Choreotopias: Performance, State Violence, and the Near Past

By

Juan Manuel Aldape Muñoz

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Performance Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor SanSan Kwan, Chair
Professor Juana María Rodríguez
Professor Ivonne del Valle

Spring 2020

Copyright Juan Manuel Aldape Muñoz

All Rights Reserved, 2020

Abstract

Choreotopias: Performance, State Violence, and the Near Past

by

Juan Manuel Aldape Muñoz

Doctor of Philosophy in Performance Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor SanSan Kwan, Chair

Choreotopias: Performance, State Violence, and the Near Past uncovers the central role of dance in producing new social and political relationships in México since the 1980s. In the process it considers how performances have worked historically and aesthetically in violent contexts. The 1980s marked an inflection point in the social life of residents in México. A contested presidential election, a deadly earthquake, a receding economy, a changing middle-class, and gender and sexuality political movements created unprecedented conditions. This project uses elements of choreography as metaphoric possibilities for understanding political organization. It highlights under analyzed artists and it explores how corruption and misuse of power shape dance and performance makers and, in turn, how these artists respond to such conditions. I describe the collective communities that use artistic interventions in zones where the State actively works to restrict political organization. *Choreotopias* foregrounds three main sites where artists contest national projects that control bodies and their actions, even in death. I assess creative practices such as experimental street choreography in the 1980s, collaborations between feminist video artists and punk youth in the late-1980s and 1990s, and dance theatre processes where artists have used forensic science aesthetics since the 1990s. Artists are attuned to the embodied dimensions of history, representative governments, and the national imaginary. Across these visual and embodied forms of expression, artists reveal the limits of the State and, in some cases, offer visions of a better world. Performance studies links gender studies and nationalism studies to construct compelling arguments about the importance of video art, dance, and theater in creating collective communities under the threat of abusive power. This project combines a mix of feminism studies, political philosophy, queer of color critique, performance analysis, and nationalism studies to consider how artists use dance and the choreography of waste to refuse control societies. This interdisciplinary study stresses the importance of creative practices in offering new ways of political formation.

Chapter One, "From Heterotopias to Choreotopias: Dance and Desmadre in Mexico City," examines the punk-aesthetic choreographies created by Asaltodiario, a Mexico City theater and dance troupe formed in 1987. I assess the relationship between choreography and precarity in times of rapid urban development after a deadly earthquake sped up citywide renovation plans. Reassessing Michel Foucault's concept of *heterotopias*, I argue that choreographic practices offered an interconnectedness that had been ruptured by the structural collapse of the city and the

State. I assess Asaltodiario's commitment to valuing the public street as a site on which to change urban life in Mexico City. The artists collaborated with homeless youth and drug addicts. Performances by Asaltodiario followed a then-recent trend in Mexican contemporary dance practices not seen in the cultural sector before the 1980s. I offer the concept I provisionally call *choreotopias*, or those temporary and spatially bounded "dance floors" that occur in unexpected places. Choreotopias are artistic-political dwelling spaces that rearrange social relationships and create temporary communities, anticipate new social imaginaries, and attend to the historic, present, and future lives of unwanted bodies. The subsequent chapters consider the notion of choreotopias in relationship to gender and death. Chapter Two, "Mosh Pit Desires: Video Feminisms and Punk Performances," examines how disaffected women who are associated with counterculture movements at the end of the twentieth century navigate México's culture of repression. I evaluate the video art projects *Nadie es inocente* (1986) and *Alma punk* (1992), created by feminist artist Sarah Minter in collaboration with disaffected youth from the punk rock commons. I analyze Minter's approach to video art and its intersection with punk's multi-sensory and "genre-punking" aspects. The performers all played themselves in these documentary-fiction projects. The content and form of the materials exceeded morally and aesthetically conservative campaigns that attempted to control how women's bodies could move. The final chapter, "Searching for the Missing: Performance, Forensics, and Democracy" offers a compelling analysis of the relationship between performance and forensic practices through an evaluation of artists such as NAKA Dance Theater, Violeta Luna, and Lukas Avendaño. These artists have used visual representations of death, official reports from missing persons' cases, and medical-legal methods to develop their performances. I maintain that the artists use dance and performance investigative aesthetics for public criticism in violent contexts without encumbering the liabilities of journalism—a discipline that became a deadly practice. This project will be of interest to scholars and students in gender studies, nationalism studies, urban studies, performance studies, and Latinx/Latin American Studies.

To María de los Angeles, Angel, Melissa, and Caim Sequoia,
María y Angel me dieron la vida,
dejaron todo para un mundo mejor,
Melissa and Caim are that new world.

Table of Contents

List of Figures iii
Acknowledgements vi
Introduction 1
Chapter One: Dance and Desmadre in Mexico City 24
Chapter Two: Mosh Pit Desires 49
Chapter Three: Searching for the Missing 77
Conclusion: The State of Performance 96
Bibliography 101
Appendix: Figures 108

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Barro Rojo dancers (1986) 109

Fig. 2 Asaltodiario choreographer Jaime Leyva (1992) 110

Fig. 3 Mierdas Punk in Sarah Minter's *Nadie es inocente* (1986) 111

Fig. 4 Alma and her friends in Sarah Minter's *Alma punk* (1992) 112

Fig. 5 Debby Kajiyama and José Navarrete in *BUSCARTE* (2017) 113

Acknowledgements

In order to build an effective campfire, a fire tender employs small kindling wood as ignition and gradually works her way to using bigger chunks of wood. She avoids adding too much wood too fast, or the fire will burn out. She gives a growing fire ongoing air but provides it with enough space for it to breathe on its own until it grows to its most hypnotizing moment, when the blaze consumes the largest woodblocks. She allows the fire to reach its hottest point when all of the big blocks have burnt down and red hot embers remain on the ground. The charcoal pieces radiate blue heat waves of warmth as they crackle in the dark hours of a cold night. I have had the great fortune of receiving the skill and attention of magnificent and expert fire tenders as I prepared and completed this project.

My dissertation committee, SanSan Kwan, Ivonne del Valle, and Juana María Rodríguez, were instrumental in giving shape to my ideas and helping me define a more nuanced argument. Your prompt responses and generous availability made me feel supported.

I would like to thank the following funding bodies and centers for making this project possible and giving me the space and time to focus on my writing and research: Latinx Research Center; Mellon-UC Berkeley Chancellor's Fellowship; UC Dissertation Completion Fellowship; UC Dissertation Year Fellowship; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/Dance Studies Association Seminar for Emergent Scholars; and the International Federation for Theatre Research's Travel Bursary.

I am grateful for the artists whose works I feature in this project, without which these pages would be empty. I had the joy of interviewing Violeta Luna, José Navarrete, Miguel Ángel Díaz, and Claudia Vázquez.

I extend a gesture of gratitude to Jill Vuchetich, Head of Archives and Library at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She provided invaluable support as I searched for materials about dance company Asaltodiario. Likewise, Sol Henaro, Curator of Archive & Research Center at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, assisted me with useful information about artist Sarah Minter.

I wish to thank Luis Herrera-Lasso and Guadalupe González González, whose conversations with me, and work in the anthology *Fenomenología de violencia*, informed my intellectual approach to understanding the value of dance and performance in the middle of systemic corruption and state-supported disenfranchisement. *Gracias Gualu y Luis*.

The Performance and Arts in Latinx America Working Group became my intellectual *familia*. Angela Marino, Laura Perez, and Marcelo Garzo offered their closest attention to my work during our regular meetings throughout my time at Berkeley.

Thank you Janelle Reinelt for meeting with me at Cafe Lila from October 2019 through March 2020. These sessions were instrumental in the final stages of this project. Her feedback and expertise in the field are without measure. I would like to thank Ramón Rivera-Servera for having lunch with me in Chicago during the Dance Studies Association's gathering in 2019. He helped me resolve some of the remaining conceptual challenges in this project.

On two separate occasions, I was lucky enough to share a panel with María Eugenia Cadus and Victoria Fortuna at the Dance Studies Association's Annual Conference. I am grateful to have had comparative discussions about dance and performance in Latin American countries that experienced dictatorships in the twentieth century. I appreciate the careful reader comments for Chapter One that I received from Anurima Banerji, Hannah Schwadron, Sharon Kivenko, Amanda Reid, María Eugenia Cadus, and Mlondi Zondi during the DSA Pre-Conference Seminar in 2019.

Likewise, I benefitted tremendously from the feedback that I received from the members who participated in the *Noises of the Border* working group at the 2019 Hemispheric *Encuentro* in Mexico City. Their comments helped me expand Chapter Three.

Thanks to the following institutions for inviting me to present sections of this research: Stanford University's Department of Theater and Performance Studies; UC Riverside's Department of Dance; UC Berkeley's Global Urban Humanities Center; University of Utah's School of Dance; and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Martha Herrera-Lasso, Kim Richards, Takeo Rivera, Natalia Duong, Josh Williams, Miyoko Conley, Heather Rastovac Akbarzadeh, and Aparna Nambiar gave me not only the warmth of their friendship, but they also extended their writing and intellectual prowess. My cohort, Julia Havard, Randi Evans, Christian Nagler, and Natalia Duong, encouraged me as we navigated the demands of our doctoral program and helped my project grow from a tiny seed to a budding sequoia grove. I will always cherish our check-ins, Lab Run, and our yearly winter gatherings. I wish to thank journalist and friend Lauren Hepler, who provided critical feedback about Chapter Three as I clarified the connections that I see between performance and journalism.

I would like to acknowledge the "All But Dissertation" writing group members that manifested in many configurations from 2017 to 2020. Each of the participants took the time to read my materials with care and provided precise feedback. Alan Pelaez, Amy Lin, Rene Kissell, Michael Singh, and Jamal Batts, as well as other graduate students, helped make my transition to Berkeley and the Bay a smooth one. Their generous comments inspired the direction of my prospectus and early stages of this research. Also, the Graduate Writing Center became my second home for two years. Director Sabrina Soracco and her staff offered a set of much needed second eyes as I prepared my prospectus and early stages of Chapter One.

Bora Reed, Marguerite Fa-Kaji, and Gary VanderPol all read different portions of this project and offered key questions from their non-performance studies perspectives. This encouraged me to develop a project that is accessible to a wider audience. In addition to providing moral support and outstanding baked goods to mark important milestones, Wes Reed supplied a much needed printer cable that allowed me to print off and read numerous drafts of this project—after all, writing is a material endeavor.

In the final months of this project, Caim Sequoia was born. His additional companionship challenged me to articulate this project to an infant. I enjoyed holding him in the baby carrier and bouncing him on a yoga ball as I read lengthy pages and he listened to me. His laugh and wise eyes reminded me of the reason for this work. Melissa, *amor,* was my cornerstone when the finish line felt unreachable. She has been the biggest advocate of my experience, voice, and writing since we first met on a charter bus ride in the middle of a winter storm in Wyoming in 2006. I told her about my desire for such as project at that time. May our familial fire grow warmer each day.

An entire community connected across borders, disciplines, abilities, and languages shaped this project. I alone am responsible for the errors and ideas that need clarification. This network challenged me to identify and clearly articulate the observations found herein, and spurred on all of my hope.

Introduction

In the performance *Réquiem para una tierra perdida* [Requiem for a Lost Land], artist Violeta Luna smiles warmly at the audience as she strokes her hair with a large wooden brush.[1] After she brushes her long black hair, she grabs it and wraps it around her face. Her left hand pulls the hair across her throat while her right hand extends outward and points to the audience. She strikes a pose as if she is being strangled. Then, she smooths the wrinkles in her clothes and tilts her upper body forward, head first, until she leans with her face facing the floor. In this bent over pose, she arranges her extensive hair across the floor with her fingers, spreading it and creating an octopus-like shape. Using only her hands, and without looking outward, she reaches under her stomach to pull out thirty-three small black and white passport-sized photos. She litters them across her hair, grabs a white bottle, and pours out a liquid that appears to be blood. The crimson fluid covers over the faces on the photographs and her hair. She slowly lifts her torso and the blood-like substance drips through her hair and the photographs entangled in it, dripping onto the floor.

Luna layers these actions with two audio recordings. The first one is of then-President Felipe Calderón's speech at the bicentennial celebration of México's independence from Spain. In his remarks, President Calderón reminds his audience that México was one of the first nations to abolish slavery and that it is rebuilding its institutions at the federal level. He says, "We are doing everything we can to secure our common future" by promising to offer police officers more money and better living wages. President Calderon's remarks are overlaid with a recording of María Rivera's 2010 poem *Los muertos* (The Dead). *Los muertos* is composed of two hundred and four lines, and it repeats the phrase, "Allá vienen" [There they come] four times.[2] After each phrase, Rivera details the names, professions, hobbies, and ages of victims of violent crimes. Then she proceeds to make long lists that begin with or repeat the phrases "se llaman' [Their names are] or "Se Llama' [Its name is]. The word *llama* appears fifty-one times. Between these phrases, Rivera outlines the reasons, motivations, and institutions that have contributed to the innumerable deaths and persons who remain disappeared in México. Rivera expresses the way in which the violence takes on many names and shapes, but how the victims of those crimes all sleep in a cemetery called México. Luna's performance piece *Requiem* coupled with Rivera's sound installation *Los muertos* foregrounds the reality that the dead continue arriving and that the number of those who are forcibly disappeared continues to increase, despite the president's claims that the government is making progress towards its goal of lowering the numbers of dead and disappeared persons by investing in security forces and paying police officers more. Luna's performance evidences the manner in which artists have used aesthetic practices to express their concerns about the contradictory conditions of the State and its connection to structural and symbolic violence in México.

Choreotopias: Performance, State Violence, and the Near Past uncovers the central role of performance as a political response to institutional oppression and its ability to produce new social relationships in México since the 1980s. In the process, *Choreotopias* considers how performances have worked aesthetically in violent contexts. In particular, I prioritize dance makers and artists that deploy movement-centered encounters with their audiences because a dance studies

[1] The performance was conceived and performed in 2011 and it has been performed at various festivals. One version of the performance can be found here: http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/xsj3v0qz.html

[2] Rivera uses portions of this line in three additional ways. She truncates the line and says "vienen" [They arrive] or "Allí vienen" [There they come]. She also asks "De dónde vienen[…]?" [Where do they come from?] A complete version of the poem can be found here: https://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/los-muertos.

framework gives specific attention to bodies and their actions. This project uses elements of choreography such as vertigo, falling, and discard as metaphoric possibilities for understanding political organization in situations where community building feels impossible. It sheds light on the importance of analyzing dance to understand how state power and political oppression have functioned since the 1980s. Across working-class, feminist, and indigenous embodied forms of expression, artists circumscribe the exclusionary aspects of political disenfranchisement by crossing disciplinary forms and styles. I examine choreographic responses that resist this violence. In a context where the State and its agents enforce structural, symbolic, and embodied ways of being and moving on its subjects, I analyze three creative sites where artists use choreographic tactics to refuse these enforcement measures. Throughout, I ask "What can choreography undo?" This negative aspect of the question reveals that something positive can emerge.

As a part of these refusal practices, the artists point our attention to their use of objects in dances and across other media. As an illustration, in *Réquiem*, Luna distributes clumps of dirt to audiences and invites them to pour the contents over the black and white photographs covered in blood, symbolically burying the dead. Like Luna, the other artists that I evaluate throughout this project use objects such as dirt and waste to invite audiences and viewers to interact with their performances and relate to each other in intimate ways that alter the taken for granted order of power. These artists point our attention to garbage and waste, inviting us to consider what it means to embody waste and to deploy it in/as performance. Looking at the embodiment of waste and refuse, this project contributes to current discussions about the relationship between materiality, aesthetic practices, and political transformation (Matheron 2018; Ramos 2015; M. Chen 2012). It places an emphasis on moving bodies, materiality, and how these two are choreographed across a landscape of disaffected artistic genres. The projects I examine here are united in their efforts to highlight how artists use objects, aesthetics, and modes of moving that are considered the refuse of modernity to create new worlds of relating to each other and other residents in the middle of economic, political, and gender-based structural and symbolic violence.

I examine artists and their choreographic use of objects because it allows me to bridge aesthetic and political concerns from the 1980s to the 2010s. Artists such as Violeta Luna have responded to the oppressive conditions and dispersed random violence that have characterized the early twenty-first century in México by also prioritizing the use of objects and refuse in performance. As mentioned earlier, in Luna's *Réquiem*, the artist incorporates bottles with contents that include dirt and resemble blood-like liquids. Also, Luna carries a brown shopping bag with a sticker from the 2010 bicentenary celebrations. She pulls out a clear plastic bag with calcium powder, and six white bottles that have México's flag emblem printed on them. She walks around tracing a long line with the powder, dividing the space between her and the audience.[3] From the same bag, she takes out thirteen tent-cards, each one with a numerical figure, starting at 5,000 and reaching 95,000. While Luna places down the tent-cards, a recording of María Rivera's poem *Los muertos* is playing. We can surmise that these numbers represent the increasing number of people who have been forcibly disappeared. Like the artists Asaltodiario and Sarah Minter who came before her and that I take up in this project, Violeta Luna is equally concerned with bodies, both alive and dead, and the objects that allow the artists to comment about the oppressive conditions. *Choreotopias* explores this ongoing commitment to exploring historical national trauma and complements the existing methodological approaches to movement analysis in dance studies by providing an object-oriented understanding of the movement of objects. The study evaluates how

[3] Calcium power is often used to cover up the smell of human bodies in graves.

choreographers and performers use objects such as waste, analog videos, and forensic evidence aesthetics to choreograph claims for social justice, in some cases offering visions of a better world.

In the last two decades, performance case studies focusing on Mexican artistic practices have flourished. *Choreotopias* contributes to these investigations by providing a model to assess the role of dance and expanded notions of choreographic thought where artists demonstrate unease about the arrangement of human bodies and the materials they use in their projects.[4] The concerns I address in this project are important for historical and current considerations because they shed light on how the state produces and consolidates its power through the creation, manipulation, and destruction of embodied practices that are a threat to the dominant political order. These embodied practices range from the physical gathering of homeless and working-class persons in protected urban spaces to the visible and tangible forms of family members congregating to request justice for persons who have been forcibly disappeared.

I foreground dance, embodied practices, and the material elements of those conditions across three creative aesthetic sites to assess the artistic processes and collective networks that have been the target of oppression. These collective networks include experimental street dances choreographed by homeless youth in the work of Asaltodiario, video art projects produced by punk collectives in collaboration with feminist artist Sarah Minter, and concert dance theater devised by NAKA Dance Theater in response to forced disappearances.[5] Some of the cases evaluated include artists who self-identify as dance makers and in other cases I foreground artists who use video art and who are thinking choreographically despite not carrying the dance maker label in the traditional sense. Dance studies needs to include video art as a choreographic endeavor to identify novel ways that artists move outside of male-dominated and state supported spaces. This panoramic approach pivots dance studies to include video artists as innovative choreographers. I consider the movement of bodies and objects that artists use in dance and movement practices. Doing so allows us to apprehend how artists are choreographing new political possibilities through the contact between human bodies and their objects, adding new meaning to our understanding of political resilience.

This project identifies artists who employ and are using expanded ideas of choreography in under-examined movement practices to call attention to lapses in justice. Proposing new ways for citizens to relate to each other, these creative methods offer visions of a better world by denouncing the classed, patriarchal, and deadly notions of national belonging. The artists and/or the communities with whom they collaborate have been the recipients of exclusionary class-based urban policies, gender-based discrimination, and insufficient legal representation. Across all sites, this study concerns the role of dance in situations where the state uses verbal and non-verbal modes of unjust treatment. It follows the cultural practices of artists who are aware of the embodied reconfigurations of time and space when and where state institutions and agents fail to provide housing justice to displaced persons, resources access to female artists, and legal representation to victims of State-connected crimes. I contend that it is imperative to assess dance and movement practices that place equal emphasis on bodies and their material realities in order to identify

[4] There is a generous amount of literature on the works of Jesusa Rodríguez, Astrid Hadad, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña. Gómez-Peña has been prolific in publishing many of his own texts that examine the connection between performance and politics. Also, Amy Sara Carroll's *REMEX: Towards an Art History of the NAFTA Era* (2017) does standout work in highlighting under-analyzed artists from México, and situating their artistic work in relationship to the aesthetics of neoliberal policies.

[5] In México, the term "youth" encompasses those between the ages of twelve and twenty-nine years of age. I use this understanding of the term throughout this project. See http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/87_020415.pdf

alternative forms of resistive tactics, and to emerge and maintain a shared sense of dwelling. The result is a reading of history and politics through a choreographic frame that attends to the arrangement of bodies, both alive and dead, and the use of objects that are central to that configuration.

This Introduction begins with an examination of how this project relates to recent discourses at the intersection of politics, power, and choreography. I consider how dance studies scholars have taken up these concerns about bodies and their resistive actions in the face of state control. Then, I examine political and social theories to assess how the state consolidates and administers its authority and how subjects are able to respond to such conditions. I select discussions that prioritize choreography as an analytic for understanding political life and that consider choreography as more than a practice for assessing the movement of people. After addressing these themes, I situate the project historically in the 1980s, providing details about the political, economic, and cultural moment, and discussing the social movements that produced the artists and artistic currents that I examine in this project. I add to these discussions by offering an analysis of the concept of "the near past" and its implication for our understanding of arts and performance. I end with an outline of the subsequent chapters. Across this Introduction, I emphasize the value of choreography and choreographic thinking as an indispensable mode for understanding how artists and residents respond to violent conditions.

Dance and The Political

Dance studies scholars Susan Foster, Mark Franko, André Lepecki, and Ramón Rivera-Servera have examined dance and choreography as sites of analysis into the actions of individuals who participate in resistance politics against state oppression. All three dance scholars insist that the political field is an examination of the politics of movement and dance, and that choreographic practices are the ideal sites to understand power. Franko, Foster, Lepecki, and Rivera-Servera each formulate their own understanding of what can be called choreography, and thereby reach different assessments about dance and choreography's resistive capacity with relationship to the state. *Choreotopias* enters into conversation with these authors and it directs the discussion from the arrangement of bodies and their resistances to an examination of disaffected artists and their choreography of objects. Exploring the artists' use of objects, this project reveals how the artists perform waste to create alternative spaces outside of control societies.

Susan Foster reconstructs three nonviolent direct-action protests to develop a theory of choreography's political possibility. In "Choreographies of Protest" (2003), Foster examines the lunch-counter "sit-ins" of the 1960s, the ACT-UP "die-ins" of the late-1980s, and the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, Washington, in 1999. Foster opposes the classical theories of political protest that fail to understand the important role of rehearsal. These ideas advance the notion that the body loses control when it enters into a crowd and becomes part of the mass, especially during nonviolent direct actions or protests. Her study challenges these conceptions by demonstrating the political efficacy of nonviolent direct-action. The protestors maneuver the relationship between individual agency and collective action in the pursuit of racial, health, and economic justice. Foster emphasizes the dynamic design of nonviolent direct-action protests to argue that direct-actions are thought out and have a technique; that is, the actions require a commitment and they develop value over time to make social change in the world. Foster supports her assertion by extending James Jasper's conception of the use of tactics within the political field and applying it to choreographic concepts. In her description of the tactics employed by Black

protesters during the Greensboro counter sit-ins against dining segregation laws in the United States, she says:

> As they fathom injustice, organize to protest, craft a tactics, and engage in action, these bodies read what is happening and articulate their imaginative rebuttal. In so doing they demonstrate to themselves and all those watching that something can be done. (412)

In anticipation of the Greensboro protests, the members of the lunch counter protest rehearsed through role-play, preparing their bodily responses in anticipation of any possible attack; they practiced their composure. This tactic gave them a "powerful position from which to exert a sense of agency" (402). Thus, choreography resides at the anticipatory embodied level, as individuals rehearse how to sense the room, organize to protest, and utilize collective agency from daily routine to the special moment of the protest that changes the political.

Foster stresses the collective effort of these grass-roots developments as the joint actions occurred without the need for a single leader. All of the participants use their perceptive and responsive skills *in situ* during the protests to make collective decisions about how to protest because they prepared for the moment. The protesting bodies decipher the social terrains of injustice to choreograph an "imagined alternative" that impacts the viewers and makes space for their bodies in the social sphere that actively excludes their racialized bodies. Their bodies are not just the "meat that carries around the subject" and neither are they irrational bodies without control. These bodies are articulate signifying agents and their movements form large-scale actions responding to the political field before, during, and after the protest to provide significant change, because established political order responds to actions that challenge the customary order of things. In this way, she reveals that choreography can be a collective rebuttal, but it must be rehearsed and then deployed. Also, she identifies the continuum that extends from contested public sites to rehearsal spaces vis-à-vis political acts.

While Foster expands the conceptual limits of what can be called choreography, André Lepecki complicates the relationship between politics, movement, and freedom by showing the dark side of choreography. Lepecki uses the theoretical frameworks advanced by Hannah Arendt, Jacques Rancière, and Michel Foucault to examine how an omnipresent "control" society defines the entire political field in regard to the question of moving freely. For Lepecki, a "politics of control" rather than a "politics of discipline" defines the social sphere. This control is the generalized function of a power or force which directs, diverts, and pre-conditions social order to conform to particular movements and move along with conformity. In a control society, police choreograph the movement of all subjects and subjects self-police their own movement. He demonstrates that *choreopolicing* leads to the control of a totalizing field that manages the movement of people through explicit and discrete modes.

I provide a more nuanced analysis of Lepecki's argument in Chapter One but, suffice it to say for the point at hand, the policing of movement shapes all aspects of life. Lepecki advances the idea that choreography can also be deployed by the state to perpetuate conformity. A theory of kinetics in politics evidences how not all movement is created equal and it may not always be liberatory in a control society. Choreography is not apolitical; it can be connected either to an ideology of political freedom committed to anti-conformity or to doctrines of conformity to serve the state's interest. Freedom is about kinetic knowledge and the political is about the actions between subjects who share a collective desire to rehearse freedom against conformity. Thus, dance and choreographic artistic practices are the ideal processes and sites for these political rehearsals because dancers develop kinetic literacies against conformity.

If Foster and Lepecki maintain that choreography is not about arranging an established set of steps to create dances before an audience but rather about embodied and kinetic tactics that can and must be used to challenge the policing order that works to control bodies and the movement of those bodies, then Mark Franko reveals that choreography is tangled with aesthetics and history. In "Dance and the Political: States of Exception" (2006), Franko argues:

> I would like to suggest that the representation of political reality itself is what allows us to understand aesthetics precisely as historical insight. Power cannot function outside of the representational field, and representation, along with its crises, is an aesthetic matter. (33)

The aesthetic terrain is connected to the political terrain and political reality can only be represented in the cultural field. Choreography, as a cultural practice, is a set of aesthetic practices, informed by cultural policy, historical conditions, and politics, that defines the political terrain. To examine the contours of what defines choreography and its impact on the political, we must ascertain the aesthetic circumstances that make it justifiable and necessary to speak of dance and choreography.

Foster's, Lepecki's, and Franko's respective understandings of choreography, as either tactic, experimentation, or aesthetic practice, are useful frameworks for apprehending the possibility of resistance within the regimes of control through dance and other embodied endeavors. For Foster and Franko, resistance is related to social relations and ideology. Where Foster insists that resistance functions as a direct and visible embodied action in a social sphere characterized by inequalities, Franko underscores that agency is dependent on ideological relations that are manifested in aesthetic terms; that is, resistance is situated ideologically in relationship to an audience when the body enters before an audience in the public sphere through a set of recognizable representational principles (13). Lepecki characterizes choreography's resistive qualities only when it evades conformity.

While Foster, Franko, and Lepecki assess choreography and its potential as resistive practice, Ramón Rivera-Servera identifies how the social dance floor is an important site for disaffected subjects to resist state oppression and build utopian desires of community through choreographies of resistance. When analyzing the connection between choreography, race, and gender, Rivera-Servera argues, "The club provides me with strategies of survival, but also with the comfort of knowing that I can return to its realm and experience once more this utopian community of queers" (269). Building on the work of musicologist Walter Hughes, Rivera-Servera argues that club dance floors are disciplining spaces to practice survival. Club dance floors "provide sites for dwelling, temporarily limited but spatially vast homes, from which Latina/o queers perform the desires often prohibited outside these spaces, to address the structures of dominance that still seep into this 'safe haven,' and to rehearse strategies through which to survive collectively" (479). Choreography creates realms of protection and communal experiences of utopian desires because the dancers can rehearse actions against racial, gendered, and classed markers of difference that are present in the club, but are manifested in less oppressive ways. In the sphere of the club, dancers' choreographies of resistance are imaginative utopian desires. Minoritarian subjects go to the club to resist and create new affective spaces of inclusion that are not afforded elsewhere.

In this project, I complement Foster's, Lepecki's, Franko's, and Rivera-Servera's respective notions of choreography as rehearsal, experimentation, aesthetic practice, and realm of disaffected dwelling by considering how artists respond to state oppression when spaces for gathering, assembling, and resisting collectively are not allowed or are punishable by death. I add to their examinations and expand the limits of what can be called choreography by giving attention to the

contact zone between bodies and their material conditions. I focus on Rivera-Servera's literal use of the phrase "dance floor" to highlight the materiality of performance spaces and its connection to spaces that are not already constructed. I look at dance floors that are created in unexpected places, formed in connection to waste, and deployed in connection to the burial sites of victims of state violence. In the work of artists such as Asaltodiario, Sarah Minter, and NAKA Dance Theater, I notice a preoccupation with the limits of what the artists' bodies are allowed to do, say, and imagine. Within those limitations, the artists foreground their use of trash, video art, and crime scene investigations to create other homes. The artists are touching each other to help each other resist and they are touching the objects associated with their dispossession because other forms of organization are disallowed.

An emphasis on the "contact zone," to borrow Mary Pratt's words, between bodies and their objects attends to artistic practices, choreography, and the neoliberal economic developments' emphasis on the surplus of consumable goods.[6] Pratt uses this phrase to talk about social encounters where different cultures connect, negotiate, reconcile, and/or transform each other. Her assessment is useful for the purposes of this study because it emphasizes the movement of people, and the social and spatial dimensions of meeting points where difference and power manifest. I expand her use of the contact zone by foregrounding the collisional registers of touch on the surface of bodies, consumer goods, waste, and crime scene evidence that move across embodied, urban, and political surfaces. When artists encounter aesthetic objects and other bodies in the zone of difference, they experience the thing's histories of inequality. A framework that foregrounds a meeting point of dispossession reveals the historical importance of touch as a political act towards freedom and how bodies negotiate feelings and sensation as they move in and clasp on to the world around them, across multiple spaces and temporalities, with the hope of a less violent world.

This project expands dance and performance studies in three key ways. First, I offer the use of the term *choreotopias*. These are temporary and spatially bounded artistic-political experimentations that unite people around social movements and suspend the political and urban forces attempting to dispose of the historic, present, and future lives of those left to die on the street. Choreotopias are akin to what Rivera-Servera identifies as sites of dwelling. He locates these dwellings, or spatially bounded homes, in already constructed material spaces like queer dance clubs. I add to his analysis of choreographies of resistance by evaluating imaginative spaces and places where artists use refuse to create temporary homes, where they generate a sense of dwelling outside of already constructed dance floors. Choreotopias create a sense of dwelling and stability when other modes of political and social modes of organization are not available and where spaces are destroyed and under threat. I lay the foundation for this term in Chapter One by reassessing Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopia. I argue that performance-focused encounters such as choreotopias allow heterotopias to emerge. This relationship reveals the important role that performance plays in creating sites of deviance and against conformity. I apply the use of choreotopia in practices and spaces in subsequent chapters. Second, I foreground the under-analyzed practices of dance and movement in the punk rock commons and Mexican social dance in concert theater. These embodied practices are branches of political dance forms that developed in the 1980s in the wake of culturally conservative and then-nascent neoliberal policies that were changing the organization of labor, urban development policies, and the industrial sector of Mexico City. Third, I evaluate artists' use of forensic anthropology literature and techniques in concert and street performances to criticize the suspect official statements in the overwhelming cases of forced disappearances. In order to understand the value of the use of forensic aesthetics we must expand

[6] See "Arts of the Contact Zone."

our understanding of dance studies to include how dancers and performers use objects in their productions. Too often, dance studies privileges the investigation of "live" bodies in order to assess how dance can be resistive. I argue that it is imperative for dance studies to understand how dead bodies are objectified and have another life postmortem. Artists working with objects from forensic aesthetics foreground the need for a dance studies field that recognizes new modes of dance movement analysis that can be useful for understanding power and freedom in states committed to the management of death.[7]

Society, Agents, and Freedom

Choreotopias examines dances and the objects that dancers deploy to create feelings of joint dispossession, and adds to philosophical and social concerns about the role of the body in culture, society's impact on the subject, and the body as a site of discipline/freedom by/from the state. It underscores the manner in which artists evoke the politics of the state alongside the discourse of dance and movement-based practices by choreographing tactics that refuse a taken for granted social order. Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault offer insightful models for assessing the role of the state and examining how individuals negotiate their subjectivity in society and in response to state power.[8] Although their respective studies do not comment directly on each other's work, they share a preoccupation with assessing the strategies, tactics, and modes that individuals use to move and/or the way in which State power makes bodies move. They have in common a belief that the body is the terminal site where society constitutes power and where freedom might exist. Across Bourdieu's and Foucault's individual studies I see a preoccupation with the body as both the initial and terminal site of subjectivity, but each theorist sees this site as one whose freedom exists outside the terrain of hope or one that is confined, where any possible change is always constituted by the state. I maintain that this emphasis on the body is insightful and can be accompanied with an analytic that looks to body-adjacent tactics which we can consider alternate forms of resistance. *Choreotopias* offers an avenue to understand the way in which artists have responded in novel ways to political and economic violence since the 1980s.

Bourdieu argues that *habitus* are the durable and transposable expressions and dispositions that surround, inform, and shape an individual. For Bourdieu, all relations are defined by a social order, and this social order is maintained by a series of schemes which operate across different fields. Fields are created by class divisions where the dominant classes try to maintain the integrity of *doxa*, the taken for granted order that exists in the field of the undiscussed (169). The field of the undiscussed is the surrounding social sphere that creates orders to keep class divisions and is made to pass as natural. It is in the interest of those in power to perpetuate barriers that maintain inequality.

