

ARTICLE

Capitalist crisis, human rights, and resistance through art

Crisis capitalista, derechos humanos y resistencia a través del arte

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Abstract

This article describes the advantages of art as a form of resistance against the triad of patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism before moving on to popular artistic manifestations during the Chilean social explosion. Subsequently, three experiences of Latin American collectives and artists are analysed, whose worldviews are centred on resistance to this triad as a way of critically understanding the social injustices derived from cognitive capitalism, expressed in authoritarian power relations. We know the experience of art as a producer of critical subjectivity, mediated by counter-devices, as an effective strategy for creating spaces for social denunciation. The methodology is guided by qualitative research, specifically co-research, the fruit of narrative socio-analysis. This methodology, in connection with the proposals developed by the experiences of these collectives and artists, invites social workers to incorporate the use of art as a pretext for social transformation in their professional practices.

Keywords
: art; resistance;
counter-device;
qualitative
research;
narrative socio-
analysis; counter-
device; narrative
socio-analysis.

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Resumen

Este artículo describe las ventajas del arte como forma de resistencia contra la tríada compuesta por el patriarcado, colonialismo y capitalismo, para después aplicarlo a las manifestaciones artísticas populares durante el estallido social chileno. Posteriormente, analizamos tres experiencias de colectivos y artistas latinoamericanos cuyas visiones de mundo están centradas en la resistencia a esta tríada como una forma de comprender críticamente las injusticias sociales derivadas del capitalismo cognitivo, expresado en relaciones de poder autoritarias. Comprendemos la experiencia del arte como productora de subjetividad crítica, mediada por los contra-dispositivos, como estrategia efectiva para la creación de espacios de denuncia social. La metodología está orientada por la investigación cualitativa, específicamente la co-investigación, fruto del socioanálisis narrativo. Esta metodología, en conexión con las propuestas desarrolladas por las experiencias de estos colectivos y artistas, se convierte en una invitación a trabajadores/as sociales para incorporar en sus prácticas profesionales el uso del arte como pretexto para la transformación social.

Palabras Clave:
arte; resistencia;
contra-
dispositivo;
investigación
cualitativa;
socioanálisis
narrativo

Introduction

In this article, we describe the experience of three collectives/artists to find ways of critical reading for social transformation based on art and artistic expression as strategies for the essential construction of capitalist dominations and social problems. To this end, we describe the concept of crisis applied to cognitive capitalism and its consequences for independent and immaterial works. This crisis has been expressed, in an increasingly important way, in the field of art, which has been permeated by ideological practices that commodify and dilute creative processes in favour of political, ideological and economic interests. Thus, we describe the concept of the device to read the participants' experience through a qualitative methodology critically focused explicitly on narrative psychoanalysis (Curcio et al., 2017).

The crisis, in general terms, and according to McNamee (1996), implies a separation between social traditions constructed about specific discursive practices and personal ideas and perceptions, often countering these traditions. According to Gómez (2024), capitalism remains a totalitarian form over labour and bodies and continues to create conditions of precariousness in social, political and economic dimensions. The crisis of civilisation has created an unequal power relationship that is expressed in the precariousness of labour, the emergence of authoritarian power relations and the radicalisation of social relations, expressed in racism, xenophobia, and misogyny, among others (Rosario, 2023)



Cognitive capitalism

In recent decades, capital has shown a progressive decomposition and dematerialisation. The labour force has become increasingly separated from constant capital (Hardt and Negri, 2011) and is no longer tied to a specific location, as it was during Fordist capitalism. As a consequence, cognitive capitalism has developed, i.e. the co-optation of independent and usually immaterial labour, as opposed to the static labour of chain production.

The new information and communication technologies have become intertwined with immaterial labour, which has also acquired a “new centrality in the cultural industries” (Ribalta, 2010, p.243). Thus, cognitive capitalism knows how to capture all spheres with its immateriality, including desire, understood as the vital force composed of creativity, vitality, sensuality and willingness to change, and in the Fanonian sense, to political transformation (De Oto and Postléman, 2018).

Bifo (2003) has described this phenomenon as the “cognitariat”, a synthesis of “cognitive capitalism” and “proletariat”, the latter indicating the precariousness of immaterial labour. It implies “new forms of self-employment in the field of cultural industries and the emergence of a new highly skilled but simultaneously self-exploited, impoverished and precarious self-employed working class: the cognitariat” (Ribalta, 2010, p.243). The proletariat is connected to cognitive capitalism reflected in the emergence of professionals in the cultural field and the artistic-cultural industries, who see their labour rights undermined through job insecurity, the extension of working hours and the low expectation of lasting employment contracts, which is reflected in the absence of job stability and an imbalance between work and personal time, aspects that affect their quality of life.

Artists have become an essential element of post-Fordist production. Important strategies of cultural work, such as self-management and creativity, as well as supposedly anti-hierarchical and flexible labour structures, have replaced the disciplinary ones of the Fordist regime; similarly, the model of entrepreneurship, which in the case of Chile competes for funds in structures that do not differentiate specific types of work, including that performed by academics. Artists and cultural workers are the ideal workforce for this contemporary capitalism due to their enthusiasm, their high capacity for self-motivation and ingenuity, and the widespread assumption that they should not have high economic expectations in the field of the arts.



