were hosted in the backyards of the artist’s family and community.

The project comprises the karaoke musical videos, a reading workshop, a fanzine and printed information about Gloria.

*KARAOKE READINGS* is part of a larger artistic project that explores ways to narrate the space of the delta of the Río Bravo/Río Grande, the MX/US border river, and to develop solidarious relationships to rurality, water bodies and biota.

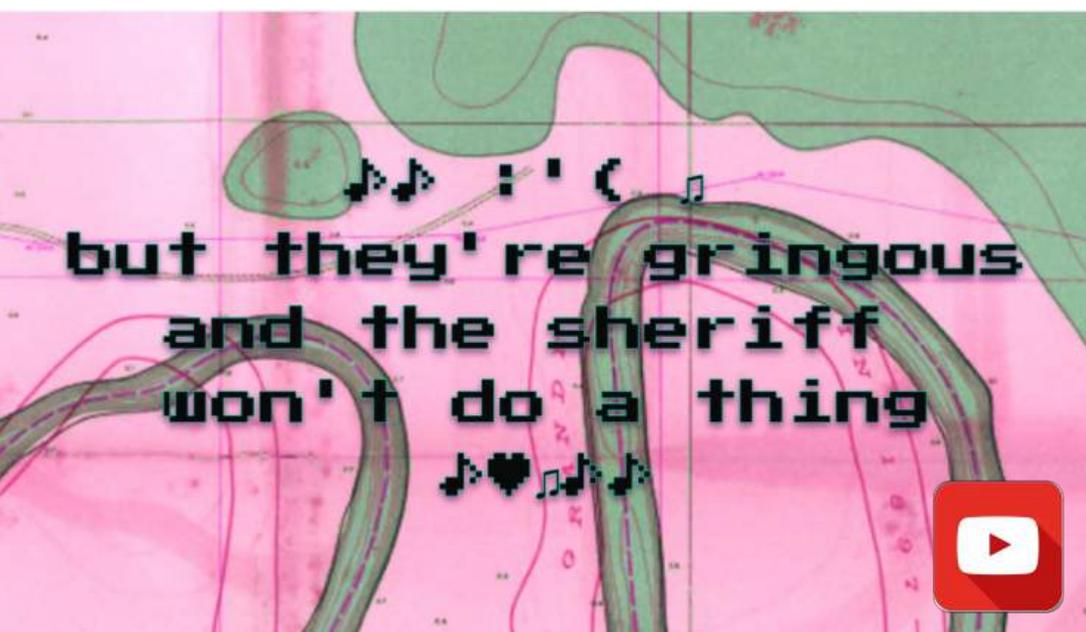
This project was part of the exhibitions *LETTERS FROM ONION ISLAND* solo show at Les Complices\*, curated by Gökçe Ergör (2019), of the group exhibition *Picking out images from my soul’s eye* curated by Andrea Keppler and Verena Melgarejo-Weinandt, in DISTRICT Berlin (2021), of *Art as Connection: An Unhappy Achive* curated by Sabian Baumann and Karin Michalski in Aargauer Kunsthau (2021); of *COMPOST, The Open Bin* curated by Giulia Buseti, Chiara Borgonovo and Olena Iorova in On Curating Space, Zurich (2022), *Juicy Things*, Kunsthochschule Halle (2022), of [Into the Rhythm: From Score to Contact Zone](#), at ARKO Seoul, and of Wildbuchs Festival: *Mother Tongues*, in Roxy Theater Basel (2025)



Images:  
Installation at ARKO, Seoul

Video still

Left: photo Gloria Anzaldúa in  
the Gulf of Mexico, and link to  
youtube video playlist.



## KARAOKE READINGS

Karaoke videos, Workshop and karaoke sessions, Fanzines

Gloria Anzaldúa wrote referential texts that shaped post-colonial and chicanx knowledges. Many of her texts narrate the Texas border territory as a body of her own, a fluctuating delta landscape that is still vessel of racist and migratory conflicts crossed by queer desires and ghosts.

*KARAOKE READINGS* is a pedagogical format that wishes to create wide accesses to Anzaldúa's poems and texts, recognizing the importance of embodying her voice and positioning her writings as a person from the border river and the surrounding delta system.

The sessions are guided by the artist.

PLAYLIST of KARAOKE READINGS videos [HERE](#)



Images:

Video still

Workshop and installation view, fanzine and karaoke gatherings in Les Complices\*, ARKO, On-curating Space, and Aargauer Kunsthau

# Que no nos quiten ni la lengua ni las patas

(Take anything but our tongues and feet)

One channel video

28 min

2024

This video work was filmed in one of the first *ejidos* in Mexico: *Ejido Zaragoza*.

*Ejid*os are the rural settlements that were part of the modern project of nation constructed after the Revolution in the first decades of the last century. The government of the Revolution included agricultural communities as a part of their utopia of progress. Rurality was an important source extracted for the fabrication of a national sovereign identity that looked back at the pre-colonial myths of creation and that paid attention to rural/indigenous cultural heritages to establish what is now considered "traditional".

Within the complexity of post-war, rural populations throughout the country went from working as servants of *latifundios*, rich family-owned vast lands, to be small-property owners. The government allotted "unused" hectares to agricultural workers who through legal contracts, became *ejidatarios*, or cropland owners.

*Ejido Zaragoza* is where my family came to work as independent agricultural labor and to develop into humans of the delta of the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande. It is also an environment affected by the *herida abierta*, the open wound that the MX/US border is, as Gloria Anzaldúa names it. Ecological impacts produced by political and economical powers, are not only damaging the soil and the livelihood of rural populations, but ending the life of *ejido* communities, at least as they were envisioned in their revolutionary beginnings.

The story of this video is guided by the emotional and economical landscape that my family has known for generations. It portrays the actual state of *el rancho*, their farm house, narrated by me in my position as a daughter that follows their imaginations, domestic practices, memories and death. I observe the decadence of our main economy and culture. I emphasize that this space is now taken care by older people and that their environment has radically changed due to the growth of the nearby city of Matamoros, the lack of irrigation water, and the progressive salinification of soil.

Exhibited in Espace 3533 (Geneve Sept 2024) as part of the exhibition "With the Fields".  
Commissioned by the Karachi Biennial (Oct 2024).

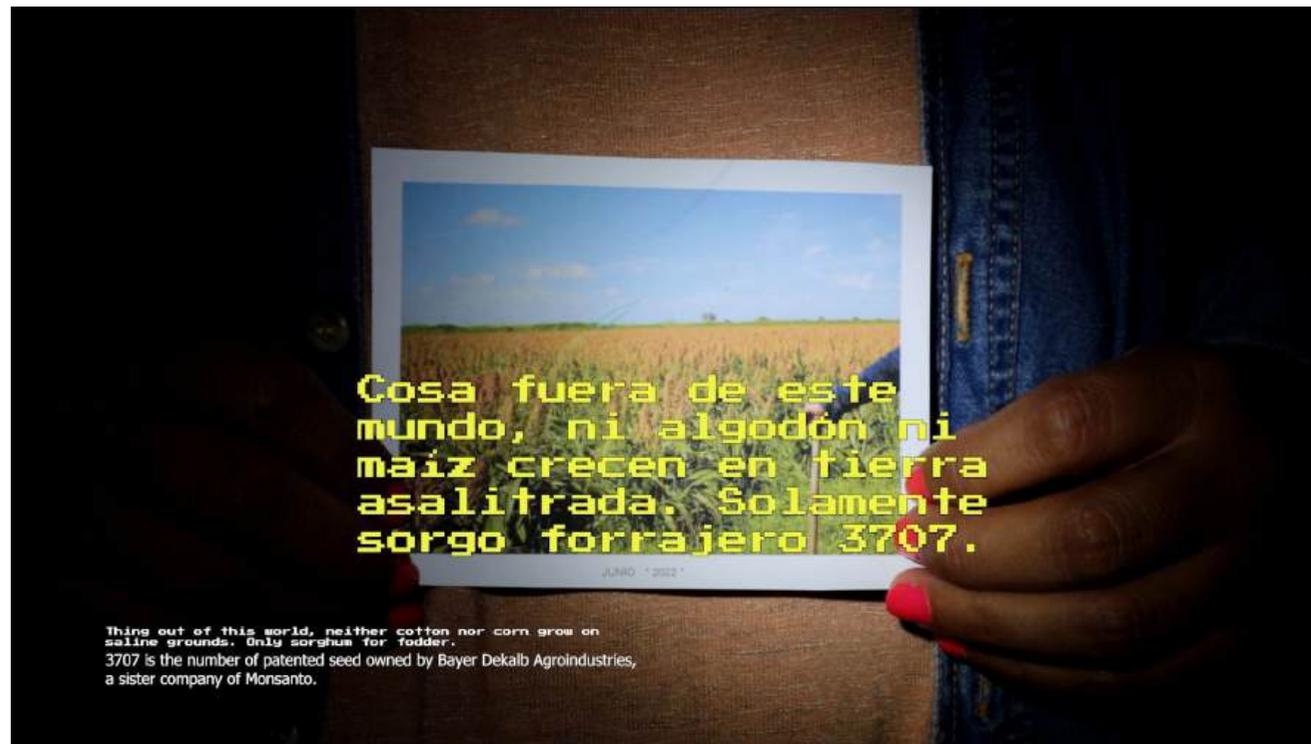
Supported by ProHelvetia.

[LINK to video upon request](#)

Images:  
Video stills



while public international affairs with containers,  
cranes, rural jargon, are negotiated.

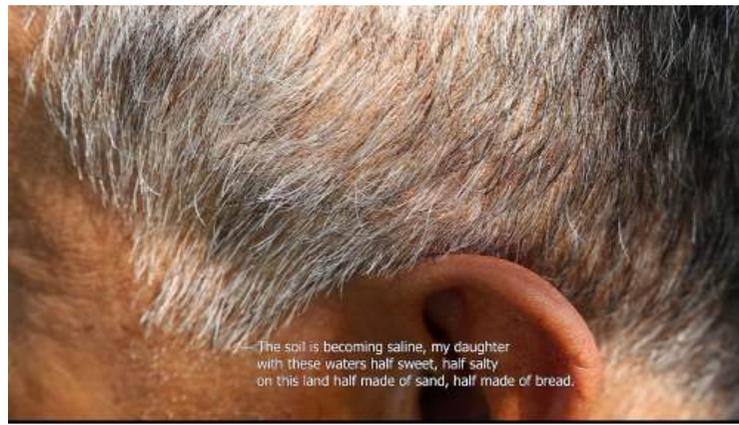


Cosa fuera de este  
mundo, ni algodón ni  
maiz crecen en tierra  
asalitrada. Solamente  
sorgo forrajero 3707.

Thing out of this world, neither cotton nor corn grow on  
saline grounds. Only sorghum for fodder.  
3707 is the number of patented seed owned by Bayer Dekalb Agroindustries,  
a sister company of Monsanto.



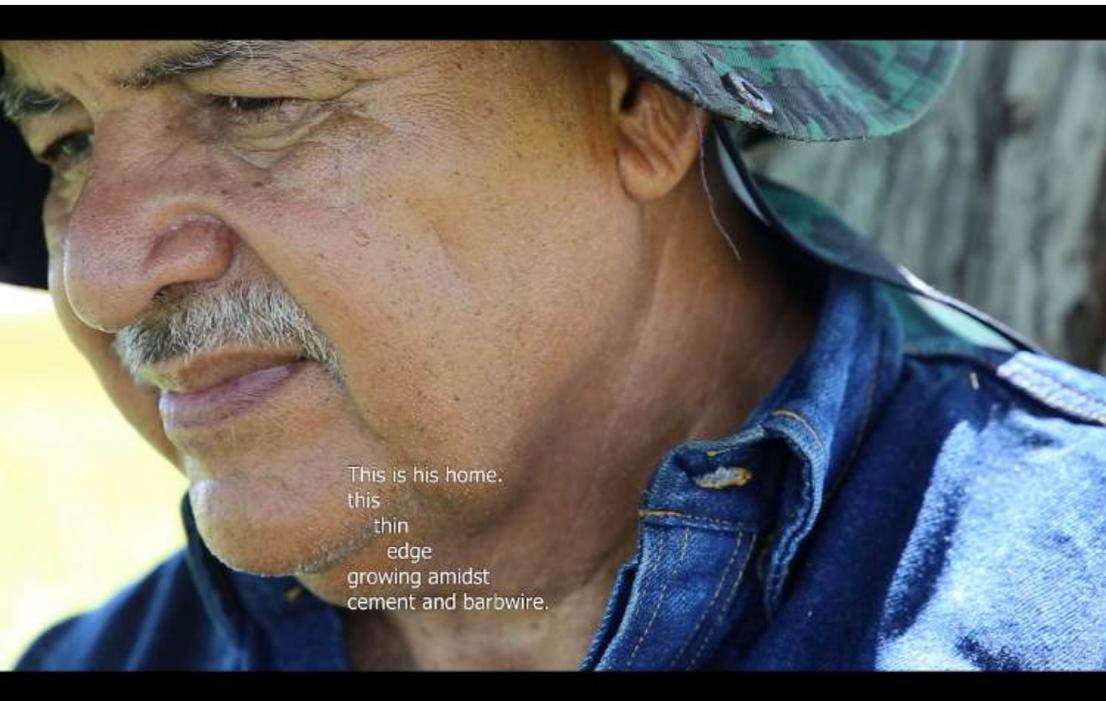
When my little guamúchil plants sprout



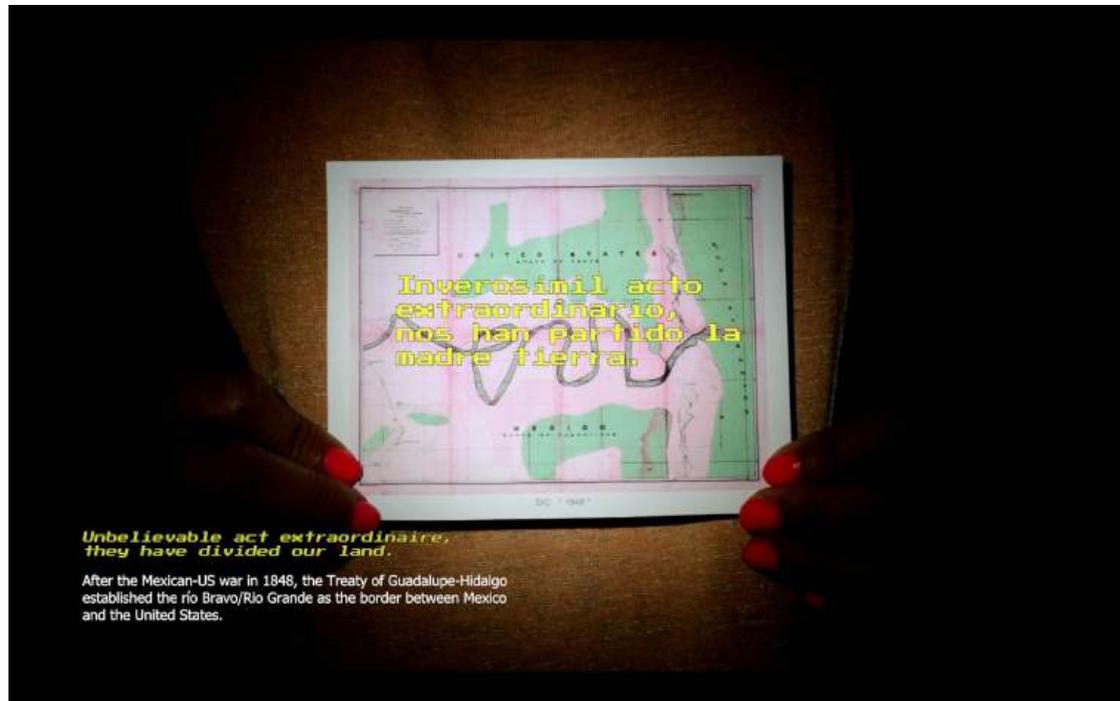
The soil is becoming saline, my daughter  
with these waters half sweet, half salty  
on this land half made of sand, half made of bread.