This social order is established at the earliest stages of a child's development. From its earliest years, a child develops forms, actions, attitudes, perspectives, expressions, and

[7] Achille Mbembe has provided a powerful analytic for assessing how certain bodies are made to exist between life and death by offering the term necropolitics. These individuals often receive social or civil death. I do not take up Mbembe's term in this project. Instead, in the third chapter, I employ Zayak Valencia's notion of necropolitics, which builds on Mbembe's use of the term. I make this choice because Valencia is a Mexican political philosopher and she employs the term in a Mexican context. For further reading of Mbembe's use of necropolitics see "Necropolitics" in *Public Culture*. 15 (1): 11–40. 2003.

[8] Although many other authors have advanced our understanding about the relationship between power, movement, and the body, such as J.L Austin, Judith Butler, and John Searle, I choose to focus on these authors because they emphasize the moving body and its actions. The other authors' prominent focus on speech acts and linguistics are perceptive, but for the purposes of this project I limit my interest to these scholars.

relationships, what Bourdieu calls *schemes*. Schemes create a social structure that establishes and perpetuates a division between classes and groups wherein the elite classes keep their authority. For example, a child experiences the house as a site where the objectification of the social order takes place and where, through practice, the world is objectified as a place of social divisions. The idea of the physical home becomes a classed system that perpetuates class divisions. These acquired actions are realized in the body as the person lives in the home. The person learns to keep the social order and their experience is the product of a social history that is made to appear natural and unconscious despite the fact that it is perpetually constructed and made to pass as commonplace (Bourdieu 79).

Bourdieu also argues that the body develops "techniques of the body" within a social order.[9] He maintains that the individual is an agent whose decisions within the social order perpetuate the durable and "transposable 'dispositions'" that maintain social divisions. Within Bourdieu's idea of the habitus, "intention" is pre-figured because the agent makes decisions within an established field wherein their actions, expressions, attitudes, and practices call upon the entire field of order (94). His/her decisions are improvisations within an established arrangement of power where the body perpetuates the system of dispositions around them. Consequently, the interactions between agents are conditioned by objective structures of the "relation between the groups they belong to" (81). An agent's intentions are pre-conditions and practices that keep the collective rhythm of the social order (162). Meaning, a person cannot exist outside a socially structured order despite their intention to do otherwise.

If for Bourdieu an individual's resistive actions are subsumed into an established social order where her actions are already pre-determined to perpetuate pre-existing notions of power that benefit the dominant modes of being in the world, then for Michel Foucault a human being is constructed as a subject who exists within a matrix of power relations where she possesses the ability to strategize against the social order. For Foucault, there is room for freedom. Although Foucault's earlier works, such as *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976) contribute insight into the function of institutions that shape the subject, his later essay "The Subject and Power" shifts the attention away from the institution. In thinking about the body of his literary works, Foucault says, "My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (326). While his earlier interests examine the power in institutions, he concludes in this study that his focus has always been on the subject and not on institutions themselves.[10] One must understand institutions from the point of power relations between subjects rather than studying power relations from the point of institutions because power exists outside, though not necessarily apart from, institutions (Foucault 343).

Foucault emphasizes the need to shift the perspective on the location of power from the power of the institution to the power of relationships between subjects. In doing so, we observe how human beings can develop strategies for freedom. The target of political freedom is to develop strategies to establish not what we are, but what we refuse to be. He argues, "We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political 'double bind,' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of the modern power structures" (336). The subject is created out of a 'double bind' where society purports to give freedom to the individual and

[9] Bourdieu's idea of the techniques of the body parallel's Marcel Mauss' similarly titled social and physical condition. See Mauss *Techniques of the Body* (1943).

[10] For him, it is necessary to expand the notion of power to study the objectification of the subject and to examine the different modes through which culture makes subjects out of human beings. Foucault examines three modes through which culture turns human beings into subjects. These modes include: the objectivizing of inquiry; the objectivizing of the subject by dividing practices; and human beings that turn themselves into a subject.

requires the maintenance of institutions to secure that freedom. Meaning, a social order in Western society developed institutions such as the family, police, medicine, education, and employers to care for the individualization of the subject and to distribute the totalizing modern political structures that act on the actions of individuals. This assertion is due to the fact that, since the sixteenth century, the state has possessed the monopoly on the individual through a new pastoral power. Pastoral power tries to save individuals, mobilizes institutions such as the police, education, and services of market economies, and multiplies the development of knowledge to quantify populations and to analyze the individual.

The double bind that prevails is not a result of the existence of a singular, totalizing institutional power. Instead, Foucault insists, "[power] is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions" (340). Power exists in the actions between subjects and their relationships rather than in a single entity that exercises that power, such as an institution like education. The exercise of power is the control of the "possible field of actions," potential actions that may arise within the network of society. Institutions and control entities retain their power by anticipating rather than responding to individual actions, and actions upon actions.

By refocusing his attention on the constitution of power and its role in acting upon the actions of the subject, Foucault identifies that freedom is possible outside of institutions and the modes in which they seek to control undisciplined bodies. Because power is exercised on subjects and their way of moving, the "possible field of actions," freedom is an interplay between power relations that is mediated by actions and movement. Consequently, power relations can only exist where the potential of escape is present; a power relation that anticipates a set of possible actions means there is always a potential for escape and possible flight before an institution controls that action (Foucault 346). The subject's freedom does not result from a refusal of institutions. It arises when one turns down or turns away from the possible capture of one's future actions.[11] Foucault's study of the phenomena of power reveals that the location of power and the construction of the subject are maintained in the reciprocity of movement relations and the strategies for freedom in the refusal of actions that attempt to control the motions of the human being.

Across the issues expressed by Bourdieu and Foucault, I notice a concern with the power of totalizing entities, such as the state or society, and an individual's ability to react to the conditions the entities create to shape the subject's consciousness, unconsciousness, and actions. The two underline the importance of situating the body as the terminal site of social order. The human body is either a site that perpetuates a social arrangement that benefits the dominant modes of being in the world or the site of potential freedom for actions within power relations. For them, it is crucial to apprehend a person's actions and how one moves in the world in order to understand social relations and power dynamics. However, their respective assessments put forward competing ideas about what types of actions and movement are possible for an individual to attain freedom and agency. For Bourdieu, an individual's actions and movements, the techniques of the body, and a person's embodied gestures are all bodily practices that perpetuate pre-existing classed social orders. Across these fields, the individual possesses a form of agency that is already inscribed in social relations, meaning agency and resistance to dominant power exist within the bounds of an established social order that perpetuates inequality. Meanwhile, for Foucault, human beings have a potential to attain freedom because power relations cannot exist without the possibility of escape.

[11] Foucault also insists, "There is an agonism between freedom and power relations" (342). By this he means that power and freedom are permanently provoking each other. Freedom is only possible for the subject when power relationships make apparent the actions that attempt to take action upon others.

Foucault helps us see that power resides on who can control the possible field of actions and, through such observations, we can evaluate how one can anticipate and refuse this control.

Choreography as an analytic offers unique insight to the actions that subjects deploy in response to institutions and established unequal relationships that are made to appear normal. In *Choreographing Relations,* Petra Sabisch expands our philosophical understanding of the ontology of choreography by placing attention on "What can choreography do?"—instead of trying to define and limit choreography to *what it is*. Sabisch makes clear, "By shifting the focus from an inventory of the empirically given to the potential of choreography, a potential which encompasses the capacity of creating new relations, a stable demarcation of the object of choreography can be deviated from" (8). Choreography is a changing practice and concept, and not simply a stable metaphor, for the study of political life and a method of studying social relationships across time and space, giving us the capacity to reveal new politics between subjects and freedom and allowing us to imagine and rehearse new actions for potential worlds.

I approach choreography in this project as the starting point to consider the state's attempt at managing bodies and their actions, and how artists use choreographic thinking with a longing to decline the State's doxa and to create a sense of community by rebuffing pastoral power. I expand Sabisch' question by reversing it and asking "What can choreography undo?" By reversing the main verb, we can apply Foucault's idea of what subjects refuse to produce in order to change the politics of the taken for granted social order. This endeavor puts forward an assessment of nationalism and state violence seen through choreographic discourse and theory. It foregrounds how artists process and refuse the State's anticipatory control. In thinking about what choreography can undo, I focus on choreographic practices that prioritize suddenness and loss of control. Vertigo, falling, and discard are movement phenomena that conform to gravity and that happen without control. These actions of descent emphasize unexpectedness and loss. Their qualities suggest things tumbling out of place or making events incoherent. Yet a political potential exists in these actions of surrendering control when executed in community.

I choose to focus on artists who create temporary sites of dwelling through actions that appear to be out of control because this emphasis prioritizes an analysis of how artists produce community in situations where collective building may not be possible or when it is allowed to exist only so long as it conforms to the State's interests. In "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," Martin Heidegger elucidates on the relationship between constructing physical structures and dwelling in them. Building entails constructing the materiality of spaces such as houses, stadiums, hangers, and bridges. It would appear that the construction process has the final goal of erecting residences. However, he contends that the action of building is a type of dwelling; building (verb) is a home and it provides a place to be in the world. The connection between building and dwelling is related to the case studies herein because I examine artists and themes connected to performances of waste that comment on homelessness, transience, and roaming. I argue that the process of producing spatially and temporally bounded aesthetic experiences, what I term choreotopias, does the work of assembling, and consequently creates moments of embodied dwelling that are not allowed elsewhere. These temporarily shared felt experiences of home in unexpected places are critical to refusal practices when the state prevents the construction of alternative structures and disallows gatherings or the assembly of residents that are deemed dirty, uncooperative, or disposable.

A focus on an artist's refusal coupled with the choreography of temporary dwelling spaces branches out the study of movement into the material. As a verb, the word refuse underscores a person's rejection and rebuff of a request. And as a noun, it describes trash, waste, and debris. As I will go on to show across the chapters, refusal and refuse are intimately bonded. I analyze this

connection and expose how the techniques of the body, embodied forms of maintaining power, and a person's actions are always in relationship to the objects they hold, relocate, mix, and pick up. Disaffected choreography animates objects that shape and deploy a sense of dwelling that the state works to actively control. By adding a focus on the material and refuse, I supplement Foucault's and Bourdieu's concerns about what persons can produce to undo violent systems of oppression that perpetuate inequality. This study changes our understanding of what type of freedom is possible when artists adopt the choreography of their bodies and their objects to refuse the taken for granted social order under pastoral power.

To advance my argument, I use interdisciplinary methodologies. I draw upon dance studies, urban studies, gender studies, queer of color critique, and nationalism studies. Such an approach can attend to the genre-crossing approaches that artists use and deploy to contest state dispossession that occurs across various institutions. This interdisciplinary framework expands dance studies into the examination of the movement and management of dead and forcibly disappeared bodies. This project will contribute to dance and performance studies and Latino/a studies fields by foregrounding choreography as a useful analytic to understand the relationship between material culture, resistance, and contemporary performance practices. The artistic work of choreographers becomes central for analyzing how dance or movement-based practices are tactics and actions against undue class structures, gender-based oppression, and racialized violence, where the order of things appear to make it unimaginable to see visions of a less violent world.

Changing the State of Affairs: México

Choreotopias focuses on movement practices that are about negotiating political life through dance and performance practices. Although this project acknowledges the *longue durée* of the colonial project and its impact on Mexican urban life, it begins in the 1980s because the State's single-party monopoly underwent monumental changes and it transformed the political, economic, social, and artistic spheres. Democratic institutions, the private sector, middle-class desires, and gender politics all underwent major changes during this period, and they altered the relationship between dance performance, urban space, and aesthetics.

The lead up to and outcome of the 1988 presidential election sparked monumental changes in electoral processes. According to Roderic Ai Camp, the result of the fraudulent election contributed to the eventual defeat of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in 2000, which dominated the Mexican political sphere for over seventy years. Residents were pushing for the democratization of the city. In Mexico City, there were urban social movements to change the law that gave the president the power to appoint the mayor of the nation's capital. The Asamblea de Barrios, Super Barrio, demanded better housing situations and a more transparent democratic process. Transformations in electoral processes lead to the private business sector becoming heavily involved in electoral politics. Businesses started to support candidates and parties along party lines. Big business succeeded in "protecting itself from democratic incursions while maximizing its own freedom to maneuver" (Strom C. Thacker 19). This resulted in big business indirectly influencing local and national campaigns.

A changing political system and free-market politics contributed to competing forces battling over urban development initiatives. The development of high density buildings, renovation projects, and a shifting economic model took power away from Mexico City's industrial sector. Diane Davis argues that the transformations that were offered for Mexico City's historic downtown area affected what happened to low income, unskilled service, and informal sectors living and

working in Mexico City. However, these low income and informal sectors determined its future based on connections and networks to economic globalization. These connections posed challenges to the local and federal government's desires for downtown economic changes. There was a struggle between two different types of globalizations. One drew its strength from a network of global actors and investors that valued high density, urban development, while the other drew on a set of global actors and investors comprised of smugglers, narcotraffickers, and other providers of illicit activities and goods. These two competing globalizations coexisted in the same physical and social space. Davis calls these different networks of globalization "liberal" and "illiberal."[12]

These growing frictions and changes in the economy coincided with tensions over which classes and social movements had access to the public space. Prior to the 1980s, middle-class residents such as doctors, teachers, and students had experienced the governments' unwillingness to open up discussions about who had access to the media and other public forums (Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico* 152). This period was marked by a debate over the liberalization in anti-liberalization agendas. Then-Mayor Manuel Camacho Solís wanted to bring in urban redevelopment projects by working with foreign companies. Meanwhile, Zapatista rebels in Chiapas were pressuring the government with an anti-liberalization movement.

Public debate about gender and sexuality changed during this period. On the heels of the first gay and lesbian demonstration *Marcha del orgullo homosexual* that occurred in June 1979, gender rights social movements added mounting pressure to institutions for protection and representation, minimizing the physical violence that police forces used against gay residents (Teutle López). In 1980, Frente Homosexual de Acción Revolución (FHAR) launched the magazine *Nuestro Cuerpo* to generate dialogue and self-representation, underscoring the growing activist organizations fighting for sexuality rights. Likewise, these requests manifested in the creation of new programs within universities. El Colegio de México offered the first women's studies program across the country in 1983 (Y. Chen). The State's controlled power, which was shaped by male and heterosexual attitudes, was being usurped at different levels from different actors.

Independent dance artists were also actors who were encroaching on the State's concentrated power. Choreographer Graciela Henríquez described the dance structures from the 1970s and into the early 1980s as contrived and the most colonized of the arts.[13] Through her company Tropicanas Holliday, Henríquez created dance concerts based on urban dance vernacular, departing from formal dance structures and finding an expressive language that is unique to the urban experience in Latin America. It is important to note that while Henríquez disavowed formal academic dance training, she nonetheless developed concert-based performances. This discrepancy is not a contradiction in the artist's thoughts. Rather, this underscores the individual and collective strategies that choreographers at the time adopted as they navigated rapid

[12] The economic and political changes altered commodity chains. For example, the town Tepito in Mexico City underwent significant changes after the government chose to focus its manufacturing efforts on the United States-México border. The importation of illegal commodities, such as pirated CDs and DVDs, brought in different merchants to sell different commodities. This included goods produced in East Asia. There was a tension between Koreans who moved into the neighborhood and narcotraffickers who started to use this part of town. These competing forces pressed leaders from the community to take on different choices. The cultural cohesion that existed in this town was no longer available. Leaders started to support pro-development movements that were more in line with economic liberalization that favored high density buildings and the displacement of low skill residents.

[13] See the newspaper article in *La Jornada* where Henríquez is interviewed following the release of a book by María Cristina Mendoza Bernal that is dedicated to her life and work.

industrialization and urbanization. According to choreographer Francisco Illescas, independent artists were making art because it was urgent and necessary but they did not have to justify their work before institutional bodies to receive support (Hernández 42). At that time, neither the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (CONACULTA) nor the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (FONCA) existed.[14]

Artists demanded to undo the borders of social class structures that led to the exclusion of artists who did not adopt elite aesthetic forms such as ballet or modern dance. Performances by companies followed a then-recent trend in Mexican contemporary dance practices not seen in the cultural sector before the 1980s. Independent dance companies such as Contradanza, El Cuerpo Mutable, Barro Rojo, and Asaltodiario started to challenge the concert proscenium as an elitist space. These companies started leaning toward leftist ideologies that disliked concert dance because of its classist attitudes and its association with the United States and Europe. For example, Barro Rojo, led by Arturo Garrido, left for Nicaragua in 1983 to collaborate with the Asociación Sandinista de Trabajadores de la Cultura.[15] The group conducted a tour throughout the towns of Nicaragua, building trenches in Managua and performing choreographies about workers' rights and the Central American resistance to the "yanqui" interventions in the region (Hernández).[16]

While artists were challenging established aesthetic practices and class inequalities, State institutions began taking an interest in dance practices. The cultural sector experienced a shift towards the re-nationalization of dance and its relationship to state knowledge.[17] State agencies, research universities, and cultural centers expressed a high level of interest and produced bountiful activities where dance practices were central to understanding culture, society, and the nation. Concert dance and studio choreographic practices received notable attention. There was much public and political interest in dance's capacity to be an indispensable method for understanding other humanistic and social aspects. In 1983 and 1987, the Center for the Investigation and Documentation of Dance organized a colloquium to examine the knowledge that could be gained from choreographers, dancers, and movement artists, giving attention to the artists' knowledge related to physics, anatomy, and psychology. These colloquia recognized professional dance artists and choreographers as possessors of knowledge whose insight was useful to the public at large. The first iteration of this event, from November 25-27, 1983, offered a number of public panels featuring a range of discussions, including nutrition and diet, the nervous system, sexuality, magic, and kinesiology. The organizations represented at the event included the General Counsel for Popular Culture, the National System for the Overall Health of the Family, The National Institute of Nutrition, the Olympic Committee of México, *casas de cultura* [houses of culture], and the Sub-direction of Sports. The investigations which began in 1983 resulted in at least three publications: *Dance and Music*, *The Importance of Children's Dance in the Education Process*, and *Children's Dance*. One year later, the National Institute of Fine Arts created the Center for the Investigation of Choreography [Centro de Investigación Coreográfica] with the objective of examining the body

[14] CONACULTA was founded in 1988 and it was replaced in 2015 by the Secretaría de Cultura. See "DECRETO por el que se reforman, adicionan y derogan diversas disposiciones de la Ley Orgánica de la Administración Pública Federal, así como de otras leyes para crear la Secretaría de Cultura." Diario Oficial de la Federación. 17 Dec. 2015. Accessed 24 April 2020.

[15] Garrido was originally from Ecuador.

[16] The group performed the pieces "El Camino," "Mono Fidedigno," "Aztra," "Y amanecerá." See "La Izquierda de la danza contemporánea" (2010) for a full account of this trip.

[17] See Jose Reynoso's study for a full analysis of modern dance in Mexico in the middle of the twentieth century.

and its movement as vehicles for understanding dance making practices, and providing a space for experimentation, investigation, and the distribution of somatic inquiry.[18]

While the national cultural sector was taking interest in the role of dance in society and the public sphere, dance scholars expressed interest in establishing clear methods for the study of dance. From 1984 to 1988, the National Institute of Fine Arts, in coordination with the Center for the Investigation and Documentation of Dance, along with the Direction of Cultural Action in the ISSSTE, established the National Congress for the Investigation of Dance. It sought to provide an interdisciplinary analysis for the study of dance in society. The themes ranged from popular dance to urban dance, rights of the author, dance and education, and methodologies for dance criticism in Latin America. These events were initially coordinated in Mexico City, but in subsequent years were organized in cities such as Xalapa (1986), Guadalajara (1986), Cuernavaca (1987), and San Luis Potosí (1988).

The independent artists' actions during these social movements and institutional rearrangements reveal how artists are attuned to what political philosopher Thomas Nail refers to as "regimes of social circulation." Nail argues:

> Society is always in motion. From border security and city traffic controls to personal technologies and work schedules, human movement is socially directed. Societies are not static places with fixed characteristics and persons. Societies are dynamic processes engaged in continuously directing and circulating social life. In a movement-oriented philosophy there is no social stasis, only regimes of social circulation. (4)

In making this observation, Nail urges us to examine how all of social life is continuously directed and controlled according to movement, rather than stasis. His remarks have important consequences for the broader domain of society because it has been historically understood from the point of stasis. He argues that society must be understood in terms of motion because it is administered through the management and administration of the movement of bodies.

Nail's remarks appear to resemble dance studies scholar André Lepecki's concerns about the control of the people's movement in a *choreopoliced* society. Lepecki maintains that society and the state work to prearrange and direct all movement towards conformity.[19] To attain freedom within this controlled state, residents need to avoid succumbing to society's pressure to comply with codes of movement. Nail's argument differs from Lepecki's in that it adds an emphasis on a person's decision not to move. Rather than prioritizing the "will to act" as the ür-effort of political freedom, an oppressed subject resists the forced circulation of bodies with a "will to stay." For Nail, if society is continuously circulating, then the choice to stay put, to refuse to move on, is the first political decision.

Understanding the relationship between movement, stasis, and freedom demonstrates to us new ways of thinking about politics in México. If the 1980s brought tectonic changes to the regimes of social circulation that manifest in political processes, economic development, and social attitudes about gender and sexuality, then we must also understand the way in which artists responded to these changes and what that reveals about what performance offers to these transformations. *Choreotopias* evaluates artists who refuse to move or to move in certain ways as prescribed by the *doxa* of the nation.

[18] See https://cico.inba.gob.mx/convocatoria.html

[19] Lepecki, André. "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or, the Task of the Dancer." *TDR: The Drama Review* 57.4 (2013): 13–27. Web.

On the Near Past

By examining artists who attune to the regimes of social circulation and refuse to move in accordance with the State's prescribed ways, C*horeotopias* reveals how these systems of control are intimately connected to history's impact on artists' bodies and their actions, and how artists respond to such conditions. Artists utilize performance practices to respond to and oppose the distinct historical regimes of control that try to limit their bodies' movement in the present moment. Across the artists' works, there is a preoccupation with preserving a ligature with political and cultural movements from the time closest to their present moment. Given the pronounced emphasis in the artists' compositions about historical concerns, *Choreotopias* is particularly attentive to how the near past operates in relation to dance and performance practices.

During the initial stages of this research project, I struggled to frame the theme of time that the artists accentuated in their works. In each case, the artists I investigate reveal a preoccupation with the recent past. In México, a country with thousands of years of recorded history, the recent past offers important lessons for the present generation. Historic events such as the students massacre of 1968 or the 1985 Earthquake are present in the artists' work. I observed the artists' commitment to contending with and representing social-political events that had occurred in the past twenty to fifty years. Similar to Violeta Luna in *Réquiem para una tierra perdida*, the artists expressed unease with historical affairs nearest to the present moment when they deployed their artistic practices to comment on the incidents. For example, as I mentioned in an earlier section, Luna produced *Réquiem* to critique Calderón's national security policies and legal reforms, and the North American Free Trade Agreement that was enacted in 1994. These artists' emphasis on the near past is critical to our assessment of performance in a control society.

As present events enter into the terrain of the immemorial repertoire they run the risk of undergoing a process of erasure. In *Arte y Olvido del Terremoto* (2010), Ignacio Padilla argues that art can aid the process of cultural amnesia. According to Padilla, not all art helps residents remember the same way.[20] In fact, art practices can contribute to the erasure of the history that is closest to the present moment. Examining visual and photographic works created by Mexican artists, Padilla identifies the artists' response to catastrophic events such as the deadly earthquake that occurred in 1985. In the aftermath of the event, artists generated visual images to create sublime experiences that universalize traumatic moments. For Padilla, the images and their critical reception demonstrate how art can be used to remove a society from the incidents that the very artistic project captures. Such aesthetic practices use recent historic events to create grand narratives about humanity. In doing so, creative practices create and contribute to amnesia about history.

Padilla contrasts the creative practices by artists that use the recent past only to overcome it in favor of grand narratives with projects that develop from a specific context and remain in the event itself. For example, art and performance projects created by Antonio Luguín, Germán Venegas, Servicio Médico Forense, and Sergio Toledo responded to the context of the earthquake. Their works were created between 1985 and 1992. The artists did not overcome the trauma of the tremendous event to make universal claims about human tragedies that impact everyone. Instead, the artists provided historical context and their art arose directly from the traumatic event, lingering in that most recent moment for as long as possible. It is not inconsequential that the near past is forgotten in favor of the distant past or that universal themes are prioritized over local ones. Padilla says, "Memory needs forgetting: we need to distance ourselves from the near past in order to recover the distant past. It is critical to understand the cardinal role of the latter to the former; what

[20] Padilla develops his ideas by using Marc Augé's theories about history.

is forgotten also constitutes part of being" (My Translation; Padilla 47). Padilla asserts that forgetting the near past, what he considers the recent thirty to fifty years to the present moment, is critical for remembering larger historical narratives. The near past is forgotten to recover the distant past.

When I initially analyzed the artists' work for this project, which were created across a period of over three decades, I attempted to unbound the artists' work from what was perceived to be the "present" moment. Meaning, as I wrote about the artists' work from my current location in the mid-2010s to understand their then-present time, the late 1980s and early 1990s, their works kept pointing my attention to moments that came just before them. The artists' consternation with the events of history that are closest to them highlights a past that is still not out of sight, or out of mind, and that has not completely entered the Taylorian repertoire—the crystallization of embodied behaviors that transmit knowledge through performance or other embodied scenarios.[21] Instead, this most recent history is very close, perhaps one generation removed from the artists or events the artists experienced in their youth; that proximity to the events tethered itself to the surface of their embodied experience in the creative process. These endeavors express the artists' intimate sense of temporality in their aesthetic works.

Such efforts to document the past could be described as part of the culture of memory. Andreas Huyssen maintains that the end of the twentieth century marked the overwhelming boom of the "present pasts." These are efforts by individuals, communities, nations, and global entities to memorialize past events, in particular spectacular atrocities such as the Holocaust or World War II.[22] Huyssen maintains that these initiatives were concerned with how time was experienced and made sensible. In particular, he addresses how the practice of musealization serves the purpose of not forgetting the past.[23] Huyssen's proposal provides a useful analytic for understanding the relationship between time, space, and the nation, and their intersections with memory. Like Padilla, he calls for an emphasis on the lived memory as a critical practice against an "imagined memory." This critical practice is different from the creation of a fictional history with universal narratives.

Huyssen's call to valorize lived memory as a mode of understanding history bears connections to concerns expressed in performance practices. For example, October 2, 2018, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the student massacre in Tlatelolco—which I examine in detail in Chapter One. To mark this important milestone, the national university, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, organized a series of dance events that occurred throughout the year. The organizers called these events *Cartografias de resistencia* [Cartographies of Resistance]. Companies such as Barro Rojo, Asaltodiario, Taller Coreográfico de la UNAM, and Colectivo Querido Venado performed in sites where major student and political movements had taken place in the near past. These locations included Palacio de la Autonomía and Unidad Habitacional Tlatelolco, buildings of importance in the student movements of the 1960s or in the formation of community groups after the 1985 earthquake. According to Evoé Sotelo, the event coordinator, "The times that we live in require artists that offer challenges and that generate a debate about the role of art, as well as its capacity to mobilize consciousness and emotions" (My translation; "Una cartografía de la resistencia se alojará en recinto de la UNAM").[24] She expresses that art, and dance in particular, has the capacity to contribute to debates about history in ways different from other

21 See *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003).

22 Huyssen describes Holocaust and World War II museum exhibitions to highlight the increased concern with keeping the past alive. Here he is arguing how the twentieth century marked a change from the "present futures" to "present pasts."

23 Although, Huyssen tempers his valorization of such endeavors.

24 See https://www.jornada.com.mx/2018/06/09/cultura/a06n1cul. Accessed 18 Sept. 2019.

cultural texts and expressive practices. Performance engenders emotions and discourse precisely because the bodies that perform these historical events bring the past bodies to the present moment as a lived memory.

Claiming the value of dance for enacting historical events is crucial, especially when considering issues of justice during times of spectacular violence, but this declaration must be tempered with an acknowledgement that bodies brought from the past through performance are not complete bodies. Susan Foster maintains that, when we write about—and I would add perform about—past bodies, we must "acknowledge that all those bodies, in moving and in documenting their movements, in learning about past movements, continually conspire together and are conspired against" ("Choreographing History" 10).[25] For Foster, engaging with history is a process of mutual creation, whereby writing about past bodies is a process of interpretation and translation of the bodies' past movement. Historical bodies are not integral and unique bodies. They are made in collaboration with present bodies.

The connections between past and present bodies are made possible because performance makes temporal relationships palpable. Time is an embodied remnant that shapes culture. Time structures how people move every day and how they construct their environment. Time is sensed and gives everyday spaces a palpable feeling by resonating between bodies. And, in performance, time exists as what Jerzy Limon describes as the fifth-wall, or an invisible boundary between multiple time streams (216). Theater's ability to experience different time structures creates "a complex network of relationship between the fictional and the real, unique for the part of the theater" (222). When audiences and performers share the space of performance they agree to create a world where the lived experience and the fictional moment intermingle to imagine and experience other worlds. Limon is speaking of theater in particular, but his observations extend to performance practices that emphasize embodied encounters too.

This project foregrounds the dancing body's temporality and how choreographic endeavors, be they in the form of street social dance, concert dance, or expanded ideas of performance, are always a historical engagement with the near past because the body is inscribed with history. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Michel Foucault situates the body as the center of the articulation of history. He asserts that it is fallacious to assume that the body—its corporeal make-up—exists outside of sociopolitical conditions inscribed by history. He argues:

> We believe, in any event, that the body obeys the exclusive laws of physiology, and that it escapes the influence of history, but this too is false. The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes [...](87)

Sociopolitical systems discipline not only the habits and perspectives of the body, but the very fleshiness of it. They regulate the nervous system, digestion, and energies (89). The human body's bodily and living functions are subjected to regimes of discipline that attach to the digestive and nervous system. Meaning, the body is inscribed with the events of history. However, traditional history and historical analysis cannot account for such imprints of history. Instead, one way to evaluate how history rests on the surface of the body is through an affective history, one that zooms its perspective into the crevices of the body. For me, dance studies linked with performance studies allows us to zoom in on the crevices of bodies and how those bodies navigate the space and history that shape their movements and bodies in the present moment. A historical reading of dance practices and choreographic projects allow us to look at affective history. In Chapter Two, I extend Foucault's reading of history's impact of the body by describing the way vomiting can be a site of refusal for victims of physical assault and state dispossession. *Choreotopias* highlights the

[25] See *Choreographing History*.

connections that exist between movement, stasis, and freedom and how understanding the near past is critical to assessing the power of performance and what it offers to disaffected subjects as they move through regimes of social circulation and the threat of pastoral power.

Critical Mexican Dance Studies: Methodological Concerns

Choreotopias starts in the 1980s and departs from this period with an analysis of performances, literary texts, video arts projects, music, artist interview transcriptions, and dancers' movements. I engage archival analysis with the desire to weave together the historical conditions that inform the artists' social-historical context. I approach the archive of contemporary dance choreographers and video artists as a set of nodes that mark colonial, capital, and racialized relations as they connect to violent conditions. I examine critical receptions, self-documentation, program notes, and rehearsal documentation, adding to the existing and developing approaches to the study of dance in México. This project employs a deviant methodology, one that organizes artists, case studies, and theories by identifying what they refuse to be rather than what they are, and what they leave behind in their performances.

Norma Cantú and Shakina Nayfack, in their respective studies, use different research methodologies to evaluate how dance practitioners address questions of authenticity, aesthetics, identity, and interpretation. In "The Semiotics of Land and Space" (2009), Cantú examines the *danzas matachines* that developed in the border town La Santa Cruz, in Laredo, Texas. She attended performance events to evaluate the indigenous dance form and the value of the parades of the Christian cross, considering how these elements imbue the barrio La Ladrillera with a sacred dimension that is Mexican, Catholic, and Indigenous. In contrast, in "¿Por qué estás aquí? Dancing through History, Identity, and the Politics of Place in Butoh Ritual Mexicano" (2009), Nayfack argues that Butoh Mexicano can be thought of as a "locally rooted (site specific, place based) ideological intervention operating within a history of uneven geographic development" (162). Nayfack provides the reader with a historical and autoethnographic account of Mexican Butoh as developed by the artist Diego Piñon in Tlalpujahua, Michoacán. She concludes that the dance form is a dialectical process where practitioners attune to the uneven economic development that haunts the indigenous community's past and present (162).

By contrast, Ruth Hellier-Tinoco examines the strategies of belonging and resistance that indigenous dancers and cultural workers manifest against and through the cultural tourism industry in México. She foregrounds the negotiation of race and class politics as they intersect with Mexican national discourse. In *Embodying Mexico: Tourism, Nationalism, and Performance* (2011), Hellier-Tinoco considers the commercial appropriation, dissemination, and collections of indigenous embodied activities that helped establish the nation-building project in a post-revolutionary México. She locates the how, why, and with what consequences the *baile de los viejitos* and the *Noche de los muertos* became cultural representations of heteronormative, *mestizo* México. These two indigenous cultural expressions were used for nation-building projects all while they normalized a mestizo, patriarchal society, but failed to provide substantive justice to indigenous communities in Michoacán and elsewhere. Because of this situation, indigenous dancers and cultural workers employ and deploy national mythic ideas and practices about México's indigenous past that benefit the tourism industry. They adopt these aesthetic and embodied practices in order to survive.

Cantú, Nayfack, and Hellier-Tinoco focus their studies on dances in México and they offer different methodological approaches to the study of dance's relationship to the state. Cantú emphasizes the relationship between space, bodies, and the material world. She examines the

dancers' relationship to the way they use ritual items like the Christian cross to navigate the relationship between México and the United States. She traces the movement of dancers and the movement of the cross in the dancers' processions. Nayfack draws from her own experience as a dancer and identifies how artists attune to the manner in which economic development at the local and international level impact the aesthetics and processes of their dance practice. Meanwhile, Hellier-Tinoco employs a historical analysis to the development of indigenous dance forms, and how cultural agents of the State adopted these aesthetics and embodied practices for national projects. These scholars are united by their efforts to understand the relationship between dance practices and the State's economic and cultural initiatives that impact aesthetic decisions. Their studies present a generative approach to the study of Mexican embodied practices, aesthetic trajectories, political resistance, and dance.