In this sense, capital penetrates and parasitises creativity (Fernández-Savater, 2003). For Rolnik, cognitive capitalism drains creative desire, fossilising and commodifying it in initially rebellious creative practices. Or it sponsors them and thus gets the sponsored to obey the orders of capitalism (Marxen, 2018; Ribalta, 2010). As a result, subjectivity is co-opted from its desire. The static obedience of the era of disciplinary power is exchanged for a fluid and equally submissive flexibility (Fernández et al., 2015).

This commodification of creative desire is possible because capitalism can assimilate a great quantity and variety of revolutionary content without risking its existence (Raunig, 2014). It knows how to turn revolution into spectacle and commodity. To confront it, the first step is to question what we do, our creativity and our criticality. In Ribalta's (2010, p.264) words: "Are we disrupting the logic of neoliberal capitalism and cultural industries, or are we reproducing and deepening it?"

How can artists achieve anti-capitalist resistance without inscribing themselves in the same capitalist logic? This is the question that has guided this work, the results of which are discussed with readers to consider a critical reflection that, based on three experiences of South American art collectives and artists, can propose an understanding of the impact of art on the social transformation of communities, based on heterodox languages, free from consumerist ideologies and resistant to the commodification of creative desire.

Of the device in times of social crisis

One way to understand the social crisis highlighted by a series of totalitarianism and strategies of subjugation to capitalist socio-political power is through the concept of the *dispositif*. Agamben (2014) describes the fundamental characteristics of the emergence of the *dispositif*: it acts as a network in the sense of a series of dispersed but interconnected elements, such as discourses, discursive utterances, laws, scientific propositions, etc. It has a strategic function, given that devices act in the mechanisms and games of power. Finally, the *dispositif* results from the relation knowledge – power: "It institutes a 'relational machine' that disposes someone according to a certain power relation (...) the agents involved participate procedurally in the reproduction of the *dispositif*" (Curcio et al., 2017, p.86). This is why Agamben states: "...devices must involve a process of subjectification, that is, they must produce their subject" (2014, p.16).



For Foucault (1994), the *dispositif* was “a formation whose main function is to respond at a given historical moment to an urgent need” (Holmes, 2006, p.147). In this sense, it responds to a societal need that can manifest as, a crisis. Likewise, the device is essential for communication, as it establishes a particular regime of enunciation that includes the arts. Devices are machines that make people see and speak, with the option of censorship included (Curcio et al., 2017; Deleuze, 1990). Deleuze, moreover, analysed the lines of rupture, fissure and fracture that each device entails: “Devices thus have as their components lines of visibility, of enunciation, lines of force, lines of subjectivation, lines of rupture, of fissure, of fracture that intersect...” (1990, pp. 157-158). And it is mainly the lines of subjectivation that are suitable for breaking with the old ones in favour of the creation of new devices: “Every device is thus defined by its tenor of novelty and creativity, which at the same time marks its capacity to transform itself or to fissure itself for the benefit of a device of the future” (Deleuze, 1990, p.159). It is the passage from the recent past to the near future, from history to events.

Now, the necessity of our contemporaneity, the “structural imperative” (Holmes, 2006, p.147), can be seen in a “cognitive creativity” that answers to cognitive capitalism and the shaping of subjectivities to the mandates of this late capitalism (Plaza, 2023). At the same time, fissure lines can break these mandates to develop liberated creative subjectivities and desires, leading to social and political transformation, as seen in the example of the artistic practices described below.

Bursts

In recent years, we have also witnessed lines of fissure in the form of collective protests, insurrections and social outbursts against late-capitalist and environmental exploitation and more social justice and recognition of human rights, as well as the rights to health, education and public, quality and stable pensions. We should clarify that we maintain the term “social outburst” in our text instead of “social awakening, social revolts, overflow,” etc. However, we know the criticisms raised, particularly for evoking the ephemeral without doing “justice to its importance within an extensive and profoundly transformative process for the country” (Plaza, 2023, p.7). However, we are more convinced by the term’s “etymological roots with the word ‘splinter’” (Plaza, 2023, p.7). In other words, it is a process that explodes and breaks a whole, in this context, the neoliberal state completely, without the possibility of repairing it without fissures.

We are also aware that this is not a geographically, socially, or politically isolated event in Chile. We have observed outbursts in other countries: Colombia (2021), 15-M in Spain (2011), the Arab Springs in the Middle East, Africa (2010-2012) and even in the USA with *Occupy Wall Street* (2011), with the content of these protests and demands coinciding pretty closely.

In 2019, Chilean society exploded against the malaise produced by neoliberalism over the last half century, first by the extreme capitalism installed during the military dictatorship and imported by the Chicago Boys, followed by the neoliberal perpetuation of the post-dictatorial Concertación.

The protagonists and participants of the explosion massively opposed the neoliberal status quo and “the dissolution of the social bond” produced by neoliberalism itself (Plaza, 2023, p.80). They created spaces for meeting, debate, discussion, and interaction, a new collectivity and relationality. These protests were articulated mainly in public space, with or through the arts, artistic activities and creative expressions, as “street making” (Cristi, 2023, p.19).

The arts allow for the most effective forms of resistance to “raise critical gazes at the paradigm of production of subjectivities in a community” (Plaza, 2023, p.74). However, we need a type of critical art that knows how to “produce changes in the collective interpretation of reality” to jointly evoke an alternative, anti-capitalist future (Plaza, 2023, p.75).