Only when i looked at the edge of things,



This is his home.  
this  
thin  
edge  
growing amidst  
cement and barbwire.



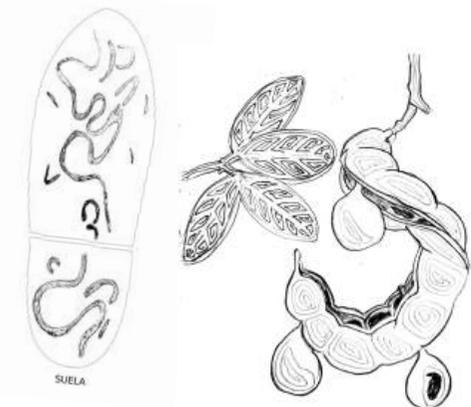
*Inverosímil acto  
extraordinario,  
nos han partido la  
madre tierra.*

*Unbelievable act extraordinaire,  
they have divided our land.*

After the Mexican-US war in 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo established the río Bravo/Río Grande as the border between Mexico and the United States.

Images:  
Video stills

**LINK to video upon request**



## Que en la vida no nos falten ni la lengua ni las patas

Embroidered cowboy style snake boots, texts, drawings and video  
2023

The project's title translates as *May in life we never lose neither tongue nor feet*, a phrase coined by my aunt Candelaria Ayala while describing herself as a woman capable to move and pass knowledge throughout the small rural community of Ejido Ignacio Zaragoza. In the conservative environment of rural populations at the MX/US border, she was the outstanding gossip person who walked from farm to farm, to sell herbs and pass on information. In her 80's, she is outspoken and energetic, rare for women of the region.

For this project, my aunt Cande tells about an imagined gesture of unintended resistance: walking around passing gossip and purposely spreading seeds of trees that will break the concrete of the growing nearby city of Matamoros.

The boots, a video, drawings and texts illustrate a research about regional trees that crack and damage cement infrastructures, a general undesired effect that happens within the relation of vegetation and urban development, but that my aunt beautifully imagines as a way of recuperating her cultural capital and community.

A video installation and fanzine were presented in a solo exhibition as part of the *From Earth* program hosted by Kulturlabor Villa Sträuli, Winterthur, 2023 Supported by ProHelvetia and the collective "With the Fields".

Images:  
Boots and research on Fraxinus and  
Guamúchil trees.

Sketches for boots design



Images:

Video stills

Installation display and lecture performance at Kulturlabor Villa Sträuli, 2023





## **Educational Program with Coastal Communities of the MX/US border**

**in collaboration with Javier Dragustinovis  
2022-2023, Tamaulipas, Mexico**

Border coastal communities echo the very watery environment where they are placed: unstable grounds very much endangered by political and economical systems; fluctuating populations of human and more-than-human species living in a highly diverse ecosystem; migratory birds, insects and humans passing by lands of sweet and salty waters; ports and oil pipelines causing displacement of coastal towns.

If we could in short describe what we learned from the children, teachers and mothers of the primary school in 'Primer Campo Pesquero' is that life perseveres. During this weekly workshop, we created images of the waters that surrounded town, we gathered the names that the locals gave to the flora and fauna, and we created images with the children that were not only tangible, but edible. We hand-made small cooking ovens and made drawings with the children using beetroot as ink, and cornbread as surface.

Our relation of solidarity and support with teachers and mothers continues. Through Javier, who works as cultural worker for the most important state museum, political and practical relations are being established between coastal and city representatives. We will repeat the workshop in several other primary schools of the region.



Supported by ProHelvetia and the collective "With the Fields"

Images:  
Workshops at primary school  
and kindergarten at Primer Campo Pesquero



## Story-telling Lungghakcha and Tamales

Cooking workshop and story-telling session  
2023

Rural communities across the planet can be mirrors of each other. Producers of food that are inhabiting the so called “Global South” seem to go through similar problems: soil degradation, ecocides, water scarcity or floodings, human displacement and rural to urban migrations... these are just a few of the topics addressed during the conversations hosted in the small rural community of Kokhana, near the city of Kathmandu, Nepal.

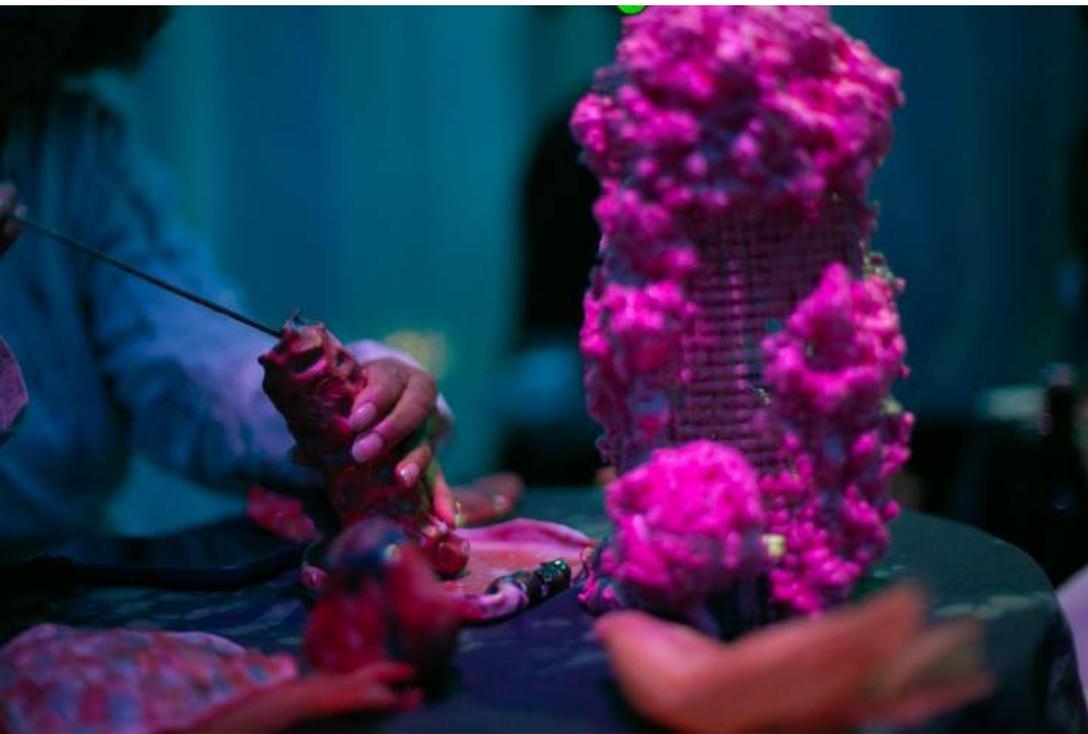
The exchange point of the discussion was the recipe of *tamales* and of *lungghakcha*, steamed corn breads, wrapped in corn leaf and served with spicy sauces, the first one a recipe from my grandmother in Mexico, the latter, a local nepalese dish.

I found that the flavors, ingredients, the devices for cooking and the rituals that produce these corn breads are quite similar. I was also alarmed that the lands where they are reproduced, are going through comparable processes of damage. I am referring to Kokhana and to the land where my family cultivates sorghum, at the MX/US border.

After the discussions and cooking encounter with the women of the Kokhana Cooperative, a story-telling session at the community center was organized as part of the educational program of the biennial. Supported by ProHelvetia. Commissioned by the Photo Kathmandu Biennial 2023., Nepal



Images:  
Workshops and cooking devices in the community center inf Kokhana



Images:  
Details of scenographic elements in the digestive system space, ceramic pieces and performers in Tanzhaus Zurich



## **CREATURE COMFORTS**

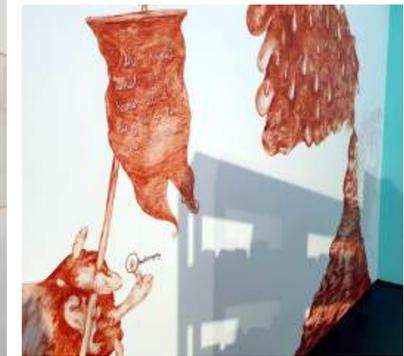
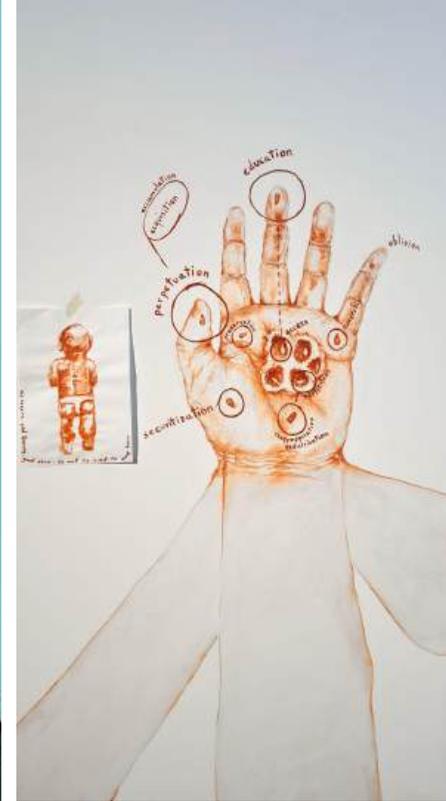
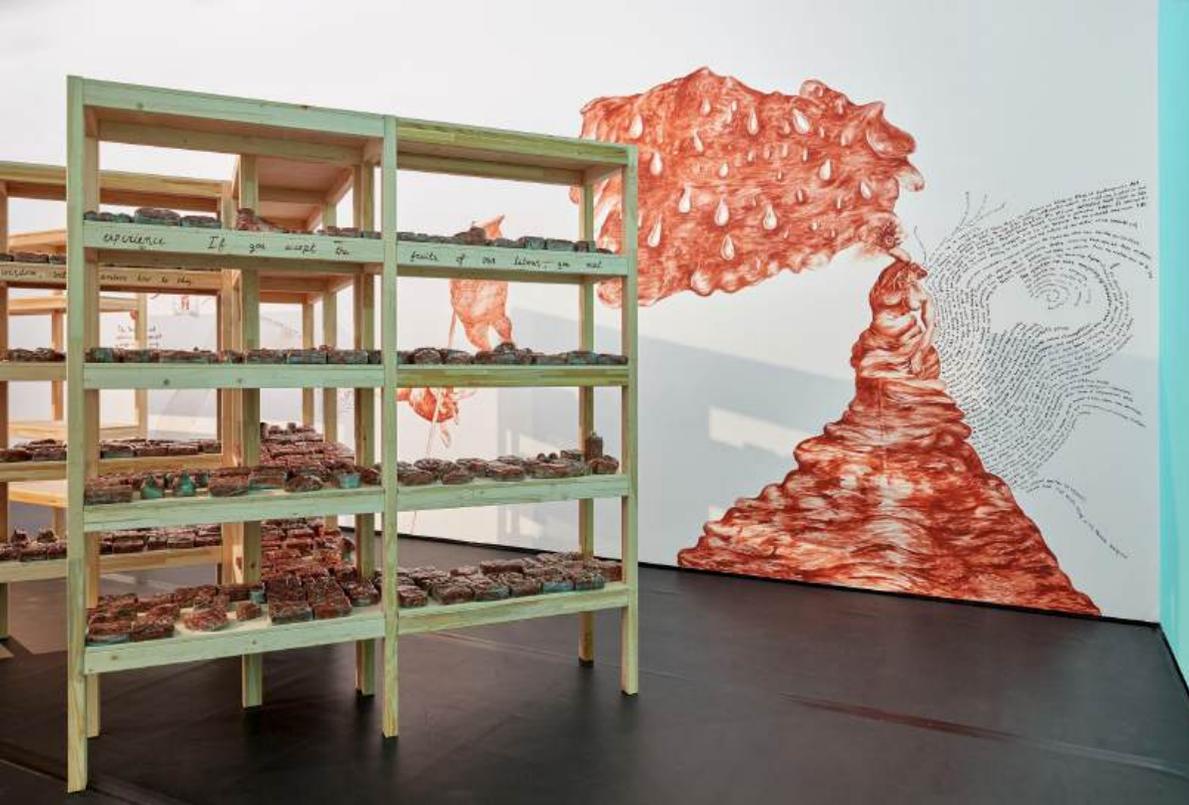
**A performance by CRIPTONITE & the Symbionts on stage with Nina Mühlemann, Edwin Ramirez, Vi, Kamran Behrouz, Alessandro Stracciatella and Jenn. 2023**

The performance/theater group Criptonite's projects "center the work of disabled artists, provide opportunities for disabled people who want to get into the arts and use access as an aesthetic. Our show tell stories about slow animals, talk about Switzerland's history with eugenics and use pleasure as a form of resistance." ([www.criptonite.art](http://www.criptonite.art))

With their performance piece CREATURE COMFORTS, artists and researchers Nina Mühlemann and Edwin Ramirez created a space of contact with the audience where an exploration of their senses and of theater experiences are offered through diverse organ-like tents across the space.

Paloma's role in this project was that of "Palomushroom", a symbiotic creature that works in the digestive system of an imagined metabolism called Gullibilus, designed by Kamran Behrouz. Ceramic eating devices seen in the detail pictures, were created for this performance piece and placed on the scenographic context designed by Theres Indermaur. People were invited to enter the space, eat and listen to a story-telling session performed by Jenn and by "Palomushroom".

Presented in Tanzhaus Zürich, 2023



Images:  
Details of  
installation  
display and  
mural painting  
at Ludwig  
Museum

photos: Leonie  
Braun

## Hands with fingers on each finger

**Participatory installation**  
**Wall paintings, printed materials, wood shelves and tables, wet clay, iron oxide pigment**  
**2022-2023**

I have a genuine interest in pedagogical approaches in art and for the exhibition *Here and Now: Anti-colonial Interventions*, I proposed a clay workshop as a setting to approach the art collection of the Ludwig Museum Köln in a hands-on manner.

The museum collection contains thousands of objects, it is a mayor effort indeed. What interests me in this critical encounter with it is how the assemblage of knowledge and objects that is an art European collection, performs in a relational sphere where it engages with the social, the political, the ecological, the globalized situation. How are the exhibitions showing and reflecting present planetary realities? How is the museum thinking of human diversity and accessibility? How is it getting involved in political discourses? How is this what we experience around us: temperature and humidity regulated rooms, untouchable sculptures, securitized paintings, curated videos... how is this informing of the ways in which to live a decolonizing community life?

I am specially interested in the educational components that are integrated (and integrative) of the experience of visiting a public museum. Specifically because I want to think about what a decolonizing education means in the context of European cultural institutions, while situating myself as an immigrant artist working for it.

For this project, 700 wet clay sculptures were offered to the public to work in a ceramic workshop setting. The sculptures were previously prepared with red iron-oxide pigment that stains the skin in the manner of red beet juice or turmeric. They are shaped after different artworks from Latin American artists that are part of the collection, its provenance details marked with stickers in each piece.

People are invited to take a sculpture, learn about the collection item that it was inspired from, then transform it with hands and tools. Instructive guidance was accessible in the form of wall drawings and notes, as well as printed materials. The intention is that starting from an existing knowledge of the collection, people have a chance to model their imaginations of the structures that safe-keep it. In the end of the experience, people are asked to leave their model on display shelves.