I complement this existing work by making my central methodological concern in this project the study of choreography as a practice intimately connected to politics and resistance. My aim is not to trace the development of specific dance genres, as is the case in Nayack's and Hellier-Tinocos' studies, nor to identify dance forms that are associated with specific identity markers. This project complements Stephanie Sherman's dissertation *(Dis)Plazas and (Dis)Placed Danzas: Space, Trauma, Moving Bodies in Mexico City* (2016). Sherman assesses Mexican experimental dance practices and their relationship to choreography and resistive strategies. I add to this work an analysis of expanded ideas of choreography in those resistive practices and a frame beyond a Mexico City focus. *Choreotopias* examines Mexican dance makers and their objects, who create affective relational politics across a labyrinth of conceptual and material borders that animate the utopian registers of community from the 1980s onward.

I track the artists' movements by evaluating performance ephemera, video art, museum archives, and artist interviews. I conducted major research trips to Minneapolis, Minnesota and Mexico City. From June to August 2017, I spent three months at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, collecting performance ephemera and documentation related to the dance company Asaltodiario. I analyze these materials in the first chapter. In 2017, I visited Mexico City twice, once from May 20 to June 4, and again from September 18 to 23. During these trips, I visited the archives center in the Museum of Modern Art and the Center for the Investigation and Documentation of Dance. Also, I attended two dance performances, and gave a presentation at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México about my research. I observed performances by NAKA Dance Theater in Mexico City, as the artists rehearsed and collected interviews for their performance *BUSCARTE*. I write about this company in the third chapter. In addition to visiting the archival centers, I collected performance reviews from the major dance publications in Mexico City. I use publications as secondary evidence throughout the dissertation. From 2018-2019, I visited México two additional times. I visited Mexico City in May 2018 to interview artists of interest in the first chapter. During this visit, I met with Miguel Àngel Díaz and Claudia Vàzquez. I also visited Mexico City in June 2019. I attended Lukas Avendaño's and Lía La Sirena's performances at the MUAC. Also, I visited the exhibition *Arte-Acción*, which highlighted the rise of performance art in México. During this same visit, I attended the flea market *Tianguis El Chopo*. El Chopo is a cultural center where Mexico City's counter culture subjects sell and exchange merchandise, such as vinyl records, CDs, or fanzines. I discuss the importance of this space in the second chapter.

In between the research trips, I interviewed and attended performances by Mexican artists presenting their work in different venues throughout California. On two separate occasions, I interviewed Violeta Luna, once on August 23, 2018, and then on December 18, 2018. From

November 9-11, 2018, I watched Fabiola Guillen's performance *Stabbat mattar* at the Festival of Latin American Contemporary Choreographers. On March 16 and 17, 2018, I attended Rogelio Lopez's concert *Dicotomía del silencio* at Shawl-Anderson Dance Center in Berkeley. On January 18, 2019, I attended the mixed-bill performance featuring artists Karen De Luna and Diego Martínez Lanz; Gizeh Muñiz and Sebastian Santamaría; and Claudia Lavista. Later that year, on April 1, 2019, I interviewed José Navarrete in Oakland, California. During the artist interviews, I inquired about the choreographers' processes, desires, hopes, and reflections for their choreography and for the spaces where they situate their work.

Throughout the investigation, I responded to the shifting conditions of the objects of study and people that I interviewed. I adopted a methodology akin to Rosa Buenfil Burgo's notion of strategic methodology (1995). According to Buenfil, a strategic methodology is a set of investigative practices that responds to conditions as they change. This approach contrasts methods that execute a set of predetermined steps that do not deviate from established methodological goals. The project and its methodology run parallel to each other. Consequently, I changed and adjusted the project as findings were assembled along the way. For example, on a trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2017, I was curious to identify which Mexican choreographers, if any, had presented their work in that city. Unexpectedly, I learned about Asaltodiario's tour performance that occurred in 1992, and I found photographic documentation of the performance. I began evaluating the artists' creative work after my findings. Miguel Ángel Díaz, co-founder of the group, was unaware of the existence of archival materials. In later communications with Díaz, I shared these materials with him.

I focused on the deviant archives and practices that choreographers made and kept to conjure the spatial and temporal disjunctures that occur across artistic spaces. By deviances, I mean the non-state sponsored archives and projects or non-normative choreographic projects that deal with the intersection of gender and class within Mexican spaces, as well as the ephemera and objects that are state-sponsored but that deviate en route to their destination. As an illustration, in 2019, I had planned to visit *Tianguis El Chopo* to experience and analyze the aesthetics of the space and people. While there, I stumbled across the fanzine *Cuerdas: Una historia punk. Cuerdas* is a black and white fanzine featuring a collection of poems by Verónica Miranda. It documents her experience as a young woman who was part of a punk band and experienced the rise of the subcultural movement in the 1980s and 1990s. I do not include an analysis of Miranda's fanzine in this project, but I highlight this moment here to animate the ways in which such creative projects, like the other ones that I evaluate throughout, traffic across and through deviant borders. Such projects energize a creative orientation that resists State-sponsored documentation. Deviances change the course of movement and enliven new circuits of belonging and knowledge production.

When analyzing performances or examining video art projects, I employ movement analysis to assess the choreographer's aesthetics based on how I, as a dancer and choreographer from México, relate to the work that the artists produce.[26] My choreographic activities are not a central focus in this project but it is important to acknowledge that my experience as a formerly undocumented migrant artist from México shapes this project. My family emigrated north in the early 1990s and I grew up undocumented in the United States. In high school, I used dance forms such as hip hop, salsa, *cumbia,* and other Latinx expressive practices in combination with Western modern dance to question our biases. Likewise, I learned Augusto Boal's various techniques from

[26] In this manner, I follow dance studies scholar SanSan Kwan's methodological approach, whose personal experience is in dialogue with the concert dances produced by contemporary Chinese choreographers and the spaces in which the choreographers produce those pieces.

Theater of the Oppressed and I facilitated community performance workshops. I have performed, choreographed, and taught using a hybrid of these aesthetic practices nationally and internationally for over fifteen years. Dance and creative practices allowed me to address feelings of alienation within the United States. The process of being in the studio, performing out in the streets, or working with immigrant communities to produce shows allowed me create moments of listening to voices who were not and are not normally heard, and to come into contact with ways of being that were and are the target of anti-immigrant sentiments. This project aligns with the political work that choreography can do and undo for those bodies whose actions are deemed unwanted and a threat to the normal order of things. It allows me to trace a dance history that was not present in my performance education, adding to the growing archive in the United States of Mexican choreographers and performance makers. My experience brings to the project an evaluation of the artists' works as more than just a reading of the dances as "texts" to be interpreted and mined. My reading of their work is mediated through an embodied appreciation of the process of making dances and investigating what choreography can make people, history, and materials do.

Chapter Order

Choreotopias foregrounds three main sites where artists use choreographic thinking to contest figurative, physical, and institutional legal conditions where agents of the Mexican national project control unwanted bodies and their actions, even in death. The areas I foreground include homelessness and urban street life; political anarchy groups and the punk rock commons; and forensic anthropology crime investigations related to forced disappearances. These sites have in common their connection to existing on the margins of what constitutes neoliberal urban utopias. Importantly, each of the locations I focus on possess a dance and movement-focused corollary through which the artists call into question and criticize racial, classed, and gendered systems and ideologies of oppression connected to the state. These movement-centered practices include experimental street choreography, femme-positive punk mosh pits, and social dance forms in concert dance theater. The artists adopt novel ways of working with objects and material life to circumscribe oppression and refuse the State's attempt to control their actions.

The first chapter "From Heterotopias to Choreotopias: Dance and Desmadre in Mexico City" examines the conflict between home and homelessness in the punk-aesthetic choreographies created by Asaltodiario, a Mexico City troupe formed in 1987. I assess the relationship between choreography and precarity in times of rapid urban development. The company organized street performances inspired by Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed. They thematized and choreographed impromptu street performances called asaltos (assaults) to address the homeless and disenfranchised experience of living in México's capital during a time of rapid urban development. I evaluate the formation of the company Asaltodiario in the 1980s and assess the group's commitment to valuing the public street as a site worth examining and on which to change urban life in Mexico City by use of aesthetic and corporeal expressions that create a more inclusive national society. It is my contention that the company's artistic grammars of disaffection, invisibility, and erasure became paramount to their survival in the face of urban development in the 1980s, and continue to be relevant today. Herein, I introduce and offer the concept I call *choreotopias* to describe the process that Asaltodiario used in their survival strategies. Choreotopias reproduce vertigo, but work through arrest and stillness to create temporary homes. Reading choreotopias as the construction of bounded space-time, fiction, and feeling, I see the possibility of grasping the relations of power set into motion by a subject's desire to generate new spaces in the doubleness of the border between moving and choosing to stay put. If we attune to

the choreotopic dimensions of the mobility of bodies across the streets of México, we see and feel that the movements set into place are not always tranquil.

The second chapter "Mosh Pit Desires: Video Art Feminisms and Punk Performance" evaluates how disaffected women who are associated with counterculture movements at the end of the twentieth century navigate México's culture of repression. I assess collaborations between feminist video artists and punk members. These projects include Sarah Minter's *Alma punk* and *Nadie es inocente.* I look at the understudied practices of the punk rock commons to consider how these embodied encounters are important for the absorption of disaffection. Here I continue the argument from the first chapter, where I propose that material culture, in this case, video art projects, are choreotopias, or those spatially and temporarily artistic-political realms of dwelling. In this temporary assembly, artists rearrange social relationships and create temporary communities, anticipate new social imaginaries, and attend to the historic, present, and future lives of unwanted bodies. I use choreographic thought to understand how classed and gendered inequalities are constituted in spaces and interactions through sound and the control of bodies. I argue that feminist video artists and punk youth created a discontinuous community through the borders of marginalization.

In the third chapter, "Searching for the Missing: Performance, Forensics, and Democracy," I give special attention to the role of forensic evidence in the processes and practices of dance and performance artists. I examine how forensic performances honor the dead and reconfigure political communities in the face of entrenched state violence. I evaluate how contemporary performance has become a key practice for reenacting and reconstructing the choreography of truth in official juridical statements. I give attention to the overlap between journalism and performance practices, examining the extent to which dance can execute the role of journalism without assuming the liabilities of a discipline that has become a risky business. I assess the manner in which artists use fragments of history that are situated between journalism, archives, and forensic evidence to challenge official narratives and construct a common democracy that can only be mediated by performance citizens. I build on nationalism studies that identify how anthropology, and in particular archeology, was central to establishing a masculinist and violent democratic public in México. I choose forensics as a disciplinary framework that relates anthropology and fragments of body remains as being central to the creation of imaginary communities. Assessing the under-theorized element of forensics in Mexican social life will offer us greater understanding about the important role of performance in contexts where mass graves are woven into social life.

In the concluding section, "The State of Performance," I consider how the left-of-center political party MORENA that was voted into office in 2018 brought in a legislative platform with the agenda to defund performance and the arts. I describe a heated debate that took place between performance artist Jesusa Rodríguez and an audience member at the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in 2019 during the biannual *Encuentro*.[27] The debate foregrounds the tension between artists and the state and the purpose of performance before the state. I connect that dispute with the concerns I address in this project about the role of performance in the face of state violence and I offer my suggestions for future research by considering the work of trans* artist Lía La Novia Sirena [Lía the Mermaid Bride], whose aquatic life on land invites us to imagine alternative modes of dwelling and relating to each other through strange love.[28]

[27] Rodríguez was one of the featured artists during the 2019 Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics' *Encuentro*. The heated exchange occurred at the end of her keynote address.

[28] Lía's full name is Lía García

Chapter One
From Heterotopias to Choreotopias: Dance and Desmadre in Mexico City

In September 1992, the co-founders of the experimental performance company Asaltodiario, Miguel Ángel Díaz and Jaime Leyva, traveled across the United States on a two-week tour as part of the program *The Year of the White Bear*.[29] This curated program included Asaltodiario alongside performance artists Guillermo Gómez-Peña with Coco Fusco and queer singer-actress Astrid Hadad.[30] Asaltodiario presented the performance *Todo aquel sorprendido, Todo aquel consignado* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota before going on to New York City for a showcase produced by Dance Theater Workshop. In their duet performance *Todo*, Leyva plays a punk youth member who sniffs chemical glue and is abruptly attacked by Díaz. The performance begins with one performer shouting at the other. Then, this argument develops into the two dancers tussling on the ground and over a trash barrel. In the end, Leyva dies when the fight goes wrong and Díaz stabs him. He is left dying alone on the concrete ground as Díaz rushes off.[31]

In this chapter, I uncover the intimate relationship between street choreography and precarity during a time of rapid urban development and after a natural disaster left thousands dead. I evaluate the formation of the company Asaltodiario in the 1980s and assess the group's commitment to dance performances in the street about street life. Performing on sidewalks and roads, the artists addressed the experience of unwanted bodies in public life. They used unruly and multidisciplinary methods to comment on the changing forms of oppression against homeless, gay, and dissident student residents. They wreaked havoc on unsuspecting residents and police officers through invisible performances inspired by Brazilian theater maker Augusto Boal. They responded to urbanization projects and the sanitation of cultural spaces by choreographing "fights" on street corners, creating interventions in protected plazas, and tightrope walking in the middle of mass street demonstrations. The artists used dance-informed processes for political formation and experimentation. The interruptions that the artists made were not to destabilize public spaces but rather to create a collective sense different from the collective chaos that had defined Mexico City since the 1980s. Their performances enact cohesion, solidifying social relationships. Importantly, I uncover how trash becomes a key trope in the group's performances, revealing an important insight about collective formation in the midst of repressive State authority. I am interested in how unwanted bodies such as working class artists, homeless youth, drug addicts, and gay residents respond to control societies by using performances of waste to build a temporary collective space that I term *choreotopias*. In the 1980s, these populations were stigmatized and collectively associated with indecency. This chapter legitimizes dance as a space for the political by examining how the artists leverage the power of performance for social interventions and advocate a more interconnected public space.

I build on recent concerns in dance studies about the political work of dance in the face of state-sanctioned policies and pivot the attention to the objects that dancers use in response to

[29] This was a multi-institutional collaboration among North American arts centers to feature artists from México.
[30] Hadad travelled with her accompanying musicians Los Tarzanes.
[31] Coincidently, Leyva's performance was not far from reality. Tragically, Leyva experienced a seizure and fell during his performance in New Rochelle, New York, sustaining critical injuries. He died shortly afterwards and was returned to Mexico five days later where he was buried at *Jardines del Recuerdo.* According to Miguel Ángel Díaz, Leyva suffered from epilepsy. Prior to his trip, doctors cleared him for travel and the artist was no longer taking medication.

political assaults.[32] In a document with technical requirements information that Asaltodiario sent to Walker Art Center curator John Killacky in preparation for the performance of *Todo aquel* in 1992, the artists requested an oil barrel, clean and empty, and trash.[33] I uncover that Asaltodiario's use of such objects as trash was more than a theatrical backdrop in their performances. These objects were important for the artists to negotiate their relationship to urban development and political repression in the 1980s and 1990s. The objects foreground the agonism between cleanliness and filth. I attend to how artists incorporate waste, flyers, and monuments into their performances to organize political formation in response to policies that try to clear city streets of unwanted residents. This chapter considers the mobility of goods and trash as organizing and choreographic objects. Understanding the artists' use of waste is important for me because it recognizes the way in which the placement of a bag or an unwanted item can be choreographically resistive where social gatherings are not permitted. The way one moves in relationship to material goods offers hope. Acknowledging the use of material goods in everyday life as a choreographic tactic provides an opportunity for looking at the way in which power functions through the use and abuse of things that make up our material reality and how objects can be altered to create new political communities when the mobilization of groups is disallowed. I focus on what is important in the street and how the artists use trash metaphorically and embody waste, setting the stage for a real space of unwantedness. This chapter considers the relevance of being in the streets and dance's ability to evidence new political possibilities. I establish a concern with the artists' use choreography of objects in this chapter and address the significance of this uncovering in the following chapter.

It is my contention that the company's artistic grammars of refuse, invisibility, and disorder became paramount to their survival as artists and residents in the face of urban development and the vertigo that accompanied that process. According to Leticia Alvarado, racialized subjects can deploy abject performances to create alternate modes of organization that evade late capitalism's demand on production.[34] She argues, "Abjections asks for a difficult embodied performance, one that embraces affects counterintuitive to those we have been taught to regard as politically helpful" (253). Alvarado argues that abjection can be deployed by communities that are attentive to violence. Abjection can be an irreverent aesthetic strategy that refuses identitarian coherences. She continues, "[A]bject performances produce a generative affective vortex within which a politics is elaborated by irreverently taping the sublime" (27). For Alvarado, aesthetic tactics create situations where new political imaginations are possible.[35] In Asaltodiario's work, I see abjection being deployed through dance, theater, and choreography as embodied political processes central to reimagining and protecting the public sphere during a time of increased assaults by police and policies on undisciplined bodies. Importantly, the artists expressed a concern with an unjust history and how what happened in the past manifests in the present moment through the materiality of social life and a cultural *habitus* impacting a subject's future belonging to a place or places.

I suggest that the artists responded to these conditions by creating a sense of place that emphasized the materiality of waste and the unworthy as a means of relating to unproductive bodies of urban development. Michel Foucault argues that all societies are made up of

[32] See Clare Croft's *Dancers as Diplomats,* Rachmi Larasati's *The Dance that Makes You Vanish,* André Lepecki's *Singularities*, and Jens Giersdorf's *The Body of the People.*

[33] In the same document, the company list Francisco Manzano Ramirez as technician and Gabriela Medina Rangel as dancer.

[34] Similarly, Mai Ngai calls these deployable strategies "ugly feelings."

[35] In Alvarado's analysis, the Los Angeles-based proto-punk collective ASCO deploys aesthetic public street actions to challenge heteronormative, patriarchal ideals (96).

heterotopias, real counter-sites that effectively enact utopias and where residents represent, contest, and invert society. I argue that choreography and performance practices are central to the emergence of these heterotopias. In particular, the choreography of waste offers an interconnectedness that has been ruptured by the state and it circumscribes the exclusionary aspects of political disenfranchisement that depend on the affect of vertigo to achieve its aim. To understand this interconnectedness, I offer the term *choreotopias* and define them as temporary and spatially bounded artistic-political sites of dwelling where "worthless" residents experience a new sense of public life by highlighting the injustices of the near past. Through this analytic, I assess Asaltodiario's artistic-political practices and how they valued choreographic life as political life, which they mediated through the use of material objects left behind in public spaces or from ephemera used in previous political movements. This use of materials and sense of place is not stable. In fact, choreotopias are chaotic, deceiving, and disorderly, but always oriented towards unity. Choreotopias lead to the emergence of heterotopias. Looking at Asaltodiario's work, we come to see the urgent reality that the public sphere without collective dance and performance is always on the verge of erasure for dirty and unproductive bodies.

The Afterlives of Heterotopias

The experimental dance company Asaltodiario formed in the tumult of destruction. Jaime Leyva, Ricardo Nájera, and Miguel Díaz started the company after a devastating earthquake left Mexico City in ruins in 1985.[36] A magnitude 8.1 earthquake struck the nation's capital in the early morning on September 19. It jolted the then-most populous city of the Americas into chaos and frenzy.[37] It left as many as ten-thousand residents dead, hundreds disabled, and many more homeless. The earthquake lasted almost two minutes and it turned the city upside down.[38] Hundreds of buildings were destroyed.[39] Sewing factory worker Evangelina Cadena later described the situation as an unerasable memory.[40] Cadena says the structures were left looking "like sandwiches," highlighting just how quickly the function and signifier of a building can change. When a destructive earthquake hits a city, the physical boundaries and the social divisions that define one building from another are rendered illegible. The spectacular collapse of the city produced collective vertigo. There was social and political destabilization and an uncertainty about the solidity of the ground on which people stood. More importantly, the unexpected event foregrounded the unequal set of relations between the public and private sites of the city, and how artists moved across the two spaces of difference when State institutions failed to provide relief resources.

Michel Foucault argues that spatial difference defines society and is crucial for the survival of freedom. In "Of Other Spaces," he maintains that all societies have sites that transform social norms and existing behaviors.[41] These are real places, unlike the imagined idea of the utopia, which

[36] At that time, the city was still known as Federal District. The city officially changed its name in 2016.
[37] Ricardo Nájera left the group in 1989. When he left, he adopted the group's proposed original name. Díaz and Leyva directed the group until Leyva's passing. Then, Claudia Vásquez joined the group in 1996 and assumed a co-director role.
[38] Jorge Flores, in "La física del temblor defeño" argues that most of the buildings were located on what used to be the lake of Tenochtitlan, the body of water surrounding the Mexica's (Aztecs) city center.
[39] https://interactivo.eluniversal.com.mx/sismo85-afectaciones/ Accessed 3 Sept.2019.
[40] In *Contar las cosas como fueron* (2007), Cadena recounts her experience of the earthquake and the mobilization efforts. She talks specifically from her experience as a sewing factory worker.
[41] Foucault originally gave the lecture in 1967 but the lecture was published in 1984 as "Des Espace Autres." Arabella Stanger takes up Foucault too and argues that choreography is a useful starting point to think about place and belonging. Following scholarship that observes choreography in its more capacious register and is not solely

is merely an illusion that presents a world in perfect form or in complete disorder. Utopias have a relation to the real space of society, but they are "fundamentally unreal spaces" (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* 3). In contrast, cemeteries, hotels, theaters, psychiatric hospitals, vacation villages, and festivals are these other spaces, or what he calls heterotopias. Heterotopias are:

> A kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites, all other sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. (3)

Heterotopias are the material manifestation where society's relations are questioned, neutralized, or invented. They absorb or deal with individuals who deviate from the expected social behaviors in society. It is precisely in these other spaces that alternate forms of belonging exist. As much as physical spaces like theaters and vacation rooms can perpetuate normative behavior, these can also be counter-sites that allow for behaviors and modes of being that transform societies. These spaces are needed to avoid the totalization of an individual into a single society. It is important that heterotopias exist because they keep open the possibilities for freedom. They are where dreams swell with water, where adventure averts espionage, and where piracy outlasts the police (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces* 9).[42] Foucault's notion of the heterotopia is useful for thinking about political experimentation, deviancy, and the creation of counter-sites, but the markers of difference that allow heterotopias to be invented and to exist are difficult to define when those markers of spatial difference collapse and are turned into ruins. A destructive event such as a deadly earthquake collapsed an entire city and contorted the physical markers of spatial and, hence, social difference that defined existing sets of relations. In such a space, the feeling of collective disorientation abounds and the processes for enacting heterotopias are difficult to establish.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1985 temblor, the physical lines between cemeteries, theaters, homes, schools, hospitals, and vacation locales were reduced to raw building materials. Image after image in the daily newspaper *Excélsior* and the broadcast channel Azteca Noticias, as well as other local papers and television channels, depicted hotels and homes on the ground or people running from one location to another. Other images depicted bodies hurriedly excavating rubble from collapsed buildings. One of the most iconic images that represented this collapse and frenzy was a still image of Hotel Regis, an accommodation in the historic downtown known for its luxury. Its exuberance turned into ruins in ninety seconds and the only remains were parts of the iconic golden marquee "Hotel Regis" positioned at the top of the hotel. The rubble from the hotel resembled the piles created from the other three hundred collapsed buildings across the city. The letter "H" fell off the sign. The alpha signifier that could have been used to articulate the name of other heterotopias such as "homes" and "hospitals" was missing. The earthquake rendered a unified sense of those different spaces in their absence and made their differences the same.

When the Hotel Regis fell to the ground, traditional time appeared to have stopped for the entire city. In front of the Hotel Regis, a large clock signaled the hour and minute when the

about arranging dance steps, Stanger argues that heterotopias are choreographic endeavors that bound time and space because they operate as a dialectic between the "here and now" and "then and there." A heterotopic analysis is about how space and time "commingle" through the organization of architecture and social relationships to create sites or processes of liberation in response to hegemonic power. Conversely, artistic choreographic endeavors can be heterotopias too because they possess a capacity to resist hegemonies through the construction and re-arrangement of space.

[42] This version of the talk was translated by Jay Miskowiec.

earthquake hit. The clock ceased to tick at "7:19."[43] In a live broadcast, Televisa showed host Lourdes Guerrero narrating the earthquake as it happened.[44] She says, "Good Morning, the hour is seven." She stops mid-sentence because the movement becomes too strong. She tells the viewers, "Let's wait a second for it to stop." Then, the live feed goes black. That second of calmness never arrived. The earthquake struck and divergent time axes became one. At 7:19am on September 19, 1985, time and space became suspended. As Guerrero says, "Everything went white. We held onto the desk for what was seconds, but appeared to be eternity." The time marker became a reference point for scholars, residents, and politicians.[45] The clock signaled an absolute break with the order of the everyday. Ordinary time became strange time. Ordinary space became strange space. The major collapse of the city created refuse and bare materials. Buildings piled up on top of each other. Cars crumbled into abstracted metal pieces. Bodies remained buried for months. The conditions created vortical time and space, making it difficult to assess which behaviors were deemed deviant and which ones were deemed in crisis. Residents spent months and years in temporary shelters, waiting for their homes to be rebuilt.[46]

With residents caught in a collective vortex, artists formed new ways to relate to displaced persons who were the victims of spectacular motion. This suspension of time reshaped how artists created performances, and the artists' actions evidence the important role that street performances play in the creation of heterotopias. A year after the devastating earthquake, Díaz and Leyva, along with other dance companies, participated in *danzas callejeras*, translated as "street dances," as a way of supporting residents who were still displaced. *Danzas callejeras* were organized by Danza Mexicana A.C. and the *Unión de Vecinos y Damnificados*, the former being a collective civic organization dedicated to serving independent choreographers and the latter being a union of displaced neighbors and residents impacted by the earthquake.[47] These associations co-convened the first encounter of *danza callejera* from November 20-24, 1986.[48] They occurred in ad hoc hostels created for the displaced residents who had yet to receive housing support from the government even a year after the devastating natural disaster. Artists focused their efforts on the neighborhoods most devastated by the quake, such as La Colonia Roma, Centro Histórico, Templo Mayor, Tlatelolco, and Peña de Morelos. These gatherings supported the displaced persons and they became a mirror that reflected back to the state that it was not providing adequate and timely assistance to the residents.

Artists deployed performances to mobilize a shared sense of temporary collectivity and create a sense of another space and time outside of displacement. Dance studies scholar Stephanie Sherman argues that *danza callejera* "critiqued brutal state oppression by making wounds visible in the dances and also mobilized the wounds" (76). According to Sherman, *danza callejera*, as a

[43] See https://www.milenio.com/cultura/el-patrimonio-que-se-perdio-imagenes-de-antes-y-despues. Accessed 5 Sept. 2019.

[44] Lourdes was the host of *Hoy Mismo*. Interview accessed 26 Nov. 2019. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=174&v=_qva8tY1ZfQ&feature=emb_logo.

[45] The film "7:19" directed by Jorge Michel Grau provides a dramatic focus to this time marker.

[46] In some cases, residents have not received support from the government as of this writing.

[47] The *Union de Viviendas y Damnificados 19 de Septiembre* was one of many civil organizations that developed in the wake of the earthquake. Their goals included providing food and entertainment to the displaced persons. In particular, the union focused its efforts on the neighborhoods most devastated by the quake, such as La Colonia Roma, Tlatelolco, and Peña de Morelos. These civil societies set up distribution centers, known as *centros de acopio,* to receive, distribute, and provide daily living items such as food, toiletries, and water.

[48] Dance companies that participated in this event included Contradanza, Utopía, Danza y Movimiento del Salvador, Experimentación Coreográfica Xalapa, La Compañía Estatal de Oaxaca, Foro Libre de Guanajuato, Barro Rojo, and UX Onodanza.

dance genre, galvanized the theatrical representation of wounds and pain to create a sense of community among the marginalized people of Mexico City who experienced psychic, physical, and emotional wounds. Dance deployed the aesthetics of pain and reoriented the shared agony of abusive power for the purpose of serving the marginalized populations neglected by the government.

Although artists deployed aesthetic representations of pain a year after the earthquake to honor the persisting displacement of people caused by the earthquake, they enacted and utilized emotions such as anger immediately after the event. A month after the tremor, residents protested because the federal government had not yet provided any organized support. On October 12, 1985, thousands marched across the streets of the capital to reunite at Los Pinos, President Miguel de la Madrid's residence. Union workers and displaced residents walked side by side to give a document stating their demands to Hilda Anderson Nevares, then-President Miguel de la Madrid's representative. They requested, among other things, economic resources for the creation of a fund to reconstruct the housing units that the residents lost (Cadena). Requests went unanswered and the demonstrations continued.

These activities demonstrate the social set of relations that maintain heterotopias. Foucault maintains that our lives are divided into a set of relations that are divided unto irreconcilable sites (*Of Other Spaces* 3). These sites of difference are the places where heterotopias are maintained. Our lives are governed by delimited oppositional markers of space (such as private/public, family/social) that indicate which sites are inviolable and which are unprotected, and they are made to pass as a given or made to appear normal, what Pierre Bourdieu calls the *doxa* of society.[49] The normal set of relations that kept the social order of space clearly delineated became untethered in the midst of the demonstrations, recovery efforts, and artistic productions, but these activities also reflected a mirror of society. These activities represented participatory democracy, contested the government's lack of action, and inverted the normal set of relations when residents demanded actions from the government rather than the government's requesting specific protocols from the residents.

Similar contestations were taking place in the dance performance sphere. Demands for substantive change from the government extended across the cultural sector too where dance artists were negotiating the issues of the precariousness of space and time in the city. As can be seen in Jorge Izquierdo's photo of Barro Rojo in Mexico City, there was a "fuck you" attitude and sentiment in the dance performance scene in response to the conditions of public life. From left to right, Arturo Garrido, Daniela Heredia, Alejandra Mendoza, Serafín Aponte, Laura Rocha, and Francisco Illescas stand in front of the camera (see figure 1). In broad daylight, men and women use their hands and elbows to gesture the expletives "huevos," "chinga tu madre," and "vete a la chingada," looking directly at the camera without reservation, knowing they are being watched and not caring.[50] Even Illescas, the one person who is not holding up his hands, squints his eyes at the camera, dismissing the viewer and relegating the camera to a distant intruder. More importantly, their pelvises are turned away from the viewer, almost as if they were heading away from the camera and decided to pivot around to flip off the viewer. They are caught in vortex, being propelled forward with the momentum of a sidewalk designed to keep their bodies moving. Yet they resist that gravitational pull and gesture "fuck off" towards the ever present eye.

[49] I analyze this concept in the Introduction.

[50] In the image, some of the artists are gesturing "fuck you." In Spanish, this can signal different meanings. I chose "vete a la chingada," but other phrases include "que te den por el culo," "vete a la mierda," que te jodan."

Izquierdo's photo encapsulates the sentiments expressed by several choreographers making dances in the 1980s, and it gives us an account of the economic conditions for working-class residents at the time. The six youth are surrounded by an unmaintained street. Graffiti covers the walls behind them, quickly drawn black strokes stand in contrast to the white wall. On the lower edge of the wall, overgrown shrubs shoot up from the ground. They run both parallel and perpendicular to the wall, cutting across the wide pedestrian sidewalk. Izquierdo's photo testifies to the social realities and attitudes of performance artists at the time. Gritty and unkempt, the street was the site for political and social belonging. The bodies stood next to each other, creating a collective mass to resist the propulsion of the city's sidewalk. In the midst of economic and political collective vertigo, performance makers were enacting a collective political formation. There is a direct and unapologetic politic used by artists during this turbulent period.

The artists' confrontational stance and the site of the street indicate the presence of a heterotopia. The artists are partially using the sidewalk in a manner that it was designed to be used in a utopian ideal, principally to keep the flow of bodies safe from cars and to move continuously. Yet the artists contest this space and invert its use by refusing to move on. They turn around to express different forms of the expletive "fuck off," reflecting and speaking about other spaces. The gesture mirrors society's ideas about safety and danger, and the division between private and public spaces. The real sidewalk floor becomes a counter-site to the imagined space of the sidewalk that is designed to transport residents from one location to another.

Asaltodiario, Barro Rojo, and other artists were not merely romanticizing street life. They were aware that street life was merely a reflection and extension of the private/public life binary that disenfranchised many youth, including them. In the case of Asaltodiario, group members were youth from the streets.[51] Leyva and Díaz's solidarity with the homeless, drug addicts, or working-class was informed by the fact that they were young, dark-skinned adults from marginalized, non-middle-class barrios. Leyva was from the barrio de Guadalupe, in Iztapalapa, the historically marginalized delegation. Díaz was from the northwest barrio Doctores, a working-class neighborhood. Miguel Díaz says, "We were youth from the streets" (Personal Interview). Even though they used dance in their performances, they did not contain their aesthetics to any one aesthetic form. They spent their days in city sewers with homeless and drug-using youth. They supported the kids and taught them dances. However, they did not consider themselves to be doing rehabilitative work (Díaz). They spent time with youth who did not know where to get social services assistance and decided to make the street their home. The homeless youth living on the streets contested the public/private binary.

After the earthquake, the easy lines between private and public space were erased for more residents and Asaltodiario negotiated which aesthetics to use in their work. When participating in the *danza callejeras*, Díaz and Leyva were still members of dance company Contradanza as they performed on the street corners. The dance companies chose dances designed for the concert stage, but adapted them to the street. Díaz says:

> We did not have dances that responded to that specific situation [the earthquake], but we chose the ones that were most appropriate for the people that were shattered because they had lost their loved ones and they did not have housing. (My translation; Piñon)

[51] In Barro Rojo's case, the company travelled to Nicaragua to work for anti-imperialist interventions in Central America. Their radical aesthetics were situated in relationship to anti-capitalist and then-crystalizing neoliberal policies. These artists were responding to the institutionalized systems of exclusion and regional intervention by foreign militaries.

Companies performed community concerts using dance genres that ranged from Martha Graham to José Limón, the dominant movement vocabularies taught at the national schools and art centers at the time.[52] Díaz and his collaborators did not have the financial capacity to support the residents' reconstruction efforts. They used the dance tools that they learned at the *Centros de Educación Artística* to create a sense of ordinary time. When people's lives were shattered, dance performances became appropriate tools to create and invent a sense of regular time and space.