One of the main advantages of the arts is their greater symbolic effectiveness compared to verbal and written language. They operate with a freedom that allows them to go beyond what is verbally prescribed. This is due to their ability to condense different times in a single work, which can include the denunciation of a present malaise or injustice, with its possible causes in the past, and can simultaneously open the horizon to announce possible alternatives: a different future, a future freedom. This temporality in the arts is not necessarily linear. One of the advantages of artistic language is the possibility of interrupting or even breaking the imperatives of linearity. In this way, dominant discourses can be interrupted or recomposed, and alternative narratives can be found (Marxen and González, 2022; 2023; Vattimo, 2005; Gadamer, 1997).

In Chilean cities, the walls shouted and manifested the ‘rudder blows in the face of political becoming’ (Plaza, 2023, pp. 8-9; Red Conceptualismos del Sur, 2019). Without



following the neoliberalist superficiality and co-optation of the so-called ‘relational aesthetics’ (Bourriaud, 2006; Ribalta, 2010), we want to highlight the solid relational aspect of the arts during the explosion. They invited, reflected and supported public debates. Their scope was social interaction of a political nature. The recipients of the art of the blast “are constitutive participants in the piece or artistic action” (Plaza, 2023, p.75). The new artists committed to social transformation operate instead as facilitators who make these processes possible to recover the “creative, recreational, imaginative, expressive, impressionistic capacities of the common [...] for the flow of sensitive communication” (Delgado, 2020, p.137; Echeverría, 2010). This flow had to resist state repression in Chile and other countries.

Yet “the visual languages of the struggles of the present are interwoven with those actions that shaped the struggles of the past and, at the same time, with those of the future” (Cristi, 2023, p.16). Benjamin (2022) analysed the technical reproducibility of art and how art can serve politics. His text seems more current than ever if we consider the digital possibilities for interventions and archives of protest art (Ureta, 2023). However, we concur with Benjamin’s warning that reproducibility has to happen with a critical attitude (Marxen, 2019).

In Chile, one form of resistance has been related to the graphic and muralist practice of the Unidad Popular, under the term “graphic memory” and “ecology of visual resistances”, emphasising the dynamic character of these practices, especially the technical and conceptual developments in the graphic crafts (Cristi, 2023; Manzi and Cristi, 2016; Aguirre and Chamorro, 2008). Furthermore, the articulations of the outburst have taken up, both graphically and in terms of content, the Penguin Revolution (2006) and the Student Movement (2011) (Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio, 2022). We consider that a strong performative aspect emerged at two specific moments in 2006 and 2011, which was taken up and further developed during the outbreak. However, we reject the idea of a linear development between the events, because of the plurification of the demands and the participating groups since 2019 (Dardot, 2023), who deployed an impressive artistic variety in the form of: “murals, photographs, serigraphs, chants, dances, photomontages, parades, poems, graffiti, banners, *stickers*, interventions on public statuary, masks, costumes, memes, batucada, costumes, performances, stencils, choreographies, flops, rituals, sculptures, posters and canvases” (Plaza, 2023, p.65).

This artistic expansion and variety, which has enriched the protests in recent times, as Patricio Guzmán noted in his film *La cordillera de los sueños* (2020), is summed up in the

phrase “writing together the memory of the future” (Dardot, 2023). Or, as the collective Las Tesis intoned it with a choreography that went around the world and exposed the validity of gender violence. These manifestations broadened the variety of narrative, visual and performative forms of social, political and ideological interests, which show the pertinent and current relationship of art as a form of resistance arising from collectives and organised subjectivities, which seek to tell the story with a different set of facts.

We can explain these ways of unveiling social reality with a diversity of devices, as in the previous examples, with the Deleuzian concept of the event that aims at “a new existence”, producing at the same time new subjectivities in the form of “new relations with the body, with time, with sexuality, with the environment, with culture, with work...” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1993, in Pelbart, 2023, p.128). In these new experiences, “what was previously experienced as inevitable suddenly appears intolerable, and what was previously not even imaginable becomes thinkable, desirable” (Pelbart, 2023, p.128). What leads to events is an exhaustion that can be political, biopolitical, macro, micro or mesopolitical.

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This detachment or emptying is what Deleuze called “rarefaction” that pushes the invention of new becomings, “the creation of the possible” (Pelbart, 2023, p.129), in short, to points “of inflexion in history” (Plaza, 2023, p.8).



Figure 1. Marxen (2019). The streets of Valparaíso during the burst.

In these moments of maximum uncertainty, a very high degree of creativity is required first to conceptualise exhaustion and then express it to turn it into a new world to come, into “a new mode of existence” to be created. It is a matter of nothing less than “inventing new possibilities of life, new ways of existing” (Pelbart, 2023, p.130).

Artists such as Eduardo Molinari and the duo Iconoclasistas (both from Buenos Aires) have described these dynamics of fusing thinking with feeling in favour of new ways of inhabiting the world and against neoliberalist plundering as “feeling-thinking” (Marxen and González, 2023).