All kinds of shapes were created by this process-based participatory installation. Collections within the collections were made, some guided by my prompts, by the museum permanent exhibition, others by their experience of the city and personal lives of the public.

Exhibition *Here and Now: Anti-colonial Interventions* curated by Joanne Rodríguez, with Pavel Aguilar, Neyen Pailamilla and the kind help of the museum staff, Ludwig Museum, Köln (2022-2023)



Images:  
Installation display and workshop  
area  
Ludwig Museum, Köln  
Photos: Leonie Braun

THIS IS AN EXERCISE OF IMAGINATION  
EST UN EXERCICE DE L'IMAGINATION  
DIES IST EINE ÜBUNG DER VORSTELLUNGSKRAFT  
WIE DIE KUNSTWERKE BIST DU AUCH DU NICHT ALLEIN

This building hosts a collection of around 70,000 art objects.

Yet, the artist Paloma Ayala asks you to participate in the making of a new collection. *One that will neither be preserved nor sold and, paradoxically, is un-collectable.*

**How relevant is it to continue or discontinue art collections?**

**Model a future moment when the Ludwig collection begins a de-growth process.**

How will the building be repurposed? What will happen to the artworks?

DIES IST EINE ÜBUNG DER VORSTELLUNGSKRAFT  
WIE DIE KUNSTWERKE BIST DU AUCH DU NICHT ALLEIN  
DIES IST EINE ÜBUNG DER VORSTELLUNGSKRAFT  
WIE DIE KUNSTWERKE BIST DU AUCH DU NICHT ALLEIN

Dieses Gebäude beherbergt eine Sammlung von ca. 70.000 Kunstobjekten.

Die Künstlerin Paloma Ayala bittet dich nun, dich an der Entstehung einer neuen Sammlung zu beteiligen. *Eine, die weder bewahrt noch verkauft wird und die paradoxerweise nicht gesammelt werden kann.*

**Wie wichtig ist es, Kunstsammlungen fortzuführen oder sogar abzuschaffen?**

**Stelle dir einen zukünftigen Moment vor, in dem die Sammlung Ludwig einen Entsamlungsprozess beginnt.**

Wie wird das Gebäude umfunktioniert? Was passiert mit den Kunstwerken?



*"Today the Museum Ludwig is home to one of the most important collections of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art in the world. And, unlike royal collections, it owes its existence to the extraordinary dedication of private citizens."* (Museum Ludwig website)

Dedicated. Extraordinary. Non-royal. Citizens. Think a little bit about this description and how it detaches the collection to classic understandings of colonialism: no old European undemocratic rulers were involved. Only (wealthy, western and legal) citizens that dedicate more-than-ordinary efforts to build a collection of artistic objects made by the most historically influential (mostly western, white and male) artists.

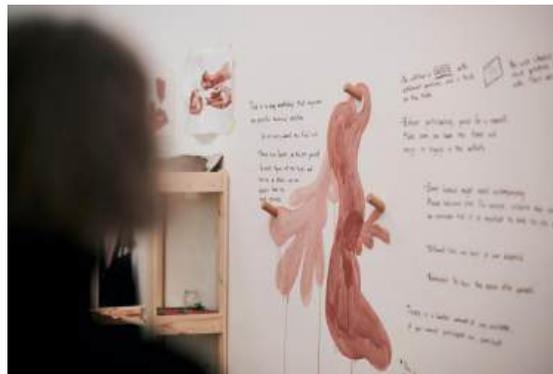
This is an exercise of imagination:

**Model a moment in which European white wealth, acquired a masterpiece.**

You are not alone.

Images: Details of guiding printed materials

Photos of active workshop space



The participatory installation *Hands with fingers on each finger*, included a series of guiding texts written on walls or printed on paper leaflets.

I called the printed materials "Operative Guidelines", a name that I learned from the Restoration Department of the museum. This is the name of the guideline protocols that they create in order to address the problems of the aging of specific materials in artworks.



Images above:

Encounter around food and reading session for closing event of the exhibition *Alimento*



Image down-right:

“Special” pozole soup

Symposium, talk with Mu Koch and Tania Galindo Castañeda.

Ceramic objects and ingredients for table.



## Always the consumers, never the consumed

Food, textiles and reading session  
2023

*What if we include ourselves in the food system?*

*What if by including ourselves in giving food to our food, or by being our own food, can we propose a platform of reflection and critique of a food system that is in favor of us and only us?*

*In which ways can we possibly de-hierarchize food practices, and include our own past and responsibility towards the ecological everything?*

These questions reappear (see next page) as part of the art-science curatorial program *Alimento*, where food circularity, justice and speculations on how to break down the hierarchies of human food systems, are discussed and displayed by artists and environmental scientists.

By eating and reading about *pozole*, a Mesoamerican soup described by different European colonizer documents and more recently by anthropologists, as a recipe made with human body parts, corn and chili, Paloma draws on colonial imaginations of anthropophagic practices to make a critique on how “cannibalism” was used as yet another excuse for domination, christian salvation and the genocide that took place throughout the territories now called Latin America,

A “special” *pozole* was served during a reading session. Booklets with texts on anthropofagia, human milk, and fungi growing on human waste, were presented and are still part of the arvae/SAE library.

*Alimento* is a joint venture by Adriana Dominguez (La Capsula), Tara Lasrado (arvae) and Kenza Benabderrazik (Sustainable Agroecology Lab SAE, ETH), in Zurich.





from headwaters to delta

Image: video still

## ***Canción Caníbal***

**One-channel video**

**17min**

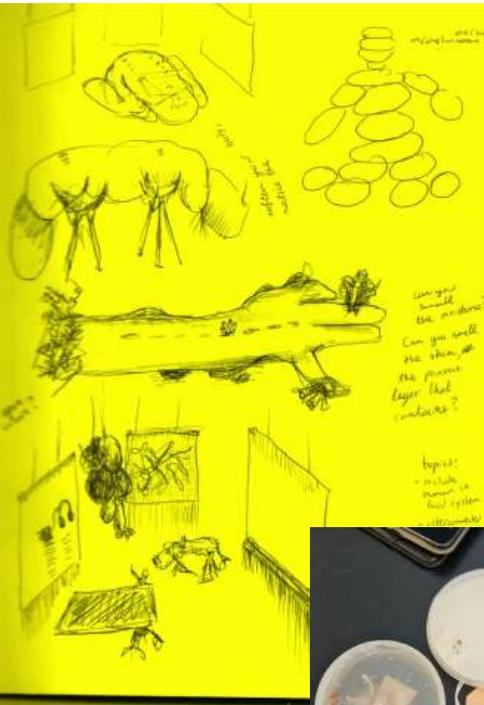
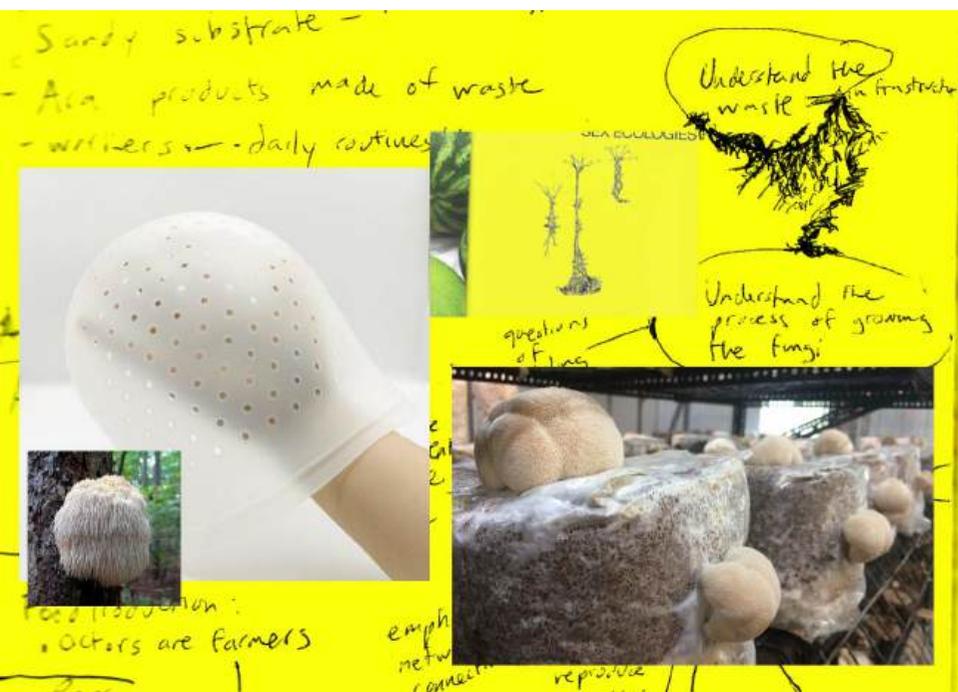
**2021**

There are extensive instances in which Gloria Anzaldúa writes about the limits of the body and how when confronted to extraordinary situations, it adapts by merging with the landscape, developing mystical strategies, and growing new organs in order to coexist with violently devastated spaces existing at the Mex/US border. This video follows the imaginations of Gloria, whose homonymous poem tells about consuming who we love.

The story looks into different extractivist and colonizing activities that continue to consume the very flesh, bone and fluid of specific areas at two border rivers: the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande and the Rhein river.

**Link of video on request.**

Exhibited in *Picking out images from my soul's eye* curated by Andrea Keppler and Verena Melgarejo-Weinandt, DISTRICT Berlin (2021), COMPOST: the open bin, OnCurating Space (2022) and *Habitar Tierras Fronterizas*, curated by Javier Dragustinovis in Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Tamaulipas (2022)



Images:  
Sketches

Installation display at NaturLabor, Arosa.

## Food is human.

### (Re-)imagining the relationship between human and fungi

PET plastic, plant substrate, fungi spores, human body waste and video  
2021-2022

Gathered within the art/science collaborative platform Arvae, visual artist Paloma Ayala and environmental scientists PhD Mark Anthony and PhD Nadine Keller from ETH Zurich, teamed up to discuss and experiment on how edible fungi can be cultivated on sewage sand. The team worked with Roland Bürkli, waste management staff in Arosa, a small alpine community whose main economy is tourism.

— *The possibility of growing human food out of human waste -of tourist's waste!- excited me greatly. It opened up the topic of anthropofagia to my practice, and questions of hierarchies both in our food systems and in the narratives that the colonizer world imposed on the colonized subjects: savages, non-christian, animals.*

As part of the group and throughout the process of growing mushrooms in waste, I asked myself: What if we include ourselves in the food system? What if being the food of others can we propose a platform of reflection and critique of a food system that is in favor of us and only us? In which ways can we possibly de-hierarchize food practices, and include our own past and responsibility towards the ecological everything?

The project "offers new perspectives and possibilities on waste generation while addressing the challenges of growing food and sustaining soil health in an alpine region..." (arvae.ch)

Exhibition [Neue Perspektiven zur Nachhaltigkeit](#), organized by Tara Lasrado and Alexandra Mueller-Crepon, in NaturLabor Arosa (2022)



## Red Sorghum

lecture-performance  
2021

Ecocide is linked to coloniality, agricultural practices to modernity and to the historical US/MX border time when rural political nuclei spawned within the XX Century in Mexico. This lecture-performance tells the story of my family, who are agricultural workers and continue to be part of the aforementioned processes happening in a political division that has undeniably shaped the sustenance and life-perseverance of all regional biota, as well as the people's' relation to the diverse entities living there.

*Red Sorghum* is a storytelling session where the question of food, the community and the global structures forged around growing food, becomes also a question about the re-articulation of myself, migrant womxn of color, in a European context.

Presented at the BlackBox (2021) and at Kunsthaus Zürich, as part of the exhibition *Earth Beats* side program *Visions of Nature*, curated by Sandra Gianfreda and Simon Würsten-Marin (2022).



Images:  
BlackBox performance in the crossroads of the streets  
Gesnerallee and Staufacherstrasse, Zurich 2021



**From the kitchen of the  
MIGRANTE y MESTIZA  
Cumbia-mix! Reeesistenteeee!!**



Click on title to listen

**Cumbia-mix to be  
listened while cooking  
sound, 2021**

A collaboration with DJ Elimix "La Reina de la Cumbia", based in Seattle and a member of the feminist all-womxn Mexican collective "Musas Sonideras".

Commissioned by and part of the collection of [OTO Sound Museum](#) (2021)

This cocina es tuya, no matter how your fire looks like, honey. Si es de hornillas o de anafres, a flama de leña o a placa eléctrica, if you are living the magical moment of turning ingredients into food, then we are in the same place.

So let's begin this journey next to each other.

This cumbia mix is dedicated to each one of the care workers that have nourished our growth and our health as a person and as community. We hope that the music guides your making, infuses your healing energies against viruses, sponcios y violencias. El espíritu se va alimentando de los ritmos sabrosos, they will make us stronger!

May this food that is forged first in your imagination, then given body with hard work, become the very center of the planetary energy to shit discrimination out, take a piss on colonial structures, and lovingly protect all life equally.

The music and the words will accompany you through the mystical triangle of fridge, sink, and stove, towards the spiral of blender, ladle spoons and napkins, arriving to the circle of potatoes, peeling knives and cutting boards. So many magic sigils exist in cooking, so much power we make, we become, we are.

Let's hope that with this music, you end up dancing amongst pans, with salt and oregano in your hands. ¡Échale magia mamá! ¡Son los polvitos mágicos de la salud emocional!

Above all, we hope that you enjoy. We recognize the work that you do for everyone. Know that you are the most important at this moment. We see you and embrace you.

Take care.





## RIVER ORACLE

Cyanotypes, text and sound installation  
2022 - 2025

In collaboration with Riikka Tauriainen and Anne-Laure Franchette,  
with sound artists Melody Chua and Kay Zhang.

Storytelling water bodies requires a practice of sensing, imagining, and tracing of the hydro-structures in and around us. We imagine a hydro-logic that exists in constant process of flow and in relation with the surrounding agencies, including us who colonize and re-articulate water bodies for our benefit. These cyanotypes are large-scaled photographic reproductions of a moment in which the relation between Rhein river, hydropower plant, and our capacity to produce visibility, is performed.

Images: Process of printing cyanotypes at  
Eglisau-Frauenfeld Kraftwerk

The cyanotypes are accompanied by collectively-written texts and sound.

Exhibited in: *Humans as watery beings*, curated by Anne-Christine Liske in Flussbad Berlin, *Emotions are Oceans* curated by Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk and Sergi Pera Rusca in RADIUS Center for Art and Ecologies, Delft (2022), *Zones of Love, Playbour & Kinship*, curated by Lucy Tuma in Shedhalle, Zurich (2022), and [Spinning in Fluid Dreams](#) (*hydroelectric transmutations in Swiss landscapes*), curated by Monica Unser, Nacoca Ko, Antoine Félix Bücher for Art Geneve (2024).

Installation view: <https://youtu.be/a1GzSSbo2Dg>



Images:  
Installation view in RADIUS Center for Art and Ecology, Delft  
Shedhalle, Zurich  
and Flussbad Berlin

What different perspectives should I focus on?

What actions can I take?

What do I have to start to comprehend -about myself or the world- in order to shift?