This political, social, and aesthetic situation marked Díaz and Leyva's artistic development. Through their involvement with Contradanza and the *danza callejeras*, they found a process to address the social injustices that displaced residents were experiencing. They realized the profound capacity of contemporary dance in urban life to be routed from strange to ordinary time and space. Yet, for them, concert dance genres appeared to be an inadequate language to address these injustices. The dance genres still possessed an ordinariness of regular time that perpetuated a normative behavior of class systems that demarcated sanctified spaces from dirty spaces. They found value in using dance genres such as Graham and Limón, but those techniques were associated with concert dance and served the purpose of entertainment for displaced persons rather than tools for social change. When the dancers used these dance forms, the accumulated social class value of these techniques marked the dancers as different from the people on the street.[53] The way the dancers moved in front of the residents rendered their bodies strange and created a difference that alienated them. For example, when a dancer began to perform, as soon as they lifted their leg beyond the ordinary range of movement, they became strangers in space and time, and they rendered their bodies as sites that were trained in formal studios, spaces distant from the resident's reality.[54] These gestures signaled unequal spatial difference. Díaz and Leyva sought aesthetic tools and processes that connected them to the residents whose displacement had become ordinary.

Keeping their art on the street allowed the artists to prioritize a creative practice that did not try to impose aesthetic genres on the populations they were working with.[55] Díaz, Leyva, and Nájera decided to start a laboratory to develop methodologies to deal with the political injustices of the city. Asaltodiario was trying to erase the line between performance and politics by rejecting elitism and centering the knowledge generated from street life. Díaz maintains:

> The public is our audience. Our neighbors continue to be the people with whom we live. They are the people with whom we get on the Metro or the bus. They are the citizens who walk the streets because we are from there too. It is the people that go to the market. That is our community. (Díaz; My translation)

They adopted working-class aesthetic practices to make themselves available to the needs homelessness and policies created for unwanted bodies, using movement vocabularies, symbolic images, and aesthetic representations specific to the communities in which they were working, be it the market or the metro. In their new practice, they emphasized a set of embodied and spatial relations that enacted a shared sense of community with displaced persons.

Shifting their aesthetic practices from the concert to the street allowed them to underscore the social conditions that unjustly pressured homeless bodies and drug users, and to use the physical conditions of street life for developing creative works. In making this methodological and

[52] Limón was a prominent American modern dance choreographer and dancer who migrated to the United States from Mexico in the early twentieth century.

[53] Interview with Miguel Ángel Díaz

[54] Díaz gives other examples such as when a dancer lifts their head.

[55] Also, it made them less dependent on the cronyism of the deciders of state culture; a process that, according to César León Palacios, was crystalized from the 1940s to the 1970s.

aesthetic distinction, they highlighted the creation of performance interventions that were oriented to their communities and unified by the street. They wore tattered clothes not because they romanticized the street, but because those were the clothes they wore themselves on a regular basis. The artists, like the residents, were living, eating, and doing political work on the street. The government was not making reasonable efforts to reinstate the living conditions for those persons who had lost their dwellings. The clothes and practices they taught each other were from their lives and from what they experienced every day. The rubble became the scenography. Helping people clear debris from the street became ordinary behavior. The street became both strange and ordinary space and time, and the boundary between the utopia and heterotopia was blurry.

For the young artists, the methodologies from Brazilian Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed animated and challenged the unjust social-political conditions that they faced and, I argue, attended to the efficacy of performance's ability to create a sense of collectivity in a collective vortex of space and time.[56] Díaz and Leyva did not train directly with Boal, but they trained with members of theater companies who had trained directly with Boal in México. The Brazilian artist, educator, and philosopher travelled through México in the early 1970s, long before Asaltodiario formed as a company. He performed at the Palacio de Bellas Artes.[57] *El Zopilote* and *Zumbón* later trained artists such as Leyva and Díaz in the *Centro de Educación Artística* in Boal's methods.[58] Boal's Theater of the Oppressed possessed three modes or tactics. These included Image Theater, Forum Theater, and Invisible Theater. Boal developed these tactics under the umbrella of the Theater of the Oppressed to help disenfranchised persons to rehearse revolutionary actions. The theater was a training ground for other modes of political organization. In particular, Díaz and Leyva drew from the branch of Invisible Theater where public interventions involve performers who never reveal that they are actors, but who stage an event and provoke actions where a performance might not otherwise happen. This branch of the Theater of the Oppressed sought to create public spectacles and commotions, provoking residents to overhear conversations that might question their values or opinions about politics and society. Asaltodiario found in Boal's Invisible Theater an avenue to create public opportunities for spectators to address the impact of the existing class and racial differences in Mexico City, but that had been rendered illegible after the earthquake. They wanted aesthetic practices that did not distance the viewer from the performance. For this reason, their performances always began "invisible," without an announcement. The artists wanted the unsuspecting viewers to see the dancers as residents first and foremost, avoiding being seen as different from the people for and whom they were performing. In this space, dance was front and center in cultivating a sense of unity and cohesion where there was chaos and uncertainty.

In a photograph of Asaltodiario's performance *Veinte años produciendo calidad* from 1988, the image captures Miguel Ángel Díaz in the middle of an outdoor performance firmly hugging a metal construction beam as it appears to be in mid-fall.[59] Asaltodiario's urban aesthetics appear surprisingly subdued. Any jeans-wearing youth from urban city centers such as London, New

[56] See Augusto Boal. *Teatro del Oprimido* (1974).

[57] See Rubio González, Javier and José Carreño Carlón. *México, 30 Años en Movimiento: Una Cronologia.* Distrito Federal: Universidad Iberoamericana. 1998. p. 130.

[58] It was not until 1994 that Díaz had the opportunity to meet Boal on a trip to New York.

[59] In the same image, Gomez-Peña and Fusco's now famous performance *The Couple in the Cage: Two Amerindian Visit the West* evidences the duet's critique of ethnographic practices and the continued racialization of brown bodies in the United States. On the lower-right hand side, Hadad's picture highlights her queer cabaret aesthetic, which critiques heteronormative and patriarchal Mexican identity.

York, or Río de Janeiro could have created this performance.[60] The image documents a figure holding on closely to the insert of steel grooves. With a construction crane in the background, the solitary figure looks to their left. From the image's perspective, the performer's position on the metal construction is unclear. The exact location, time, and gender are difficult to locate. Although the figure has a thin rope wrapped around their waist, the angle of the rope indicates that they are beyond the point where the tie-line would capture them should they fall off. Moreover, the steel beam distorts the frame because its direction and movement contradicts the crane's position in the background, which stands above an unseen ground. Both the crane and steel beam appear to be mid-fall; together, they disorient the visual field, almost inducing vertigo. The figure clings on to the beam even as it appears to topple down, holding on almost masochistically. The image expresses the intimate and constantly precarious relationship that exists between the infrastructure of urban development and the body's place in it. Vertigo becomes a bodily relationship to the material conditions of our urban landscape.

Frank B. Wilderson differentiates between subjective vertigo and objective vertigo.[61] The former is the individualized feeling that a person or group of persons experiences when they are confronted with and responding to spectacular circumstances, such as combat ambushes or protests. The latter, objective vertigo, describes the institutionalized or systemic construction of disorientation. This means that government agencies or policies are capable of creating social parameters that are meant to instill confusion.

Wilderson's assessment of these two modes of experiencing vertigo links to what I observe in the work of the artists in the México of the 1980s. The earthquake destroyed major parts of the city and induced feelings of subjective vertigo. Residents did not know where family members were located. Telecommunication systems stopped functioning. Then-President de la Madrid requested that residents stay home and wait for the government to implement its response. He refused foreign assistance and prohibited the use of the military in the rescue efforts.[62] Seeing no immediate action, residents mobilized on their own, removing debris and setting up food distribution shelters.[63] They exposed the government's inefficiency. In 1985, México changed drastically, not only because the city underwent major urban developments after the earthquake, but also because its residents exposed how it was up to them to rescue their own city. Importantly, it became clear that performance practices served an important function in inventing new spaces for healing from the trauma of the events and creating new forms for residents to relate to each other.

The name Asaltodiario behaves badly in multiple ways. First, the moniker can be split into three separate words "a salto diario," translating approximately in English to "the daily grind." The phrase is choreographic in nature and refers to the colloquial verbiage that Mexico City residents use to express the daily effort they exert in order to survive and navigate the conditions of the urban metropolis. When the term is divided into two words, "asalto diario," it foregrounds assaults imposed upon the resident by someone or something attempting to steal something of value; the

[60] I came across this image at the Walker Art Center's program leaflet for the performances occurring on 12 Sept. 1992.

[61] Wilderson is discussing the experience of Black subjects in the United States, but his analysis of the effective and motion-attuned dimensions of political formation and disorientation are useful in other contexts. See "The Vengeance of Vertigo: Aphasia and Abjection in the Political Trials of Black Insurgents." *InTensions Journal*, no. 5, 2011, pp. 1-41.

[62] "Oh Dios," "Tragedia" Radio la Nueva República. 19 Sept. 2015. Accessed 25 Nov. 2019.

[63] Verónica Calderón. "La movilización popular que puso en juicio la eficacia de un gobierno." *El País*. 20 Sept. 2015. Accessed 25 Nov. 2019.

asalto can be an antagonistic entity taking any shape, form, or force. These assaults can be imposed by police wanting to be bribed, men cat-calling women walking down the street, *chavos banda* [street gang kids] trying to make a quick steal, the shoulder-to-shoulder contact occurring every day in the subterranean metro as millions of residents commute from one location to another, or political-economic forces relying on corrupt administrators and foreign intervention. What unites both terms is the emphasis on the daily, "diario." It foregrounds the quotidian steps that residents make daily to survive and the violent attacks that they receive on a regular basis. Leyva, Díaz, and Nájera started the group because they wanted to create counter forces in public yet marginalized street spaces where deviant bodies gathered. These spaces can be defined as heterotopias but, as I will show in the following section, other forms take shape in the presence of collective vertigo.

Of Choreotopias

Asaltodiario's performance activities could be considered a reconstruction of heterotopias in the midst of a spatial and temporal collective vertigo after the collapse. Foucault argues, "heterotopias function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (*Of Other Spaces* 6). In general, spaces like hotels, theaters, cemeteries, and gardens create slices of time, or heterochronies. They all signal other strange times away from regular time. These are situations where the telos of time diverge. On the one hand, time can move towards the infinite. For example, libraries and cemeteries accumulate time outside of ordinary time. The items and bodies that enter these spaces are preserved with eternity in mind. Meaning, the books and bodies are going to be in space as if it is possible to imagine the future of human experience in its totality. On the other hand, time can be directed towards the immediate. As an illustration, vacation villas, hotels, or shelters created for festivals are oriented towards a transitory time. These events are small and bounded bursts of experiences in a situated space. Asaltodiario organized workshops with homeless populations in the historic Alameda Central.[64] Since the early days of Asaltodiario's formation, Díaz and Leyva conducted late-night laboratories with beggars, drug addicts, and punk residents in contested plazas to interrupt the clearing of these marginalized people and the sanitation of public spaces with economic value. The times and locations of these workshops are heterotopias because they are counter-sites and behaviors to the imagined utopian idea of the city and they occur outside of traditional time; time different from production time (unhoused versus housed) and regular working hours (night time versus day time). However, Asaltodiario's actions and the work that the performance is doing in these spaces and times are similar to, but unlike, the heterotopia. The group's first piece *Todo aquel sorprendido, todo aquel consignado* (1987) suggests the construction of sites different from, but not unrelated to, a heterotopia. In the presence of objective vertigo where delimited sets of social and spatial relations are unclear, I suggest that *choreotopias* give rise to heterotopias. Choreotopias offer residents a way to relate to each other in order not to forget the injustices of the past and present.

To understand how marginalized youth create a sense of dwelling or home when the markers of spatial difference are temporarily erased, I find it useful to consider the combination of the terms *choreo* and *topia*, or "circulation" and "place" respectively. Here, I am using *choreo* in connection with its Greek root *choreia*, or the process of integrating the elements of human rhythm, movement, and voice, while giving specific emphasis to the kinetic circulation and integration of these elements as originally understood.[65] In its original meaning, choreo refers to the moment

[64] Located in the delegation Magdalena Contreras.
[65] For an extended study of the term choreography, see Susan Foster's chapter "Choreography" in Choreographing Empathy (2011).

when a chorus creates a circle and combines dance, song, and architecture as part of a drama. The chorus unites and collectively deploys these elements to create a unified sense of imaginative and real movement by moving in a circle while at the same time inventing a bounded space within a performance (Kitto). Choreo suggests a unity of space and collective effort to tell a story. Combined, the two terms render the concept of a *choreotopia*. At their most surface level, choretopias invent a sense of enclosure within a larger set of established relations by deploying an embodied sense of space and creating a temporary bounded place when it draws collective attention to a pressing theme. The effectiveness of a choreotopia rests in its ability to be deployed in unexpected places.

Todo aquel foregrounds homeless youth's anxieties with consumer culture, waste, and state violence against gay residents. From 1987 to 1992, Asaltodiario staged *Todo aquel* in various barrios and communities in México and the United States. In all of these performances, the artists donned similar clothes. Their shoes are in tatters, jeans have holes, and shirts are cut off. Also, Leyva has his hair buzzed and trimmed with angular lines designed across it. *Todo aquel sorprendido, todo aquel consignado* reveals an insight about how marginalized residents create a sense of belonging in the midst of the collective vortex of social chaos.[66] That belonging happens despite, or rather because of, the lack of heterotopic spaces that exist for them. Meaning, the earthquake rendered the places that were heretofore spaces of difference inaccessible. *Todo aquel* is about two young people who scuffle. One of the young men, Leyva, walks around sniffing glue from a bag. Then, without warning, the other young man, Díaz, leaps out of nowhere and begins to push Leyva. Meanwhile, Leyva continues to get high from sniffing industrial glue and Díaz tussles with him in what appears to be both a violent game between best friends and a deadly fight between enemies. At times the youth are dancing in unison, leaping forward and backward, or standing parallel to each other on their left legs with their right legs straight. Yet at other times they combat each other with force. Shirtless, they clasp their arms and push each other to the ground. The piece reaches an apex as one of the *chavos* stands atop a trash barrel brandishing a knife pointed directly at his friend. The playful duet leads to the death of one of the members and ends with one of the men holding the other one screaming, "cuuleero!"[67]

Following a heterotopic analysis allows us only to account for the social and architectural conditions of economic differences in the present moment and how these might impact future desires. We attend solely to the "here and now" and "then and there;" that is, youth gather on street corners and fight each other because they have nothing else to do. Asaltodiario shared this specific piece in the peripheries of the city in places such as Tlalnepantla where *razzias* or police raids against homeless youth, gay clubs, and street gangs continued to be a common occurrence even after the tenure of the city's notorious police chief Arturo Durazo Moreno ended in 1982.[68] It reveals that street corners are real spaces that transform society because a person lounging and fighting on the street corner stands in contrast to the normative behavior prescribed for the street; that is, it is designed for transporting. That the performance takes place in corners where delinquent, homosexual, and working-class bodies gathered is indicative of its un-utopian dimensions.[69]

[66] I recreated this performance based on an interview, newspaper articles, photographs, and a recreation of the piece from 2017.

[67] Translated approximately to "fucker" or "asshole," derived from "culo," ass.

[68] In 1989, Carlos Monsiváis recounted Moreno's legacy in the public sphere. Moreno was notorious for torturing suspect criminals who were in fact innocent victims.

[69] Alberto Teutle López proposes that the street was associated with delinquency, homosexuality, and working-class. See "Male homoeroticism, homosexual identity, and AIDS in Mexico City in the 1980s."

The reason this intervention is less a heterotopia and more of a choreotopia is also related to the lack of permission requested to access public spaces. Foucault insists that entry into a heterotopia is by force or requires a rite of passage mediated by gestures. He says, "Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures" (*Of Other Spaces* 7). One cannot simply access a counter-site. One has to know the codes or gestures of conformity or deviance to gain acceptance. Permission legitimizes the heterotopic encounter. By contrast, the choreotopia does not seek legitimized authority. When Leyva enters the street corners, he does not seek permission and the action is not compulsory. The gesture is decided *in situ* or *ad hoc* and does not require prior knowledge of a system of signification and authority. The title of the piece foregrounds these abrupt interruptions of space. *Todo aquel sorprendido, todo aquel consignado* translates roughly to "all who are surprised, all who are arrested." The artists' choice to enact the performance in unexpected places is designed to interrupt the normal order of events. It is supposed to capture the passersby gaze, stopping them in their tracks and bringing attention to the youth's tussle and their negotiation of street life.

Importantly, the trash makes the choreotopia possible. When the trash is left in the dumpster, it appears to have no value. Leyva uses the crinkled up waste in the trash bin because the object does not have the same protections as if it were in a grocery store. Once the bag is left in the trash, other forms of legitimate authority are enacted. Leyva enters the temporary performance space and grabs the trash. Then, Díaz shouts at him and threatens him with a knife. These interactions foreground the movement of those specific material elements. Meaning, the trash is on its way to the city dump and, because it is deemed valueless, the dancers can interact with it differently than if it had been in a store—a space that requires particular modes of conduct, movement, and exchange. In this sense, the performers are transiting momentarily through the trash's lack of value to choreograph a valuable collective encounter.

In Sal Salerno's photo of Leyva in *Todo aquel*, Leyva holds a plastic bag with care and concern (see figure two).[70] His hands wrap around the thin plastic material. The bag resembles a tiny cloud floating on the edge of his lips. The inclusion of the *monas* [cleaning rags referred to as dolls] and the bag of cement in the performance signal the embrace of that pungent difference. The dolls, which are covered in glue, are sniffed to induce pleasure, but they emit a strong odor that can be smelled from many feet away. Anyone who happens to walk by the scent could be repulsed by it. The concavenal shape of Leyva's hands tenderly accepts the smell of that difference. The *monas* are employed to create a shared sense of care with the lower classes. Chemical inhalants can be an acquired taste to create a collectivity amongst youth who are deemed a social failure (Gigengack).

The artists enact a subtle relationship of care with disenfranchised subjects when they use the trash through a choreographic lens. First, they identify impoverished neighborhoods or corners where undisciplined bodies gather. Second, performative interventions are identified; meaning, they select a piece that is appropriate for the occasion. Third, they use performance tools to momentarily cause disorder and then leave without ever saying there was a performance, only a wall tagged with the name "Asaltodiario," and the "A" drawn as the anarchy symbol. These invisible street choreographies rupture the public as a form of political and social collectivity,

[70] This photo of the performance was taken at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1992. It is important to note that the majority of the audience is white. I do not analyze the racial context of this performance when the artists were touring. Other photo documentation exists of this performance. I chose this one because it captures an intimate moment between Leyva and the plastic bag.

creatively using the city's waste. They do not depend on recognition and permission. The past performance signaled that the dance was not ephemeral, it transformed into the material in the present moment. Importantly, the wall tag expressed how the performance started with the duet dance but as it transformed it gave attention to the material elements that shape the performer's material conditions outside of the performance.

Asaltodiario maintained a preoccupation with not only looking to their present and future lives, but also prioritized the surplus of material conditions from the past that are left behind on the street and created a kinesthetic sense of urban life.[71] The piece always began with the two young people staging an argument, where the passersby could mistake the encounter as a fight. They procured the trash can for their performances from the corners where they staged the intervention. Díaz and Leyva would search for the container in advance of the performance, take out the trash specific to the site, build a pile, and use the empty container and the trash as part of the scenography and properties for the assaults. The trash was central to the desired effect. At the end of the intervention, the surviving youth abandoned the scene when the piece ended, while the deceased youth stayed on the ground until people dispersed.[72]

Because I am analyzing performance practices in a Mexican context, it would be appropriate to translate the term to its Spanish equivalent, rendering the noun *coreotopía.* However, spelling the term the same in both languages keeps its deviant characteristics. Upon first glance, a Spanish-speaking reader might misidentify the first part of this term as *choreo* or *choro*; that is, the effect or action of *chorear*, meaning, to tell a story full of lies to convince someone of something.[73] In the performance, Leyva and Díaz do not announce that they are performers. They want the passersby to think that they are one of them. The clothes they wear for the interventions make them appear like any person wearing denim jeans and tennis shoes. In effect, they are partially concealing their identities to convince the audience that they are part of the people on the street. Unlike the heterotopia, the choreotopia does not require legitimized authority for its enactment. Consequently, choreotopias do not try to reinstate a past that perpetuates recognized forms of power and place. Rather, they are about the deviancies of place for the lives of unwanted residents and the material consequences of the past in the form of residue.

A choreotopic analytic offers a framework to assess the circulation of place where belonging is deviant and fragile, always on the cusp of fracturing and sticking to para-human materialities such as knives, trash, and chemical bags that make a place tangible, but where permission is not needed. The trash bags the residents throw out, the clothes they wear, the drugs they consume, along with their bodies, make this strange time and place palpable. In the five years that Leyva performed *Todo aquel,* he would grab trash bags from trashcans because they were abundant. These objects became the avenue to relate to non-normative populations. *Todo aquel* is as much about the social interactions the artists try to cultivate with working-class audiences deemed perpetually suspicious as it is about the waste objects deemed worthless by the audiences who leave them behind. A heterotopic analysis of this performance only accounts for the behavioral and architectural conditions of the intervention. We know that the behavior is deviant and the street

[71] For a rich and insightful analysis on the relationship between dance and urban space see SanSan Kwan's *Kinesthetic City* (2013).
[72] As of this writing, I was unable to find performance reviews that gave details about who saw the performances. I was able to read a short description written by Héctor Garay.
[73] The term has other meanings such as mussels, thief, or a long-winded talk. Also, this term is closely related to "chorro," which means diarrhea. I use this meaning because this is the first definition that came to me when I read it. Also, it was and is a term that is used regularly within my working-class communities. I choose this definition to honor the use of this term in a playful manner.

corner is a counter site. Both of these aspects stand outside of ordinary time and space. The fight is a strange behavior. Leyva's sniffing glue is unusual. The street corner is an odd location for an altercation. Yet the trash is neither a space nor a time, but it signals the past lives of others. The material afterlives of the heterotopias, and the embodied conditions of their political and social conditions, are in the trash; meaning, the trash will be picked up by someone and taken to a dump site. And, when it is not taken, it will lay on the street and accumulate until it becomes an obstacle to a person walking on the sidewalk or driving a car. The trash was a metaphor for the interconnectedness that existed in public life and that united people across difference in the accumulation of waste.

This framework follows Deborah Vargas who, when analyzing the lives of subjects who are deemed dirty and wasteful in neoliberal projects, or those who are deemed *los sucios,* invites us to consider how the most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations create a sense of belonging.[74] For Vargas, *lo sucio* is a queer analytic in attending to economic and social projects that disappear welfare moms, economically impoverished neighborhoods, and overcrowded rental dwellings through the cleaning up of spaces and populations deemed dirty and wasteful. In conditions where markers of cleanliness and sanitation are employed against bodies marked by their supposed lewdness, perpetual untrustworthiness, and inability to meet normative ideas of womanhood and manhood, markers of difference associated with unwanted tastes and smells can be tactics against regimes that expect normalized economic and sexual behaviors.

Taking a lead from Vargas, it is imperative to consider how subjects hitherto considered obscene, unproductive, and lewd use their "dirty" bodies and practices to embrace difference and employ it to create a shared sense of care that is felt, smelled, and tasted. In the case of Asaltodiario, commitments to highlighting alternate forms of non-productive relationships through the use of the waste are present. Again, Leyva enters the corners for the intervention pretending to be a homeless youth addicted to chemical drugs. Chemical glue has a pungent scent that can be smelled from a great distance away. This smell signals a culture of unproductiveness because youth who inhale such chemicals lay around in the streets; they take up space without permission or a desire to be productive according to societal norms. What is more, inhalant use is an embodied social practice that is adopted along class lines. The cement is cheaper to buy compared to cocaine and heroin. Therefore, although chemical drug use is widely accepted across class lines, cement inhalants are associated with the lower classes.

A reading of Asaltodiario's artistic vision evidences that heterotopias are everywhere, as Foucault insists, but it is performance-centered actions that make those heterotopic spaces visible and felt. Choreotopias attend to the corporeal parameters of power, acknowledges the material concerns of these power relations in motion, and foreground the choreographic acts of difference used without permission and a desire to reinstate a normative narrative of the past. Again, in *Todo aquel*, Leyva, who holds the plastic bag full of chemical glue, offers it repeatedly to Díaz, then rests on his back on the ground, inhaling from the bag and pointing to the sky. He holds the bag tenderly.[75] His left hand grasps the edge of the plastic bag while his right hand caresses the bottom of the bag. He pumps the bag, trying to inhale the air inside. Díaz walks into the inhalant user, never indicating to the user that he should stop consuming the drugs. In fact, the impetus of their

[74] See "Ruminations on *Lo Sucio* as a Latino Queer Analytic" (2014).

[75] I started to recreate this performance using interviews and photo documentation because the piece had not been performed since 1992 when Jaime Leyva passed away. In the middle of my research in July of 2017, Miguel Diaz reconstructed and performed *Todo aquel* for the first time since 1992. I incorporate the video documentation from the 2017 performance with my other archival materials.

tussle is never clearly defined; that is, their condition appears perpetual and we experience it *in medias res*. The scenario appears simple, but the situation is more complicated. In recounting the performance, Héctor Garay maintains that the performance is simply a modern day tragedy about the consequences of using drugs.[76] This appears to be true but, upon closer analysis, the performance indicates that the tragedy is not about the drugs. Díaz does not accuse Leyva. They exchange gestures of disagreement but we do not know if they are longtime enemies or passersby who had an argument. The youth are friends and enemies. There is an agonism between the two. The performance leaves the viewer wondering about their relationship, but what emerges from the performance is the feeling of an ongoing struggle.

One can surmise that the playful, deadly duet is not about condemning the youth for the use of drugs. The piece premiered after the 1985 earthquake, a time when toxic chemical use was common in México City. Yet the economic crisis and the earthquake that occurred in the 1980s did not introduce the use of inhalant consumption. When México experienced an economic boom from the 1940s to the 1970s, youth began adopting the sniffing of chemical glues from plastic bags or *monas* (Natera).[77] Hence, the tension between the youth, and the eventual tragedy, does not play out with the objective of mobilizing a political agenda disavowing the use of solvents—although it does not disregard the deadly consequences. Rather, their relationship affirms the sniffing of chemicals as a terminal site of belonging and agency. Because solvents are accessible, youth are able to induce a high on their own terms. The *monas,* as chemical dolls, provide an intimacy at the edge of the youth's fingers. As queer of color theorist Mel Chen helps us understand, marginalized subjects relate to the toxins and other non-human objects because synthetic toxins induce pleasures and affections that create a sociability otherwise thought to be evacuated.[78]

In *Todo aquel,* the surviving friend screams after his friend dies from a self-inflicted stab that occurs during their playful bouts. Díaz holds Leyva's head tenderly as his friend dies. Then he looks to the sky as he shouts angrily "culero," fucker. He mourns in agony and fury. Díaz mourns Leyva's loss. He wraps his arms around his back. He exchanges a temporary caress before he leaves his friend on the street and continues on his way. The soft embrace before his departure indicates a temporary care and tenderness. In that small gesture, we see that the dead friend is not the culero; the culero is the system that creates the conditions against both of them. Importantly, when Díaz looks up at the sky, he reveals how structural dispossession is everywhere and invisible, and made to appear natural. In this way, choreotopias are artistic-political sites of dwelling where human bodies, sounds, ideologies, non-human materials, and energies collide and integrate to account for the historic, present, and future lives of unwanted bodies.

If the 1980s is a period marked by tectonic destruction and collective vertigo, then Asaltodiario's creative work is an urban politic that uses the waste of the past to create a temporary and spatially bounded dwelling riding along an unjust shifting landscape. The plastic bag and the toxins mediate a temporary sociality that cannot be achieved otherwise. Holding a bag tenderly in the middle of a high achieves a lucid experience in an otherwise difficult situation of economic impoverishment. When Asaltodiario performed this duet in the streets of México City, their interventions became choreotopias, an organizing method for working-class residents. They reveal how choreotopias emerge as heterotopias by expressing the material and embodied dimensions of the street as a mirror of the street. Choreotopias are entered into with the residue of urbanization's

[76] Garay Aguilera, Héctor Manuel. "Un extraño en un espacio extraño" in *La tradición hoy en día*. Mexico City, Universidad Iberoamericana. 1998, pp. 71-83.
[77] This period is often referred to as the "Mexican Miracle."
[78] See *Animacies*, Duke University Press, 2012.

waste and toxicity, using trash to assemble temporary artistic-political intimacies that induce a chemical drag and suspend the political and urban forces attempting to dispose of the historic, present, and future lives of those left to die. In the next section, I address what viewers of choreotopias get from these experiences.

Conflict in the Alameda Central

With the idea of choreotopias, I am interested in a political model that tracks how bodies, sounds, fumes, and other materials move in and out of performances to create temporary communities that are united by a sense of dispossession, and give rise to heterotopias. This term adds one more category to the types of categorizations that exist in dance studies and tend to divide performances along dance genre lines. Meaning, when analyzing performances, dance scholars often use the terms "social," "concert," or "folk" to describe the collective movement of bodies.[79] The idea of choreotopias allows us to pay attention to the movement of bodies, the objects they use in performances, and the collectivity created in the moment, without resorting to dance genre specific movement. However, I also do not want to prioritize movement as a site of liberation. Instead, I am interested in an idea of liberation where movement is a process that gets us to a place of rest or, as Asaltodiario's work reveals, arrest. Here, I am distinguishing movement from André Lepecki's idea of the choreopolitical, and its reliance on the Arendtian notion of movement as motion or "will to act" as the terminal site of agency. Movement here is being conceived of as transportation or conveyor. It is carrying or transferring a feeling, object, or motion from one location to another. The artists I examine are using movement to get to a point of rest. The choreotopia exists in the suspended crack of anticipatory conditions where the imaginaries, feelings, and material realities of life vibrate and come into contact with the conditions of oppression that threaten to limit freedom in the future.

Urban sociologist Diane Davis argues that the 1980s in Mexico City was a time dedicated to the privatization and commercialization of public space.[80] Luxury shopping centers or the development of high density buildings, renovation projects, and a shifting economic model took power away from Mexico City's industrial sector and public spaces. The Mexican government and foreign companies such as the private property investment firm Reichmann Brothers were vying for economic control of the historic downtown area, with competing desires for the urbanization and sanitation of México throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These development efforts included the clearing of homeless persons, sex workers, market vendors, and working class residents from historically public spaces. Endeavors such as the Alameda Project threatened to transform the historic downtown blocks into global corners of consumer culture and a liberalized economy while it restricted the access and enjoyment of homeless and working-class residents.

Asaltodiario's earliest projects in 1987 included interventions at the heritage site Hemiciclo Benito Juárez, a monument located in the Alameda Central Square erected to honor former President Benito Juárez. While the garden dates back to 1592, and is considered to be the oldest public park in México City, then-president Porfirio Díaz commissioned the Hemiciclo in 1910. President Díaz requested the monument five years after the initial construction of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, which stands adjacent.[81] It is here where a microcosm exists of the larger tensions

[79] Susan Foster, in *Worlding Dance*, argues that these terms are imperial constructs and reify orientalist and colonial notions of power and how it gets to be expressed through the movement of bodies.
[80] See Davis, Diane E. "Globalization, Governance, and the Collision of Forces in Mexico City's Historic Center" in Tom Angotti ed., *Urban Latin America: Inequalities and Neoliberal Reforms*. 2017.
[81] The palace was completed in 1934 by then-President Aberaldo Rodriguez, though it was originally conceived in 1904 as the National Theater by President Porfirio Díaz, when the then-president wanted the center to commemorate

within the wider city between residents who felt that rapid development and the protection of patrimonial heritage was more important than other residents' right to public space. Asaltodiario produced a sensibility of interconnectedness that was specifically in response to the destructive elements of capitalism and the public discrimination against homeless, gay, and working-class residents.[82] Their aim to connect was ideological and abstract, but their work challenged the heteronormative middle class, reminding the public of the interconnectedness that was being lost and attending to the material necessities of those who were losing access to public space. However, that objective was sometimes met unintentionally, signaling to us that choreotopias can be the result of performance interventions that are not always planned.

Línea del alba was a raucous choreography for nine performers based on the 1944 poem *Los hombres de alba* by Efraín Huerta about drug addicts, gays, mentally unstable, and vagabonds frequenting the Hemiciclo from dusk until dawn. In the intervention, the performers represented some of those figures, but updated them to reflect the 1980s' attitudes. Nacho Carillo, Joanne Macquiene, Karim Noak, Alda Roiter, and Yozune Lorenzo all played wealthy young couples driving a stylish car and parading in the park. Jaime Leyva represented a homeless resident from the neighboring barrio and Miguel Ángel Díaz was a police officer. Gerardo Quesada was the musician playing music as a wealthy couple arrived. The sequence began inconspicuously with a car parking in front of the Hemiciclo along the Avenida Juárez and a man and woman dressed in high fashion walking in front of the monument. Then, the homeless person, played by Leyva, was supposed to ask the couple for a donation. Díaz, dressed as a police officer, was supposed to show up to drive out Leyva. The performance was scheduled to be performed during the second iteration of the *danza callejeras* festival in 1987.

In preparation for *Línea* at the Hemiciclo, Asaltodiario rehearsed at night without the city's permission. In developing *Línea* for the festival, the artists needed to use the park to rehearse, but the artists were prevented from rehearsing because they did not have the proper permits. They gathered after daylight hours, taking turns to teach others what they learned earlier in the day at their various arts schools.[83] In addition to teaching each other different creative processes, they memorized the police officers' routines and habits, knowing when dinner breaks would occur. They did this to understand how much time they had for their rehearsals and interventions. After the artists learned when the police officers' food breaks were, they used that time to rehearse.

During one of the unsanctioned rehearsals, a real police officer caught them off guard. Díaz was supposed to kick out Leyva, but a police mounted on a horse interrupted the performance. The police started to drive out the performer. Then the unexpected happened. The residents formed a circle around the supposed homeless man, blocking the horse-mounted police and protecting those

one hundred years of Mexican Independence. The Italian architect Adamo Boari was contracted to build the center, where he would use art nouveau and Art Deco styles. He worked with engineer Gonzalo Garita, but this partnership was tenuous at best and eventually dissolved. What was supposed to be a project lasting four years ended up lasting thirty years. The *Palacio de Bellas Artes*, which was designed in accordance with colonial urban planning ideologies following the decrees in the Ordinances of 1537, maintained its symbolic dominance as the seat of cultural power where the creative sector, Mexican expressive culture, and national *mestizo* ideologies commingled.

[82] The term "gay" or homosexual was just starting to be used as an accepted term. Prior to this period, the more common phrase was "persona de ambiente," translating approximately to "people of the atmosphere." See Teutle López, Alberto. "Male Homoeroticism, Homosexual Identity, and AIDS in México City in the 1980s" in *The Sexual History of the Global South: Sexual Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (2013).