Molinari and Iconoclasistas are already examples of artists who present an effective resistance to capitalism, including colonialist environmental exploitation. We need such devices to confront the triad (capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism) since events that aim to resist only one aspect of this triad, for example, capitalism alone, risk perpetuating racial and neo-colonial injustices, as well as reproducing patriarchal systems. And if we only focus on opposition to patriarchy, we are likely to reproduce white feminism, which merely favours white, upper-middle-class women.

This article focuses on *artistic devices* that have taken the form of counter-dispositions. They oppose both neoliberal logic and the disciplinary controls of the state and totalitarian politics, challenging the cooptation, usurpation and neutralisation of the arts and creative desire by neoliberal power agencies.

Methodology

We start from a qualitative methodology that becomes a situated activity in which the relations between the researcher and the community must become intersubjective (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). We also consider it as an encounter that produces subjectivities through artistic and poetic devices as performative strategies for the production of new meanings mediated by art and poetry (Marxen and González, 2023).

Accordingly, we start with the contributions of narrative socioanalysis (Curcio et al., 2017), which focuses on the generativity of narratives as situated constructions and how these narratives impact the communities from which they emerge. We consider alternative narratives as a fundamental axis in co-research, given that: “These spaces offer different models, opposed to hegemony, capable of deconstructing institutionalised lives and situations of domination” (Marxen, 2022, p.5).

The most suitable way to account for the subjectivity of communities that have usually been denied their rights and made invisible by society is through the claim of movements and artists who empower everyday expressions that “affirm a differential form” in opposition to capitalist, colonialist and patriarchal axiomatics, to reach “minor forms that appear as foci of resistance and lines of flight that are realised as spaces of self-determination” (Ezcurdia, 2023, p. 203).

Thus, subjectivities arrive at new representations centred on their critical and symbolic efficiency, which refract dominant and hegemonic discourses (Ezcurdia, 2023; Marxen, 2016). This allows the generation of a “minor language” in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari (1978), which starts from the margins of mainstream thought, where it can activate its hidden potential (Marxen, 2012; Fortun, 2010).

Against this background, we describe the experience of three contemporary collectives/artists who create a series of artistic strategies to express social subjectivity by constructing shared and collectively created knowledge. The most important selection criterion was the artists’ ability to continuously break with dominant capitalist, patriarchal, and colonialist discourses and with sophisticated symbolic efficacy.

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Following Stake (2013), we chose to select three collectives/artists through deliberate sampling, drawing on the specificity of the characteristics that frame the artistic work of the participants, thanks to previous encounters and knowledge of their creative strategies in particular social contexts. After contacting them and proposing a space for asynchronous conversation, they were interviewed virtually, with questions adapted to the specific practices of each artist/collective, in addition to interweaving bibliographical sources on their work and, above all, images of their works with the aim of softening, through art, the power relations between the participants. The interviews with Mujeres Creando, Danny Reveco, and Cholita Chic were conducted through questions about the objectives and resistance each of these artistic proposals seeks. From the interviews, an analysis of the most significant phrases was carried out to include them in the article, using an analysis of recurring themes (Wodak and Meyer, 2003).

Mujeres Creando

Mujeres Creando (MC hereafter) is an anarcho-feminist collective that emerged in La Paz, Bolivia, in 1992. Its primary mission is to fight “effectively against machismo, colonialism and neoliberalism” (Marxen and González, 2023, p.87).



This collective runs a self-managed cooperative shelter, Virgen de los Deseos, for women who have suffered violence, which defines itself as “a space of political fiction, a utopia, a uchronia, a laboratory in which to imagine how we would live in a post-patriarchal and radically decolonised world” (Preciado, 2022, p.12).

MC has created a series of artistic strategies to give an account of its objectives as a collective, to make concrete denunciations of abuses, as well as to consolidate spaces for social denunciation through artistic expressions such as graffiti, performance, *Radio Deseo* and films such as *Mamá no me lo dijo* (2004). In short, they develop a series of “practices of rebellion and deinstitutionalisation of violence” that they call “depatriarchalisation” (Preciado, 2022, p.18). As a result, the collective generates diverse actions to defend Bolivian women’s and other populations’ rights. Thus:

We constitute a space of reference for justice, a factory of justice and collective struggle against the violation of the rights of women, children, adolescents, young people and the LGTBIQ+ population in cases of male violence, such as family violence in all its expressions, rape, femicide, fatherhood irresponsibility, bank usury, harassment and abuse at work and other problems that affect the population we work with. (MC-Patricia Galindo, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

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The previous quote shows the expression of co-research within the daily activities of the collective, which is related to the impact of narrative socio-analysis (Lara, 2020; Arribas, 2020). Similarly, the actions developed allow for a free flow of events focused on social denunciation, which impacts the community’s social imaginaries. It is possible to see the diversity of narrative media, and actions focused on everyday dimensions to publicly express these rights violations.

MC has become a movement that definitely impacts respecting women’s rights and vulnerable populations. It can also be observed that the range of discrimination includes other types of silent violence, such as bank usury (Toro et al., 2010), fatherhood irresponsibility and labour abuse.