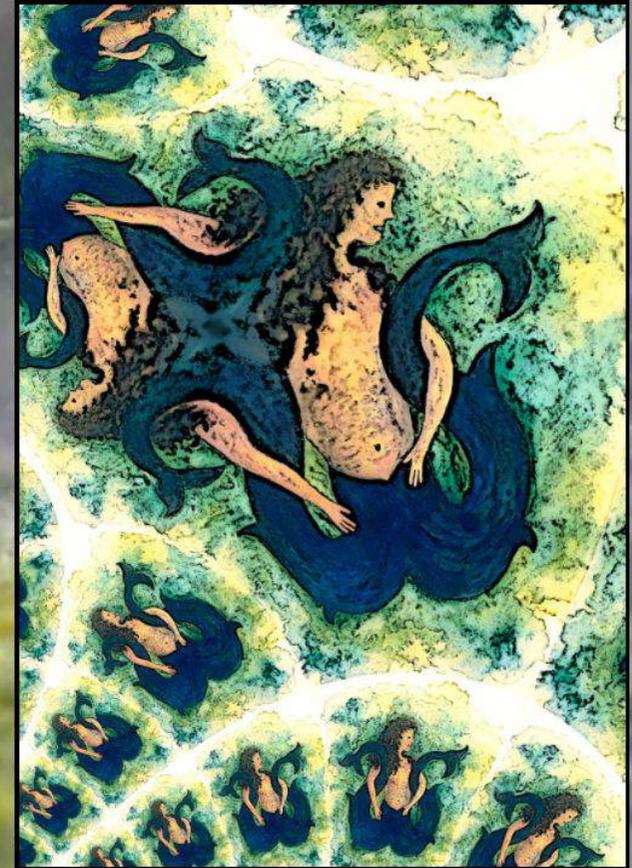


Image: website screenshot

## RIVER ORACLE

website  
2021

An oracle that is meant to be a situating tool for self reflection. The cards show a collective experience and the relationships developed with dam, shore, water and more-than-human riverine agencies. Inspired by Astrida Neimanis and generated from a combined research on feminism, water bodies, colonization of rivers, natural and border spaces.

Website was coded by Paloma Ayala, texts and design in collaboration with Riikka Tauriainen and Anne-Laure Franchette, for the exhibition *Intimacy of Strangers* in sic! Elephanthouse, Luzern (2020).

Try it!  
[http://riikkatauriainen.net/river\\_oracle/](http://riikkatauriainen.net/river_oracle/)



Image: video still

## ***From sensitive pools and snail connections***

One-channel video  
2021

*"The last known body of the species Achatinella Apexfulva passed away on the 1 of January of 2019. Her muscled body described by us as a foot, a sleepless ear, a malleable pair of eyes or a wet and cold carry-bag coated with soft mucus, survived alone in a plastic box during 14 years, protected by a human project of preservation of snails unique on planet Earth. His given name was George."* (video text)

In collaboration with Jeanne Jacob and Riikka Tauriainen. Exhibited at SIC! Elephanthouse, Luzern as part of the exhibition *Intimacy of Strangers*, curated by Lena Pfäffli, Sabrina Negroni and Anne-Sophie Mlamali (2020)

**Link of video upon request**



Images:  
Anamen-oven constructed at the  
Eglusau-Frauenfeld Kraftwerk and  
at Sihlwald.

## **Anamen-fires**

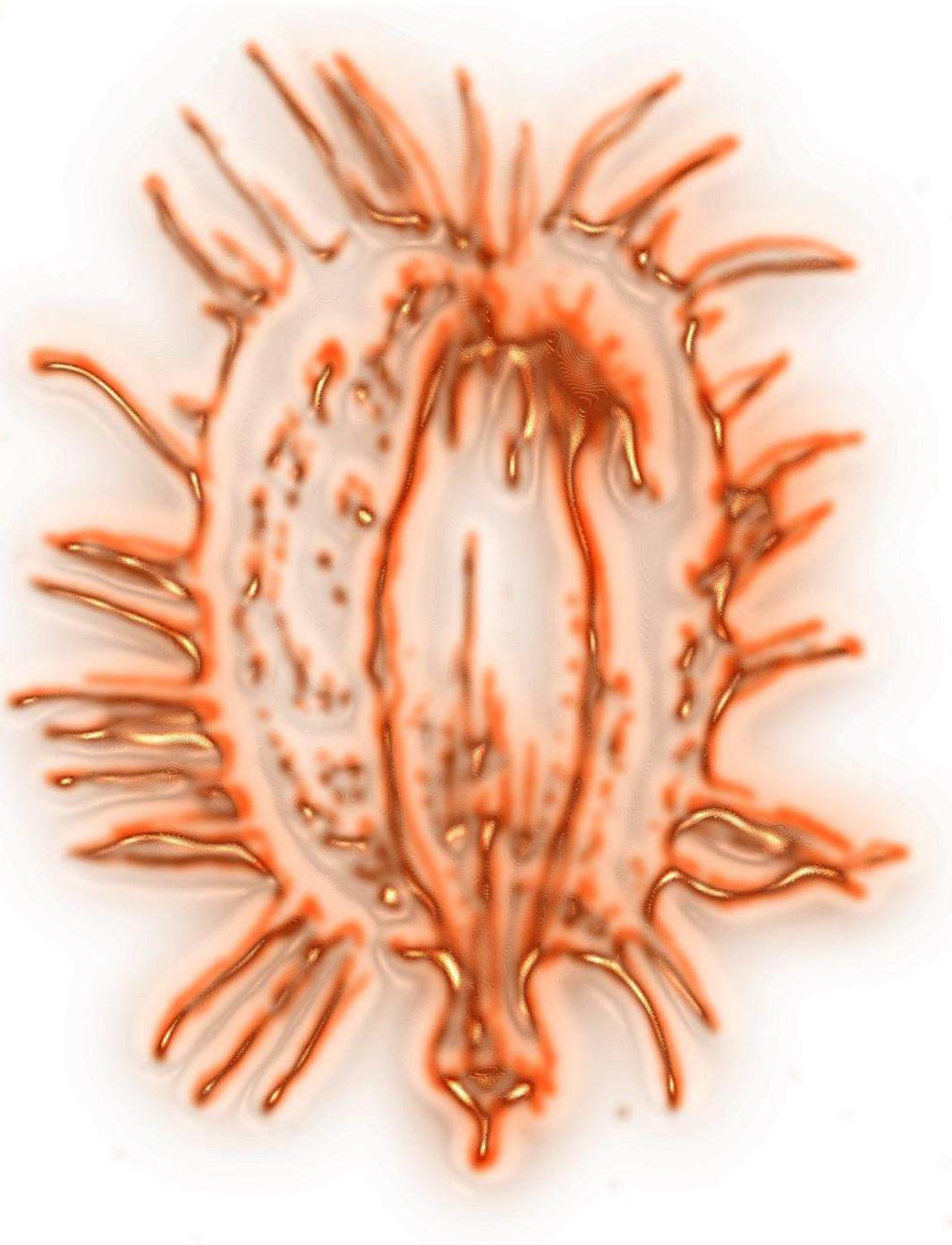
**Oven constructions, foraging and reading sessions  
2020-2025**

Taking inspiration from the 'Siluetas' series created by cuban-american artist Ana Mendieta, this set of events invite womxn to dig and construct ovens, cook, listen and read for each other. We make all sorts of Ana men-things: Anamen-pizzas, Anamen-vegetables, Anamen-rituals, and give space to reflect at the intersection of imagination and the forces that surround and nurture, maintain or destroy habitat.

Anamen-fires have taken place at Eglisau-Frauenfeld Kraftwerk (hydroelectric), Villigen Zementwerk Steinbruch (gravel mine), the Sihlwald forest, in Switzerland, the public space in Sierre, and diverse spots in Zurich.

Find texts, videos and drawings reflecting on the collective endeavor where these ovens were developed the website *Siluetas de papa, hierba y fuego*, designed by Paloma Ayala.  
[siluetas.coalitioncyborg.org/siluetas.html](https://siluetas.coalitioncyborg.org/siluetas.html)

Anamen-fires have been part of the *Hochrhein Triennale*, curated by Franz Krähenbühl and Alain Jenzer in Kaiserstuhl/Hohentengen (2021), *Forest of many Worlds*, curated by Domenico Roberti, Jose Cáceres Mardones and Paula Baeza-Pailamilla in La Cápsula, Zurich (2021), and several educational programs in EDHEA, Sierre and ZHdK, Zurich.



Images: Window installation in La Cápsula, Zurich and fanzine design.

**23 portions of Daucus Carota,  
in love and honor of accessible food,  
sexual joy and reproductive rights  
for bodies able to gestate**  
Plant and seed installation, fanzine  
2021

Amongst its many therapeutic effects, Daucus Carota L. is mentioned in numerous herbalist, traditional medicine and scientific references as a contraceptive, an abortifacient, and an emmenagogue weed. It induces menstrual bleeding, helps regulate cycles and prevents embryos to stick in uterine walls. It also has a delicious flavor that goes well with squash soups and curries.

This installation collects the seeds of hundreds of Daucus Carota plants found in fields and streets of the Sihlwald forest and adjacent communities. The fanzine contains actual seeds, information about abortive gardens, and instructions to plant one's own.

Part of the exhibition [Forest of Many Worlds](#), curated by Domenico Roberti, Jose Cáceres Mardones and Paula Baeza-Pailamilla in La Cápsula, Zurich (2021)



Images:

Event organized by [OTO Sound Museum](#) and MigrationsMuseum, May 2021

## ***Loud-reading in the Situated Kitchen***

**Cooking and reading performance  
2021**

Following the Caribbean practice of loud-reading done by tobacco and sugar industry workers in the XIX Century, this performance focuses on making food and sharing knowledge that connects the specificity of bamboo, rice and other inhabitants of an urban garden, to colonizing and global movements.

“Through the act of cooking, kitchens establish implicit, visceral understandings of the world. No recipe is neutral; no tool universal. [...] As an intimate, geosocial, critical space, kitchens are places for stories to be told; for new kinships to be made, and new alliances to be forged.” (Critical Cooking Show, 2020)

In collaboration with Caterina Giansiracusa.

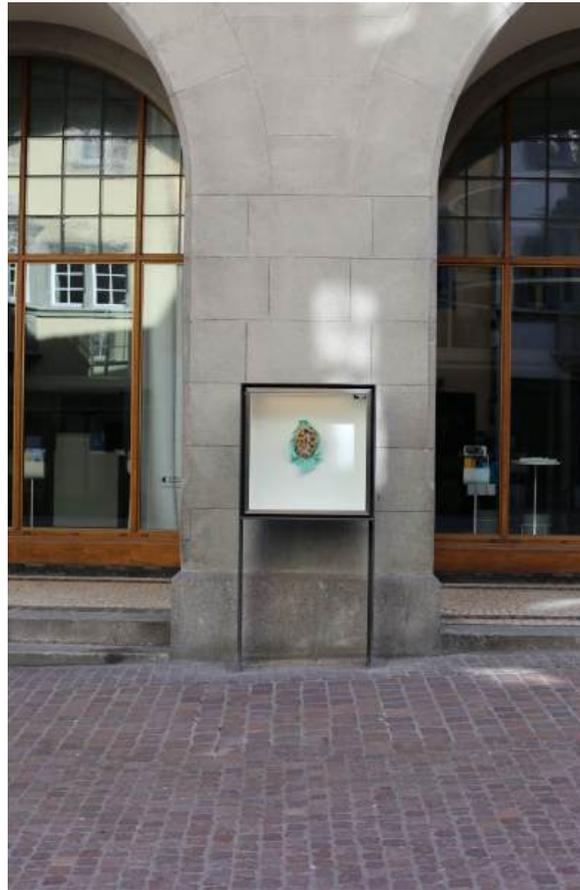
Part of the performative program of [OTO Sound Museum](#) and MigrationsMuseum, curated by Francesca Cecherini and Eleonora Stassi.

Dear Schaffhauser\_Innen,

**this is bread,** yet it looks like the mud cake that children playfully make when practicing mothers' and grandmothers' cooking knowledges. One totally forgives the comparison after looking at the topography that it took inspiration from. This **bread** maps the surface elevations, depressions and living content of a specific place:



a Kiesgraben, one of the gravel mines accompanying the Rhein river on it's way to the North Sea. It is a design belonging to Holcim, the cement industry who owns most of the mines found in Schaffhausen, Aargau, Basel Stadt, Basel Land, and more. And here I want to stress that saying 'more' is an understatement: LafargeHolcim, the french-swiss merger now re-branded as Holcim Ltd, is the world's largest producer of construction materials. They have quarries, kilns and ready mix plants in every continent, hundreds of them (1). The damages that cement production and mining activities create are well known, well documented and mediatized by NGO's, news media and the UN. Affected communities around the world enter into legal battles demanding compensation, restitution and respect (2). Air pollution resulting of the cement industry is one of those grand battles that exemplifies the entanglements of the anthropocene, which is: how we have managed to model the face of Earth, how human structures are built in our favor only... and when I say "our" I mean we in Europe. We who persevere in acting upon our colonial endeavors and take advantage of given privileges. Interestingly, in Switzerland and other European countries, Holcim Ltd is an example of ecological sustainability. They take pride in their low carbon emission plants and support the development of science and technologies expected to model our relation with the materials that structure our habitats here. It's huge power, you see, when you produce the material that our living spaces are made of. This industry is an acting economical and material force that influences the governance of the places where they dig, fire, mix, and make business.



The grand quality of Swiss cement originates partly in the grand holes designed by geologists and engineers, carved by construction workers and machines, which the **bread** references. The curvatures, soft elevations and cropped walls of the quarry seen in the picture above, own an architectural beauty difficult for me to praise. They are like bites on the flesh of Earth, or cavities where biodiversity is bullied by human, which I guess is another way of appreciating its beauty.

## ***This is BREAD***

**Mold on bread and crocheted textile doilies.**

**2021**

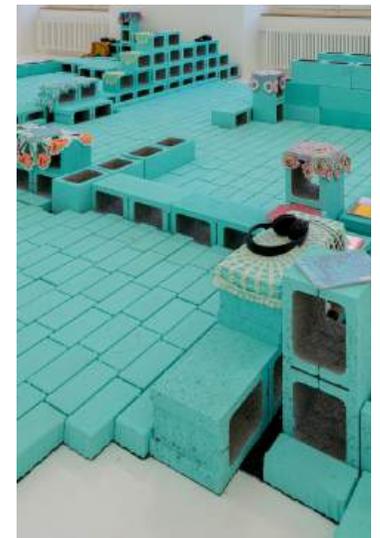
An [open letter](#) and a series of moldy breads cooked in the near immediacies of the city Schaffhausen was displayed during 2 months in the public municipal vitrines called Kunstkasten in the city of Schaffhausen. The bread was cooked in and near mining quarries. The letter critiques the green-washed perception that Swiss industry keeps, where their methods of extractions seem the most ecologically sustainable, the most advanced in technological terms... and a privilege reserved for the Swiss territory and population.

Exhibition curated by [Collettiva Feminista](#) as part their project **das Feministisches Kapital**, conceived by Eleonora Stassi, Silvia Savoldi and Isabelle Lüth.

Images:

Open letter to  
Schaffhausen inhabitants

Exhibition in 6  
Kunstkasten vitrines  
throughout the city of  
Schaffhausen.