[83] Díaz studied at a Centro de Educación Artistica (1980-1988). These were technical training schools for artists and performers. Jaime Leyva studied at Sistema Nacional para la Enseñanza Professional de la Danza (1984).

whom they thought were residents.[84] According to Díaz, "The people resisted the displacement of the homeless person. This action becomes a moment for the community to participate. However, it is not only about participating in a dance or performance of representation" (My translation; Personal Interview). The intervention at the Hemiciclo created an opportunity for city residents to participate in a small action of civil disobedience by using their bodies against horse-mounted police. Unintentionally, the artists aestheticized transgressive behaviors. The residents and the police joined a performance without knowing they were part of an intervention. They legitimized a collective creation of homeless life in the streets while bringing it into visibility to middle class publics in a way that made them reflect on their own losses of the collective shared space.[85] The space that they were losing was the access to the park. In that fragmented juncture between the residents' corporeal sense of the police's threat and their imagination of communal action, worlds of difference resonate and offer a sense of common connection and freedom.

Aspects of this intervention capture what performance theorist André Lepecki calls the *choreopolitical* (2013). Underscoring a direct relationship between politics, dance, and freedom, Lepecki maintains that a politics of control defines our society. This control, what he calls *choreopolicing*, is the generalized function of power or a force that directs, diverts, and pre-conditions social order to adhere to particular movement with conformity.[86] In a control society, police choreograph the movement of all subjects and/or subjects self-police by adhering to particular movement even outside of the direct view of authoritative power; choreopolicing can manifest as internalized and self-monitored normative actions and behavior. In contrast to choreopolicing, the choreopolitical is the non-conforming movement that must be practiced, rehearsed, experimented with, and nurtured. The political will vanish if we do not know how to move. Freedom is about kinetic knowledge and the political is about collective action between subjects. Freedom is always experimental and needs to be rehearsed through repetition, ad infinitum, or it will vanish.

The performers' actions at the Hemiciclo can be considered choreopolitical because Asaltodiario transgressed legitimated behaviors in a space that was already deemed suspicious and deviant. The dancers rehearsed in the space without permission. When they performed the intervention during the day, they had not requested the proper permits to perform in the park. Had they performed *Todo aquel* during the festival as originally intended and executed the performance within the purview of the permit, the action would have conformed to the behaviors prescribed by that permit. Instead, they practiced and experimented with their rehearsal times based on when the police took their breaks. In taking these collective actions, the group maintained non-conforming practices and kept their freedom. *Línea del alba* was created by Díaz and Leyva to honor the unwanted residents who frequented the historic park at the Alameda.

The performance does not explicitly address the exclusion of homosexual residents in the park, but the performance's reference to Huerta's poem demonstrates a concern with the public

84 This event is interesting because the audience's response differs from what happens when André Lepecki describes as the audience's response to Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5* (2008). In that intervention, the audience moves out of the way when a horse-mounted police directs them to clear the space. Lepecki finds it interesting that the police always succeed in choreographing people's movement. However, I wonder how much of the audience's reaction can be attributed to the police versus to the towering horse.

85 In an interview with me on August 30, 2019, Miguel Angel Díaz says that the policies at that time pre-figured those that are prevalent today.

86 It could be argued that this tactic of invisible theater takes away the residents' agency to decide how they want to participate in the intervention. In this chapter, I do not have the space to elaborate a longer thesis on how this argument assumes that the residents already have agency when they enter public space.

anxiety about gay men in public spaces and equating them with indecency.[87] In *Hombres*, Huerta makes a list of the indecent characters that frequented the Alameda in 1944. These included late-night sweaty workers with tattoos, insomniacs, bandits, and violators. He calls these characters, "Los hombres más adandonados, más locos, más valientes; los más puros" [The most abandoned, craziest, most courageous; the purest]. Among these men, he includes the "maricas con fiebre en las orejas" [sissies with a fever in their ears]. Before the creation of commercial gay clubs, the Alameda Central was known as a *cruising* site. Men interested in other men searched for sexual partners in the public bathrooms. Huerta expresses reverence for all of these nocturnal characters who possess "ojos como diamantes" [eyes like diamonds].

The residents who responded to *Línea* may not have been aware of the direct connection between the performance and Huerta's poem, but their actions expressed a care for the wellbeing of these people much in the same way that Huerta does in *Hombres.* The people collectively protect the homeless person/performer. The police do not succeed completely in choreographing the performers. The people guard his right to keep moving and their right to be in the space. Yet, they do not evade the police. They stand between the police and the performers. They intervene in the police's intervention when they see and sense the police walking towards the homeless person. The dancer-as-homeless person evades the police, but his freedom is achieved through the assistance of the crowd that blocks the authorities and protects the dancer's movement. They create a moment of stasis in order for his movement to emerge. His evasion is secured through the collective action against the police. The police attempt to apprehend the homeless person, but he is not apprehended thanks to the residents' actions. Between the juncture of the choreopolitical (the dancers) and choreopolicing (the park authorities), the choreotopia emerges as an embodied social intensity that mediates these two modes of social organization. The moment the police officers rush away the supposed homeless person, the passersby intervene and instantiate a choreopolitical possibility.

What this moment reveals is that the choreopolitical and choreopolicing are two types of heterotopias, and choreotopias mirror and mediate the relationship between these two sites. As mentioned earlier, heterotopias are real space, effectively enacting utopias. In this way, the choreopolitical site is effectively enacting the utopia of unrestricted freedom and choreopolicing is effectively enacting the utopia of complete control. And what mediates this relationship is the choreotopic site, where a bounded dilation of time-space occurs when the bodies get between the police and it conjures in corporeal intensities, or what Brian Massumi refers to as those sensations and affects "filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonation" (26). The residents' bodies feel the sensation of the utopic threat of complete conformity. They sense that if they do not intervene in that moment, the homeless person will lose some element of their freedom and possibly their life. Thus, when the residents coalesce around him, they become a collective entity capable of sensing and responding to the kinesthetic dimensions of legitimized power in space in the city street. Collectivity responds to the threat of conformity and protects individual freedom. In that interaction, the residents' collective experience becomes a living corpus in which its urban surfaces are experienced and heterotopias continue to exist.

Zones of Survivorship

Up to now I have argued for a choreotopic analytic that allows us to apprehend how performances on the street can be spaces for artists and residents to negotiate the conditions of social and political collective vertigo. When a city collapses and the lines between different heterotopias are difficult to distinguish, performances that use waste and corporeal intensities

[87] Emiliano Delgadillo Martínez argues that the theme of virility runs throughout Huerta's poem.

allow a shared sense of collectivity that agents of the State have evacuated or threatened to erase. Asaltodiario's practices facilitated a continuum of everyday connections from material belonging to the assembly of dissident acts as tactics in control societies. Meaning, these are choreography-focused actions that any person can execute with the trash and the sidewalk, and deploy to relate to each other. Given this assessment, my own view based on their work is that policing is not a monolithic force existing beyond the terrain of hope. The division between piracy and policing that Foucault outlines as essential to the heterotopia is rendered into a form of political play in the choreotopias. Between policing and piracy, there is play. As I mention in the previous section, already in Asaltodiario's earliest works such as *Linea de alba*, police and policing are a form of political humor and merrymaking. In *Suite semafórica: veinte años produciendo calidad,* the artists amplify this relationship. In this final section, I unpack the relationship between policing and piracy and its link to the hope that choreotopias offers.

Suite is an insurrectionist performance. It occurred on the street corners of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Northwest part of Mexico City, commenting on the deadly attack that occurred twenty years earlier in Mexico City. *Suite* happened in advance of the multitude of demonstrators marching across the streets of Mexico City on October 2, 1988. The raucous event was part circus, part contemporary dance, and part political commentary—a political avant-garde cabaret on wheels. Miguel Àngel Díaz, Jamie Leyva, and Joanna Macquiene played three performers dressed up as clowns. Asaltodiario members painted their faces, donned overalls, and covered their butts with pillows depicting the face of then-presidential candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari. The flyers included political commentary criticizing Gortari's campaign slogan, "*México Produce Calidad*" [México Produces Quality].

It occurred in the middle of public demonstrations commemorating twenty years since the military's brutal attack on student protesters. On October 2, 1968, student organizers, sponsored by the Consejo Nacional de Huelga [National Council for Strike], spoke from the third story of the Chihuahua building in Tlatelolco to deride the oppressive and capitalistic policies promoted by then-President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. The demonstrators had been marching for at least two months. Importantly, on September 18, the military had taken over the national university (Ferri). This instigated the months-long demonstrations. On October 2, when the final speaker gave his last words at the Chihuahua building, helicopters flying overhead shot off a red and green flare. This signaled the beginning of the Mexican military's attack on the students, neighbors, and demonstrators.[88] Ten days after the tragedy, on October 12, President Díaz Ordaz would go on to give the opening remarks at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México for the Olympic Games. In the end, the total number of dead is disputed; the numbers range from twenty to more than three hundred (Ferri). What is clear is that hundreds were wounded and the military detained more than five thousand students. Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, students, teachers, and union workers hesitated to participate in large street demonstrations for fear of the government's impunity and its willingness to use deadly force. The massacre marked the end of the student movement (del Castillo).

The performance foregrounded the lives of the undesired student bodies and leftist political protestors alongside the figures who exercise State power. In recalling this intervention, Díaz says, "These were little clowns that caused disorder" (My translation; Personal Interview). Residents were invited to shoot darts at the bullseye painted as Gortari's face. After performing amateur acrobatics dressed as clowns, the dancers put on a pig's nose and a police hat to chase the activists. Then, they distributed flyers commemorating the 1968 massacre. Eventually, the real police

[88] To this date, demonstrator interviews and state official records disagree on who started the shooting.

authorities showed up to chase the performers away. Still in clown mode, Díaz hopped onto the streetlight poles.[89] He walked from one pole to another using cables with a thin rope around his waist, as if on a tightrope. According to Díaz, bystanders screamed, "He is going to fall" (Personal Interview).

In *Suite*, the performers are not dismissing the police officers as a totalizing force. The performers joke with the police and play with the authority figures, usurping the entities as a form of political play.[90] Here, laughter becomes a different kind of control that blurs the binary between police and piracy. Judith Butler reminds us that laughter is an involuntary somatic control, "bodies at the limits of their sounds" ("Out of Breath"). Laughter possesses "reciprocal revival" when people lose control. Seen this way, rather than representing the open wounds of victimhood solely to criticize the police and the military, Asaltodiario uses laughter to reveal the presence of authority next to pain and revive their collective power.

Suite expresses how oppressed subjects use objects and their histories to survive control societies. Choreographer Robert Battle asserts that giving attention to the past is about what can happen to oppressed subjects now and in the future. Battle asserts, "The arts are artifacts of human survival" ("Joining Generations"). Seen through Battle's perspective, *Suite* relies on ephemera, emblems, and material objects from the near past to comment about the oppression that continued to exist after 1968. The artists collected images from the 1968 massacre and used them twenty years later by designing flyers in a similar fashion to the 1968 leaflets distributed by residents who were critical of the Presidency leading up to and during the Olympics. They interacted with the residents by passing out these flyers resembling the now-iconographic design from the 1968 Olympics. Words on the flyer such as "México" and "68" were outlined in black and white and the Olympic rings were depicted with military guards carrying machine guns as they ran through the numbers "68." Other images portrayed a dove with a knife puncturing its chest and blood dripping on its side. They were reusing the material remains of the past. By using iconographic images from 1968, the group underscored the lack of progress the government had made towards justice since the time of the students' deaths and they foregrounded the continuation of the oppressive tactics carried out by Gortari's campaign.

This intervention recognized the tragic loss of the students while also transmitting more than a singular scenario about victimhood and the exercise of power by the police and military. The group positioned itself between the police and the protestors, but not beyond it. They were betwixt and between the mass of bodies requesting change and the bodies enforcing normative behavior. This point highlights how, in choreotopias, piracy and policing commingle.

The performance's raucousness and disorder between victimhood and policing allowed the artists to pirate the event for their own gain. In English, Díaz' remark about the clowns causing disorder does not carry the same weight as it does in Spanish. In colloquial Spanish, *desmadre* is saturation, wreaking havoc, losing one's comportment, being unproductive, and creating diversions. It is a type of disorder, saturating the visual-sonic-corporeal field. In line with Asaltodiario's other Invisible Theater tactics, Asaltodiario carried their sound system and *palanganas* (water basins) on a truck they borrowed from the social services organization *Unión*

[89] He learned techniques such as tight-rope walking from Juvenal Jiménez and circus from Irene Martínez for this specific intervention.
[90] Cuerpo Mutable, which was originally called Forion Ensamble and founded in 1983, was another company that dedicated their creative process to using theatrical conventions and dance movement to express their concerns about the urban experience. Forion Ensamble used humor to focus on the idiosyncratic tendencies of the urban experience in México. These dance companies were developing new forms of creating and interacting with the audiences that took the urban quotidian life as the source of inspiration for their first works.

de Vecinos y Damnificados.[91] Their collaborator Imma Cervantes drove slowly, announcing that she was selling water buckets. Then she sold the plastic water basins. As Cervantes sold buckets, the intervention included dancing, flyering, acrobatics, clowning, political marches, and a sound system. They invited the audience to participate when they asked passersby to kick the performers on the butt. Also, they sold goods and generated money. Through these various modes of interaction, be it the invisible theater or the spectacular sale of buckets, the representations of the police officers, the students, and President became available for choreographing political pleasure through *desmadre*. Cervantes, Díaz, Leyva, and Macquiene saturated the street as they drove by. They sold goods to survive as residents and artists while they remarked about the ongoing social political problems.

Desmadre opens up the space for minor zones of survival. The term desmadre shares a connection with the word *desmadrar*, to separate the mother from the children so that they do not suckle from her ("Desmadrar"). This understanding of desmadrar is present and inverted as both a metaphor and real condition in *Suite*. After artists invited residents to kick the clown's butt with the President's face on the street-corner, they switched into police drag. This chaotic and slapstick comedy performance drew crowds in. Once they were close, they encouraged residents to buy *palanganas* off of a truck. By making money in these interactions, the artists turned the attention away from the demonstration and the police to make their money. The artists inverted the mother/child binary and chose to separate themselves even from the demonstrators who were participating in authorized marches. They refused pastoral power, what Michel Foucault describes as the State's monopoly of institutions for saving individuals.[92] By usurping the event, the artists put in place minor zones of financial survival that also refuse the state's involvement even when it is being criticized; that is, minor scenarios that mediate laughter and absurdity as a form of making money for emotional, material, and political livelihood in the presence of an ever destructive and oppressive urban landscape away from, but not apart from, State control.

I want to emphasize that I am not suggesting that Asaltodiario was *simpatico* with police officers or that they were uncritical of the presidency by not participating in the march. Rather, by using laughter alongside of pain to generate income, they rendered the performativity of policing. They donned police uniforms all while the actual police were present and regulating the larger demonstration. Cervantes, Díaz, and Leyva clowned the police. This concern with clowning was present across their work. As I mentioned in an earlier section about their interventions in the Hemiciclo, they played with the police's time, learning the police's dinner hours in order to know when to rehearse. In preparation for their interventions, the group memorized the police's lunch and dinner breaks. Nacho Carillo, Joanne Macquiene, Karim Noak, Alda Roiter, and Yozune Lorenzo rehearsed during those meal breaks. The police person's need to eat became an opportunity for the artists to pirate the protected space. They did not take a confrontational measure. On the street, the political is not only available as a resistive action against police conformity, but it is also available to oppressed subjects as a form of police play.

Consequently, public space survives for unwanted bodies and it also exists with the slightest hope even for those who perpetuate the status quo. Asaltodiario intervened in the Hemiciclo and mass demonstrations to play with the function of policing, circuitously usurping the space in the police's temporary absence and presence. A commitment to the street opened up new possibilities beyond the police versus pirate binary. Choreotopias allow slippages of space between policing and piracy. Without a choreotopia's capacity to allow slippages on the street between affiliation

[91] Díaz had maintained a close relationship with them since co-organizing the street dances in 1986

[92] I provide a closer reading of this term in this project's Introduction.

and resistance and pain and humor, hope for a more just city is lost. And, lest we forget that there is a material reality that is always present despite other political realities that make it not as evident, then we miss that central connection between people and we run the risk of committing the same crimes ourselves.

Conclusion

On July 17, 2017, Miguel Àngel Díaz walked up to the microphone on the stage of the Palacio de Bellas Artes in México's capital. He looked out at the audience as he gave the closing remarks for the thirty-year anniversary concert commemorating the formation of the experimental artistic company Asaltodiario. He told the crowd that his remarks would be brief. Then, he lifted his left hand momentarily and declared, "We dedicate this night to our friend Jaime Leyva and all of the social justice struggles that exist in this country." Without taking a breath, he continued, "And we only have to say that they will not break us. They will not frighten us. We will not stop going to the streets. We will keep working." The artist asserted his belief that dance belongs on the street and it is there to challenge the social inequalities that exist in Mexico City. On that night, the group presented *Todo aquel* for the first time since 1992. Díaz's statement underscored the company's history of consciousness raising around urban violence, using the politics of performance to create a more inclusive society.

Asaltodiario was part of a wave of deviant and unruly performance groups unsatisfied with genre distinctions. They were an active dance community performing for displaced and marginalized residents from 1986 up until 1991. *Danzas callejeras* were concrete-focused performance events emblematic of the contemporary dance community—an area of research in dance studies that would benefit from further analysis. Asaltodiario's work traces the genealogies of performance and politics across a continuum of public spaces and practices, from these dances to street corners to protected heritage sites. Across these sites, their political commitment was oriented always to belonging to the street. Asaltodiario's work, and their dedication to performing on the street, acquired an aesthetics specific to the street, where the city's residents were deemed unproductive. These commitments developed after the initial response to a devastating earthquake in 1985 that left the social and political realities of a city in a collective vortex. The easy line that divided public and private spaces was erased after the earthquake. The street became both public and private space.

Political philosopher Jacques Rancière argues that there has been an overlap between the arts and politics in the last century, maintaining that resistive practices in art and politics share similar approaches.[93] He identifies that, since the 1990s, political practices tend to focus on creating a social environment that is centered on the idea of "being with." When we look at an example like Asaltodiario from the Global South context, we see that these practices predated the 1990s. They choreographed interventions by using the trash left behind by undisciplined bodies. They created interventions in historically protected spaces to be with unwanted bodies. And, they were with the residents in the mass demonstrations. In Asaltodiario's thirty years of existence, the group has reiterated its commitment to returning to the streets with dance. These concerns with urban life are evidenced by the fact that the original name of Díaz's group was going to be *Urbanda,* a name combining the terms urban and *banda*; the latter term meaning gang, used colloquially to talk about

[93] Rancière delivered these remarks in the lecture "Shifting Borders: Art, Politics, and Ethics Today," UC Berkeley. 20 Feb. 2018.

street youth.[94] That Díaz and his colleagues have worked on the street for over three decades is itself a notable feat.

In recalling the impact of their artistic work with the punk youth they met on the street, Díaz says, "There we realized the power of the scenic stage and transformation. But we also saw that we could work our bodies with more calmness and with patience, which can create marvels and transform the body. And that transforms the social environment" (My translation; Personal Interview). Their work spanned multiple spaces, from plazas to street corners to parks. In engaging the residents with invisible interventions across these different sites, their street focused actions, though brief and illegible as performances, were the artists' proposal to transform society. In those choreotopic encounters, they used an aesthetic language that responded to the social movements happening in Mexico City and the utter collapse of a city where time and space ceased to exist in normative time.

Ultimately, Asaltodiario's artistic practices demonstrate the importance of holding on tightly to performance as a means to fight for a public society when it feels like it is falling apart. The figure connected to the thin rope in Asaltodiario's promotional image that I analyzed at the beginning of this chapter reveals a subtle commitment to living in control societies that cause collective vertigo. The figure shows us the commitments we must make to intervene in projects that promise progress at the expense of people. Much like the figure on the steel beam, we too must clasp on firmly to the belief that the performing body has a place in the production of our social realities that is produced at the expense of unwanted bodies. No matter how vertigo-inducing and precarious the conditions of our reality, we must hold on to the hope of an inclusive society, even if the idea of an inclusive society is a thin rope that gives the illusion of security. Our only choice is to hold on tightly as the world around us falls apart until our impending death. We must laugh together and defend the streets one dirty move and one trash can at a time, even when the horizon of hope feels as if it is disappearing.

[94] Ricardo Nájera left the group in 1989. When he left, he adopted the group's proposed original name. Díaz and Leyva directed the group until Leyva's passing. Then, Claudia Vásquez joined the group in 1996 and assumed a co-director role.

Chapter Two
Mosh Pit Desires: Video Feminisms and Punk Performance

In Sarah Minter's 1992 video art project *Alma punk* [Punk soul], a disaffected young woman is at the center of a story that crosses physical and aesthetic borders. We are introduced to Alma, who is portrayed by Ana Hernández. Alma is having a hard time managing expectations of a monogamous relationship, raising money to pay her rent, and securing a space for her experimental femme performance group. She walks around the city, selling vinyl records at the flea market *Tianguis El Chopo*, seeing an eclipse at the historic Plaza Mayor, and attending an experimental performance by Aldo Flores at the independent space El Rull.[95] Along the way, she stops by the city landfill to find boots, sleeps in filthy homes, and picks up the city phones to get a hold of Juan, her absentee partner. When she finds moments of respite, Alma has a recurring dream wherein she is naked and running in a dark alley. In the end, Alma leaves Mexico City and, via Tijuana, makes her way to San Jose, California, where her immigrant mother resides. The video ends in slow motion as Alma jumps midair over the United States-México border fence.

In this chapter, I build on the first chapter's focus on waste and examine how disaffected women who are associated with counterculture movements navigate expected gender roles at the end of the twentieth century in México. Here I expand the argument from the previous chapter, where I propose that dances and performance objects are choreotopias, or those artistic-political dwelling sites that create temporary and spatially bounded communities through public displays of abjection, enact solidity in the face of uncertainty, and anticipate new social imaginaries. I complement Chapter One's focus on experimental street dances by assessing video art practices. At the center of this choreotopia are Sarah Minter and her feminist video art projects created in collaboration with punk members.[96] Minter was a middle-class independent artist born in Puebla, México in 1953. The artist died in 2016. She started her artistic endeavors in theater and was a member of the experimental, and provocative, theater group Ergónico.[97] She shifted to video in 1980. In 1985, Minter began producing *Nadie es inocente* [Nobody is innocent], a documentary-fiction video art project about the punk group *Mierdas Punk* [Shit Punks]. Six years later, from 1991 to 1992, Minter produced *Alma punk,* another documentary-fiction video art project featuring a punk girl and her life in Mexico City. Across the projects, the punk members, all of whom are non-professional actors, play themselves in the documentary-fiction projects that attest to their lives as economically dispossessed youth in the 1980s and 1990s. I give attention to the manner in which aesthetic practices in video art created a net of commonality between feminist artists and women from the punk rock commons. Through these collaborations, Minter and the punk youth create a mobile sense of community, deploy their agency outside of male-dominated state controls, and resist non-verbal methods that perpetuate gender and class inequality.

Both films unmoor the punk from the urban center as the featured wanderers end up away from the city. *Alma* follows the non-linear narrative of a young woman negotiating economic precarity and expected normative gender roles, finally hitchhiking into the border desert when she

[95] Sol Henaro identified this performance in the video. Henaro is the curator at MUAC. She included Minter's *Alma Punk* in the exhibition Arte-Acción.

[96] Minter was born in Puebla in 1953.

[97] Minter joined the group at age seventeen. Juan Carlos Uviedo started Ergónico. It included members Olivier Debroise, Sarah and Yago Minter, Héctor de Anda, Athenea Baker, Zaniah Guvan, Mario Ficachi, Alejandra Zea, Nelson Oxman, Jacques Riviere, and Julia Marichal, as well as other performers. More information can be found in the catalogue published as part of an exhibition organized by the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC). Reference https://muac.unam.mx/exposicion/juan-carlos-uviedo?lang=en

crosses into the United States. *Nadie es inocente* tracks the pseudo-fictional story of Kara, portrayed by Juan Martínez.[98] Kara is a disillusioned young man who leaves the peripheral city Nezahualcóyotl, a formerly-unincorporated enclave in the adjacent State of México. Nezahualcóyotl was considered a "slum" town at the time.[99] Kara is on a train, reflecting about the rise of his gang the *Mierdas Punk* and his eventual disillusionment with the group. The video alternates between solitary images of Kara's internal monologue and documentary-style footage of the *Mierdas Punks* striding throughout the city. Their activities range from collecting clothes at the city's landfill to attending informal music concert spaces in buildings that collapsed after the 1985 earthquake to dancing until their party is interrupted by the police at dawn. Kara leaves the metropolis and arrives at an unidentified country town—we suspect outside of Mexico City.[100] The fifty-seven-minute long video blurs storylines and video genres.

When examining these historical materials from the late eighties and nineties, I observe the ways women video artists combined practices related to punk subculture and then-emerging analog video technologies to resist repressive attitudes towards women, not only in dominant culture, but also in largely male subcultures. In the decade following the earthquake and in the midst of public demonstrations carried out by residents seeking economic and political justice, women were demanding reproductive and sexual rights, as well as greater access to sex education and reproductive care. For example, in 1989, feminist discourses about abortion began to be linked with other women's concerns after police raided a private abortion clinic and arrested patients, nurses, doctors, and staff without a court order.[101] The incident resulted in a lawsuit, bringing public attention to the issues and uniting women from different classes and professions. In Minter's videos, I evaluate the movement of abject bodies and the development of the videos between feminist and punk communities. This double focus traces a continuum of dispersed but nonetheless related practices of thinking and acting discontinuously. According to Martha Rosler, "Alongside performance, video was a very important tool in the women's movement, because it was new, provisional, cheap, simple, time-based, and speaking[…] video created community, it resided within a community, and it moved to other communities, creating a new, discontinuous 'imagined community'" (7). Rosler created dispersed liberatory spaces through video as opposed to film; she found a practice in a system away from the central power of production. Rosler is writing about women video artists in the United States, but her comments parallel my observations about the role of video in late-twentieth century feminist video movements in Mexico City. I observe class and racial discontinuities in Minter's work that complement Rosler's observations about video art, feminist movements, and performance in the United States.

Discontinuity means a break in physical continuity or in time. It underscores the way in which intersecting aesthetics converge at certain moments but then end abruptly and are picked up again by someone else in another time and at another place, either intentionally or not. An emphasis on physical breaks and interruptions foregrounds the ways in which women have used media and performance outside of male-centered control and surveillance precisely because of the dispersal

[98] Martínez died just as Minter was preparing to produce a follow-up to the documentary in 2006. He was born in 1968 and passed away in 2006.

[99] See Daniel Hernandez' review of Minter's work where he uses this term to refer to Nezahualcóyotl. "Morelia Film Festival: A filmmaker revisits punks after 20 years, finding a slum transformed." *Los Angeles Times*. 20 Oct. 2010. Accessed 5 Feb. 2019.

[100] The video says this section of the project was filmed in Guanajuato.

[101] For a detailed account of the reproductive and sexual rights movement between the 1970s and early 1990s see Marta Lama's "The feminist movement and the development of political discourse on voluntary motherhood in Mexico." *Reproductive Health Matters*, vol. 5, no. 10, 1997, pp. 58-67.

characteristics of such media. An object's ability to be in one community and then to be taken up in another one creates a shared sense of affiliation between unlikely allies.

The videos I examine uncover the under-analyzed disconnected links between feminist and punk communities in México. Minter's productions highlight the various communities to which the low-class punk members and middle-class video artists belong, as well as create new communities around state-making, aesthetics, and culture that bleed from the art and punk worlds, being a way around the big budget singularly male industry. At the surface level, these collaborations demonstrate that punk is more than debauchery; it is about collective social change, (dis)organized resistance, and a "Do-It-Yourself" approach that parallels other "global punk" movements. Collective strategies present in the videos exhibit what José Esteban Muñoz calls a punk rock commons, or a "being-with, in which various disaffected, antisocial actants [find] networks of affiliation and belonging that [allow] them to think and act otherwise, together, in a social field that [is] most interested in dismantling their desire for different relations within the social" (99). For Muñoz, punk rock creates a larger collective of affiliation and it emerges as a shared experience precisely because actants can behave uncouth without encumbering the liabilities of misbehaving. Punk members create alternate social realities away from, but not necessarily outside of, dominant culture. In the punk rock commons, material culture, sound, and bodies conjure a being-with that centers a negative affect that is both innovative and annihilative. It is about a dissident mode of desiring and choreographing insurrectionist spaces (97).

In my view, Minter's video art projects are germane to choreographic concerns across the commons connecting feminist video artists and/as punk youth, evidencing the way in which networks of affiliation and belonging are enacted and deployed across gender, class, and geographic difference.[102] The documentary-fictional stories highlight places not often associated with the punk rock commons. In *Nadie,* Kara has a psychic trip in a rural town surrounded by cacti. Meanwhile, Alma in *Alma punk* hitchhikes her way to the Tijuana border. The videos underscore punk culture in the countryside and the borderlands. The videos suggest new readings about punk life as a border crossing aesthetic and experience. It is this border crossing life that drew feminist video artists to punk, which was focused on undoing master narratives. Feminist video art was central to that crossover because it scripted discontinuous imagined communities. Minter's videos fit the larger collective of disaffected actants and the coalitional politics that extend across genres and styles. Minter shared her videos across a distribution of underground artist networks. In the actual films, punk members improvised the scripts and scene selection. The collaborators used video content from each other's projects.[103] They used ad hoc events in México's history to stage the dialogues and the scenes. They attended inaugural performances or dances in the historic downtown square. Taken together, these video collaborations add to the genealogy of the punk rock commons and provide a framework for assessing punk's resistive value beyond the analytic claims about punk. These art projects circulated as insurrectionist processes that had challenged and continue to challenge patriarchal regimes of professionalism and aesthetic genres. The videos emphasize autonomy and peripheral freedom because they circulate as disaffected objects moving across abject networks of affiliation. They reveal that punk subculture is more than just semiotic

[102] Andrea Gentile produced *La neta no hay futuro* (1988), following the *Mierdas Punks* too. However, Gentile employs an interview format in her project. I choose to focus on Minter's rather than Gentile's project because it allows me to think through Minter's work, although a comparative analysis of Gentile's and Minter's works would also be a worthwhile project.

[103] Minter uses excerpts from Gregorio Rocha's punk-focused semi-documentary *Sábado de mierda* [Saturday of Shit]. This video art project was filmed between 1985 and 1987 and screened in 1988. I did not use Rocha's project for this analysis because I wanted to limit my scope to a single artist and give attention to female artists.

deviance and annihilation. They possess a border-crossing ethos that emphasizes the breaks in times and physical contact central to the net that covers the feminist and punk rock commons.

In this analysis of Sarah Minter's work, I am thinking about the commons as a form of "being-with," as Muñoz describes it, and emphasizing how ideas of discontinuity are key for this "being-with" to exist. As mentioned above, Muñoz sees the commons as the experience of either spending time or taking up space with other subjects whose lives are bound together because of their shared struggle against larger systemic forms of oppression. I take this to mean that a commons can only be experienced from the margins or from below. In this way, the commons, as I think about it in this chapter and elaborate on it in Chapter Three, is about the creation of a "being-with" that can exist between feminist video artists and disaffected youth from punk rock. The commons between the two is a shared net of survival strategies that manifests in the everyday practices of subjects who navigate gender-based violence and class dispossession. At the intersection of semiotics and embodiment, I advance the argument that the commons that extends between feminist video artists and punk rock youth is not just anti-genre or antisocial, it is a genre-crossing life with an *alma* [soul] that defies artistic conventions and cultural spaces beyond semiotic readings and expected gender practices. The video art projects crisscross video genres, narrative structures, and movement practices. The commons between feminist video artists and punk youth attends to the unequal movement of the world.

I focus on both video art projects *Nadie es inocente* and *Alma punk* because the latter informs the former and it de-centers the binary gender norms at the center of power while accounting for how these power structures impact women and men differently in insurrectionist worlds like the punk rock commons. The videos were not shown together and the actors from one performance were not in the other.[104] However, Minter produced both shows and maintained close connections with both groups.[105] Overall, the videos complement each other to offer a broader picture of the way in which gender-based oppression operates to exclude poor and lower-class men of color while it scripts normative behaviors for women across different classes. In response to these conditions, disaffected artists and punk youth deploy three observable tactics. They create opportunities for non-violent contact to withstand violent forms of touch. They enact agency in terms of aesthetic practice and navigation of place to defy male-claims of ownership and control over women's bodies. They deploy embodied and guttural strategies to purge dominant scripts that perpetuate inequality through non-verbal methods. Minter's creations allow me to connect feminist liberatory practices in the face of cultural repression and disaffected youth's use of countercultural material life, providing a framework for reassessing these intersections across multiple sites of material production.

By evaluating the material life of the commons that connects feminist video artists and punk rock, I underscore the potential impact of things such as analog technology on knowledge production and transmission across time and space. During an initial attempt to watch Minter's *Alma punk* at the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California, the video's audio tracks started to fail. The audio's breakdown made me aware of what Philip Auslander has described as the "liveness" of media; that is, the embodied relationships that emerge when one interacts with mediated experiences, televisual or otherwise.[106] With the help of the archivist, I took out the VHS

[104] In *Sábado de mierda*, Gregorio Rocha collaborated with the Mierdas Punks to write a documentary script. Sarah Minter was part of this project. She used some of the footage from this project in *Nadie es inocente.*

[105] Any time I spoke with punk members, they spoke very highly of Minter. In recounting the birth of the Mierdas Punks, Pablo Podrido Hernández says Minter was one of the few artists that expressed concern and care for Neza. See http://mald3ojo.com/adrian-delangel.html

[106] See Auslander, P. *Liveness*. London: Routledge, 2008.

tape, assessed it for any damage, and adjusted the tracking. However, the videotape's audio channel continued to malfunction. The archivist informed me that VHS tapes have a thirty-year lifespan. Usually, the audio is the first element to deteriorate. The archive center chose not to make a digital reproduction because the version they stored is a bootleg version of the original. Minter sent an unofficial copy to then-curator Jesse Lerner.[107] The archivist made an exception and allowed me to see it because the artist died in 2016. At the moment of its failure, the video made me aware of its intended function, materiality, and historic-social movement from México to Berkeley. Meaning, the audio track was recorded to document Minter's collaboration with the punk youth and other events in México's history. As a documentary-fiction project, *Alma punk* is evidence of the historical moments that Minter and her collaborators found to be important. Yet, the recorded video was still changing in style and form after its initial production. The video art persisted across multiple sites and now exists as a pirated and decaying copy in a film center. Like a performance whose contours, sounds, and scenes change from one act to the next and one location to another, the video object passes through multiple material changes and alters the modes of engagement for those persons who interact with the video at the different phases. When the video stopped functioning, I had to talk to the archivist to get their help. The video required a translator who knew its history.[108] I needed to interact with the video as more than just a review of a material object with information about Minter's project. The audio track's failure prompted me to consult an expert who spoke the language of the video's material makeup. Only the archivist knew why it was failing. The archivist had an intimate and felt understanding of the video's material makeup and its disintegration. The video content and the material composition of the video created a temporary community of affiliation between unlikely allies.