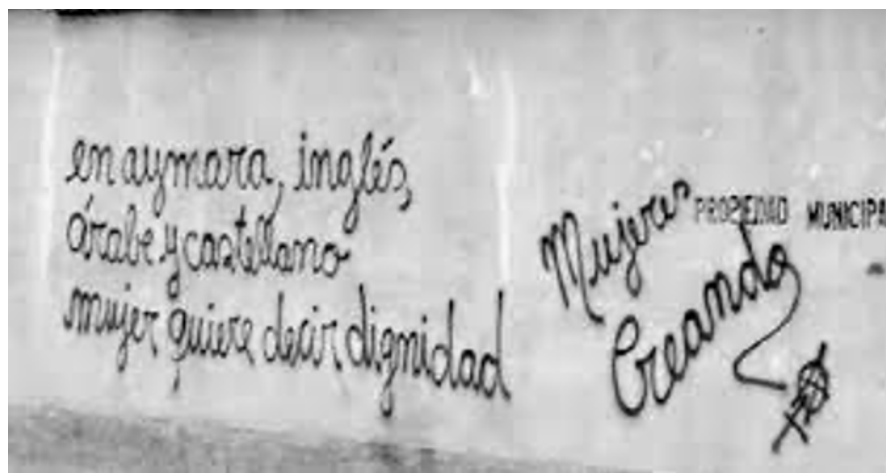


Figure 2. *Mujeres Creando* (2019). Graffiti made by *Mujeres Creando* on one of the walls (public space) of the city of La Paz - Bolivia.

The art, as shown in Figure 2, is a statement of principle about the intentions of the MC collective, expressed in the semantic equivalence of the words dignity and woman. In this case, the disruption of the blank space of a wall creates an alternative meaning, with a phrase superimposed on a previously written sentence: “municipal property”. Two types of phrase are superimposed; one, institutional, declaring a property owned by a municipality, with another phrase that restructures the properties of the wall. The handling of the blank space of the wall, which has its stable meaning, is re-signified by the construction of the graffiti, which expands the sense of interpretation by the passer-by.

It is also worth highlighting the insistence and constancy of MC’s graffiti activity: “It is not one graffiti, it is thousands; it is not one place, it is four cities; it is not the centre of the cities, but all imaginable spaces; it is not one theme, it is a chain of themes” (Galindo, 2022, p.120). The relationship between the arts in MC is established before any initial intervention in the very configuration and construction of the collective’s meaning. This allows us to think that graffiti is not an isolated expression but is interconnected as a work of expansion and movement.

In our very name, “Mujeres Creando” is the verb that signifies a transcendent part of what constitutes us as a movement. This verb also evokes one of our most essential forces, which is also our most fertile method of action for the struggle, which is creativity. (MC-Danitzza Luna, personal communication, 30 March 2024; underlined in original)

The actions carried out by MC start from creativity as an axis of reconfiguration of reality; this dimension becomes an essential aspect to consider, given that, as seen in previous paragraphs, subjectivities, in this case, the MC collective, reach the construction of new representations, centred on graffiti and other social interventions, radio programmes and public denunciations, as a minor language that criticises hegemonic discourses (Marxen, 2012). Thus:

Creativity means a more fertile ground and engine for action, free from definitional disputes, delimitations, hierarchies and vertical classifications. We do not call ourselves artists, activists, or artists who use art as a mere tool to communicate their struggles (MC-Danitza Luna, personal communication, 30 March 2024)

For Galindo (2022, p.118): “Creativity is the skin with which we touch and explore our society, seeking and intuiting its erogenous zones, its everyday sensitive zones, its pain zones, its pleasure zones, its vetoed historical memory”.

They reject institutionalised, academic art: “As an anti-racist, anti-capitalist and feminist social movement, we establish that we do not have a utilitarian or servile relationship with the arts as they are defined” (MC-Danitza Luna, personal communication, 30 March 2024). Although they do use academic art to take up their proposals for critical and social intervention:

it is necessary to resort to symbolic historical references that come from these studies and that serve to deepen any current debate that we want to raise; we have no problem in doing so or even rethinking the hegemonic discourses that have been formed on these historical references. (MC-Danitza Luna, personal communication, 30 March 2024)

They insist that

creativity is not a power that should only be restricted to the purely artistic world. ...all our symbolic and concrete work of struggle is based on this principle; our main stage is the street. (MC-Danitza Luna, personal communication, 30 March 2024)



Understanding creativity as a force that encompasses all spheres of life and struggle has already had a strong tradition in Latin America (see, for example, the work and texts of Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica and Mário Pedrosa).

The relevance of the street as a space for artistic and critical production deserves attention in MC, and for the works/interventions referred to in this article. This preference is due to the importance it has for any political dispute and social struggle. The street and public space are not places of consensus, but of dissent. This is also true for the art that takes place there: it must generate dispute (Szmulewicz, 2023; Mouffe, 2021). Disputation operates as an act of resistance that is gestated in the public for an itinerant and active audience, without any institutional confinement. This is precisely characteristic of the methodologies of the “South”, anti-extractivist. Their validity is oriented to their capacity to support, initiate, sustain and strengthen social struggles (Cusicanqui, 2015; Marxen and González, 2023; Marxen, 2020). And an ideal way to account for these social struggles is, precisely, to use the public space of the streets to carry out critical processes that impact all possible audiences and publics, generating a deconstruction of the meaning of what the work of art is. In other words, from the street MC deinstitutionalises the artistic creative process (Galindo, 2022).