## **MONUMENT**

**painted cinder blocks, crocheted textiles, audio and publication  
2020**

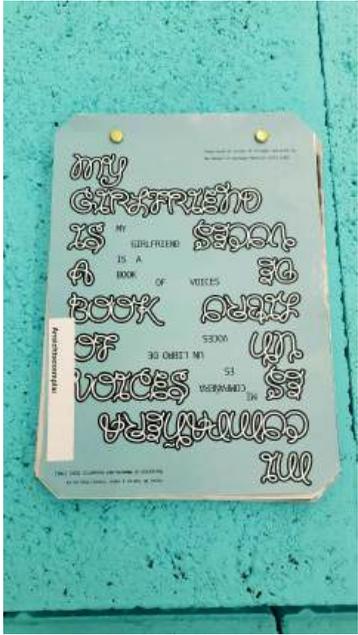
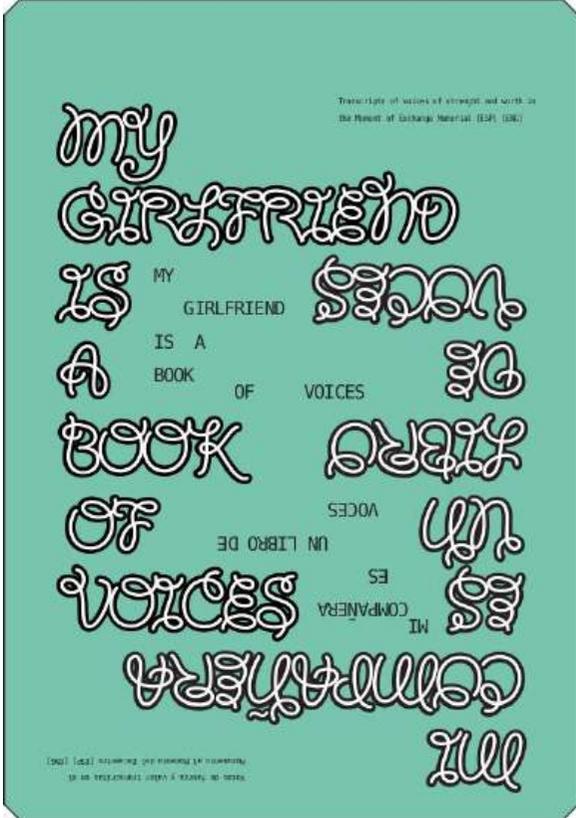
Installation and social space featuring voices of activist women in Latin America and Zurich. This monument memorializes instances of older (e.g. Frauen Manifest, Zurich 1970) and recent (e.g. Parlamento de las Mujeres, 2019) feminist movements. It follows the logic of the anti-monuments created in feminist activist contexts, being critical of history as a space in need to depatriarchise. A publication with the transcript of these and many other texts and interviews is included in the accompanying publication titled "My girlfriend is a book of voices".

Part of the group exhibition "Auf der Suche... nach Zürich" in Helmhaus Zurich (2020) , curated by Nadja Baldini, Vreni Spieser, Simon Maurer, and Daniel Morgenthaler.

Images:

Installation display at Helmhaus, Zurich

Publication titled "My girlfriend is a book of voices"  
15 x 21cm  
210pp



**My Girlfriend is a Book of Voices  
 Mi Compañera es un Libro de Voces**

**Vol 1 and 2  
 Publications  
 2020-2022**

*My girlfriend is a book of voices* are transcripts of voices framing and accompanying a “monument” installation. The two books comprise an archive of encounters and interviews done with the women who kindly shared their knowledge and opinions on the specific topics raised by the project. The same interviews were recorded and are also offered as audio as part of the installation.

Vol 1 in Zurich and Monterrey: Narda Alvarado, Mercedes Álvarez, Gloria Anzaldúa, Erika Charles, Guadalupe Cruz, Doña Esther, Lylia Palacios, Emmy Pérez, Elvira Ramos, Colectivo Restauradoras con Glitter, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, & Colectivo Mujeres Creando, Bertha & Laura Zúñiga Cáceres, Frauen\*streik Kollektiv Zürich

Vol 2 in Denver: Cristina Aguilar, Grace Ballard, Kerrie Joy, Lucha Martinez de Luna, Chau Phan, Kenzie Sitterud, Kate Speer, Cortney Lane Stell, and Eriko Tsogo.

In spanish and english languages.



Images:  
 Installation display at  
 Helmhaus, Zurich and  
 Plattform, Denver

Design details  
 15 x 21cm  
 210pp



Images:

Installation in the crossroads of 2 de abril and Garza Sada Av, Monterrey, Mexico

## ***MONUMENT to the MOMENT OF EXCHANGE***

**Public sculpture, social space and interviews**

**Ice blocks and bronze plaque**

**2019**

This project addresses the public sphere as an infrastructure of stories in urban settlements, a construction that was created by power, and that purposely decides to invisibilize histories of struggle.

The ephemeral public monument commemorates two dates of forceful rest: an extraordinary snowfall that interrupted the dynamics of a post-industrial city in 1967; and the murder of workers by the state during a protest in 1903.

Via the fictionalization of history, and the conversations held with women activists, journalists, artists, and sociologists; this sculpture memorializes several narratives that happened and still happen, in the northeastern city of Monterrey, Mexico. Topics of urban development, displacements and the presence of working-class women in public memorials were discussed.

The sculpture was placed in the crossroads of two symbolic streets in Monterrey. A social space was created around it, where a set of conversations and interviews were recorded.

More:

<http://www.palomaavala.com/monumento-al-momento-del-encuentro.html>

# ¿Qué es el descanso sino un arma? (What is rest if not a weapon?)

Video essay  
One channel, 15min  
2020

This video essay was created after the *Monument to the Moment of Exchange* (see previous page), which took place in the literal crossroads of real and fictional histories in the city of Monterrey, Mexico. The ephemeral public monument commemorated two dates of forceful rest: an extraordinary snowfall that interrupted the dynamics of a post-industrial city in 1967; and the murder of workers by the state during a protest in 1903. The event gathered diverse activists, journalists, sociologists, architects, to have a conversation in a fake plaza, where the center was a monument melting in the harsh summer temperatures.

Within this action lied a reflection about rest as a form of resistance in the history of Monterrey, an urban, industrial and modern center, that was developed by the post-revolutionary government in the beginning of the last century. Conversations were held on urban development, displacements and the presence of working-class women in the public urban decisions. The conversations critiqued modern class divisions and the idea that 'we get what we are merited', ingrained in the idiosyncrasy of the population.

This specific piece is also a reflection about artistic work and the use of archival and found footage to reflect on historical events. Most of the images come from facebook hobby historians, domestic footage and local news media publications that were downloaded from youtube. It also includes personal experiences in family parties, the time when I worked for the architect S. Calatrava, and a clip of one of the most influential videos made by Francis Alys, where he pushes ice across Mexico City.

By taking this visual language and rearticulating it through fiction, stories can take a different meaning or exercise different connections. "The purpose is to affect the stories that already have a preconceived place in our imaginaries, meaning that they have a previous relation with History and are a referent, by altering the opinion that the public might have of them in order to affect opinions towards further similar narratives."

Based in the essay '¿Qué es el descanso sino un arma?', written by Paloma Ayala, published in "Paisaje, Ciudad y Delito", lectures and publications by Ana Cadena and Futuro Moncada, 2019

**LINK to video upon request**



2 DE ABRIL DE 1903—8 h. 45 m. A. M. Monterrey—  
Lugar de reunión para los diversos grupos de manifestantes, en celebración de la Toma de Puebla, en 1867, por el Gral. Porfirio Díaz.

Images:  
Video still

Archival image from "Monterrey Viaje al Pasado" facebook page



# El Fin de la Mar Caribe

Installation , one-channel video and publication  
Printed textiles, plaster casts, rope and stick  
2019

Matamoros is one of the places that 'officially' mark the end of the imagination of Mexico, but affectively, demographically and culturally, is sistered with Brownsville, Texas in a longer history developed over generations of people settling in the Valley of the Rio Bravo/Río Grande river, a history that can be tracked to much earlier than the creation of the actual MX/US border.

The title *The End of the Caribbean Sea* reflects on the cultural wish to belong to the south perceived in certain aesthetics of the city and the green-blueish color that characterizes it. We revise the influences of Caribbean and Central American music and dances. We look at the now decadent spaces that use to be the entertainment centers of the dying XX Century at the border, where the Tex Mex and "Tropical" music genres arose. And we explore that ideal color of the sea, the color locally called "aqua", which for us expresses also a yearning for a softer past and the nostalgia from populations that migrated from coastal and rural areas to the border, to become transnational industry workers.

In collaboration with [Javier Dragustinovis](#).

Exhibition in La Cápsula, curated by Elena Rosaura and Adriana Domínguez (2019).



Images:

Installation display and accompanying publication

Research activities in Matamoros



# El Fin de la Mar Caribe

(The End of the Caribbean Sea)

publication

2019

The tiniest fanzine that I have done is truly a pocket book that reflects on the historical relationship still perceived between Matamoros MX and Brownsville TX, cities divided by the political border since 1918.

In the book, texts and images show the research done about the green-blueish color that exemplifies a certain nostalgia, a certain imagination of belonging to the south, that characterizes the border Gulf region human settlements. This color, called "aqua" in the region, guides us through industrial paths, tex-mex music and food, coastal communities and ports, queer and night-life at the street called "La Mar Caribe", and even to the maya-blue, a color palette still used by Mayan populations in murals and ceramics, that resembles the diverse colors of the Caribbean Sea.

In collaboration with [Javier Dragustinovis](#)

6.5 x 10cm  
80pp  
printed in Matamoros, Mexico  
Oct 2019



### ABOUT THE 3 HEROIC

'Moros' is the last northeastern human settlement located at the very breastwork barrier that is the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande river. It is the end of the political 'sli' and the official end of the imaginary of the Mexican territory.

Like any other, this city is host of

innumerable narratives. There is the one about migration defined by movements from rural to urban areas and by crossings of the so called "wet-backs", swimming to the US. There is the industrial history dominated by transnational *maquiladoras*, housing not the backs but the wet shirts of workers sweating under the sun. There is the story about voices of a widely varied sort of peoples coming from afar in time and space: the *gringos*, Germans, Apaches, Cochises mixing up with the Hondurans, Mexicans, French, Guatemalans, and more. There is the history of cotton and sorghum fields, the story of

Mrs. Flavia Treviño pega taconazos en botas y sombrero mientras se le repega a la mujer del tal Amelio Casas, al ritmo de *Tropical Florida* en el bar Bocacio's en Brownsville. The music, just like Mrs. Treviño, sometimes is more tex, sometimes is more mex. Amelio Casas, que vive de este lado, no se opone al baile, al ritmo o a que su esposa salga de fiesta. Manuela, cuando vuelve, le trae *goodies* gringos imposibles de encontrar en Matamoros.

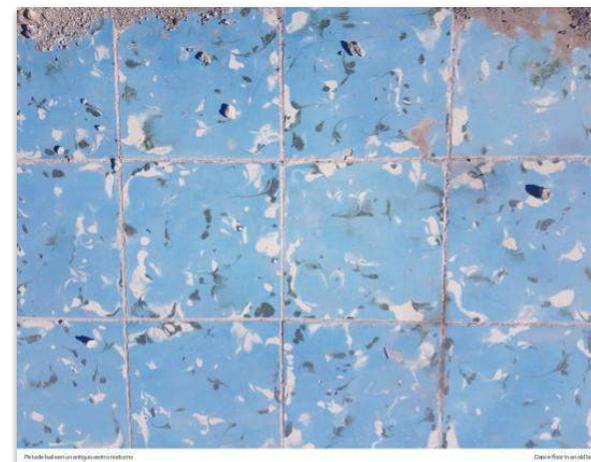


Images:

Installation display in La Capsula, Zurich.

Pages of fanzine and research images, including archival materials from the LAREDO Bar, the queer and sex-work center in Matamoros during the 1970's and 80's, where it is said that tex-mex music was developed.

Right side: the dance floor in the old building of LAREDO Bar, tiles color is mayan-blue





## Monument to Use the Space (Use it, you must)

Painted cinder blocks, textiles, audio  
video and publication series  
2020

This version of the series of monuments as social spaces was made as part of the PLATTEforum residency in Denver. PLATTEforum is a cultural center that continues to open doors for their immediate community and more. People in the downtown neighborhood were invited to use this "monument" as a reading platform and as a place to rest.

During 2 months, the cinder blocks were also a workshop platform to a group of young interns within PLATTEforum's youth support program. An editorial room was created weekly, together, we developed on the concept of public space and how do our specificities lead us to occupy these spaces. Being young, being homeless, being gay, being racialized, being under-represented, being poor, being an immigrant, all experiences of life that directly affect the ways in which these youngsters interact with the city.

The resulting publications feature interviews with 10 womxn activists, artists, sociologists, an architect, a sex therapist, urban developers and writers living in the city.

During workshop time, we spoke about topics, prepared questions for the interviewees, designed illustrations, recorded, transcribed and guided interviews. A series of five publications, titled "A space to..." were produced: *A space to change*, *a space to love*, *a space to be queer*, *a space to learn*, *a space to be*.

In the end, a solo exhibition with collected materials happened at [PLATTEforum](http://PLATTEforum) Denver, US (2020)



Images:  
Installation display at  
[PLATTEforum](http://PLATTEforum)

Details of publication  
design

Saturday gatherings with  
the youth program and  
interviews.

Some illustrations  
prepared for the  
publications.

# LETTERS FROM ONION ISLAND

Painted cinder blocks, video, crocheted textiles and publication  
2019

The border as a river began to take shape in 1848, with the Mexican-American War, defining what is now the limits of political territories in 1918. But this was not a definitive decision for the river itself or for the natural swing of the delta. Delta landscapes constantly fluctuate. They occupy the interface between land and sea, and “are dynamic spaces that have come to be understood as one of the most biologically rich environments on the planet. They are also a place where qualitatively different ecosystems manifest upon a single geographical terrain.” (B. Milligan, 2016) The delta of the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande itself occupies one of the biggest and most important ecological areas in terms of biodiversity content, in North America, protected by the UNESCO.

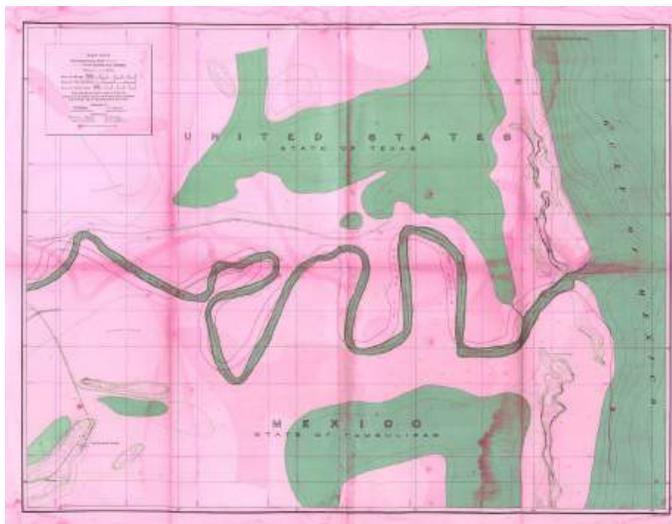
In this project, the border is perceived as a slit, an “open wound”, as writer Gloria Anzaldúa puts it, and is yet sensitive matter for us who live or grew up there. If we put it in terms of ONION ISLAND, the border politics layer is covering other layers of the onion, not letting us see, for example, the story of the colonization of the water flow through levees, dams and canal systems, that stops the fluctuation of the basin after floodings, affecting the subtropical environment of amphibians and plants, and the animals that feed on them. There is also the story of progressive salinification and desertification of crop lands due to the use of brackish waters (part fresh, part salty water) from the river estuaries and lagoons. There is the story of landscape appreciation through food, bird watching and long afternoon conversations at a farm. The story of women being autonomous by being weavers or cutting fish. The story of loss of access to touch, or to even see, the river. The story of queer life moving across the border, music and nightlife, brought by the podcast Jotxs & Recuerdos, by Alexandra Salazar Vasquez.