The video's condition conjures punk's afterlife. According to Deborah Vargas, punk's afterlife traces "persistent modes of alterity, namely, abject public displays of *lo sucio* or class-disparaging vernacular for 'dirty,' 'filthy' aesthetics and resistance" (59). In this case, while the video in the Pacific Film Archive is stored in a supposedly safe place, it is still dirty and possesses an alterity because it is a pirated copy that cannot be rescued. The video is twice-behaved "filth." First in the story about the punk community that comprises the main "story" in the video and a second time in the video's failure to retell that story because the tape is eroding. I interacted with the constantly moving and discontinuous imagined communities of disaffection that the afterlife of the punk video enacts and sustains when subjects such as researchers interact with the filthy aesthetics of the project.

In what follows, I examine the collaborations between punk collectives and feminist video artists that have not been adequately analyzed. This chapter continues with an identification of what these collaborations reveal to us about the gestures of touch and kindness during violent times and a reassessment of the analytical frameworks that scholars have used to examine punk subculture.[109] Then, I dedicate my time to analyzing how feminist approaches to video art

[107] Jesse Lerner organized a series of exhibitions in California that featured Mexican video artists. The series *Mexperimental Cinema* occurred in April 1998. Artists such as Ximena Cuevas spoke at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. I listened to the recorded question and answer sessions.

[108] I experienced a similar problem when requesting access to documentation created by Verónica Miranda. Miranda joined an all punk girl band in the 1980s. She possesses video footage from the 1980s but she cannot convert it because she lacks a converter.

[109] This chapter does not provide a comprehensive account of punk's development in Mexico City nor do I identify a taxonomy of musical genres—such an attempt would be imperialist and reductionist. Writing from within the United States about México, I want to avoid any situation where the knowledge that I generate from this project perpetuates center-periphery binary, where any assessment from the United States is assumed to be definitive and authoritative.

expression intersect with punk's multi-sensory and genre-punking aspects. Lastly, I assess Minter's video art projects within the larger punk rock commons, arguing that these projects reveal the power of dis-scriptive tactics, or non-verbal actions such as vomiting used by abject subjects to purge dominated scripts that attempt to control disaffected feminist artists and punk youth. Like the trash that I examine in the previous chapter, the waste and objects that I evaluate in this chapter become important elements for artists who seek to create a sense of home. Across this chapter, I highlight how an abject commons is created across communities looking to resist and evade the constraints of men's control over women's bodies.

La Tocada

In *Nadie es inocente* and *Alma punk*, Kara and Alma are two young punks wandering throughout Mexico City's busy streets on their respective journeys to *tocadas*—informal music concerts. Each in their own way, Kara and Alma are always perusing the city, lounging in train cars, looking at audiences attending performances, and/or traveling to dilapidated buildings and makeshift homes. Eventually, their walks culminate in the accumulated effect of bodies on top of bodies. For example, in *Nadie,* a slam dancer jumps into the mosh pit. The sequence repeats five times as if the person's body is suspended in midair. He looks directly at the camera with a smile as a backdrop of black leather and blue denim jeans frames his body. However, the repetition of the sequence is jarring. The filmic replay lasts only three seconds. It is sharp and staccato and it exhibits a feeling of déjà-vu. Eventually, the body falls back into the ground again, subsumed into the mass pile of bodies, becoming indistinguishable. Floating traces of his falling body linger in the air before it disappears into the mass pile of moshing punk bodies.

Punk practices in México are key to the creation of alternative political spaces and subjects, but few studies have analyzed the gendered aspects of these communities. Subculture studies scholars have focused on style and corporeal experience to analyze the punk rock experience. Drawing on Stuart Hall, cultural theorist Dick Hebdige uses a semiotic analysis to propose that punk's resistive value exists mainly against the upper- and middle-classes when punk members deploy their dress, music, and language as visual signifiers of difference; punk is "semiotic guerrilla warfare" (105).[110] Hebdige describes punks as bricoleurs, or those who "[appropriate] another range of commodities by placing them in symbolic ensemble which served to erase or subvert their original straight meanings" (104).[111] In response to Hebdige, Lauraine Leblanc, in *Pretty in Punk*, argues that Hebdige does not provide a firsthand account from the interviewees who confirm that dress, language, and music (semiotic readings) are the primary forms of resistance (17). Leblanc, a punk girl herself, interviews over forty punk girls in the United States and examines how they experience punk life and resist a subculture that is coded male.

Scholarship from México about punk culture expands beyond semiotic and corporeal analyses. Kelley Tatro approaches punk with a focus on embodied analysis and proposes that punk is a practice for self-defense training and that the screams in punk are in fact laborious practices requiring physical training (Tatro 2018; Tatro 2014).[112] Aracelia Salomé López-Cabello examines how punk is a system of significations across music, clothes, tattoos, gestures, rituals, and emblems that leads to the constitution of collective identity. Although not a direct response to Hebdige and

[110] Hebdige borrows Umberto Eco's phrase to describe punk's subversive practices. He also builds on John Clarke's ideas of the bricoleur.
[111] Hebdige looks to anthropological understandings of the bricoleur, drawing from C. Levi-Strauss, T. Hawkes, and J. Clarke.
[112] Tatro is following Ernesto Laclau's ideas of articulations.

Leblanc, López-Cabello's analysis synthesizes a semiotic and corporeal reading of punk. In her view, punk is a type of discourse that connects semiotics and embodied practices. Punks go to the *tocadas*, or informal music concerts, as a learning space and a "camp of action." In these punk spaces, individuals learn to articulate their political affinities and build a collective identity through what they wear and what they do. Similarly, Alice Poma and Tommaso Gravante maintain that punk is an experimental laboratory for new political possibilities. Drawing on Verta Taylor and Nella Van Dyke, Poma and Gravante argue that punk practices are tactical repertoires. These are practices used by oppressed subjects who challenge normative dominant cultures but who do not try to reinstate a determined set of ideologies and politics. Instead, everyday decisions and actions are part of political practices where subjects decide the makeup of collective organization on the spot, responding to the means that are used to challenge society. These authors look beyond semiotic readings of punk and highlight the pedagogical and collective elements in it.

The above-mentioned analytical frames demonstrate punk's irreducible nature. Punk can take on many signs, practices, and political orientations. It can be about appropriating "straight meanings" (Hebdige), education (Poma and Gravanta; López-Cabello), and embodiment (Leblanc). And yet, at least in México, two distinct genealogical strands conjoin in punk. On the one hand, there is the political realm of antiauthoritarianism and anarchism. Unlike in other countries, punk in México links to political groups or youth who challenge institutionalized oppressive regimes or local cronyism that disenfranchise peripheral poor residents (Poma and Gravanta). On the other hand, there is the commercial side to this commons. Members sell music, merchandise, and fanzines at flea markets and information shops such as *Tianguis Cultural El Chopo*, a counter-cultural space for the exchange and sale of illicit drugs and punk, rock, and heavy metal music and clothing.

The elements of appropriation, education, embodiment, and political experimentation in punk rock come together in the video art project *Nadie es inocente.* Kara, the lead protagonist, dresses in black clothes that appropriate dominant culture meanings, like the English flag. He is concerned about recruiting more members and teaching them the right way to do punk. And, importantly, the video highlights Kara and his friends as they make their way to the *tocada*. Throughout the video, Kara asks his friends if they are going to attend the gathering. Right before we see Kara and his friends in the mosh pit, Minter documents them coloring their hair and spiking it into Mohawks. The camera zooms in on three punks stroking one of their member's hair. They use a comb with orange dye on it and they paint the person's hair. The orange contrasts with the black hair. Then, the scene jump cuts and Minter shows us two hands clasping clumps of hair as the fingers separate them into eight spikes rising vertically. She zooms out and we see the two punks surrounded by seven other youth who are coloring and styling their hair. Then, abruptly, the scene jump cuts again and those same members and their stained hair are at the mosh pit. They are banging their heads and they begin to thrash their bodies around.[113] All of the labor done by the youth to help each other prepare appears to lead to the mosh pit, where the youth revel in what Daniel Hernandez describes as "out-of-control rock shows."[114] Yet their attention to the hair, to make it orderly and not wild, showcases the level of preparation and attention to structure and organization that punk youth employ. It emphasizes that punk is an identity and something that is practiced.

113 Andrea Gentile gives a similar aesthetic treatment to the mosh pit in *La neta no hay futuro* (1988). Gentile's documentary culminates in the mosh pit and it ends with bodies thrashing into each other.
114 See Hernández, Daniel. "Morelia Film Festival: A Filmmaker Revisits Punks After 20 Years, Finding a Slum Transformed." *Los Angeles Times* 20 Oct. 2010. Accessed 1 Jan. 2019.

Given Minter's aesthetic emphasis on the youth's investment in preparing for the mosh pit, a mosh pit appears to be the prime manner in which the punk processes and experiences the city, but it is intriguing because of its absence in *Alma punk*. In *Alma,* a traditional mosh pit never occurs. There are no situations where dancers jump up and down and throw themselves violently into the center to collide with each other. There is little emphasis on the youths' effort to prepare their hair for the event. Instead, the film focuses on Alma's walks through the city. She is not only looking at the city, but she is also finding moments to sell recycled items she found at the city landfill. Perhaps because of the lack of representation of slam dancing in Minter's documentary-style video piece about punk girls, the embodied practice haunts the video and makes its presence known in the video's collective mind. Alma is repeatedly going from one location to another where punks would normally hang out. She makes her way to a screen printing shop to make zines, attends the flea market to sell items that she found in the city's landfill, and frequents a bar with her friends to enjoy a drink. Yet she never attends a concert or participates in a mosh pit as those represented in *Nadie es inocente*. And, unlike Kara in *Nadie*, Alma does not recite an internal monologue. She witnesses dance events and participates in dancing, but only in social clubs or in the public square—never slam dances. In Mexico City, she stands just outside of a circle formed around dancers of an Aztec ritual that is being performed in the historic square during an eclipse. When she is in Tijuana right before she crosses the border, she visits the social dance club *Last Temptation* to meet with new friends and find a one-night stand. The film is called *Alma punk,* or Punk soul, but the film does not represent or highlight slam dances. It appears punk's soul is not only about this activity. It is also about what is felt inside, in the interior of the person as they move from one location to another.

Although art historians value *Alma* and *Nadie* as seminal contributions to the video art genre and their appraisal of the punk experience, few of them acknowledge the important connections that Sarah Minter has to theater and body-based practices and how these intersect with punk aesthetics to script new relationships across deviant kinesthetic imaginations.[115] In a review of Minter's work, Kimberlee Córdova says, "Minter's work is at its best when it uses observation to wrestle the psychic specters of the city."[116] Like other scholars, Cordóva's assessment of Minter's work misses the concerted effort that the artist made to highlight the experience of feeling the urban experience with the entirety of her body, and not just seeing it. Minter trained professionally as an actress and she focused on her body. Minter insists that a lot of her training was not about an enigmatic social body, but was about her body.[117] She trained the entirety of her body because it allowed her to access a performance process that was not about training in forms or methods for commercial appeal. While video art became an appendage to her life, Minter adopted this method as an extension of her interest in embodied practices that attended to the urban experience's impact on the entire body.[118] Video-making practices allowed her to express her concerns about women's roles in Mexican society and the possible avenues that exist in creating alternative forms of bodily being and movement. Through the films *Nadie* and *Alma*, she documented the gestures and bodily

[115] Minter's first solo exhibition *Ojo en Rotación 1981-2015* at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in 2015 highlighted her monumental impact in feminist discourse and video art practices. *Minueto* (2010-2014) is one piece in this collection that gestures towards her concerns with bodies and risk.

[116] "Ojo en Rotación: Sarah Minter at MUAC" from www.sfaq.us. Accessed 17 Dec. 2019.

[117] Delgado, C., Henaro, S., Minter, S. (2015) *In Dialogue with Sara Minter* MUAC, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, UNAM, Mexico, DF

[118] According to Cuauhtémoc Medina, in Minter's work, "Video appears simultaneously as an accompaniment to life, as a means of research and archive, and as an interpolation of the viewer's space and time: as the closest possible thing to personal interaction through apparatuses and images" (MUAC).

movements through which gender-based oppression function in the punk rock commons. Her video art projects in collaboration with the *Mierdas Punks* in *Nadie* and with Ana Hernández in *Alma* examine the unwanted lower-class body in Mexican society. She points us to the structures of choreographic and embodied thinking present in punk forms of movement that are not historically and traditionally considered dance. Through her lens, mosh pits in the punk rock commons are dances themselves; she highlights how aesthetic and production moshing were an important strategy for women to find new forms of relating to each other outside, but necessarily apart from, the visual field.

Before Minter began experimenting with video art in the 1980s, she developed a commitment to resisting institutional and cultural gender norms through her body. She was always seeking freedom, regardless of the genre and space. First, she studied theater and film acting at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. However, she found these practices to be too stifling. After leaving her formal training, she found non-theatrical practices to be ideal processes for maintaining her personal freedom and cultivating the collective body.[119] She was seeking artistic methods that created shared experiences that distributed power across all of those participating in the process of creation. Much like the film industry, male directors controlled the theater sector in Mexico City and wrote scripts that followed linear narratives. Then, in 1971, Minter began working with the Argentinian theater-maker Juan Carlos Uviedo.[120] For Minter, Oviedo and the theater laboratory emphasized the body, identity, and power that derived from creative expressions and collective action. Oviedo prioritized process and physical exertion over elements that were theatricalized representations of times, people, and places. His practices aligned with Minter's belief that she could use her body in the same way as men. She maintains, "My body gave me that strength: it was a body that resisted, a trained body, acrobatic, and on the other hand it was also a temperament, a mental calm, and a question of experiencing and seeing things beyond the first impression" (*Ojo en Rotación* 143). Minter put herself and her body at the same level as men in México since they had a social permission to do what they wanted with their bodies, an allowance that excluded her. The performance laboratory provided a space for her to resist that power and assert new identities. However, her desire for an independent body was more than just a preoccupation with having access to what men had. It was about creating iterative processes that encouraged multiple meanings about the resistive body.

Nadie and *Alma* help us understand those desires. There are different layers in which these projects highlight dance and the defiant body as a central concern in Minter's work. One layer is that the videography itself is a kind of choreography. Building on Susan Foster's conception of choreography, Cindy García maintains that choreography is "the set of culturally situated codes and values regarding gestures, movement and speech through which identities, and, thus, social memberships are configured" (xvii). This notion of choreography posits that subjects have the ability to mold and shape the cultural conditions that affect their lives. The video is edited cacophonously, using different video genres that highlight Kara and Alma's movement throughout the city and document the sounds associated with different sites. It is a documentary and a fictional narrative. In this way, the videos emerge as a choreographic object from the collaborations between Minter and the members, who respond to the situated codes and values of their time. These codes and values are chronicled in the videos. In *Nadie*, Kara meanders through the city as it undergoes changes. As he sits on a train that is on its way out of the city, he wonders what the passengers

[119] During this period, Minter also pursued a brief career in graphic design.
[120] Uviedo organized and directed the performance group Ergónico.

value. Similarly, *Alma* watches performances from a distance or comes into contact with other youth in the club, negotiating her desire to be mobile while everyone around her appears to want to stay in the same place. The creative decisions that make up the videos are informed by Minter and the members of the *Mierdas Punk* and *Alma*.

The other layer is the recording of the dancing itself as a unique and bounded site of sensual experience. As mentioned above, dancing reoccurs as a main theme for Alma. Again, the night before Alma crosses illegally into the United States, she attends the club *Last Temptation* with her friends. Likewise, right before she leaves Mexico City, she watches dancers perform Aztec dance in the historic Zócalo. This ethnography of dance styles in the capital city and in the periphery evidences Alma's negotiations about her body and how she moves in and out of different bodily coded spaces. She sees a concert dance, site-specific dances, and participates in social dances. Each of these have their own conventions for interacting with other people. For example, in the social club space, attendees stand in close proximity to each other, dancing in pairs. In the Aztec performance that occurs in the plaza, audiences surround dancers as they move within a cipher. The non-linear narratives appear to orient us both toward and away from dance spaces at the same time. What this points us to is that the mosh pit dances in punk rock commons are part of a panorama of situated bodily experiences just like other dance and theatrical forms.

The fluidity of Kara's and Alma's meanderings illustrates the networks that are central to performance practices. Writing about performance and building on sociologist Bruno Latour's idea of actor-network in performance contexts, Leo Cabranes-Grant maintains, "Performance discloses the fluidity of a network, exposing it as a tissue made of *quasi*-conditions, incessantly shifting and metamorphic" (517). For Cabranes-Grant, performances are not limited as discrete events; they are quasi-objects and quasi-subjects in processes of circulatory conditions that assemble when the conditions are appropriate for establishing a repertoire and they are never static. In the case of Kara in *Nadie*, his anticipation before the *tocadas* is a tissue extending the event beyond the cipher. Kara's individual body cannot be contained as he prowls across the city and beyond to the rural pueblos. Kara's movement throughout the city, and his eventual departure from it in search of more rural conditions, is mediated through the entirety of his body. He leans on walls as he loiters for the next gig, exchanges and sells goods at flea markets, or frequents the city landfill to collect trash and initiate new members into the group. Across these spaces, he touches rubble with his hands in abandoned buildings, helps style his peers' hair, or spits on new members. Similarly, Alma is oriented towards her mother's voice in San Jose, California, as she feels her voyage on her feet, tastes it on her lips, and hears it. This emphasis on the experience of touching is made evident by the fact that *Alma* begins with a zoom in on her feet as the lead protagonist walks across the stylish ceramic floor of a postal office. Alma experiences the city as she jumps from one location to another, experiencing it through different senses. She walks around the plaza as a voyeur, looking at performances. Alma navigates through performance genres between an interpretive play, a Greek tragedy, and *danza Azteca.* All of these experiences are partial. She sees glimpses of the performances and they have no clear narratives, endings, or beginnings. She watches only quasi-performances and quasi-relationships as she strolls from one location to the next. Kara's and Alma's transitory state indicates the importance of how one gets to the mosh pit and how the journey is as relevant as the music itself. Although Kara does not attend other dance events like Alma does in her journey, his transitory escapades across the city showcase that he is observing the city's discrete sites. He observes and feels his way through the train station, his home, a rural town, and the landfill. In the same way, Alma sees the discrete sites that assemble around different dance genres. Alma and Kara move across these spaces and feel their way through the city. Consequently, the

mosh pit, like other dance genres and discrete sites represented in the videos, is a transitory station of touching in the ever-circulating tissue network of belonging.

The centripetal force of the mosh pit holds sociality together. Alma's and Kara's journeys appear to be random, but they have direction. Their actions are thought out. They go to their respective gatherings and recuperate their dancing bodies by revealing the production of the dance, what leads up to it, how people get there, and what people do afterward. So we look at the punk mosh pit as a limited and spatially bounded site where gestures, movements, and speech are configured for a moment before reassembling elsewhere. We can look at what is going on in the dance and assess the surrounding contexts. As an illustration, Kara and his friends saunter away from their homes, haunt demolished buildings, retreat to the landfills, and stomp around the mosh pit. This circulation across the city emphasizes their bodily moment, but most often they spend their time outside of the mosh pit. The moments before Kara gets to the mosh pits are micro-movements that are oriented to the mosh pit. The youth arrange their hair color in the brightest hues and don their blackest jackets. There is an elasticity to each step that they take on their walks throughout the city and the mosh pits are the temporary accumulations of those walks. By following this thread, we can see how punk movements trace the emergent experience of all of the micro-movements that came before the dance-event.

This assessment is important because it evidences how the city's experiences are transited and mediated through the punk body. As the punk body walks from one location to another, seeing its colors, hearing its calamitous uproar, it takes these experiences and reassembles them when they come in contact with other bodies that bring their respective experiences to the mosh. In the mosh pit, the city is reimagined and redefined anew through the body. The city comes together in the mosh pit because the youth bring in their experiences of the city and put to use the recycled waste that is generated from its residents. Residents participate in consumer culture and use what they think is valuable and discard what has lost value. This use happens across shopping centers, bedrooms, bathrooms, and many other sites. They are joined together in the city landfill, but punk youth, who choose not to participate in consumer culture, search for and recycle these items. Then they dress it up for their own pleasure in the mosh pit.

Importantly, the *tocada* in these films extends beyond its connection to music and sound, reaching the terminal significance of its original meaning, that is, "touch." Orienting oneself to the *tocada*, that informal music concert, is as much about the excess sounds that come out of the sound systems and amplifiers as it is about the vibratory sounds that come out of bodies when they jump in and out of the mosh. As mentioned earlier, Minter slows down the mosh pit scene in *Nadie* to accentuate bodies piling on top of each other. While Rafa "Punk" Rojas is on the microphone partially singing The Ramone's *Blitzkrieg Bop,* the punk's body lingers midair, free falling with a disregard for where his limbs will land and the impact of his body.[121] Then, his body falls into the leathery pile of combat boots, spiky hair, and sweaty limbs. One body is difficult to distinguish from another. The bodies overwhelm the screen and that excess supersedes the framed eye. Bodies hurl in and out of other bodies. It is chaotic. Bodies on top of bodies. Those on the very bottom feel the weight of the corpus on top of them. They surrender their flesh and bones into the mass blob of leathered bodies. The camera slows down and we see them free fall in complete abandonment to gravity.

121 I say partially singing because he is not actually saying the words in English. His sounds mimic the words that are used in the original song, but they are gibberish. In Minter's follow-up documentary about the Mierdas Punk, Rafa admits that he used to make up words to the songs on the spot.

For the lounger, crowds become the place of comfort. According to Walter Benjamin, the lounger or stroller, whom he identified as the *flâneur*, takes pleasure in the masses.[122] The flâneur sees his world in the crowds of the world and in turn creates a world apart from them at the same time. He is aware of the value of his time and so he refuses to produce goods with his time and body. The flâneur has no desire to enter into the consumerist center and he resists the idea of producing commodities, but he produces wasted time. The strollers in *Nadie* also produce wasted time, but, unlike Benjamin's lounger, whose time is spent watching the masses, the punk stroller wanders throughout the city to see its people and takes pleasure in coming into contact with others. Whereas Benjamin's flâneur seeks to join the masses through the visual sphere, and to idle his body, the loungers in *Nadie* waste time by circulating throughout the city streets and wasting their touch. They are also aware of the value of their time but they waste their time through touch. They refuse to produce, using their touch for embodied encounters in mosh pits, landfills, and on sidewalks. The punks attend musical gatherings to throw their bodies into the mass piles of bodies. They primarily gather at the edges of the city center and, if they enter the city, they do not wander the center to be consumers. Instead, they venture to the center to be producers of an embodied sense of waste and to make money out of recycled or formerly trashed items. For instance, Alma visits the city landfill to collect clothes, instruments, and furniture with her friends. She rummages the extensive land in search of resalable items, bending down and clasping clothes, musical instruments, or anything that could have resale value. Then, she visits the *Tianguis El Chopo* to sell the items and make money from the flocks of people that swarm the flea market. Kara's concern about his position amongst the masses is more explicit than Alma's. While he is aboard the train taking him to an undisclosed location, he saunters through the cabin, holding on tightly to the seat handles. The camera zooms in on the men, women, and children sitting in the cabin, showing their faces from Kara's perspective. A man who is about to take a drink from a cup sees Kara and extends the beverage to him. The man's arm reaches directly at the viewer, as if breaking the fourth-wall between the video and the viewer. Kara's fingers reach forward from behind the camera and extend to grab the drink from the passenger's hand. There is a desire to touch.

Despite the punk lounger's predilection to being part of the masses to touch their way into new horizons, that participation looks and feels different for punk women. In *Alma punk,* a punk mosh pit as it is traditionally conceived never occurs. There is no montage of bodies jumping on top of other bodies in the peripheries of the city or in abandoned buildings. Yet another event in *Alma* receives similar aesthetic treatments to that of the mosh pit in *Nadie*. Alma and four of her friends sit in a dining room, gathered around the table to make fanzines. They listen to Alma's friend from Poland. As they pass drinks around they giggle and encourage each other to drink tap water—a signifier of class/economic precarity because they are unable to purchase bottled water and tap water is unclean. Eventually, they say "cheers" and they celebrate the publication of the fanzine. The camera zooms in on their faces. Facial parts become inverted and difficult to distinguish. Eyes and mouths are distorted and inverted; the physical orientation becomes difficult to grasp. In that moment, the women begin to discuss the men in their lives, but Alma tells her girlfriends that they are distracting her from her hallucinogenic high. She says, "Let's not introduce bad elements into the conversation." They switch topics and converse about their financial problems or how they want to move out of their homes. Then, Alma declares, "Who's talking? I only hear voices." Alma can only hear voices, being unable to distinguish her friends' faces.

122 Benjamin, Walter, and Rolf Tiedemann. *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press, 1999. Print.

Much like the mosh pit highlighted at the *tocada* in *Nadie,* the tocada represented in *Alma* is a "mosh pit," albeit a domestic one. The camera zooms in, highlighting their bodies in disarray. One body becomes the other. The tactility of the punk mosh pit feels and looks different for Alma and her friends because she experiences gender-based violence and discrimination in both dominant society and subcultures.[123] Alma and her friends go to the living room to get high. Frenzy is mediated by psychedelic drugs. The world turns upside down. One person's voice becomes another person's body. The women use their economic precarity as a motivation to gather and create a temporary conviviality where they sense other ways of touching and being in the world. Ultimately, the domestic scene becomes a rebellious site for dislodging heterosexist ideologies present in countercultures too. Alma and her friends pile on top of each other away from the turbulence of a violent reality. The domestic mosh is a space to touch through hearing. It is a space where disaffected women get high and pile on top of each other in the domestic dining room as a counter world for imagining and sensing a less violent but nonetheless punk world.

Tenderness and domesticity expressed in the mosh pit is not limited to Alma and her female friends. Throughout *Nadie*, Kara and his friends convey a preoccupation with domestic life and kindness. At times, the youth lounge around on top of their beds and discuss the falling out of other members. Kara reposes with his head against the wall as he describes different ways of increasing their membership. He insists that they need to become more anarchistic. In another moment, but in the same location, he inhales chemical glue in his bedroom and makes shadow puppets while he reclines on his bed. These domestic qualities extend beyond their homes. Kara and his friends travel to the landfill to pick up trash and to induct a punk member into their gang. In front of a makeshift dwelling, they lounge on couches (see figure three). Kara says, "Come on in. You are in your home." They invite Jaime "El Cebollas" Camacho, the soon to be initiated member, in to their home and ask him if he wants to be baptized. After Camacho utters "Yes," they all spit on him. They snort until phlegm comes out of their mouths. They purse their lips and project the saliva unto their new member. Then, the youth pile on top of the new member and throw linens on top of him, covering his body. He tussles back gently and laughingly. When they finish, they welcome him to the group.

A domestic tenderness imbues their relationship. Laughter, couches, and linens abound in their rites of passage that occur in the middle of a wasteland—where consumer goods from the city go to "die." In the center of the landfill where capitalism's waste shapes the reality for the poor, the outcasts, and the unproductive, punk male youth create a domesticity and touch each other ever less violently. They change the politics of touch that they carry throughout their meanderings in the city when they interact with crowds. Thus, punk's soul is to touch each other differently, in a kinder and more inclusive manner.

Resistance within a Resistance

Women who do not comport themselves according to the standards of dominant cultural norms have to reckon with their bodies in a way that countercultural men do not. A main axis running through Minter's *Alma punk* is how Alma, despite being part of a disaffected group, has to navigate men wanting to control her body. Alma visits the apartment building El Paraiso [Paradise] to meet her partner Juan, played by Siro Basilia. Just as they are about to kiss, he smells her neck and, with his right hand, reaches into and out of her underwear. He smells his hand and questions

[123] This comment does not indicate that punk women did not participate in mosh pits themselves. In the fanzine *Cuerdas: Una historia punk* (2018), Verónica Miranda recounts her experience as a teenage girl attending slam dancing sessions.

her about where she has been. Juan accuses her of sleeping around with other men. With a smile on his face, he remarks, "I can smell your 'activity' all over you." She says to his accusatory remarks, "Es mi flujo" [It is my fluid]. He insists on knowing with whom she has been sleeping. Frustrated, she resists his demands for information. Juan is relentless in his quest to get her to admit that she has been sleeping with other men. She proclaims that it is none of his business who she is hanging out with and where she goes. She refuses his demands and leaves the room. As she exits the apartment complex, he sticks his head out the window and attempts to hail her by screaming, "Alma, Alma, Alma." She ignores his demands and keeps walking. Alma's name echoes throughout the dark streets.

Resistive subcultural practices and the gendered dynamics within them that developed in the 1980s and 1990s were affected by cultural shifts that occurred in México in the post-Avándaro years. On September 11, 1971, the *Festival de Rock y Ruedas de Avándaro* caused an irreparable cleave in the performance culture of a nation. As over 200,000 people throbbed in the two-day music festival in the outskirts of México's capital, decades of foundational moral piety among the elites of post-revolutionary society were shaken to the core. Even after the 1960s, the Avándaro festival had transformed into a Woodstock of the South, challenging the moral conventions of an otherwise sexually conservative society committed to putting the brakes on counterculture. Festival producers maintained that the event would be a time for people to gather in the spirit of love. Concertgoers camped outdoors and erected makeshift dwellings on top of trees. However, it was a young woman dancing on a car rooftop who became the emblematic symbol of the concert. According to an account by Fernanda Ramos Pintle, a young woman glided across the multitude of attendees as she walked and danced at the same time ("La Mujer"). Then, she decided to take off her white T-shirt and blue jeans. Ramos Pintle says of the young woman, she "disrobed liberally but not sexually[…] No one could resist her poetic dance." The unidentified girl danced naked on top of the car for hours. She became the symbol of the resistant body and the harbinger of a subculture of indecency within the dominant conservative culture.

In the ensuing months, conservative daily newspapers demonized the unidentified dancing woman. Most notably, *Casos de Alarma!* dedicated an entire issue of its photonovela style reporting to a visual re-dramatization of a woman named "Macrina" and her voyage to Avándaro. The alarmist publication scripted a conservative campaign against rock music and culture, with women figuratively and literally at the center. Maintaining that the events it featured were based on actual events, the publication "re-staged" Macrina's life as she fell into "vice and degeneracy." First, she is in her home surrounded by middle-class comfort. Then, she succumbs to her hippie harem leader "El Chiro" and decides to join him at the bacchanal dance at Avándaro, which the paper described as an orgy. Finally, she arrives at the rock concert and loses her sense of morality. The concluding image depicts Macrina wearing a yellow mini-skirt as she dances before a multitude of bodies. With a spotlight on her, she grabs the sleeves of her tie-dyed blouse just as she is about to disrobe, exposing her breasts. Surrounded by a mass of clothed bodies and their gaze magnetized by her, Macrina tilts her head back and closes her eyes, moving in unbounded pleasure. The publishers used this image as both the magazine's cover and the final image. Where the cover included the captioned text "Avándaro, El Infierno!," the final image ends with a description of Avándaro as the worst moment in México's history.

The Avándaro concert marked the beginning of then-President Luis Echeverría's six-year repression of rock in Mexico City. In November 1975, the United States' band Chicago visited Mexico City and over forty-five thousand people attended the concert (Fisher). However, more people wanted to enter the auditorium than were allowed and the attendees began to force their

entry. Not being able to enter, the concertgoers protested in the streets. The event resulted in injuries and the destruction of cars. A month later, President Echeverría suspended rock music and other contemporary shows at public auditoriums such as the *Palacio de Bellas Artes*, the National Auditorium, and the Chapultepec Park Auditorium. In all cases, the President's restrictions of the events were based on concerns for the attendees' wellbeing and protection of property.[124]

Despite the increase of alarmist publications and the outlawing of rock music, the subculture flourished in the uncharted spaces of Mexico City's counterculture. First, impresarios and emerging artists established rock cafes. These spaces were public venues where band members hung out to listen to each other play. Entrance was free, but clients purchased drinks to stay and listen to the bands. However, these cafes were closed down during the increased repression of rock. Second, the periphery of the city became fertile ground for experimentation in new forms of music and dance. Due to the diminishing places where rockers could play, *hoyos funky* emerged in the outskirts of the city, in unincorporated areas like Nezahualcóyotl. *Hoyos* were events produced for and by youth who played rock music. These occurred in undeveloped commercial zones or buildings dilapidated by the 1985 earthquake. Attendees did not drink, but the general public associated these places with debauchery.[125] Lastly, the flea markets in the city provided new spaces for the mixing of classes, races, and religions. In particular, *Tianguis Cultural del Chopo* appeared in 1980 as the countercultural flea market for buying and selling prohibited music and cultural ephemera. The *hoyos funky*, the periphery, and *El Chopo* turned into spaces where deviant behaviors and lower classes were tolerated by the government because they were contained in a distinct area and, at least with *El Chopo,* the participants became organized in 1985, creating a civic association and implementing rules for sellers and attendees.[126]

Punk rock grew as a response to the government's continued repression of rock music and its failure to provide adequate resources for residents impacted by the turbulent earthquake in 1985 that left thousands dead. Much like the history of punk rock in the United States and the United Kingdom, punk's origins in México are debated. Cornejo and Urteaga argue that punk rock originated with undocumented migrants who returned from the United States to México's low-income municipalities. Arcelia Salomé López-Cabello, examining punk in México from 1984 to 2014, proposes that upper-middle class elites introduced punk after visiting the United Kingdom but low-income youth in the peripheries of Mexico City adopted it and spread it across the city. While there is no identifiable origin, band, or group, the *Mierdas Punk* and the *Punks No Dead* are associated with making punk visible in Mexico City and its outskirts. *Mierdas* were from the poor neighborhoods in the outskirts of Mexico City and *Punks No Dead* resided in Mexico City.