Their work has occasionally reached hegemonic events on the global art circuit. They have been invited to the 31st Sao Paulo Biennial (2014), Documenta XIV (2017), Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid (MNCARS, 2000-2001), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC, 2011). María Galindo has been invited to the 57th and 60th Venice Biennale (2015 and 2024). One of the highlights of the 60th edition of the Venice Biennale was a critical encounter with the artist Sandra Gamarra (Arteinformado, 2024). Galindo (2022) appreciates the debates developed in these events and did not feel disciplined by them. She emphasises the pragmatism they can benefit from, thanks to their rigorously critical attitude towards the official institutions of international art.

As a consequence of the above, the work of MC has transformed the critical practices of feminist movements in Latin America, emphasising some actions for the achievement of these critical practices, which is to go from the pedagogy of indignation to the pedagogy of collective feminist struggle:

Our feminism is concrete, it can be touched, it can be read in a sentence against a rapist, it can be drawn in a law proposal for women, it is concrete in the accompaniment of hundreds of women in abortions, in the recovery of the sons

and daughters of hundreds of mothers, in saving women from the trap of bank usury, in teaching them how to apply feminist self-defence, in each and every one of the radio documentaries made by María Galindo to, for example, return a femicide to prison immediately, among so many other concrete actions that can be named. We don't just discuss our feminism, we get down to work to achieve visible results. (MC-Raíza Zeballos, personal communication, 30 March 2024)

The above comment shows the actualisation that for Galindo (2022) is a central part of MC. They act under the “feminist principle that ‘nobody represents anybody’” (p.106). This implies that they do not assume a self-proclaimed exclusive leadership, which makes them lose their principles of collaboration and disinterested work, which is related to their ideological positions based on a direct and reliable intervention, but without protagonism.

They clearly, effectively and continuously develop multiple counter-devices to combat patriarchalism, colonialism and neoliberalism, including environmental extrapolation:

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Mujeres Creando integrates a series of struggles that we consider an integral part of the feminist struggle, an anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist struggle, which is why we cannot close our eyes to what is being done with our forests, our reserves, against the Indigenous peoples of the Bolivian Amazon. (MC-Julietta Ojeda, personal communication, 30 March 2024)

The construction of artistic strategies of denouncing MC is a clear example of the relationship of collective action with shared meanings: it allows the experience of free writing and expressions, isolated from totalising discourses and turned to society itself with alternative meanings about social assumptions and imaginaries. This relates to the relational sequences that shared action representations have (Gergen and Gergen, 2011). Without going too far, shared action is the possibility of social construction of social meanings, which have their meaning in interpersonal relationships. In other words, meanings have a relational basis, anchored in language. In the case of MC's artistic strategies of denunciation, it is a collective action, thanks to the fact that: “... mental representations are not private individual possessions. They are components of relationship” (Gergen and Gergen, 2011, p.48). In this sense, the shared meanings of collective action are a social and mediated construction of the experiences to which MC invites us for a reconfiguration of reality, mediated by art and social denunciation.



Cholita Chic

Since 2010 this has been the pseudonym of the artist from Arica who dedicates herself to photography and portraiture, inspired by the art and culture of the Andean American chicha, the figure of the chola, *pop art* and the tripartite border culture between Chile, Bolivia and Peru. It is worth noting that the definitions of ‘chola’ provided by the RAE’s dictionary of Americanisms, itself a colonialist linguistic and cultural domination, set the trend in its derogatory treatment of women¹. These definitions are resemanticised in the work of Cholita Chic, moving from a pejorative and aggressive connotation to a form of female empowerment based on the everyday, the poetic and the photographic. This allows for a re-reading of the word chola, pragmatically re-signifying its social meanings

In the context of colonial history and “tripartite cultural circulation”, she vindicates Andean, border, migrant and Aymara beauty. “[I]n pursuit of empowering ourselves as Latin Americans” her works reflect “strength, colour, diversity, sensuality, empowerment, sensitivity, appropriation of bodies and resistance to the Euro-white mandate” (Colavitto, 2019, para. 5). Thus, her work addresses and discusses the concept of beauty itself, in a colonial and patriarchal context.

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Figure 3. Cholita Chic (2020). Mural in Arica.

¹ <https://www.asale.org/damer/chola>

She also places herself in a context of colonial wounds and exploitation: “We are very far from having justice for the people, everything is being privatised more and more every day. Chile does not belong to the Chileans and South America does not belong to the South Americans”. For this reason, it is essential to have “creative militant practices, every day, [since] we are very far from having justice for the people”. In this sense, the visual arts have awakened “the rebellious unconscious of creative militant practices” (CC-Cholita Chic, personal communication, 28 April 2024).



Figure 4. *Cholita Chic* (2022). Profile picture.

She wants to build images from liberated memories from “bodies - racism - pain - migration and soundscapes” that are especially relevant in cross-border areas. She points out the importance of reaching an “awareness for women’s rights, but with cultural poetic action” (CC-Cholita Chic, personal communication, 28 April 2024) which is a form of resistance with symbolic effectiveness that does not forget poetry, in the sense of a struggle that refers to sensibility. The incorporation of poetry as a form of raising awareness of women’s rights owes its impact to the symbolic efficacy of the poetic, as a provocateur of broad and critical readings of a particular event. According to Marxen and González (2023), cultural poetic action could be framed as a poetic device given that it is “...a multimodal, multisituated and relational strategy, which allows the expression and understanding of phenomena of human life, mediated by verses and created to account for subjective processes” (p.111). Thanks to this poetic action,

it is possible to interpret re-signified images of an experience, converted in turn into sensitive expressions that allow a reconfiguration of that memory, previously centred on oppression, and now converted into a sensation of real and practical liberation.