These stories emphasize the work of women, their approach to space and to their ecological circumstance. They are shown in the form of video interviews, audios, and crochet textiles produced by my aunts Thelma and Mari Flores.

One of the most important material inclusions is the use of painted cinder blocks, a reference to the farm spaces where the research is situated, but also to the fact that in 2017, [Holcim](#), the swiss cement industry, made agreements with the first Trump’s administration to “build the wall”. The bricks were donated and bought in the Siggental-Würenlingen Holcim factory, very near the artists’ home in Switzerland. “I was, and still am pissed at the US hostility and seemingly colonizing agenda. I continue to use the bricks in a diverse of modalities and speak about this in Switzerland.”

Solo exhibition at Les Complices\*, curated by Gökçe Ergör (2019)  
Research supported by Aargauer Kuratorium

More about this artistic research [www.infopalomaavala.com](http://www.infopalomaavala.com)



Images:  
Installation display at Les Complices\*, Zurich

Archival materials and video stills

~~It is our costume  
to consume  
the person we love  
Tubon flesh swollen  
genitalia - nipples  
the scrotum - the vulva  
the soles of the feet  
the palms of the hand  
heart and liver taste best.  
Cannibalism is blessed.~~

~~I'll wear your jawbone  
round my neck  
listen to your vertebrae  
bone rapping bone in my wrists.  
I'll string your fingers round my waist  
what a rigorous embrace.  
Over my heart I'll wear  
a bronch with a lock of your hair.  
Nights I'll sleep cradling  
your skull - sharpening  
my teeth on your toothless grin.~~

~~I miss you in this way.~~

~~I will eat you up.~~

~~Cito.  
The Cannibal~~

Gloria,

Your letter found it's way into my panties.

I am confused and wish to write some words that would only be words and not an invitation to bed. I have successfully managed to keep it out of the paper until now, but that last letter fucked the plan.

I became jealous of something you wrote... I hate myself in those moments. I am not that, yet I am, yet I long for you.

See, I think you know exactly  
it any longer.

Rio Grande flows brave.

Speechless,  
Paloma

how I feel and I do not want to dig into



# LETTERS FROM ONION ISLAND A FICTIONAL EPISTOLARY PRACTICE

publication  
2019

— an excuse to cry, like cutting onions while cooking.

— an encounter of narratives.

— a paranormal exchange with a feminist ghost, a woman from the Valley of Texas, my ancestor and my crush.

— onion island as an imaginary place where all sorts of encounters happen

This fanzine is a fictional letter exchange with Gloria Anzaldúa, self-described as "chicana dyke-feminist, tejana patlache poet, writer, and cultural theorist", born, raised and buried in the same river valley region where Paloma is from... dead since 2006.

The text gives title to a long artistic research project. For Paloma, ONION ISLAND is a fertile fictional alternative to narrate the space of the delta and to explore a solidaire relationship with rurality, water bodies, and biota.

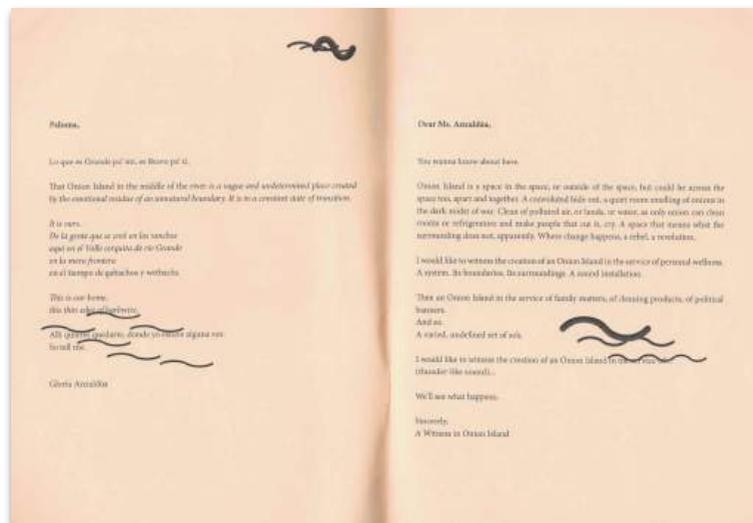
**How could these, and other poetic and cultural agencies lead to create platforms of knowledge creation in favor of the ecologies of the river delta? How could a practice of decolonization of the dominating narrative of violence of the border, create new accesses to the Rio Bravo/Río Grande river, both physically and in the collective or personal imaginaries?**

[DOWNLOAD](#) publication here.



A GROVE OF NATIVE PALMS (SABAL TEXANA), LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS

114921



Paloma,

Lo que es Grande por mí, es Grande por tí.

That Onion Island is the middle of the river is a vague and ambivalent place created by the emotional middle of an ancestral boundary. It is a creative state of transition.

It is ours.

De la parte que se pone en las venidas  
opos en el Valle copado de río Grande  
en la parte frontera  
en el tiempo de gualicho y wethico.

This is our home.  
This is our home.

All great traditions, create to name alguna vez  
social life.

Gloria Anzaldúa

Dear Ms. Anzaldúa,

We neither know about here.

Onion Island is a space in the space, or outside of the space, but could be across the space too, apart and together. A circumscribed hole out, a quiet room smelling of onions in the dark night of our. Clean of polluted air, or lands, or water, an only vision one clear vision or refrigeration and make people that eat it, cry. A space that remains silent, the surrounding does not, apparently. When change happens, a rebel, a revolution.

I would like to witness the creation of an Onion Island in the service of personal well-being. A system. Its foundation. Its surroundings. A social institution.

That an Onion Island in the service of family matters, of closing products, of political borders.

And so.

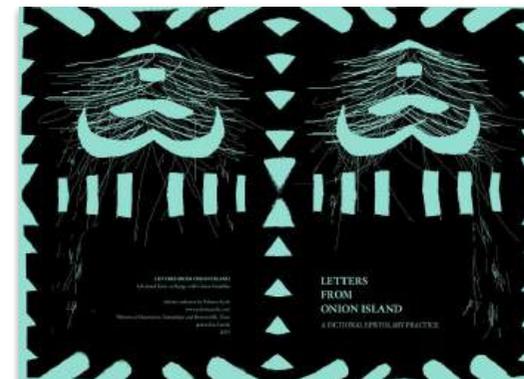
A world, underfoot out of soil.

I would like to witness the creation of an Onion Island in the service of personal well-being (beyond the social).

We'll see what happens.

Paloma,  
A Woman in Onion Island

Images:  
36pp  
A5  
printed in Zürich  
2019





Images:

Installation display at VOLUMES 2019  
Kunsthalle Zurich

More: <https://www.lacapsula-zh.com/mexaonline>

## **MEXA! Independent publications from Mexico**

Archive of fanzines and workshops  
2017-2021

MEXA! comprises the work of the most active collectives and initiatives that are publishing independently in Mexico. It was showcased for the first time in VOLUMES 2017, at Helmhaus Zurich. Our "Female Takeover" collection and the fanzine-making workshop hashtag#MANIFESTO, was part of VOLUMES 2019 and the *inter:archive* exhibition at On-curating Space, Zurich, in 2020.

In collaboration with curator [Adriana Domínguez](#). Commissioned by [VOLUMES](#) and part of the VOLUMES Archive and displays in Helmhaus (2017) and Kunsthalle Zurich (2019)

# USE THE SPACE. USE IT, YOU MUST.

## Sex, space and imagination

publication  
New Delhi  
2018

The women experiences described in this fanzine took place in imaginary gardens, student dormitories, gated communities, urban archaeological goddess burials, and villages consumed by the capital city of New Delhi. They are visualized imaginations of a land where 18 million human bodies occupy one of the biggest urban settlements in the planet.

How we persevere at inhabiting such spaces and how the spaces inhabit us women, is the question that is thought through and made into diverse artistic responses in this publication.

It is about the spaces where sex is determined and contained, where relational encounters that lead to how eroticized our genitals feel, or how we deal with public menstrual affairs, happen. Spaces that tell us which gender should we construct our sexual identities around, when and why to make love, empower or weaken, create political family relationships, when to trust or be suspicious of the dark. The spaces that we occupy as females and often, as citizens with lower status and less visibility.

[Download publication HERE](#)

Images:  
Publication design  
27.5 x 39 cm, 10pp

USE THE SPACE  
USE IT, YOU MUST  
लिंग, जगह और उसकी परिकल्पना

artistic project by Patricia Mehta  
[www.patriciamehta.com](http://www.patriciamehta.com)



The brown dog is lying on a ledge in front of a colorful mural. The text 'Occupying is not a simple task' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

The brown dog is lying on a ledge in front of a colorful mural. The text 'Occupying is not a simple task' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.



The blue plastic basket and a large, dark, textured object (possibly a sculpture or a piece of fabric) on a floor. The text 'Domestic beings being domestic' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

The blue plastic basket and a large, dark, textured object (possibly a sculpture or a piece of fabric) on a floor. The text 'Domestic beings being domestic' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

## ***In view of the normalcy***

One channel video, discussions and publications

New Delhi

2018

A collaboration with Prerana Khandelwaal, Art History PhD student in Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi (JNU).

This project begins with a pseudo-archaeological lucky moment: the finding of a historical stone sculpture of the Hindu deity Saraswati, buried under debris, trash and soil within the grounds of JNU. The stone figure was unearthed by Prerana and me, and brought to her all-female dormitory in campus. This happened during an effervescent moment of political discrepancies between student groups and the university administration.

The work oscillates between domestic and female experiences in the dorm, the city, the cultural values and political narratives that regulate young women in one of the biggest human settlements of the world. The presence of the statue in the dormitory triggered familiar life conversations, reminders of gendered impositions formulated from cultural definitions that require for the women to be sexually "pure", own an "elongated symmetrical figure", be clothed, silent, be listeners (as opposed to out-spoken), and be the key of the formation of family units.

While these private moments of encounter with history, myth, sex, and imagination happened, the administration of university campus progressively redefined the lifestyle of the hostel, the access and mobility of residents and visitors. This affected everyone's ways of being together, which perceptibly changed while this project was being done from friendly and open, to suspicious, restrictive and closed.

A video was prepared and shown within the bedrooms of the students. A fanzine was printed and spread out in the dormitory, we invited these women to join us in the screenings and have a conversation after.

The whole process of transporting the statue to the dormitory, and the relationship that the new guest elicited with the warden, guards and residents, has been documented as video, audio and writings, within the 5 weeks in which this project was carried out.

*In view of the normalcy* is a quote from a letter sent to Prerana from the administration of JNU, in which she is asked to desist her art and community-building activities.

Project done during residency time, supported by Aargauer Kuratorium.

More about the project:

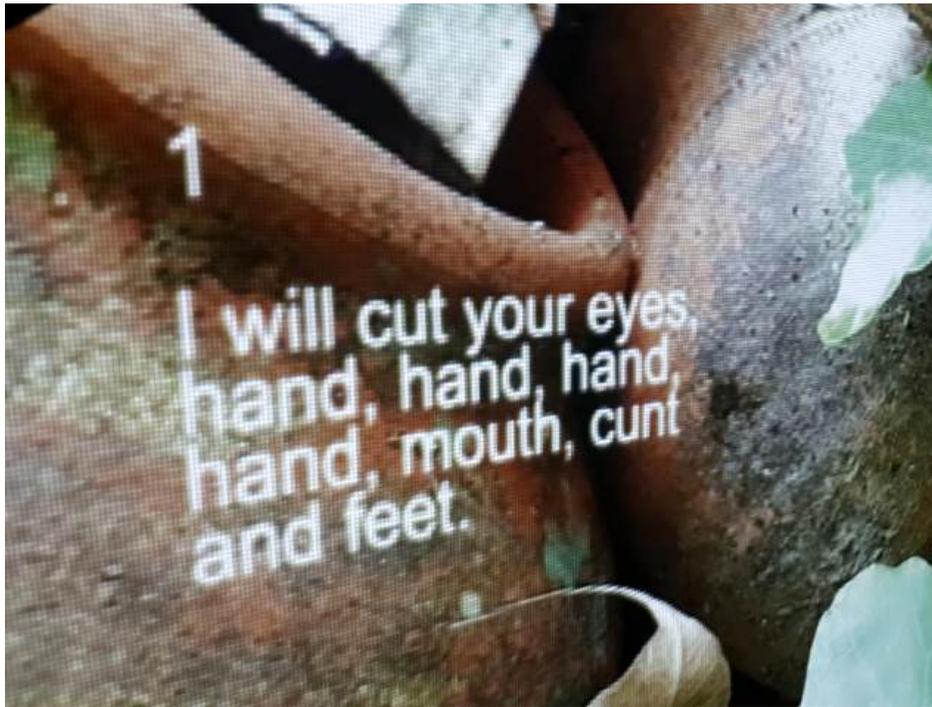
<http://www.palomaayala.com/in-view-of-the-normalcy.html>

Exhibited in SAA Gallery, New Delhi (2018) and Germinal, Matamoros Mexico (2019)

Download the fanzine [HERE](#).



Images:  
Process events, screenings in  
dormitories and fanzine distribution



*In view of the normalcy*  
two-channel video  
15min

**LINK to video upon request**

Images:  
Video stills

Screenings in  
dormitories and  
gardens.

# Monterrey Metrópoli: Diario de los Nuevos Distritos (Diary of the New Districts)

Publication  
2017

## The collective making of a fiction.

The cover image of this publication is a map, a fictional division of the north-eastern city of Monterrey, Mexico, into smaller political administrations... a map created together with a group of taxi drivers by simply asking: in your experience of navigating the city, where are divisions placed and why? Together, we came up with a fiction that was the beginning of a series of possible-yet-untrue stories about the fakely-divided city.

This fiction revolves around the character of the “empujadores” or “pushers”, literally people that push cars across district lines for a living, an economy that developed as an alternate solution to subvert the unfair tax placed for vehicles that cross boundaries... of course, some of the most affected workers are taxi-drivers. The “pushers” are a loop hole in the law: if the motor of a car is not ignited while crossing those lines, they can be tax-exempted. Furthermore, in this fictional Monterrey, “los empujadores de la Diana” are earning better, they are working in “La colina de la Diana”, a famous landmark that divides working class neighborhoods and one of the richest areas in Latin America.

The story of the “Pushers of Diana Hill” expands through the creativity and opinions of the writers and illustrators that were commissioned to contribute. For example, they wrote about fake football clubs that take pride on their district identity; they came up with the tax system for cars through stickers and drone control, problematizing the absurd and exemptions that exist in political borders; they faked legal documents that prove the effect of Asian immigration and their work with the “pushers”; they wrote on the relation between district divisioning and gentrification; they imagined a District Art Biennial that named the immigrants and excluded them from participation; they made advertisement, and came up with a more “cosmopolitan” name for the city: Monterrey Metrópoli.

The map, the articles, the pictures and illustrations, were commissioned to 12 people living or with strong ties to the city. They are taxi drivers, activists, journalists, an engineer, a poet/telephone operator, a scientist, a social worker, a hairdresser and a visual artist.

500 copies were printed and distributed in the streets and public transportation lines of the city. Additional copies were presented in publication fairs, exhibitions and artist talks.

Read ONLINE version [here](#).