Unlike the punk culture in the United States and the United Kingdom, punk in México was more than a countercultural social movement. As mentioned in the previous section, according to Poma and Gravante, anti-authoritarianism and anarchist beliefs were the cornerstone of punk in México from the beginning. The movement did not have the objective of thinking from the point of the nation-state by re-appropriating dominant culture to comment on it (Poma and Gravante 440). Meaning, the social movement disavowed existing institutionalized systems of power. Instead, concerts and dances attracted young people into alternative political models that valued non-hierarchical organization and leadership. In this way, punk in México unfolded as a laboratory

[124] The decree eventually spread to additional cities such as Guadalajara.
[125] See *El rock no tiene la culpa (Documental de rock mexicano)* (2011). Directed by Miguel Hernández.
[126] See Arturo J. Flores' article https://www.vice.com/es_latam/article/dp3xpv/nunca-existio-trueque-en-el-chopo-de-tianguis-de-discos-a-tianguis-de-camisetas (2016), Abraham Ríos, *Tianguis Cultural del Chopo* (1999), and Kelley Tatro's *The Righteous and the Profane: Performing a Punk Solidarity in Mexico City,* Duke University. Dissertation. 2013.

for political experimentation alongside a countercultural social movement that was largely unified by a shared goal of defying conservative and national cultural norms. These social movements adopted anarchistic aesthetic expression, decentralized organization, and direct action, intersecting with ideologies that appreciated collective identity over individual expression.

In the post-Avándaro period, punk rock music and culture turned into a counter-authoritarian social movement, but it was nonetheless part of a subcultural group heavily coded as male. Three months after *Casos de Alarma!* published its alarmist story about Macrina, the naked dancing woman, the rock magazine *Piedra Rodante* featured its own version of the events at Avándaro by claiming that they had identified and interviewed the real dancer from Avándaro. On the January 1972 issue cover, Alma Rosa González López, a young naked (white) woman, stands and rests her back on a wall covered by posters of male musicians. Her body faces the reader directly. With her right hand, she holds a calendar to cover her pelvis and, with her left hand, shields her breasts with cassette tapes and concert tickets. In contrast to the conservative magazine *Casos de Alarma!*, *Piedra Rodante* censored González López's body despite being the publication associated with the countercultural rock movement. Three decades later, rock music critic Oscar Sarquiz would accuse *Piedra Rodante* editor Manuel Aceves of fabricating González López's story. These competing narratives, fictional or otherwise, reveal the intersecting dimensions of power that move across semiotic and embodied axes, which temporarily assemble on magazine pages to script social choreographies of dominant and minor narratives through women's bodies.

Even though punk provided an outlet for resistance to popular and dominant conservative culture in México, the subculture itself espoused sexist and normative ideas about women's roles within punk. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, *Alma* foregrounds the double-bind that haunts the punk woman. Despite being part of the punk rock commons that gathers collectively around disaffection, Alma is expected to conform to men's ideas of submission. Her partner, Juan seeks to manage her body by assuming full control of her actions, both while she is in front of him and when she is away. He wants to determine her actions and subsequent actions, executing his authority over her even in his absence. He reaches into her underwear with the objective to please her, but then becomes suspicious because she is "too wet." He tells her that he can smell her "activity" on her after he reaches into her underwear with his hands. She dismisses his demands to know with whom she has been. He tries to prevent Alma from leaving after she refuses to answer any of his questions related to his unexpected inspection of her vagina. As she walks out on what was supposed to be a moment of meeting up and having sex, Alma leaves what turned out to be a moment of accusations and attempted control of her body.

Alma encounters the pressure to surrender her body in her apartment too. Alma walks into a cafe where her male friends sip Coca-Colas and discuss the difference between reality and the unreal. Unexpectedly, a scuffle between the hippies and the punks interrupts this otherwise tranquil moment. Alma is caught in this violent rumble, but she breaks free unscathed and returns to her home with a wounded friend Marco, played by Marco Ramírez. After she grabs alcohol and rubs it on the wound, Marco tries to kiss her. At first she reciprocates, but then she tells him to stop. She halts his forceful kiss and interrupts his desire to use the moment after the scuffle to kiss Alma, again highlighting the male violence that occurs within countercultures, where young men feel that they can access women whenever they want.

When Alma leaves Juan, his apartment is in the background. He lives in the building complex called El Paraíso [Paradise]. I take Juan's apartment to be the stand-in for the punk rock commons that dresses up as an ideology of subcultural practices that resists dominant cultural norms, but that ultimately replicates patriarchal notions of power over and through women's bodies. Juan's

apartment is supposed to represent the location of punk delight and utopia. Right before Juan receives Alma in his apartment, he looks out the window and calls Alma up. Alma opens the door and finds him reposed and strumming his guitar, as if he had been there all day, wasting time. She asks him if he is going to play at the gig that same day. He says, "I don't know." She prompts him, "So why are you practicing?" Juan appears to be disinterested in Alma's questions and continues sweeping his fingers on the guitar's strings. Juan enacts punk impassivity, wastefulness, and unconcern as a cool aesthetic. Yet Juan staged the scene. Moments before Alma walks up the stairs, Juan stepped out of the bathroom wearing boxer shorts, drying his face with his hands, and straightening his long wet hair. Then, he put on a black leather hat and glasses, and lit a cigarette. He fluffed two pillows and arranged them on the bed. He grabbed his guitar and leaned on the pillows as he drooped the cigarette from his lips. Wearing nothing but his underwear, the black hat, and the glasses, Juan created the punk scene in his bedroom moments before Alma opened the door and walked in to see him producing a gendered-version of "wasting time."

This moment in *Alma* demonstrates the double work that punk women have to endure to resist dominant ideas about their position in society. They have to be doubly aware of the men who purport to advocate alternative models of being in this world by dressing up to play punk. As this scene shows, Juan and punk rock men like him seek to control women's bodies for their own interest and to serve their sexual prowess. Alma's bodily excess supersedes his control and he accuses her of carrying around the residue of semen belonging to other men. His desire then is not to please her but, rather, to please his idea that he controls her body and her actions at all times and in all spaces. No matter how many alternative spaces there are such as *hoyos funky*, *El Chopo*, and *El Paraíso*, women must navigate these spaces with extra vigilance.

Scriptive Things

In response to women's limited roles within alternative spaces, women who do not comport themselves to expected gender roles adopt different strategies of resistance to navigate men's control of their bodies and ideas. In *Alma*, the lead protagonist is part of an all-women's performance group. The video never shows them performing, but we do see them rehearsing. These tactics parallel other strategies that women within the punk rock commons adopted. Groups such as the *Chavas Activas Punks (CHAPS)* formed in 1988 to refuse the idea that women belong as adornments on men's arms. A group of about thirty women, CHAPS committed to undoing hierarchical structures and the institutionalized family moral values that position women as either "whores," "virgins," or revolutionary *machas*. CHAPS did not want to be solely exhibited for men's sexual prowess and escapades. In addition to opposing these representations, women were responding to aesthetic systems of exclusion. Sarah Minter was also navigating women's limited roles in subcultural spaces. The videos *Nadie es inocente* and *Alma punk* are a collaboration between Minter and the punk youth, but they highlight the artist's concerns about who controls the documentation and representation of women in México's history, and under what terms.

During one scene in *Alma punk*, Alma and her girlfriend Yola are helping their friend Marilou after an apparent abortion procedure. Marilou rests on the couch while Yola rubs her back. Alma enters the living room and offers Yola pieces of a cantaloupe melon. Alma notices a book on Yola's lap and she asks about it. Yola mentions that she is reading a book about women in México. Alma asks her if it is a good book and Yola pauses momentarily. She switches topics to mention a book about poet suicides. After a conversation about Sylvia Plath, they discuss Marilou's decision to have an abortion. However, they never say the word "abortion." Instead, Yola describes how Marilou took the anesthesia and woke up later crying. In a soft voice, Yola says, "I think she

regretted the choice," but then she follows that sentence by turning her attention to Alma, asking her how things are going with Marco, her temporary boyfriend who moved in for a month. As they switch from one topic to the next, Alma holds in her hand the book about women.

Drawing on performance theorist Joseph Roach's notion of "kinesthetic imaginations," Robin Bernstein maintains that objects such as books or photo cutouts at arcades become *scriptive things* when they hail a subject into an ideology by creating gestural or embodied actions that perpetuate the oppression of other subjects. According to Bernstein, material items such as racist books or paper cutouts structure and transfer ideologies of domination through imaginations enacted in embodied encounters. Scriptive things speak the unspeakable; they conjure embodied cultural memories that circulate beyond the realm of the utterable and are as effective in composing and maintaining everyday unequal social structures as linguistic interactions;[127] an object's structure functions to keep the oppressed body as an "Other." It enacts this structure by privileging the agency of the oppressor when they encounter material relationships. Bernstein's attention to the material world points out how social power is situated at the juncture of the material, semiotic, and embodied. It is here where oppressive systemic structures are perpetuated. Scriptive things are deployed as tactical embodied repertoires to keep subjects oppressed.

Scriptive things can assemble entire artistic industries and perpetuate gender-based inequalities. Prior to the 1970s and 1980s, experimental artists were connected to state sponsored projects that favored the work of male filmmakers. Experimental cinema began in the post-revolutionary period in México. Experimental film in México held a "dialectical relationship" between mainstream, state-sponsored film production processes, and oppositional practices ("Mexperimental Cinema"). Artists such as Luis Buñuel worked for and were supported by both state-sponsored projects and the commercial film industry. They adopted the same production technologies but their content differed. For example, Buñuel's collaboration with Salvador Dalí in *Un perro andaluz* (1929) characterizes the surrealist aesthetics of early experimental twentieth century cinematic explorations. The black and white film incorporates absurd montages such as a person pulling two ropes attached to two large pianos where two large goats bleed on top. Similarly, in *Humanidad* (1934), Adolfo Maugard experiments with the aesthetic qualities of movement on camera and propagandistic themes ("Mexperimental Cinema"). Despite the artists' experimental tendencies, they worked for the large commercial production industries and for nation-building initiatives.

Parallel to experimental film practices, women were highly represented in Mexican popular culture within cinema, but they were usually on screen. Directors featured women in lead roles throughout México's Golden Cinema years of the 1940s and 1950s and well into the 1970s. In popular film culture, "controlling images" of women such as *cabareteras*, revolutionary *machas*, *femme fatales*, and virgins indexed the hyper-sexual or asexual figure of the female body, underscoring the representations available for women in a post-revolutionary context.[128] Women were not behind the camera developing scripts and narrative plots.

Experimental projects outside of the big production houses did not occur until the 1970s and 1980s with the advent of then-new video technologies. Much like film movements such as New American Cinema and European Surrealism, Mexican experimental films opposed feature film-

[127] Bernstein describes how turn-of-the-century white individuals used racist books or attended arcade photo booths, using these things to script, consciously or unconsciously, an ideology of whiteness. Racialized books and cutouts were performatives enacting and maintaining a white person's "agency, intention, and racial subjectivation" (Bernstein 69).

[128] Here I am using black feminist thinker Patricia Hill Collins' ideas of controlling images attributed to black women, but I am adapting it to a Mexican context

length projects identifiable by their narrative structure, use of characters, and employment of professional actors. Experimental film departed from these conventions of movie-making. Artists used found images, excluded narrative structures, and/or employed non-actors. What unites these characteristics is their oppositional approach to master narratives. Yet experimental film in México did not exist in the same way as it did in other countries. The film industry developed differently than it had in the United States. There were no venue houses for showing the films. Artists were relegated to showing their projects in a few locations, among friends, and in international settings ("Mexperimental Cinema").

With the introduction of video recorders, women artists across classes adopted new modes to challenge representations of women's bodies and circulated these films through non-commercial venues, favoring informal and free film screenings. According to Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda, feminist artists from the 1970s challenged established structures of power and created new archives in content and form.[129] The development of smaller format cinema and portable video projections gave women control over the projects and representations of women that were not shown in big budget cinematic productions. Video comprised a decentralized and portable mode of production that created new opportunities for documenting and circulating representations of women.

Sergio Garcia has characterized these approaches to film-making as the fourth cinema. The first cinema is commercial cinema. The second is art cinema which, according to Jesse Lerner, is translated to the equivalent of "if you are an artist then you are a pompous jerk" ("Mexperimental Cinema"). The third form is Latin American cinema of liberation in the third world that tends to be characterized by its propagandistic elements. Garcia distinguishes the previous three types of cinema from a fourth kind. This cinema is anarchic, rock and roll, or "jipi" cinema that rejects any state-sponsored connections. Video art falls within this genre of experimental film, and the media's format contributes to its artistic capacities. Video art is the artistic process of using video recording technologies and tools, such as Sony's U-Matic 3/4 mm video tapes, to create non-linear narrative films. These semi-professional cameras were usually, though not always, intended to be used as consumer grade products. Artists adopted U-Matic, Super8, and 16mm cameras for video production because these formats were easy to transport. Artists did not need to invest as much money. The artists' purposes for using video art in the fourth-cinema were varied but they were united by the medium's oppositional capacities, affordability, and easy distribution. Video became part of documenting everyday life and it provided opportunities for film artists to experiment with more freedom than in the previous approaches to cinema.[130]

These then-new analog video formats provided new modes of expression for female artists when female artists were still excluded from traditional distribution channels. As a result of the exclusion, women adopted non-commercial distribution artistic projects. Ximena Cuevas says that public television outlets at that time did not produce independent artists from México ("Mexperimental Cinema"). The cultural programs prioritized programming from outside the country. Consequently, much like fanzine makers in the punk community, video artists shared the videos by making their own bootleg versions and distributing them among peers or sending copies to international centers in New York or Chicago.

[129] Aceves Sepúlveda traces the development of women's representations in feminist films in the 1970s, pp. 5-6.

[130] It could be argued that these cameras were nonetheless middle-class tools. However, I do not dismiss them outright because such a perspective fails to acknowledge how working class or poor artists might have saved money to buy the equipment, or they might have stolen the tools. Either way, it stands that the portability and cost of the cameras made them accessible across more classes via either payment or piracy.

In addition to finding new distribution channels, female artists in the 1980s and 1990s began choosing non-controlling images and uncommon themes that had typified popular cinematic narratives.[131] Women gained control over the narratives about them in commercially successful media. Women-directed films such as María Novaro's award-nominated *Danzón* (1991) paved the way for commercially successful representations of women and their relationship to dance, sex, and freedom. The story follows Julia, played by María Rojo, as she questions what it means to be a single-mother in Mexico City and as she searches for the ideal dance partner in a club. A phone operator during the day, Julia frequents social ballrooms full of interracial and intergenerational dancers at night. Unexpectedly, she adventures to Veracruz to find Carmelo, a dance partner who disappears without a trace. As she searches for him, she navigates the gauntlets of men constantly looking at her, but she also develops a purely sexual relationship with a younger man. In the film, Julia decides where and how she wants to travel and with whom she wants to spend the night. Big budget films like Novaro's *Danzón* created alternative narratives for women and oppositional narratives to combat negative representations of women who did not have control of their bodies.

Alma and Yola sit around the couch discussing the contents of a book and animate the limited representations that exist for women, and open up discussions about how women can create other narratives. Artists such as Paola Vice, Sarah Minter, Ximena Cuevas, and Silvia Gruner created non-narrative projects focused on themes such as immigration, psychoanalysis, and labor. Where Gruner's work used video art as part of gallery installations, Sarah Minter's and Ximena Cuevas' video art circulated in small theaters locally and internationally. These artists had in common their commitment to not seeking commercial success and to employing video art to show women doing activities from the women's perspective. They focused on featuring marginalized spaces, and avoiding plots with master narratives and single male authorial voices. Self-legitimized authority away from traditional modes of video production enabled feminist artists to create communities that would not have existed otherwise.

What makes Minter's work in *Nadie* and *Alma* important is her emphasis on sexuality, collective abjection, and the body. Laura Gutiérrez argues that sexuality is central to understanding the unequal relationships of power related to censorship and control within politics and the economy (7). She examines queer and lesbian embodied performances that use political cabaret to rethink the mass-media and popular conceptions of heterosexuality in political and cultural productions in México. She moves away from cinema and towards embodied queer practices to understand cultural production and dissidence. For Gutiérrez, Mexican artists such as Jesusa Rodríguez and Astrid Hadad rewrite popular political and cultural texts to comment on how heterosexist and national discourses appear to be normal. Queer artists often use "wordplay tactics to already vernacular language" (15). More importantly, they participate in a queer world-making that rides on the surface of discomfort as a way of being. Gutiérrez says:

> In their multifarious performance strategies, the artists[…] most definitely deconstruct rigid gendered and sexual systems in Mexican society. But I contend that in the cultural production by these Mexican political cabareteras, representations of so-called deviant sexualities are also used deliberately for another purpose: to dislodge the concept of "perverse" from the queer female body and displace (or transfer) it to the national or supranational body politic. (12)

Here, Gutiérrez acknowledges the *cabaretera* as a queer and critical site to reconfigure the public Mexican sphere. She argues that political cabaret performance can challenge what is considered

[131] See Elisa Rashkin's *Women Filmmakers in Mexico: The Country of Which We Dream.* University of Texas Press. 2001.

perverse and move it from one location of power to another, identifying and deconstructing the perversity of heterosexist discourse in the public sphere. Although Laura Gutiérrez focuses on embodied public performance sites like the cabaret, a collaborative video project like *Alma punk* complements these dissident tactics. It demonstrates how feminist imaginations, and by extension the artists' videos, circumvent a masculinist culture and follow their own imaginative, though not problem-free, flow in places where space is restricted and overtly male.

Unlike Gutiérrez's queer cabaretera, Minter does not borrow popular culture to intervene and rewrite political and cultural texts in the supranational body politic, attempting to rewrite the nation from within. *Alma* documents the punk women's role in relationship to iconographic women in México's history. Alma is haunted by the presence of the virginal matriarch: La Virgen de Guadalupe.[132] The Virgin is a symbol that has been used by creoles, indigenous, and revolutionaries in New Spain and México. Her symbol was concretized when Pope John Paul the Second canonized Juan Diego on May 6, 1990.[133] In Minter's film, the Virgin appears two times: once on a blanket in Alma's apartment and a second time on a mural in Tijuana just as Alma is about to cross into the United States illegally. In Alma's rented home, the Virgin's image is screenprinted on a blanket that serves as a passage between the shower and living room. In Tijuana, the Virgin is located in the open air, painted in color on a white wall. The Virgin exists across the domestic and public spheres.

The virginal haunting that hovers behind Alma but that she never addresses links to the anxiety that Minter expresses about what women are and are not allowed to do. Minter produced *Alma punk* and *Nadie es inocente* at a time when Mexican feminist artists were working with the moving image in non-commercial methods. In these videos, new approaches to content and method uncover the larger social concerns about women's roles in dominant and subcultural communities.[134] Minter used Super-8 format, which was easy to transport and did not require as much capital investment. Minter says:

> Pronto comencé a explorar el video porque lo que yo quería era independencia. Hacer cine en México era muy difícil, casi no había apoyos ni recursos, pero sí había mucho centralismo y una estructura de poder bastante bizarra. (*Ojo en Rotación* 35) [Soon I began experimenting with video because I wanted independence. Making a film in México was difficult. There were very few financial resources but there was a lot of centralized power and a bizarre power structure; My translation]

After meeting Olivier Debroise and Gregorio Rocha, Minter expressed an interest in film, but the industry was too expensive and too centralized for her, as a woman, to develop a career. On a trip to New York in the early 1980s, she purchased a camera and taught herself how to produce, edit, and distribute her films. Wanting greater independence and financial freedom, Minter began experimenting with video art because it provided liberties and freedoms to women outside of the traditional modes of production and expression that tended to exclude women artists. Minter acquired an autonomy she would not have otherwise had if she had decided to pursue a career in

[132] For a history of the rise of the Virgen de Guadalupe in Mexico, see Margarita Zires' "Los mitos de la Virgen de Guadalupe. Su proceso de construcción y reinterpretación en el México pasado y contemporáneo." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 10(2), Summer 1994, pp. 281-313.

[133] See the Vatican's record of this account. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/homilies/1990/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19900506_citta-del-messico.html

[134] Just as I was finalizing this project, Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda's *Women Made Visible: Feminist Art and Media in Post-1968 Mexico City* (2019) was published. Aceves Sepúlveda's project argues that video artists from the 1970s are often overlooked. They created new approaches to visibilizing women's experiences. Aceves Sepúlveda calls these women *visual letradas*, or women who scripted new stories away from the central narratives told by men.

cinema. Women who chose to make cinematic features at the time scripted dominant narratives about women and how they were represented on and behind the camera because they had to adopt the practices and ideologies of a male-dominated industry.

After her trip to New York, Minter mainly produced creative projects in video and film.[135] Her major works include *San Frenesí* (1983), *Nadie es inocente* (1985-1987), *MEX-METR* (1987), *Alma punk* (1992), *Domingo en la santa sede* (2003-2004), and *Minueto* (2010-2014).[136] Minter's politics and approaches in *Alma punk* and *Nadie es inocente* underscore the tenets in the global punk scene. Minter maintained her autonomy and built her own self-taught aesthetic and technique, forgoing professional training. Deploying non-linear, non-chronological techniques, the footage for the film was captured on multiple occasions documenting the city. For example, in *Alma*, the video captures El Rull, an important performance art space that developed in Mexico City. Similarly, Alma goes to the central square to see a real eclipse that occurred in 1991. Also, Minter filmed the scenes at *El Chopo* on Saturdays because that was the only day that the flea market convened.[137] Choosing to record the video on Saturdays meant that she attempted to capture the flea market as it was constructed by the vendors and shoppers who frequented the market rather than constructing a fictional idea of *El Chopo*. It reduced the costs of productions. More importantly, it evidenced the exchange of goods, services, and media that took place at the market. In this scene of media exchange, Minter situates Alma in the middle of the activity, underscoring the different experimental and recycling strategies that women were adopting to make their own money and create their own communities through, though not apart from, male dominated subcultural spaces.

Minter's thematic concern in *Alma punk* demonstrates the varied approaches that women were taking in response to the limited representation of them in books and the screen. Yola's brief silence after Alma's question about what she thinks about women's roles in México is significant because it underscores the lack of female voices that exist in México's documentation of its own history and it accentuates the manner in which other female representations, such as the Virgen de Guadalupe, haunt quotidian and private spheres. As they rest in the living room, haunted by the Virginal blanket hanging behind them, Yola, Alma, and Marilou negotiate their choices of independence and determination of their own bodies. The brief pause accentuates the lengthy exclusion of women's voices in history books and it conjures the silent pressure that Alma, her friends, and Minter feel to adhere to the national imaginary, one that is a male-centered culture where women are expected to conform to men's interests.

Dis-scriptive Tactics

Scriptive things structure and maintain unequal repertoires of social power through the material aspects of our embodied everyday life and Minter's videos allow me to show how non-verbal tactics can undo these systems of exclusion. Because scriptive power maintains its capacity beyond the utterable, it requires pre-linguistic tactics to resist it. Minter's work highlights the way in which abject subjects resist scriptive power by purging master narratives. Using Laura Gutiérrez' helpful model of how performance can dislodge and transfer the perversity of the (queer) resistant body to the national body, feminist video art projects such as *Alma punk* and *Nadie es inocente*

[135] In 2015, the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo dedicated the first retrospective to Sarah Minter's creative legacy.
[136] This concern with the moving image on screen was formed at an early age, when she considered herself a cinephile.
[137] The flea market continues to operate to this day. I visited the market twice, in 2018 and then 2019. There I met with Minter's collaborator Pablo "Podrido" Hernández.

shift and carry the perversity of the independent women who exists outside of men's control to the perversity that unites the heterosexist punk male to the heterosexist national body. These strategies deploy dis-scriptive tactics that manifest at the embodied and aesthetic level. They enact a vomitus kinesthetic imaginary that pulls the veil on the pillar that connects masculinist dominance to minor cultures, and sustains the oppression of women in México.

Alma and other women associated with countercultural groups adopt varying tactics to survive masculinist culture despite the economic and racial oppression that they share with men who also form part of those groups. As mentioned previously, in *Alma punk*, the protagonist spends most of her time alone and moves between people and places. Yet throughout her transitory movement, her partner Juan desires to police her actions when she is not with him. Despite being part of the countercultural group that hangs out at *El Chopo* selling pirated merchandise and anti-authoritarian slogans, Juan seeks to retain his heterosexual authority over Alma. He demands to know where she has been in order to manage her life, bodily motion, and bodily fluids. By contrast, in *Nadie es inocente*, young women are largely absent from the video or they have few speaking lines when they are present. Most often, they are next to men who have their arms around them. For example, when the Mierdas Punk are drinking and wrestling in a dilapidated building, the young men are the only ones shouting that there is no love and no peace in punk. Pablo "El Podrido" Hernández jokes about how Sid the Vicious, the Sex Pistols' lead vocalist, killed his girlfriend first and then himself in the ultimate gesture of punk. Antonio "El Búho" Callejas echoes Podrido's stance by saying that Sid the Vicious killed his girlfriend because she believed in love. While the young men describe Sid's actions, Minter focuses on the women's faces. They smile, remain silent, and look with wonderment at the young men's fraternal praise of Sid the Vicious' deadly acts against his girlfriend.

Throughout her work in the punk rock commons, Sarah Minter demonstrates a concern about women's place outside, but not apart from, dominant narratives about women in México. This focus is most explicit in the scene I described in the previous section where Alma and her friend Yola discuss women's history in México. Again, Mari and Yola visit Alma's apartment after Mari has had an apparent abortion. Yola carries a book about women from México while Mari takes a nap on the couch (see figure 4). Alma asks Yola for her opinion about the book. Yola pauses momentarily after Alma's question and provides her with the nondescript response "hmm." Alma repeats the question, but Yola keeps her silence. Alma does not press her for an answer and she redirects the conversation by mentioning the book that Yola lent to her about suicidal poets. Yola wonders what Alma thinks about Sylvia Plath's desire to commit suicide. She asks, "How do you like her stuff about suicide?" Alma responds, "I don't know if it was her ideal." Yola laughs and says, "Our destiny." It is unclear why they laugh and what Yola means when she says, "Our destiny." Yola does not say whether or not she likes the book about women in México's history and she leaves it unclear whether she thinks her destiny is to commit suicide or to not exist in the archives of time. From Yola's response, we can take away that she feels positioned between a non-existent past and a suicidal future.

Between those two options, Yola offers a glimpse of other possible tactics to write new stories. Again, Yola considers Alma's question, thinking about the answer as she comes up with an idea. She simply says, "hmm." Her hesitant pause becomes an interjection between her reflection about Alma's question and her longing for an appropriate answer. The subtle "hmm" at the edge of Yola's lips suspends in the air and it conjectures the space women hold in México, between an empty past and a deadly future. She repeats the "hmm" again. Yola's two lips make contact and reverberate with a quizzical self-interrogation. Her "hmm" has a feeling, but not yet a meaning.

The "hmm" is an example of William Reddy's concept of the emotive; that is, those relational, self-exploratory, and self-altering expressions that change the world without the need for an addressee. Humming foregrounds Yola's internal reflection about the incomplete picture of women's roles and the impossibility of giving a comprehensive answer in that moment. When she makes the palliative sound, she demonstrates her desire for an answer and it sustains the conversation about how to acknowledge the erasure of women even in dissident communities. Thus, a critical need remains for the repeated question, "What is women's role in México's history?" Yola's lack of an answer is not to dismiss the women who came before her, rather it is her search to generate the question so as not to forget the answer even in the commons that resists dominant culture. Yola's temporary self-reflection expressed in her hesitation conjures a kinesthetic imagination committed to identifying women's roles in México while not prescribing anyone's mode of existing. This non-linguistic and self-reflective moment is a dis-scriptive tactic. To stop and search one's mind and body, asking what one thinks and feels, and using non-verbal responses, about women in history, is crucial to identifying a politics that recognizes women not only in history but in the present and future, in the punk rock commons and across the national body. Dis-scriptive tactics deploy unworthiness through embodied and aesthetic encounters and meditate the uneven gender power relations that connect the masculinist punk commons and the national body.

More specifically, dis-scriptive tactics manifest at the level of the gut. In *Alma*, Alma's friends are crying while one of them says how she felt the hands of a man all over her body. Alma's unnamed friend says, "Shit, I don't know what to say. It was something like…Shit, I felt like I was going to vomit. I felt those disgusting hands all over my body…I felt like throwing up." She continues, "Then everything turned black and I threw up all over that asshole." Unexpectedly, she begins laughing in the middle of her troubling story about a sexual assault. A friend responds, "Well, you deserved it. You are a whore." Her friend stops and laughs too. She says, "No, no, you're a bitch." Dissatisfied with the way she accuses the girl, she corrects herself and says, "No." Then, her friend encourages her, saying, "More, more." At first it is not evident that the young women are rehearsing a scene for an unnamed play. They are rehearsing a sketch about a physical assault, but they never state the reason nor the context for rehearsing their actions.

The circumstances surrounding the vomiting moment in this performance scene in *Alma* is different from the one illustrated in *Nadie es inocente.* Members from *Mierdas Punk* are in an abandoned building in the neighborhood Las Aguilas. In the same scene where the young men talk about Sid the Vicious killing his girlfriend, El Podrido says, "I hate México which gave birth to me. I piss on it. I spit on it." Another friend adds, "I vomit it." They sit around discussing how if rock is about peace and love then punk is the genre of horror. Before the youth sit around the dilapidated building and begin riffing about self-destruction and not wanting love, all that we hear is the sound of someone hacking their throat to vomit. The youth vomit the nation, which appears to exist inside of their intestines.

Neither video shows the youth vomiting, yet the sound and action of vomiting illustrates their concerns with the pre-linguistic embodied sphere. Elizabeth Wilson, in *Gut Feminism*, maintains that the gut is a site of knowledge connecting psychosomatic experiences. Wilson argues, "The vicissitudes of ingestion and vomiting are complex thinking enacted organically: binging and purging are the substrata themselves attempting to question, solve, control, calculate, protect, and destroy" (82). Advancing Ferenczi's argument that organs such as the gut and anus communicate information about the social sphere, Wilson sketches out the way in which ingestion and expulsion in the body indicate that organs think, and that they are where psycho-social experiences such as distress and anger are carried out. Biological acts such as vomiting are tactics

with knowledge about how to protect a person from social conditions. Following Wilson, I maintain that vomiting is a resistive tactic used by victims of gender-based violence and economic dispossession who challenge their social position by re-enacting appalling circumstances. Alma's friend reenacts her assault and demonstrates that one of her only recourses before the assailant is to respond by vomiting on the violator. Similarly, the young men who gather in dilated buildings purge the nation because they feel violated by it. Alma's friend and the *Mierdas* are united by the shared sense of protection that they receive when they vomit.

Disgust and vomiting become tactics where actants in the punk rock commons use embodied abjection to expose the profound impact of the nation on a subject's body. Standing, roughhousing, and dancing on top of a pile of concrete rubble produced from the 1985 earthquake, Podrido says he vomits México. According to Podrido and his friends, one can reject the nation's dominating force by vomiting. The young men resist the idea that México is a dominating force that consumes abjecthood by seeking out the vile and worthless conditions of urban life and reveling in that wretchedness. The youth sit around and vomit multiple times to declare that they do not need the nation. In *Nadie*, El Podrido conjures the guttural effect of vomiting and animates the solubility of the nation-state. In these embodied responses, the young men's tactical vomiting acknowledges the material and embodied impact of the nation-state on the body. This insight demonstrates that the nation is carried at the embodied level too, unsettling Benedict Anderson's idea that the nation is primarily created through print culture too.[138] Podrido's remarks reveal how the nation-state is a psycho-social-somatic condition that attempts to envelop minds, cells, bodies, and organs.

And yet, Alma's friend, who employs performance to reenact a sexual assault, underscores key differences in how these situations impact women versus men in the punk rock commons. She recalls the attacker's hands all over her body and expresses her desire to vomit. She feels queasy as her digestive system churns. She fights the attacker. This violent envelopment of her body engenders a sense of helplessness. The onslaught of the enigmatic hands triggers the stomach muscles and her esophagus responds. Unlike Podrido and his friends, who choose to purge themselves of the nation as a consequence of prolonged and implicit social distress, Alma's friend is in distress the moment of the assault. The scale of the attack is at the bodily level too, but there is physical violence that limits where she can escape to when her body is being pinned down. She has less options to find despicable urban experiences to call upon that disgust.

These differences in vomiting suggest that resistive tactics of disgust and abjection have gendered inflections. In the case of Alma's friend, she experiences the explicit use of forcible touch to render her immobile. Despite, or rather because of, the explicit attack, her body responds with a silent and guttural response beyond the utterable. It is a minor response to a major gender-based attack perpetuated by a masculine power that tries to monopolize her body. By contrast, Podrido and his male counterparts respond with an explicit guttural reaction to create a major disgust. They disavow the slow and implicit work that systemic dispossession enacts on their "vile" bodies. Although the young adults in both videos vomit, they purge differently but in response to a similar cause. Their respective responses are to the masculinist nation and its assaults on women and low-class communities, revealing that even within countercultures, masculinist ideas of power try to control women's bodies although lower class youth are also the victims of economic oppression. The sound of vomiting, ejecting feelings of abjection and violation from the stomach to the mouth, pushes back against the grammar of worthlessness and perversity that tries to control women's bodies with such words as "bitch" and "whore." Regurgitating such words provides a small act of

[138] See Benedict Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities*.

resistance across and beyond the punk rock commons. It dislodges the perversity of the punk rock commons and reveals the masculinist nation as that which is vile.

At an aesthetic level, Minter's videos are also regurgitative. Minter's *Alma punk* and *Nadie es inocente* elude genre expectations and master narratives about how to create community. The videos' scenes jump from one location to another and there are no clear story lines outside of the fact that Alma considers leaving Mexico City or that Kara is on his way outside of the city. They are always withdrawing from places. For example, Alma visits the post office on multiple occasions to receive and send postal letters to her mother in California and her pen pal in Poland. In the end, she leaves her home, but she never expresses the reason for her departure. The work defies the easy genre categorization of documentary versus fiction. Minter used the videos to create alternative communities beyond the reach of the state, national, and master narrative discourses about what women can and cannot do.