This is expressed in the following poem in response to the question: What has been the impact of your work in raising awareness of women's rights in the area, by extension, Latin America and especially for Indigenous women?

My body made of bodies
 My body as the first territory
 My body made of bodies
 My body is tripartite
 My body is colonised

My body is from the earth and the desert
 My body is in the sea
 My body is on the border
 So far the borders are illusory - until you get to the border crossing.
 (CC-Cholita Chic, personal communication, 28 April 2024)

Danny Reveco

Danny Reveco is a Chilean multimedia artist who integrates different techniques, such as performance, graffiti and the artist's own corporeality, and who "from a critical and decolonial perspective explores themes of anonymity, history and identity" (López, 2022, para.6). Reveco's connection with art and the street is significant, given that it is a way of giving an account of a critical reading of how art is understood on a daily basis, with lessons that transcend beyond the walls of a museum or a regular exhibition, shifting the stage to the common space, the wall and the social context:

We have become accustomed to thinking that art has to be in a sanitised and comfortable place, with a specialised network that guarantees you validation and appreciation of your work with literate criteria regarding the image you propose. Or the public space itself, which is the institutionalisation of the street, with rules and permits that limit street practices, under that sanitising and domesticating gaze on certain artistic practices. I feel that art doesn't have much to do with that, that it doesn't have to ask permission or be liked by those



in power, ... I choose the street because it is dirty, contradictory, it is a space in dispute, a place where historical struggles are fought, daily struggles of survival and resilience, multiple layers make it up and cover it with memories, different looks cross it, the street is a complex space that tends to escape and that bothers many people. (DR-Danny Reveco, personal communication, 30 April 2024)

The displacement of art to a space in permanent dispute, such as the street, breaks with the semantic fence of the univocity of the artistic interpretation of an object (be it a painting, a work, a sculpture) to become a counter-device to be filled in the passer-by's own experience, who gives an alternative meaning to his everyday life, his routine, which reconfigures the experience of a new possibility of life (Pelbart, 2023)



Figure 5. Danny Reveco (2021). *Enough of impunity*. Peripheral Festival. Pudahuel, former courthouse.

Reveco rightly insists on the importance of popular knowledge and he himself claims to come from the popular sectors. Without romanticising or idealising poverty, these are the places “where privileges are scarce... that interest me and that feed my creative process; observing, conversing, they are where ideas are incubated” (DR-Danny Reveco,

personal communication, 30 April 2024). In accordance with the above, Reveco's work considers the relevance of popular logics as an emerging form of knowledge, which promotes creativity, the astuteness of the alternative. Thus, his reflections resonate with the capacity and potency of the "differential forms" and "minor languages" described in the methodology.

This makes the artist part of the experience of art as a social production, which arises from these popular logics. There he feels "part of it, I'm one more, I'm a learner and observer, I don't feel like a representative of anything, but part of a whole. People know a lot and they are my first point of reference. Sometimes you just have to listen and that's enough work" (DR-Danny Reveco, personal communication, 30 April 2024).

Thanks to them, it is possible to develop "an art that seeks a bridge with its own history, with the memory of its territory, to look with distrust at the official narrative of imposed history" (DR-Danny Reveco, personal communication, 30 April 2024), as today.

artists from the first nations who are making a historical reflection that this country [Chile] has silenced and made invisible ...because they have whitewashed our identity to the point of not recognising our brownness and all that the nation state has generated to set itself up as such, all the racism and dispossession that has been silenced with euphemisms. That is why what the whole generation of Mapuche artists is doing, for example, is of radical value, ... Or the colleagues who come from the popular sectors, we are also breaking down the barriers, occupying spaces that used to belong to a privileged few, ...and I see that in this matter of imaginaries in art, it does super good, it refreshes a whole scene and raises other challenges, other questions. (DR-Danny Reveco, personal communication, 30 April 2024)





Figure 6. Danny Reveco (2023). No +—. Frame of the video at 12 channels.

Exhibition *El lenguaje no alcanza* (Language is not enough). Valparaíso Cultural Park. Registration Renata Campodinico.

It is about artistic practices that know how to confront the triad of colonialism, patriarchy and neoliberalism. In the current context of domination, devastation, genocide, of “a world that is veering to the right in a maddening way”, it is not the task of artists alone to oppose this,

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I feel that something interesting is happening here that has to do with the proliferation of reflections from different places of enunciation that point towards a critical crossroads. It is no longer the old partisan left, the vanguard with the male bastion of truth and of what should be done and thought. Now it is different groups, communities and collectivities that are weaving together a complex reflection.... A very propitious place for the political imagination because situated reflections sprout from different corporalities, constructing rendering of the imaginable possible, giving a face, putting the body, collectivising the displeasure. From there, a certain type of Art emerges that accompanies these processes, forms part of them, raises pertinent reflections from a propositional, counter-alienating place. (DR-Danny Reveco, personal communication, 30 April 2024)