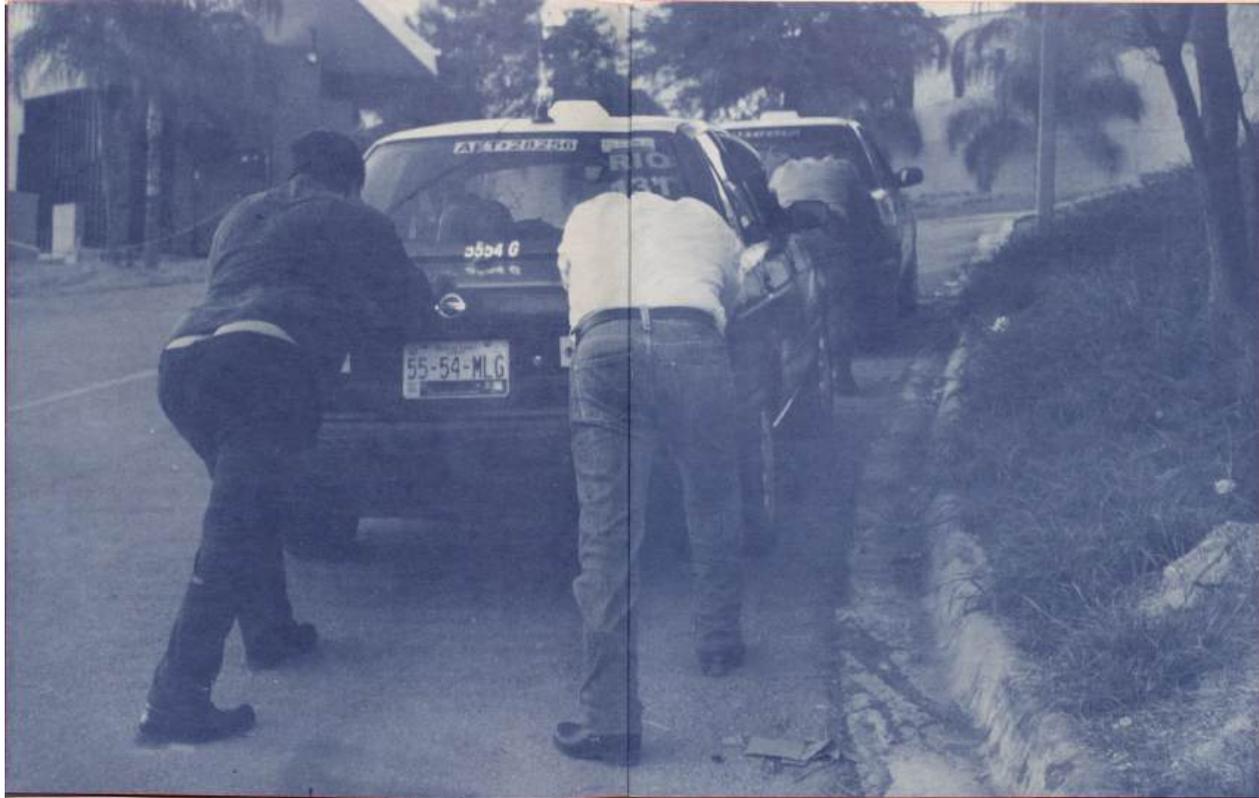
Texts written by Javier Dragustinovis, Daniel Serna, Gregorio Ayala, Vanesa Ayala, Rafael Ble, Ana Bertha Gómez, José González, David Hernández, Carlos Zazueta.

Illustrations by Griselda Villegas and Jorge Mansilla

Photos by Sandra Leal

Edited by Marcela Torres

Designed by Futuro Moncada.



Images:  
First page of publication:  
the “pushers”

Work with taxi drivers  
and mapping the city.

Images:  
Offset print  
25 x 21 cm, 52 pp

Distribution in metro  
stations of Monterrey

More:  
[www.palomaayala.com/ficti-tivos-news](http://www.palomaayala.com/ficti-tivos-news)



Monterrey, Metrópoli - Con un resultado de 3-2, gana San Pedro Grande al equipo de La Purísima en uno de los torneos inter-distritales más comentados de la temporada. / A pesar de que los sanpetrineros intentaron regresar al juego con un gol de Lucio Ayala al minuto 09, fue Alejandro Pérez quien definió el marcador con un tanto antes de finalizar el primer tiempo; un gol marcado por la polémica por un supuesto fuera de lugar del "Gallo" Pérez y un mal desempeño por parte del árbitro, pues aparentemente el reloj ya marcaba el descanso cuando se concretó la jugada. / Ya en el minuto 69, Ramón González Acosta remató el segundo de los de la Purísima que sentenció toda posibilidad del conjunto dirigido por Ramiro Mancera, por remontar. Con esto, los dirigidos por el señorón Severino Rendón aseguran jugar la Gran Final en su casa sanpetrina, en contra de los "Niños Golden" de Apodaca.

**Tierras con la Voz Alzada!**  
Porrás sanpetrina es agredida por "los Puros" y "los niños Golden", después de partido que define la final inter-distrital.  
Monterrey Metrópoli - Disturbios después del partido fueron efectuados por miembros de las distritales porras a menos de una hora de haber terminado la comedia. A las 14:30 horas, vecinas de la colonia J. Estrella llamaron a las autoridades para contener a un grupo de unos 150 personas que se habían congregado en la vía pública. Los policías llegaron al lugar y los miembros de las porras fueron llevados a un centro de detención. Los policías encontraron en el lugar, 23 individuos arrestados, 6 de ellos por alteración de la paz, 17 por posesión de armas. María Lucinda Gómez, vecina afectada en su casa, dijo: "Los de San Pedro comenzaron, yo les vi traían las camisetas rayadas. Les estaban aventando bolas con una al que estaban del otro lado de la calle, los de Apodaca. Luego ellos se fueron al lado de nosotros, yo me fui a la puerta. Mis hijos estaban abalao y les dije que se escondieran en los cuartos. Romparon los vidrios de las ventanas con varas de hierro que sacaron de la construcción de al lado. Luego otros tipos se salieron y comenzaron a golpearse duro con las varas. Todos con la vara alzada."





two-channel video and publications  
2017

*SATIRE TAXIS* tells the story of the "Pushers", people who gain money by pushing cars across "Kreis" or district borders in a speculative Zurich City. It is a fictional take on real issues of legislation enforcement in urban structures - legal control on immigrant populations-, the high levels of gentrification that we feel when looking for decently priced homes, the social unfairness in the Urban Development state agenda that prefers to support ecologically friendly and clean looking environments than sectors like low-income households or working-class immigrants.

The people that push cars, the "taxis of taxis", are characters of a story developed first in the city of Monterrey, Mexico (see previous pages). In the city of Zurich, they were performed and developed with a group of Eritrean and Ghanan taxi drivers: Amanuel Egea, M. Gebreselassie, and Adjø Ababio. They spoke of the many limits and controls that they have to go through to be able to drive an official taxi, being able to own a car, migrating to Switzerland, being the money source of their families, and the growing problem that they experience with the cheaper Uber application taking more clientele.

The installation problematizes "the Pushers" as an unregulated working presence in Zurich, as in the story from Monterrey. I explained these other "empujadores" to the taxi drivers in Zurich, but they expressed disbelief. The only way that this worker could be believable in a place like here, said Amanuel during our meetings, is if it was a black undocumented immigrant. This statement unleashed a lot of questions about their living conditions, control of black or undocumented bodies in the city.

The installation consists of a two-channel video, an ad inclusion in the newspaper *WoZ*, and printed material containing an article titled "The Pushers are real. A recent discovery of the letters by Knüt and Betani Tsäbis raises questions of public performance of power, legislation enforcement and the Zürich urban sustainability agenda."

The ad of "The Pushers" story appeared in *die Wochenzeitung WoZ* newspaper on 31.8.2017, with the website reference: [www.fictitiousnews.site](http://www.fictitiousnews.site), where the story was expanded through pictures and research materials.

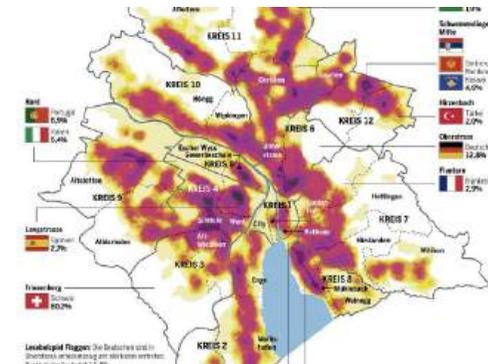
Realized for the MFA Degree Show, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (2017)



Images right:  
Work with taxi drivers, control meters, and research on gentrification and urban development in the media

Image left:  
Installation view  
Two-channel video and stack of newspapers

More:  
<http://www.palomaavala.com/fictitious-news.html>



## Das Beispiel einer unzimmerlichen Vermieterin

Von 1440 auf 3500 Franken Miete Gewerbe auswirken.

	2010	2011	Veränderung
<b>Kreis 1</b>	27'744	66'528	<b>140%</b>
Langstrasse	14'486	27'385	<b>89%</b>
Enge	7'649	14'252	<b>86%</b>
Altstetten	2'752	5'029	<b>83%</b>
Unterstrass	4'931	8'370	<b>70%</b>
Wiedikon	5'528	9'136	<b>65%</b>
Hirslanden	5'490	8'932	<b>62%</b>
Friesenberg	4'121	6'526	<b>58%</b>





### Unerwartete Vorkommnisse an der Förrlibuckstrasse

Drei Männer, die in Zürich als «The Pushers» bekannt sind, schieben für Geld motorisierte Fahrzeuge über Bezirksgrenzen. Ihre Anwesenheit hat Fragen aufgeworfen, zur lokalen Politik der Ausgrenzung im Rahmen der städtischen Nachhaltigkeits-Agenda. Ihre

Existenz ist mehr als ein Klatsch oder ein «journalistischer Nonsense», wie die Stadtpolizei es öffentlich erklärt hat. Dies ist das einzige bekannte Bild ihrer Tätigkeit. Sie wurden die «Taxidienst für Taxis» und «Satire Taxis» genannt.

Lesen Sie die komplette Geschichte in [www.fictitiousnews.site](http://www.fictitiousnews.site)

BEFORE ANY NEWSPAPERS HAD WRITTEN A WORD ABOUT IT, THERE WAS SPECULATION EVERY TIME A BODY WAS SEEN PUSHING A CAR around Förrlibuckstrasse, Waidstrasse and Ballonstrasse in Zürich city. What used to be a very out of the ordinary vision, became normalized in the year 2016. For some it was a huge joke, an urban myth even, but for others “the Pushers” were the only way to deal with the strict regulations of the municipality affecting owners of vehicles and the motorized movement of people through the city.

Die Wochenzeitung was first to report the story on August of 2018. A short piece was published based on street gossip that told the legend of the men that were subverting Zürich's transit legislation, which until now states that motor vehicles transiting across boundaries of districts must pay 4% of the vehicle market value on a yearly basis.

The Zürich Police Department issued the first of two denials a few weeks after, saying it had established no real presence of people laboring as “pushers” of cars and calling the whole thing a “notable journalistic nonsense, completely fictitious” (Zürich Stadtpolizei 2018).

In September of 2019, a year after the matter of “the Pushers”

ex  
it  
sit  
an  
wa  
  
Be  
se  
tri

Images:

SATIRE TAXIS  
Ad in *Die Wochenzeitung WOZI*  
newspaper, published on August  
28, 2017

Installation view in Toni Areal  
Two-channel video and stack of  
newspapers  
Back drop of the Stadtpolizei  
building at Dutweilerstrasse  
Zurich.

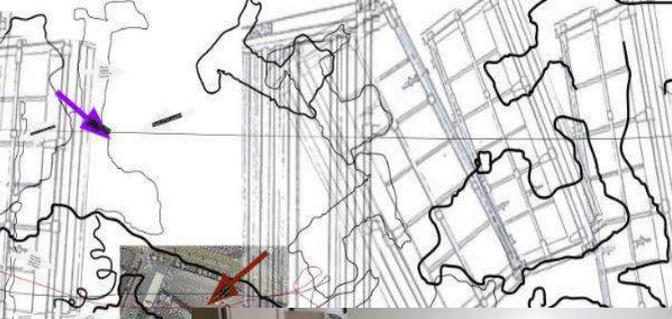
More:  
<http://www.palomaavala.com/fictitious-news.html>



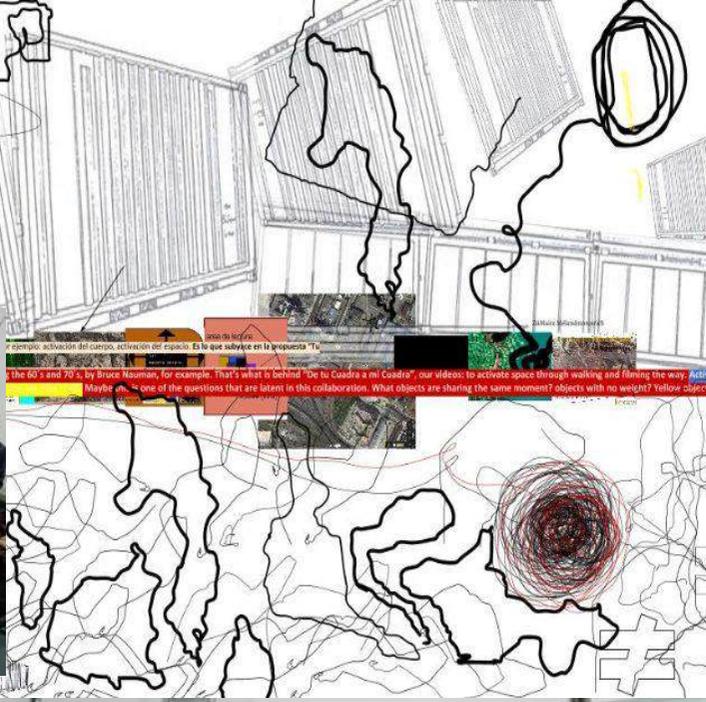


Every first world has a third world, every third world has... what?  
Todo primer mundo tiene un tercer mundo, todo tercer mundo tiene... que?

Todo ciudad de primer mundo tiene un tercer mundo y viceversa  
Lieber Javier,  
Reaprovechando a lo que haz escrito... un buen resumen de nuestra conversacion del otro dia  
Pienso en los proyectos de los que tenemos libertad... los conciertos, siendo que a mi el corazon  
las manos y de la boca a de bueno... quiero decir que me funciona mejor actuando y pensando  
que en el momento de la escritura...  
Me gustaria una frase que escribiste de que todo ciudad de primer mundo tiene un tercer, y viceversa. Me gusta porque es politicamente incorrecta (retomamos  
el concepto de "tercer mundo" que se refiere a "tercer mundo" y "tercer mundo" para analizarlo).



... en el momento de la escritura...  
... espacios distantes pero generados con una misma in-  
...  
... return to your comment about an action a-  
... that. The scene that is cut in two moments. Rea-  
...  
... things that we keep to reuse? All those objects that lead and give meaning to our lives?



# #9044 (the distance between what we have and what we want)

Discussions, food encounter, video and publication  
2016

A long-distance collaboration performed with artist Javier Dragustinovis.

"...we are left to discover what collaboration means in conditions like ours. Both of us distributed, organized, assembled, networked, in different time zones and spaces... such long distance and so many borders in between."

The pictures show a food event with workers of ELSA Químicos, a local chemical factory in the town of Matamoros, Mexico border with Texas. We guided the topic of our conversation to the distance from what we experiment and taste here, to the imagination of what could be or what is across the US/MX border and across other borders.

The publication printed on napkins reads: "Artists negotiating distance. (The distance between what we have and what we want.)"

More: <http://nuevemilcuarentaycuatro.tumblr.com>

Image above:  
Publication design printed on napkins  
: Dinner with workers  
Background image: collective design, visual of process on table cloth

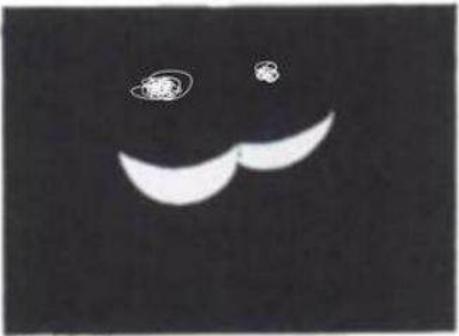


# #9044

Archive



"Nibiru, the bullshit planet" or a moustache.



## Talking about distance and bullshit, nothing better than a reference for "Nibiru, the Bullshit Planet" (or a moustacho)

The Nibiru cataclysm is a supposed disastrous encounter between the Earth and a large planetary object (either a collision or an ~~near-miss~~) which certain groups believe will take place in the early 21st century. Believers in this **doomsday event** usually refer to this object as *Planet X* or *Nibiru*. The idea that a planet-sized object will collide with or closely pass Earth in the near future is not supported by any scientific evidence and has been rejected as **pseudoscience** and an internet **hoax** by astronomers and planetary scientists.<sup>[4]</sup>

The idea was first put forward in 1995 by Nancy Lieder,<sup>[4]</sup> founder of the website ZetaTalk. Lieder describes herself as a **contactee** with the ability to receive messages from **extraterrestrials** from the **Zeta Reticuli** star system through an implant in her brain. She states that she was chosen to warn mankind that the object would sweep through the inner **Solar System** in May 2003 (though that date was later postponed) causing Earth to undergo a **physical pole shift** that would destroy most of humanity.<sup>[6]</sup> The prediction has subsequently spread beyond Lieder's website and has been embraced by numerous Internet doomsday groups, most of which linked the event to the **2012 phenomenon**. Since 2012, the Nibiru cataclysm has frequently reappeared in the popular media; usually linked to newsmaking astronomical objects such as **Comet ISON** or **Planet Nine**. Although the name "Nibiru" is derived from the works of the **ancient astronaut** writer **Zecharia Sitchin** and his interpretations of **Babylonian** and **Sumerian** mythology, he denied any connection between his work and various claims of a coming apocalypse.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nibiru\\_cataclysm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nibiru_cataclysm)



## En aguas internacionales

Estimada Paloma,  
He visitado la página que me mencionas, ¿cómo diría que decir le voy para de territorio seguido que ellos han cuestionado? Cuando hablamos de territorio de asociación a la fiducia y permanentemente, ¿de la red un continente extranjero? ¿Que lo que tiene en cada carta de la ley que imaginamos? Algunos resultados recientes han añadido al momento la imaginación para rediseñar las fronteras. ¿Cómo es que el mapa puede haber sido el espacio (o justificarlo). ¿En blog o una página en la red es un tema via aguas internacionales? ¿Una geografía virtual que algún día reclamaremos como un territorio verdadero?

Posted by [ayestragastinos](#)  
4 months ago  
Psoomnik

Share  
Short URL:  
<https://tumblr.com/254ed85a9gk>  
Twitter Facebook Pinterest Google+

What is the distance (¿cual es la distancia) between (entre) what we have (lo que tenemos) and (y) what we want? (lo que queremos?)

## #9044 Publication and blog

With Javier Dragustinovis

More:  
<http://nuevemilcuarentaycuatro.tumblr.com>



Images:

Event in Gessnerallee  
Zurich  
Nov 2017

## ***The many ingredients of the soup of domestic violence***

**Discussion and cooking event  
2017**

*- We made a list of concepts and violences while cutting potatoes and onions. Cooking can also be a form of activism, or?*

This event invited representants of diverse organizations that concern themselves with domestic violence and migrant women issues in Zurich, including Cafe Donna, Radio Lora, and BIF Beratungsstelle für Frauen in Zurich. We discussed practical information about gender violence for spanish speaking immigrants in Switzerland. Artists, psychologists, social workers, teachers, activists and house workers were invited to participate.

In collaboration with activist Yolanda Candela and curators [Adriana Domínguez and Elena Rosaura](#) from La Cápsula.

Article published in the web blog *Zuriquesa*, by Yolanda Candela. In spanish language: <https://zuriquesa.com/2017/11/22/los-ingredientes-de-la-sopa-de-la-violencia/>



Image: video still

## **Christmas Dinner**

one-channel video

15min

2016

**-showing socio-cultural problematics through the summit of family reunions-**

The video *Christmas Dinner* reflects on the social function of holding together as a family group against the complexity of social mechanisms that let moral atrocities and love happen at the same time, on the same table, among people connected by bonds traditionally accepted as the strongest. It deals with shock and everyday life, with love tied to social obligations and hierarchies in a family unit revealed and confronted in a fictionalized social gathering situation.

How do we perceive the violence within our own filial systems and how do we communicate it?

Filmed in Matamoros, Mexico, with my own family and friends.

Exhibited as part of the Shortlist of Credit Suisse Videokunstpreis, Bern (2017)

## 3 veces heroica

# MATAMOROS TAMAULIPAS

Educational program, discussions, public banners

"3 times heroic Matamoros" is the official name of the city at the eastest MX/US border, in the state of Tamaulipas.

Other than how violence and corruption shape the daily experiences of people with their environment, I am also interested in its immigration history, how people had for years the desire and tendency to move to the north, and how this immigration has affected the city. How people that live in the Texan side of the border relate to the Mexican side and vice versa. Also how people connect to the city, how they describe themselves as part of it, what sort of things would they keep or change. Their relation to the "maquiladoras" or factories that produce parts of different sorts, and that employ people for minimum wage to produce mass high-tech elements for international companies. Their life always in apparent transition from rural to urban areas.

This is the city were I was born in and were my family still lives, but this is not the only reason why I want to work with artists and people from Matamoros. I believe human settlements placed in political borders can tell us a lot about how countries deal with human rights and how people confront what could be described as a hard life situation. I also believe that it is inevitable that artists respond to their immediate environment, and that the artist's condition is full of privileges to communicate, to connect to people and places, to create networks that could improve the community, and to empower.

## The Future

educational program in collaboration with Juan Gonzalez  
2016

A five day workshop took place in the Independencia public primary school with children from second to sixth grade.

I guided a discussion about their imagination of the future of their community and their opinions on the present living situation, including that of criminal violent events performed by cartels. This topic inspired illustrations that later were made into posters which the put out in the garden of their school and at nearby streets.

Immersed in the -peak of violence- post-moment, the border people's relationship with public environments changed, drastically affecting day-to-day dynamics. The posters expressed the children's concerns on security, mobility in their urban context, and their ideas on how they want their shared spaces to be like.

More: <http://www.palomaavala.com/month.html>



Images:

One week workshop at  
Escuela Primaria  
Independencia



## **Banners para el Centro**

**(Banners for Downtown)  
Interviews, drawings and textiles  
2016**

A series of encounters with vendors in Matamoros, inspired the making of 10 banners placed around the downtown neighborhood "el Centro", one of the oldest settlements divided by the border imposition where strong ties has been historically developed across the river border in Brownsville Texas and to other regions in Mexico. Matamoros has strong immigrations patterns of people coming to work to the transnational factories "maquiladoras".

During our encounters in textile shops, small restaurants, magazine shops and others, people told us about their immigration history, their diaspora patterns and what they consider the neighborhood's historical value in the area.

Our conversations turned into texts and drawings for banners, designed specially for the neighborhood with textiles, colors and phrases given to us by the interviewees.

In collaboration with [Javier Dragustinovis](#).

Images:

Banners and interviews

More:  
[www.palomaavala.com/mo nth.html](http://www.palomaavala.com/mo nth.html)





**What escaped corruption is extremely precious.**

Ink drawings, mono-prints, murals and flyers  
2015

Drawings in response to the pro-human rights and against-violence movements that have been increasingly active in Mexico due to the abductions of a group of students and the discoveries of a number of mass graves in the country.

Protest images and texts are a mode of communication, and intrinsically carry a sense of hope that somehow Art will have an impact in popular consciousness. The drawings reflect the specific preoccupation aforementioned, yes, but they respond to more immediate emotional and empathetic questions.

Spread in protests in Zürich, Barcelona, and Monterrey Mexico, Part of the exhibition *What escaped corruption...* curated by Mona Lim in Bärengasse Museum, Zurich (2015)

Images:

Drawings

Monoprints in Barcelona

Wall paintings, flyers and drawings at Bärengasse Museum

## Selected Exhibitions

11/2024 // [Karachi Biennial](#) curated by Waheeda Baloch. Karachi

09-11 2024// [Into the Rhythm: From Score to Contact Zone](#) , ARKO, Seoul

7–10 2024 // [Art Safiental](#), curated by Johannes Hendinger and Anne-laure Franchette. Safiental, Graubünden. Different locations.

2–4 2024 // *Se sirven tamales de "PECHITOS"*, food and story-telling session as part of the residency program of KIOSKO, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

9 2022 – 1/2023 // [Alimento](#), curated by Adriana Domínguez in collaboration with Kenza Benamderrazik and Tara Lasrado. La Cápsula and SAE Greenhouse, Zurich

7-8 2022 // [Storytelling Agricultural Communities in border conditions](#), part of Photo Kathmandu 2023 program, artistic director Nayantara Gurung Kakshapati. Kathmandu

1-3 2023 // [Que no me quiten ni la lengua ni las patas](#), solo exhibition curated by Merly Knörle and Anabel Roque Rodríguez. Villa Sträuli, Winterthur

Oct 2022-Feb 2023 // [Here and Now: Anti-colonial Interventions](#), curated by Joanne Rodríguez. Ludwig Museum, Köln

July-Aug 2022 // [Zones of Love. Playbour & Kinship](#), curated by Lucy Tuma. Shedhalle, Zurich

June-July 2022 // [Neue Perspektiven zur Nachhaltigkeit](#), Arvae art-science collaborative program curated by Tara Lasrado and Alexandra Mueller-Crepon, NaturLabor Arosa

Apr-May 2022 // [Underland: Emotions are Oceans](#). Curated by Niekolaas Lekkerkerk. RADIUS Center for Contemporary Art and Ecology, Delft

Mar -June 2022 // *Habitar Tierras Fronterizas* curated by Javier Dragustinovis. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Tamaulipas MACT

Jan 2022// Lecture Performance part of *Visions of Nature* curated by Simon Würsten Marin, in the context of the exhibition [Earth Beats](#), Kunsthaus Zürich

Oct 2021- Jan 2022 // [Art as Connection: An Unhappy Archive Part II](#) curated by Sabian Baumann and Karin Michalski. Aargauer Kunstmuseum, Aarau

Oct 2021 // [A Forest of Many Worlds](#) curated by Jose Cáceres Mardones, Domenico Ermanno Roberti and Paula Baeza-Pailamilla. La Cápsula, Zürich

Aug-Sept 2021 // [Anamen Fires](#), cooking program part of the *Hochrhein Triennale* curated by Franz Krähenbühl and Alain Jenzer. Kaiserstuhl/Hohentengen

May 2021// [Echo of Leaf and Body](#), performance and workshop with BadLab Collective for the conference *Open Source Body*, curated by Ewen Chardonnet. Volumes Paris

Apr-May 2021 // [Picking out images from my soul's eye](#), curated by Verena Melgarejo-Weinandt and Andrea Keppler. DISTRICT Berlin

April-May 2021 // [Loud-reading from the Situated Kitchen](#), cooking performance curated by Eleonora Stassi and Francesca Cecherini. OTO Sound Museum, Zurich

April 2021 // [From Sensitive Pools... and RIVER ORACLE](#), part of of the exhibition "Intimacy of Strangers" by Riikka Tauriainen, curated by Lena Pfäffli, Sabrina Negroni and Anne-Sophie Mlamali. sic! Elephanthouse, Luzern

March 2020 // [Games.Fights.Encounters](#), curated by Jose Cáceres, Dorothee Richter and Ronald Kolb. OnCurating Space, Zürich

March 2020 // [Monument to Use de Space \(Use it, you must\)](#). PLATTEforum, Denver

Dec 2019 - Jan 2020 // [Auf der Suche... Nach Zürich](#), curated by Nadja Baldini, Simon Maurer, Vreni Spieser. Helmhaus Zürich

Nov 2019 // [Letters from Onion Island](#), curated by Gökçe Ergör. Les Complices\* Zürich

Sept 2019 // [El Fin de la Mar Caribe](#) in collaboration with Javier Dragustinovis. Curated by Elena Rosauero and Adriana Domínguez. La Cápsula, Zürich

July 2019 // *Monumento al Momento del Encuentro*, public sculpture and social space. Monterrey, Mexico

## Selected Programs as Community-engaged Artist

May 2023 to date // Co-organizer of [Les Complices\\*](#), community art space focused on queer feminist and BIPOC people and topics.

June 2022 // instructor of *Primer Campo Pesquero*, workshop for children and families living in coastal communities, in collaboration with Javier Dragustinovis. Matamoros

Mar-June 2021 // organizer of [This room called GROUND](#), in support of under-funded BIPOC and queer artists, in collaboration with Gökçe Ergör, Les Complices\*, Zurich

2017-2021 // curator of [MEXA! Archive of independent publications from Mexico](#) as part of VOLUMES, in collaboration with Adriana Domínguez. Presented in Helmhaus, Kunsthalle and OnCurating Space, Zurich

## Selected Residencies

Feb-March 2024 // Art Residency KIOSKO, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, supported by Pro Helvetia

July - Dec 2022 // Art Residency [U-jazdowski Centre of Contemporary Art](#), Warsaw, supported by Pro Helvetia

Jan - Mar 2020 // Art Residency and leader of fanzine-making workshop for youngsters in [PlatteForum](#), Denver

Sept - Oct 2018 // Art Residency in [Khoj Studios](#), New Delhi, supported by Aargauer Kuratorium

## Selected Teaching experience

Apr 2022-2025 // *Anamen-fires*, outdoor cooking and reading workshops for Students EDHEA, ZHdK.

Oct 2022 // *KARAOKE READINGS*, part of the [Juicy Things](#) program of Kunsthochschule Halle

Feb 2022 // [Case Study: Teresa Margolles and Fernando Britto](#), fanzine-making workshop with specialized group in Fotomuseum, Winterthur

Jan 2021 // *Politics of Care*, food and reading session for F+F students, organized by Gökçe Ergör and Sarah Merten.

Nov 2021 // *A kind of magic...* blockWoche in collaboration with Riikka Tauriainen, Hyperwerk Basel

Nov 2021 // Guest lecturer for *Decolonizing Art Institutions* led by Gökçe Ergör and Ali Monoud, Hochschule der Künste Bern

Jul 2021 and Nov 2021 // *Making Oracles* workshop in collaboration with Riikka Tauriainen, Hyperwerk, Basel

## Published Texts

*SABER BIEN*, in [Schpensa Online Archive](#). Edited by Violeta Burckhardt, Anne-Laure Franchette, Bettina Tschuor. Commissioned by Arvae, 2022

*Conversations between Epizoochory*, in [MOBILE SOILS](#). Edited by Anne-Laure Franchette, Jose Caceres Mardones, Gabriel N.Gee, Published by TETI Press, 2021

*Travel through t(her)e*, in [ART & CRISIS. A Polyphonic Research on the Contemporary](#). Edited by Donatella Bernardi, Published by JRP/Ringier

## Selected Grants and Prizes

2025 // Förderpreis Kanton Zürich awarded to Les Complices\*

2024 // Freiraum Beitrag awarded by Kanton Zurich

2023 // Research and production grant To-Gather awarded to Collective With the Fields

2021 // Research grant for "This room called GROUND", awarded by ProHelvetia

2021 // Reisestipendium for ONION ISLAND project, awarded by Aargauer Kuratorium