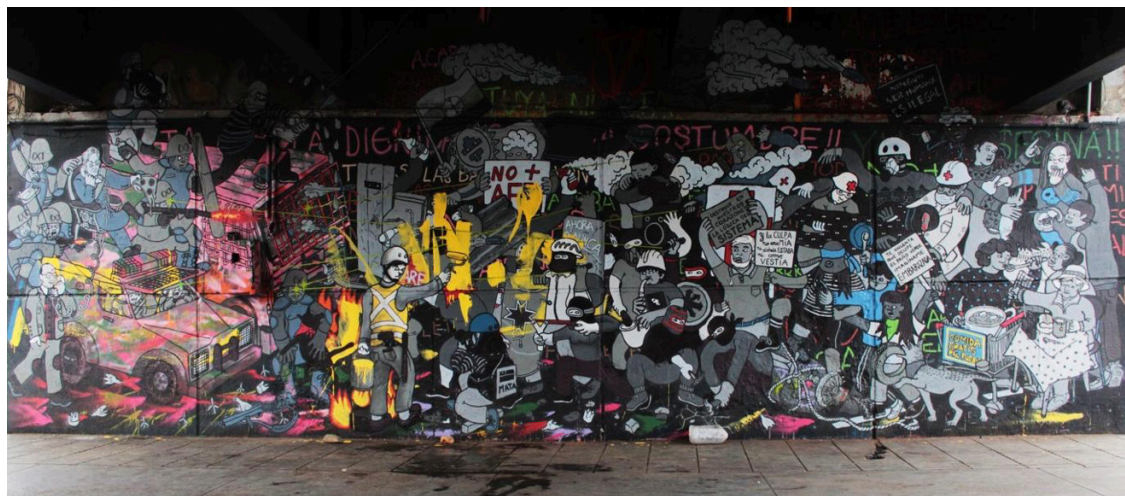


Figure 7. Danny Reveco (2019-2021). *When Chile is over*. Nudo Barón, Valparaíso.

Revenco describes the role of the “new artists” who go beyond representation, acting as facilitator-participants to make social transformation possible with the people. With Revenco’s affirmation of the use of the street as a dirty, contradictory and disputed space for the realisation of his works, one can see the relevance of creating an alternative space to present art as a moment of convergence of historical struggles, memories, which generates not only reflection in passers-by, but also a mixture of often contradictory feelings. This opening up of meanings is a pretext to disperse and atomise the dominant narratives, usually coined for institutional art. In other words: “Many contemporary artists ...share an eagerness to oppose totalising, dominant narratives as well as universalisable responses in order to de-totalise their works...” (Marxen and González, 2022, p.3).

In this way, to relate Revenco’s work to the proposals we describe in this article on artistic and poetic counter-devices, his works configure an alternative sense of art, usually understood as stable and timeless, to be a work in movement, re-signified at the moment of its creation and appropriated by audiences, with a social sense, which dynamises not only the relationships of audiences with art, but the impact that art has on the understanding of everyday life.

Confluences and final reflections

We reaffirm the importance of public space for all three participants. Danny Revenco and MC highlight the importance of the street for their work, and Cholita Chic also acts in the public space, especially with her murals. In this sense, they all make use of the walls in the public space. It is there that they shake and re-signify the social imaginary, against the triad of capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism.

Moreover, the work of all three stands out for its continuity (manifested, for example,

in the insistence of MC's graffiti on a spatial and temporal level), collectivity (MC's collective work, Danny's confluence and dialogue with social movements and communities) and particularly for its symbolic efficacy. These three elements have already been highlighted as a value of Latin American critical art of the 1970s and 1980s for its effective political resistance (Marxen, 2019). This resistance has allowed, as a common aspect of the three artists/collectives, to consolidate the idea that the artist, from their field of action, contributes to social criticism thanks to the construction of their works as a device that moves alternative senses to understand the social reality of Latin American countries, which undoubtedly contributes to the academy, to create bridges between social artistic work and the awareness of phenomena that impact the quality of life of the people in Latin America.

Likewise, the artists mentioned above have successfully leapt beyond the canonical genres of institutionalised art to bring their works and practices into the public, political and community spheres. This expression of art offers a critical perspective, which confirms the need to create spaces of resistance through art that is the product of collaborative actions, centred on collective construction, opening up the constant transformation of society itself. As María Galindo de MC (2022, p.121) states: "its strength lies in the 'thinking, acting and dreaming collectivity'".

However, all the participants are aware of the risks involved in their work: "It is always in militancy, I take certain risks of going out to paste on the street; making murals on unauthorised walls, and resistance is the strength of the rebelliousness that I have to take these walls to communicate a feminine endurance and integrity. Without risks there is no resistance" (CC-Cholita Chic, personal communication, 28 April 2024).

And, in Reveco's words,

Disputing imaginaries brings consequences, Chile knows a lot about that. Víctor Jara felt it in the flesh, lemebel was always ignored and has been one of the most beautiful things we've had, Las Tesis para la revuelta, were also harassed for their performances [lower case in the original]. There is a long history of colleagues who have been persecuted and censored; it is a practice and it has to do with the image of culture that they want to propagate versus the image that emerges from these other sensibilities that go against the grain (in agreement with Galindo, 2022).

In this sense, we end with a phrase by Loreto González that Reveco contributed to us:

“There is no point in working in art if one doesn’t militate for it. And I don’t belong to a party, my militancy is art” (Montesinos, 2022).

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