There is a double move in Minter's two art projects that emphasize the collective building possibility enacted through expulsion and material life. In *Nadie* the punks sit and sell merchandise at *El Chopo* after they had scoured a vast landfill for watches, jackets, and boots. As they wade through the endless mountains of trash, they dress each other and joke that they look like famous punk musicians. Or, one of the youth suggests that his friend's sister would find a watch comforting as she continues to mourn her child's death. In *Alma*, Alma visits her friend Chilona at El Bordo de Xochiaca, a landfill at the outskirts of Mexico City because she wants to find boots to resell. She steps on a soaked ground, trash bags, ripped clothes, and indistinguishable objects, looking for her boots. Meanwhile, garbage trucks dump more trash on the towering landfill. Unexpectedly, she finds a wooden guitar. She inspects it, says it is still good, and takes it with her. The endless incoming waste allows the youth to create an ongoing shared sense of collection outside of the landfill.

The youth's concerns in reusing waste and committing to material culture point towards the meta in my larger assessment of Minter's videos. Alma's and the Mierdas' preoccupation with analog media and waste material parallels Minter's concerns about what video art allowed her to create as an artist working in a male-dominated industry. The creation of the videos allowed Minter to be part of the punk rock commons and to undo master narratives about women's roles at the national level by adopting practices that blurred genre borders. Such a collaboration allowed her to create a discontinuous imagined community between disaffected youth and feminist video artists, conjoining a shared struggle of independence.[139]

These videos represent and demonstrate the discontinuous embodied networks in the punk rock commons that are mediated by material concerns, and that are united through excretion. Mercantilism and material culture are central elements of the punk commons, but Minter's video pieces indicate that material culture in the punk rock is symbolically and bodily sourced from waste. Regardless of where the punk rock music movement started, it sources its energy in the refuse that city residents throw away.

Alma maintains a preoccupation with finding and selling garbage, devoting her time to the circulation of material goods between family and friends and what those relationships allow for the creation of discontinuous communities. These discontinuous communities may never meet and they are created and enacted through the use and enjoyment of material goods. In other words, the waste instantiates and maintains relationships and networks of being-with for Alma, and the

[139] Here I am thinking about José Esteban Muñoz and his idea of disidentification. This idea is useful for thinking about minoritarian material culture. However, this project is not concerned solely with identity issues. Material life and what it does to shape our desires are also of concern. Hence, the emphasis on things rather than identities.

Mierdas. In this situation, the waste of material objects that are not stationary and limited to the nation, are constantly moving and being left behind as Alma moves and chooses to leave México, and she creates an imagined community between México and the United States. The clothes and boots that she found in the landfill are crossing national, linguistic, and classed borders. These minor materials create social networks across borders that set-up, enact, and maintain embodied imagined relationships.[140] In the same way, Minter's video art, alongside performance, allowed women artists to create new communities connected by the shared exclusion from male-dominated professions, spaces, and aesthetics that attempted to script secondary roles for women.

Conclusion

In *Nadie es inocente-veinte años después* [Nobody is innocent-twenty years later], Sarah Minter returns to Nezahualcóyotl in 2006 to document the lives of the former members of the *Mierdas Punk*. Minter traces the punks' lives and the way in which the city has changed in the last two decades. She paints a visual map of the punks in the city, juxtaposing montages of the original video with those of them in their current environment. The Mierdas reflect about the members who have died over the years. Mierdas were stabbed, shot, or died of drug overdoses. Twenty years later, the Mierdas swap out their Converse shoes and Mohawks for soccer cleats, children, worshiping in churches, ballet classes, and social justice-focused murals. Some of them, like Pablo "El Podrido" Hernández, still attend mosh pit gatherings at *El Chopo*.

In this latest version of the documentary, Minter features Guadalupe "Lupita" Arriaga, as she hangs clothes and wakes her children up. Lupita reflects about her experience of punk life. In a conversation with her mom and Javier "El Cienfuegos" Campos, her first boyfriend while they were part of the *Mierdas Punks*, she discusses her decision to have five kids and her choice to have an abortion too. Her mom tells her that she did not have the right to do it even though there are laws that protect women's decisions to do so. In their conversation, El Cienfuegos asks Lupita what she liked about him and they spend their time musing over whether she liked his kisses. She says, "No," and they break out laughing.

Across Minter's work, disaffected youth from the punk rock communities and feminist video artists shared a commitment to creating networks of alterity dedicated to a more caring touch, establishing a sense of community that circulates through material culture, and undoing master narratives about women by adopting purgative actions and aesthetics. Women who experienced abjection, particularly those within the punk rock commons, adopted moshing and vomiting as embodied and aesthetic tactics to resist the masculinist and conservative ideologies that restrict how women move. These tactics were carried out not only in relationship to discussions about women navigating majority culture, but also in their negotiations within the minoritarian punk rock commons. These affiliations trace a continuum of shared collective experiences that unite women across the discontinuous community that exists between feminist video artists and the punk rock life.

This chapter was not a nostalgic reading of the life and times of technologies from the 1980s or 1990s. Instead, it foregrounded how disaffected bodies survive and share knowledge through products now deemed obsolete or nostalgic in the present. Perhaps it feels odd to discuss analog video tapes now that digital tools are the *modus operandi* of social life and choreograph our every action. However, performance studies scholars can examine technologies of the near past to understand how then-new analog media production methods allowed female artists the opportunity

[140] In *Women Made Visible*, Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda maintains that these practices of exchange began in the 1970s with the creation of Cine-Mujer and other feminist groups and publication media.

to create new forms of political imagination and how artists foregrounded the discontinuous mobile punk body and what the disaffected body leaves behind strewn about on archives and repertoires. For example, in Minter's most recent documentary of the punks, she zooms in on Rafa "Punk" Rojas as he takes out a DVD and inserts it in the video player to watch the original 1986 documentary. Looking backwards, Tavia Nyong'o reminds us, just might prove revivifying in a culture "that wants to live nowhere but at the cutting edge" (21).

This analysis of Minter and her work gave us the opportunity to think about VHS tapes, paper letters, and cassette tapes and what those elements mean for our understanding of the performance and politics of women and disaffected youth as they face economic oppression and gender-based violence.[141] Such a reading of the near past allowed us to consider the effective modes of alterity and the punk rock commons that continue to vibrate each Saturday at the flea market *El Chopo* in downtown Mexico City, where, since 1980, counterculture sellers and seekers exchange cassette tapes, CDs, vinyl records, and VHS tapes.[142] Minter's work offers us ways to consider how these spaces, practices, and material contact zones put the brakes on a national culture that chooses to be nowhere but the present while it continues to perpetuate violence against women. These exchanges signal the significance of using analog technologies as modes of creating communities that do not forget the injustices lodged against women and abject youth in the near past and how we might forge less violent ways of touching each other.

[141] In the United States and elsewhere, since the mid-2000s, there has been a revival of analog audio formats such as vinyl records. See Marc Hogan's article https://pitchfork.com/features/article/is-vinyls-comeback-here-to-stay/. Accessed 6 Jan. 2020.

[142] I visited El Chopo two times in 2019. There, I happened to run into Pablo "Podrido" Hernández.

Chapter Three
Searching for the Missing: Performance, Forensics, and Democracy

In the performance *Réquiem: fosas* [Requiem: Graves], Violeta Luna sits with her legs open, surrounded by a pile of indistinguishable, oddly shaped black objects.[143] The Mexican artist slowly lifts up her long black skirt to reveal a large skull between her thighs. A white toothed, grimaced smile shines through from under the draping material. Fluorescent white flowers adorn the skull's head. After the skull makes its presence known, Luna grabs it by its sides. The cranial figure acts out a serpentine behavior and it slithers side-to-side, appearing to take control of Luna's body and lifting her to a standing position, compelling her to walk forward towards the audience. The skull leads Luna for a short walk and then the artist puts it down and stands above it. She reaches into the seam of her dress, just below her belly button, and pulls out what appears to be a clump of pubic hair. Lastly, she takes off her white wig and places it next to the skull and hair. Then, she parades around the items dropping sand to create a circle around them. Sand granules sprinkle over the deadly objects.

This chapter continues the line of inquiry from the two previous chapters, which evaluate dance and movement-based practices and how artists negotiate their place in society in the midst of spectacular political and economic violence. However, unlike in the preceding chapters, my concern here is less with living bodies than with what the State does to dead bodies and how artists offer us performance practices to "revive" those bodies that have been the victims of repression, political or otherwise. I propose two key arguments. The first is that these artists are advancing a commitment to investigative performance practices. The second is that forensic performances unravel the relationship between the nation, anthropology, and democracy. I evaluate the artists' use of the literature and techniques of forensic anthropology in community performances in order to criticize official statements in cases of forced disappearances. Artists are making a claim for justice in opposition to putative democratic processes that end up serving a violent form of democracy, a theater of representative politics that gives the illusion of justice.

This moment in Luna's performance initially can be read in at least three ways. One, it is a forlorn commentary about how México cannot produce living beings. Only death can come out of Luna's womb. Two, we might read this scene as another example of a Mexican artist showing reverence for the celebration of the dead, a ritual commercialized across the México-U.S. border in films such as *The Book of Life* (2014) or Pixar's *Coco* (2017). Finally, Luna paints her body like Tlaltecuhtli, the mother of all things, human beings alive and dead. This could be interpreted as an indictment of the Mexica people, blaming them because the deity requires constant human sacrifice and forgives the countless numbers of dead and disappeared persons.[144] Yet, a small gesture in this performance unmoors these facile readings and, as I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, complicates our understanding of the relationship between performance and politics in social contexts where spectacular representations of death and violence are part of everyday life. Looking beyond simplistic readings will challenge us to reassess what performance practices offer in democratic contexts where administrative and government levels of justice conjoin death and violence.

[143] I observed the performance at the Dance Mission Theater in San Francisco, California on Saturday and Sunday, November 11-12, 2017. Luna's work was featured as part of the Festival of Latin American Contemporary Choreographers.
[144] Tlaltecuhtli is said to rule with her husband Mictlantecutli.

Before Luna reveals the skull under her skirt, a video projection behind her shows what appears to be a familiar scenario representing a crime scene. A left hand reaches for a white brush while the other hand digs into the dirt to grab an indistinguishable object. The person's face is outside of the visual frame and we cannot make out her role, name, or designation. The figure cleans the dirt off of the object. Next to her hand is a tag with the alphanumeric identifier "C7." She shakes the object one more time, holds it for one second. She puts it away and wiggles her fingers. The objects and the scene indicate that it is an investigation scenario, but we cannot say what for and under what circumstances. There is no recognizable weapon nor body. Neither do we know any details about the person outside the frame. Yet the scene's marker "C7" and the digging gesture are distinguishable as reenactments associated with what we call forensic practices, or the searching for human remains.

A forensic specialist's goal is the articulation of the fragment within the whole. They recover, identify, and examine human remains. These include complete remains, decomposing remains, skeletonized remains, and remains altered by extraordinary conditions, such as fire, dismemberment, high-impact trauma, or any one of many natural or artificial methods (Pinkering 18). Using methods from disciplines such as anthropology, archeology, pathology, and odontology, forensic specialists try to identify biographic information such as age, sex, stature, and/or race/ethnicity from the fragments of a crime scene. Also, the specialists reconstruct the scenarios surrounding a person's death, trying to ascertain the events leading up to the person's death or the person's last moments before they died. What do these legal-scientific practices, which are concerned with crime scene investigations and the reenactment of a person's death, have to do with performance practices?

Luna's *Fosas* incorporates representations of forensic practices in a subtle manner but other performances foreground this connection and indicate how they have become central to recent Mexican artistic expression. For example, Rafael Lozano Hemmer's digital interactive platform *Level of Confidence* takes up the reconstruction and reenactment of digital forensic practices. This portable installation uses biometric digital technologies such as facial recognition to give museum visitors the opportunity to scan their faces and match them with one of the forty-three missing students from Iguala, Guerrero, México—a case I elaborate in detail in later sections. In 2014, the students were attacked by federal and municipal police working with drug cartels. Their location remains unknown. In the installation, visitors walk up to a large screen, stand in front of it, and wait for the algorithm to scan the features of their faces. Hemmer's installation offers audiences a personal and participatory encounter as they wait for the scan to complete. In all situations, the algorithm does not find an exact match, evidencing the ongoing search for the missing students.

Similarly, in *Buscando a bruno* [Searching for Bruno], Lukas Avendaño invites audiences to sit on an empty chair next to the *muxe* artist and anthropologist as they wait for Bruno, the artist's missing brother, who was forcibly disappeared on May 10, 2018.[145] Avendaño perches on one chair and, dressed in Oaxacan garb, holds a picture of Bruno that includes a simple question, "Dónde está Bruno?" [Where is Bruno?]. Avendaño incorporates dozens of forensic specialists dressed in hazmat suits and one trumpeter.[146] The specialists walk around handing out QR codes.[147] The code

[145] *Muxe* is a third-gender term used and accepted in the Zapoteca indigenous community in Oaxaca, México. See Miano Borruso, Marinella. "Hombre, mujer y muxe en el Istmo de Tehuantepec." *México: Plaza y Valdés, INAH* (2002).

[146] The hazmat suits were incorporated in the version I saw on June, 6, 2019, in México City at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo. However, other versions of this performance do not include these persons.

[147] QR Codes are black and white codes akin to bar codes. They provide information about an object or they direct the reader to a website with more details.

leads people to a website with information about Bruno. In addition to passing out the QR codes, a woman and a young girl walk around asking viewers to create boats made out of rice paper and inviting them to float the childlike creations on the water fountain. As in other versions of this performance, audience members are invited to sit next to Avendaño as the artist waits for authorities to find Bruno. Eventually, the dozens of specialists wearing hazmat suits surround Avendaño and they make the *muxe* artist "disappear." A mass of white coats engulfs Avendaño's body and the audience does not see where it ends up. We can surmise that they disappeared into the abyss or became one of the forensic specialists.

Given the pronounced presence of forensic concerns with missing bodies in artistic processes, this under-analyzed relationship deserves attention. In this chapter, I identify the commitments that artists make towards investigative methods. I assess how performance reenactments of forensic practices are useful for thinking about missing bodies that we know have vanished or bodies whose identities remain unknown even after they have been found. I offer an appraisal of this terrain as it pertains to theatrical events where biometric details, human remains discovery, testimonies, and crime scene investigations are used in common discourse to configure a claim for social justice where the legal-scientific terrain has failed to secure the protection of victims of state repression.

While my principal concern is to examine the relationship between performance and forensics, I first examine how anthropology and, in particular, archeology was central to establishing a national community in México. I identify a larger concern with how anthropology and the search and management of the dead relates to the construction of the national identity. I connect the transformations that occur in anthropology as a creation of a mythic past to forensic anthropology becoming central to the idea of the formation of México. After I provide a brief overview, I continue to examine how artists use forensic anthropology methods to shatter this national mythic past that erases the bodies that are disappeared. These artists are challenging that deconstruction through performance. I choose forensics as a disciplinary framework that relates anthropology and fragments of bodily remains as being central to the creation of imaginary communities. These bodily concerns are choreographic in nature and deal with the arrangement of dead bodies in space. It is important to reassess these actions as choreographic in nature because they reveal how the state's control of normative behaviors is not limited to the living body. Looking at the arrangement of dead bodies, whether they are confirmed to have passed or not, reveals that dance studies can expand its movement assessment to not just those bodies who are alive but also to those that are made to move under the state's control even after they have died or disappeared. Here I focus on performances where citizens challenge the violent nation and I foreground the importance of artistic practices in this resistance, even after a person has died or been forcibly disappeared. Understanding the under-theorized element of forensics will offer us greater insight into performance's vital role in contexts where mass graves are woven into a violent social life. It uncovers how performances that are spatially and temporarily bounded can carry out the work of journalism without experiencing the liability of a discipline that has become deadly.

Nation Building and the Collection of Bones

Juan Caloca's artistic installation *Las horas del exterminio (fosa común)* [Hours of Extermination (Common Grave)] employs images of Mexican patriotism and tools from forensic archeology. In *Las horas*, Caloca blends two separate flag staffs with a shovel and a pickaxe. The top of the staff consists of a three-pointed spade and represents national authority. The staffs' bottom ends culminate in a shovel and a pickaxe with a pointed pick on one end and a chisel on

the other. The tools require lots of force and are designed to strike hard soil. Users of these instruments exploit the momentum generated from the metal to strike the ground with great force. Caloca's *Las horas del exterminio (fosa común)* foregrounds the intimate relationship between the State and its exhumation of the dead for nation building, symbolizing the tools from anthropology that were wielded to dig up the ground for the collection of artifacts and bones.

The field of anthropology's primary focus on architectural developments and the construction of scientific labs in the 1900s almost "bordered on the necrophiliac" (Gillingham 49). The post-1910 revolution era relied heavily on physical anthropology's focus on the search for remains of the dead to build a revolutionary state. Elites and common people alike fervidly hunted to find and reclaim corpses. In 1939, then-President Lázaro Cárdenas established the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia to promote the investigation, preservation, and transmission of México's archaeological, anthropological, paleontological, and historical heritage (Gobierno de México). For Paul Gillingham, another important event in these necrophiliac enterprises happened in the early 1950s with a debate over claiming the bones of Cuauhtémoc, the Mexica people's last emperor. His bones were supposedly found beneath a church altar in the remote village of Ixcateopan, Guerrero. Similarly, archaeologists had just found Hernan Cortés' bones and then-Senator Joaquín Fagoaga petitioned the government to return the remains of former President Porfirio Díaz from France.[148]

In the period between the Revolution of 1910 and 1990, the field of anthropology was focused on myth creation. According to Claudio Lomnitz, México established a national system dedicated to utilizing anthropological tools to build an ideology centered on the country's indigenous heritage. He calls this system *national anthropologies*, describing them as "anthropological traditions that have been fostered by educational and cultural institutions for the development of studies of their own nation" (Lomnitz 228). For example, these educational and cultural institutions included the Museo Nacional de Antropología built in 1964. Lomnitz goes on to argue, "Mexico developed one of the earliest, most successful, and internationally influential national anthropologies" (230). Anthropology's institutionalized system, which focused on recovering bones and archeological sites to recover the past, shaped the development of México because it provided the theoretical and empirical materials to configure modernist aesthetics and public opinion after the revolutionary period. It crafted a mythic indigenous aesthetic commingled with a modern cultural imaginary to produce a unified sense of nationhood that depended on anthropology to verify the connection between the two. These imaginings were visually rendered on the edifices of buildings designed to forge the revolution's commitment to valuing the indigenous presence and modernizing the indigenous past, which resulted in the idea of the unified mestizo identity (Lomnitz 231). Buildings such as the Universidad Nacional Autónama de México's main library are visual reminders of the indigenous past that exists in the mestizo present. This building's mural, created by Juan O. Gorman, is one of the largest in the world. The mosaic was constructed from pebbles found throughout the entire country. Each of the mural's sides features an important phase in the country's historical timeline. The north side highlights Tláloc, other Mexica gods, and four rivers. The south side exhibits key moments in México's colonial period. The east side promotes the country's modernity and a reference to communism. The west side honors the national university, highlighting its contributions to science, sports, and culture.[149]

[148] Porfirio Díaz was president in Mexico City from 1876 to 1911. His tenure is known as the Porfiriato.

[149] In 2017, the newspaper 24 Horas created a printout of the mural's four sides. It did this in honor of the sixty years since the mural was built. The editors call this mural México's insignia. The original illustration could be found on the following link: http://www.24-horas.mx/el-mural-mas-grande-del-mundo-infografia/. Since I last accessed it on

By the late 1900s, reverence for the dead and its connection to the justice system was central for the creation of what Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman have called the "forensic imaginary."[150] In the 1970s, the field of anthropology shifted away from an institutional discipline designed to build a national identity based on indigenous roots and moved towards a nation building project dedicated to an understanding of the then-present make-up of México. The State's search for the dead focused less on the past and more on the social and political conditions of the time. In 1975, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia created the first nationally accredited program dedicated to forensic physical anthropology. It underscored the operational logic of forensics in the medical legal sense with the objective to serve the state's interests.

These forensic concerns continued into the 1990s. One example of this imaginary was the project *La cara del mexicano* [The Face of the Mexican].[151] In 1993, María Villanueva documented and digitized the morphological make up of residents from across the republic.[152] Between 1993 and 1996, her team took pictures of close to three thousand residents. Then, the scientists used computer aided technology to create the digital archive CARAMEX. The repository had limited use. The attorney general had sole access to the information storage system. Combining anthropology and forensics, the project endeavored to understand the morphological distribution across the country, but it was also used to give the attorney general an archive of the general profile of its residents. These databases were used in investigations to identify the possible whereabouts of individuals involved in criminal cases.

The techniques of forensic sciences replaced a cultural anthropology field dedicated to myth-making with new techniques focused on truth-telling. Villanueva's *La cara del mexicano* project is evidence of the ways in which the state started to use forensic tools to create an inventory of its population. Its objective was to construct an information system efficient and precise at identifying possible criminals. Importantly, for the CARAMEX project, digital artists used Adobe Photoshop to break down the person's faces into parts. This process involved isolating eyes, ears, mouths, mustaches, foreheads, and many other features. These isolated body parts were subsequently added to a repository that could reconstruct images of supposed criminals. The nation's shift towards a forensic emphasis coincided with the State's new use of anthropological tools to dissect bodies rather than to uncover them. State supported projects such as CARAMEX allow us to ascertain the State's utilization of forensic practices as an instrument of the national imaginary, legal field, and its interest in the lives of its citizens.

Caloca's *Horas del exterminio* underscores this entangled history. The installation does not offer other imagery next to the shovel and pickaxe. The tools stand against a blank wall, propped up with care. The shovel and pickaxe are both tinted in a shiny, silvery metallic coat. The surrounding walls and lights reflect off of the surface of instruments of power. Looking at the objects, one cannot decipher if these tools are being used for uncovering objects on the ground or covering them up. Here, the instruments used for the exhumation of dead bodies are the same tools utilized for the burial of dead bodies. The audience's role is to ascertain the role of these tools and

15 Jul. 2019, the graphic is no longer available. A copy can be found here: https://www.pinterest.fr/pin/324399979395853262/.

[150] See *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of a Forensics Aesthetics*. Sternberg Press, 2012.

[151] Villanueva's project followed French police officer and biometrics officer Alphonse Bertillon's methods. Bertillon, 1853-1941, measured the facial and physical features of French residents and created systemic methods for documenting and identifying individuals.

[152] The project was supported by the Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas and La Procuraduría General de Justicia del Distrito Federal. The project can be accessed here: http://www.iia.unam.mx/investigacion/proyectos/caramexv2/index.htm

whom they are serving. Importantly, Caloca's *Horas del exterminio* appears to only capture the relationship between México's national anthropology projects and pre-digital tools era. The shovel and axe represent antiquated tools that do not account for more recent techniques like those used in *CARAMEX*.

The fact that Caloca's *Horas del exterminio* does not comment on the use of forensic tools like computer generated images does not make it irrelevant to current concerns about the way in which the state uses forensic imaginary to create a larger national imaginary. As I mentioned, the artist coated the shovel and pickaxe in a shiny, silvery metallic layer. The light reflects off of the polished surface. The features of the exhibition rooms are cast back to the viewer. However, the images are distorted. Ceilings, walls, windows, and floors are warped. A window is elongated. The floor appears to go beyond the gallery hall. The surface alters what we think is the real experience. The distortion of the real on the shiny surface of the installation is its most striking feature. This underscores how the nation has used, and continues to use, the tools of anthropology to create a distorted sense of reality. The following section elaborates on the significance of this observation.

Reenactments of the Disappeared

In NAKA Dance Theater's production *BUSCARTE, or Searching for You*, Debby Kajiyama drags a tape recorder across the floor making a loud scraping noise (see figure five).[153] She pulls the device and alternates between tracing her right hand, the floor, and her body. Her collaborator José Navarrete enters halfway through the performance wearing a large white eagle as a head mask. They take turns scanning each other's bodies. This examination results in the artists pushing each other until Navarrete's eagle head topples off. Then, Kajiyama starts listening to the tape, holding her hand and looking at the recorder. A voice on the recorder says, "No, no. I don't think it's a haunting. He did not have a face. I mean, they removed the face. The reason I have a clean conscience is because I know I did my job…I saw a body." The short responses and the pauses between the phrases indicate it is a scenario of someone testifying and answering questions. The interviewee's identity is unclear, but so is the interrogator's. The person continues to give details about how they identified a human body whose facial features were removed. Then, Kajiyama grabs the tape recorder and interrogates the person by asking, "Are you sorry?" The interviewee responds, "No." Then, Kajiyama wonders, "Is there anything you could have done differently?"

Slowly, the scenario becomes easier to distinguish and we notice that Kajiyama is interviewing herself on the recorder. However, it is difficult to differentiate between the interrogator and the suspect because the person being interviewed is Kajiyama and Kajiyama is interviewing the recorded person. The enigmatic interviewee is the interrogator. They switch back and forth asking each other the same questions. This back and forth interrogation distorts our sense of the location. It produces subjective vertigo.[154] Are we watching this experience from the suspect's or the interrogator's perspective? The interrogation begins with the audience listening to a stranger on a tape recorder, but then we come to see and identify the person being interviewed as Kajiyama. The distinction is unstable because before too long the roles switch again.

Kajiyama and Navarrete devised *BUSCARTE* to contemplate the forensic findings in the case of the forty-three missing students from Ayotzinapa. In the event, federal, municipal, and state police forces chased and attacked student teachers from the Escuela Normal Rural Raúl Isidro

[153] NAKA Dance Theater is an Oakland and Mexico City-based performance group. Its co-director José Navarrete is from Mexico City. He travels between México's capital and Oakland on a regular basis to produce community projects that address issues of state violence and immigration.

[154] In Chapter One, I elaborate on the difference between subjective and objective vertigo.

Burgos, popularly known as Escuela Rural Normal de Ayotzinapa. On that night, eight people were killed, twelve were injured, and forty-three were abducted by municipal officials. *BUSCARTE* is a performance project that started in 2015 and culminated in May 2019. Although the artists themselves are not using forensic science methods by traversing crime scene scenarios to identify mass graves or entering courtrooms to testify before a judge or jury, they are adopting similar practices in their performances. The artists have interviewed family members of missing persons and used excerpts from forensic reports. Navarrete and Kajiyama are interested in the fact that authorities and independent groups found other mass graves while looking for the missing college students in Guerrero.[155] In a program note from March 11, 2018, the artists make clear that this piece is "a quest to make visible that which cannot be looked at directly" (Program for *NAKA Dance Theater's* Still Unaccounted For*)*. That which cannot be looked at directly are the countless dismembered bodies found in mass graves or the estimated twenty-five thousand bodies that remained uncounted.[156]

The moment in *BUSCARTE* when Kajiyama interrogates herself foregrounds at least two elements of concern in issues related to forced disappearances in México. First, it animates the difficulty of assessing who is at fault in these situations. The names of the interviewee and the interviewer are never clear. When investigators identify culprits involved in forced disappearances or murders, it is revealed that the person was following orders from their supervisor. The person prioritized the job over the dead victim and she was only obeying orders. Second, even when suspects are identified or when victims' identities are known, as is the case in Ayotzinapa, there is impunity and residents are left with materials such as recorders, images, and visual representations of the crime scene or symbolic images that represent the disappeared or that are also falsely created based on torture.

In her book on forced disappearances during the 1970s Dirty War in Argentina, performance studies scholar Diana Taylor discusses five kinds of writing/representations about the disappeared. These include: testimonies as evidence given by disappeared persons in a court setting; testimony writings by victims of torture who "reappear;" representations of the bodies of the disappeared by others (such as photos used during demonstrations); fictional and aesthetic representations in novels, plays, and films; and, lastly, scholars who examine the issues or theme of the disappeared (Taylor 140-145).[157] Similarly, in a Mexican context, representations of the disappeared occur in multiple locations and across various media and texts, but important differences require attention. Representation of violent or forced disappearances include the ones Taylor identifies, as well as tabloids and daily newspapers that depict dismembered bodies, crime scenes, or destroyed cars where people were taken away—images that I choose not to show here. The spectacle of forced disappearances is maintained not only by state media, but also by daily press agencies. Also, there is a marked difference in the objective of these disappearances. In an Argentinian context, the right-wing military's goal was to make people disappear in public via what Taylor calls the *theater of operations*, or public spectacles where residents were taken in the middle of the day and

[155] See Telemundo article with details about the identification of sixty clandestine graves after a year of searching for the missing students of Ayotzinapa.
https://www.telemundonuevainglaterra.com/noticias/local/localizan-en-fosas-de-iguala-restos-de-105-desaparecidos-solo-identifican-13-cuerpos-caso-ayotzinapa-detona-busqueda/1923549/.

[156] According to a report by *El Universal*, an estimated twenty-five thousand residents were forcibly disappeared between 2006 and 2016. See https://interactivo.eluniversal.com.mx/desaparecidos/.

[157] Across the first four representations, Taylor contends that most of them re-inscribe misogynistic views regardless of whether they are fictional or not. She is critical of narratives that use depictions of women's disposable bodies to support critiques of nationalistic ideologies.

seemingly reappeared days, months, or years later. In so doing, the military used performative practices to mediate the disappearance and reappearance of leftist or dissenting residents through the visual sphere to establish and maintain the military's authority. The military theatricalized their tactics, forcing people to disappear and reappear in public with the message that any person could disappear, be tortured, and show up again on a sidewalk or in trash cans (Taylor 98). The visibility of disappearance was key to visibilizing the maintenance of power under which dissident leftists were deemed a threat to the dictatorship.

While forced disappearances in México can be carried out in the theater of operations orchestrated by the government, they can also be executed by non-government agents due to the lack of government intervention. Mass graves are found where there is no direct connection to politically motivated crimes, yet local politicians might have been aware of the crime and did not intervene. In other cases, women are forced to disappear or are murdered by their partners. They are disposed of in mass graves but are often accused of being affiliated with drug traffickers; their death is labeled a homicide rather than a femicide, a crime involving the intentional murder of women simply because they are women (Fregoso). Residents are forcibly disappeared in public to possibly be found in mass graves or to never be identified, waiting beyond the reach of visibility for someone to determine their remains. The theater of operations is maintained by the state but also by anyone, almost always a man, anywhere, who wants to discard a body or bodies into mass graves simply because they can execute that power.

Visual representations such as visual artist Alessandra de Cristofaro's illustration brings this blurry line between the dead and the quotidian into relief. With a palm tree in the background, two kids playing basketball stand in front of their homes. A cloud hovers on the right side of the house. However, there is an unsettling aspect to this illustration. Below the green grass, seven cranial and four femur bones lie on the ground. Rocks, guns, and money stand between the skeletons. In this cartoon, no political parties are represented. Everyone is implicated. Human remains are interspersed with currency bills and rocks. This picture is a graphic reminder of two worlds, one of the living and one of the dead. Who we think is alive and who is dead is ambiguous. The remains' scent slithers vertically across the black ground and around the kids' bodies, gliding across their skin, their clothes, and their homes, animating the two worlds.

These deadly conditions epitomize what political philosopher Sayak Valencia refers to as the manifestations of *gore capitalism.* She argues that gore capitalism is the permutation of extreme neoliberal epistemologies created by subjects who use decorative displays of extreme violence, narco-trafficking, and necropower to keep up with the economic and social demands of capitalism in the United States. The decorative representations Valencia identifies are in opposition to the ones represented by de Cristofaro's illustrations. Decorative displays of violence include the hanging of mutilated bodies in public squares, executions in broad daylight, and the dismemberment of bodies left to be strewn out in public. Consequently, this desire creates a necro-state, the socio-political dependence on death and the destruction of corpses at all levels of society (Valencia 16).

De Cristofaro's graphic accentuates these gory conditions and depicts all aspects of life infused with the violent dead. The bones' odors permeate the ground, gliding across the terrains of life and death, blurring the distinction between the two worlds. The dead are quite alive, just not in the form we recognize. Moreover, the cloud hovering over the houses possesses the same texture as the bones' scents. The cloud is the stench of the mass graves yet to be found, but that are nonetheless close to domesticity and leisure, waiting to rain down on the living. It is a necro-precipitation hovering over the "living." The clearest indication from this scenario is that bio-

pleasure (playing games) exists next to an animated necro-domesticity where the missing dead's stench envelopes all aspects of quotidian life. This is domestic life in the necro-state.

BUSCARTE expresses a concern with making sense of what appears insensible in the context of gore capitalism, where mass graves are logical, and where political violence makes it difficult to find the responsible assailants. Again, in the piece, a binary is established since Kajiyama begins interviewing the recorder. She asks the interviewer about the crime she committed. However, the binary between the interrogator and suspect falls apart because the roles switch. The interrogator becomes the suspect. It is difficult to distinguish between the interviewee and the interviewer. Where one cannot account for the bodies of the disappeared and where the victims of economic dispossession have become the perpetrators of spectacular violence in order to do their job, the practices for establishing a clear distinction between the victim and the perpetrator fail to guarantee processes that distinguish between law and lawlessness.

This layered performance of interrogation provokes a reassessment of the role of reenactments in performance spaces. According to Rebecca Schneider, "Entering, or reenacting, an event or a set of acts (acts of art or acts of war) from a critical direction, a different temporal angle, may be, as [Adrienne] Rich suggests, an act of survival, of keeping alive *as* passing on (in multiple senses of the phrase 'to pass')" (7). Schneider contends that time-based art encounters create multidirectional capacities when they are reenacted. Meaning, to reenact historical encounters and to play with time's backward and forward dimensions is to perform its similarity and difference. Thus, in the fold of reenacting an art encounter through bodily practice we identify "the vehicle for sameness and the vehicle for difference or change" (Schneider 10). No matter how small, performing reenactments is a mode of survival because it offers a site for creating other social realities.

NAKA's reenactment of the interview indicates the survival strategies that are needed in a necro-state. Is it the testimony of the criminal event that outlasts the material bodies? Or is it the eyewitnesses who remember the residents who were forcibly disappeared? Perhaps it is the body that was killed? I consider performance's connection to forensic methods because it allows us to unravel larger anxieties about democracy. Through this, we get closer to understanding what survives when both social reality and domestic life are a mass grave.

Forensics and Performance

Forensic specialists are popularly understood as experts who recover, identify, and examine human remains using a medicolegal framework. Yet they also assess and articulate the social conditions surrounding the crime to understand what lead up to it. In the seminal study *Digging for the Disappeared*, Adam Rosenblatt maintains that, although forensic science started in the early 1970s as a set of disciplinary practices with the objective of finding evidence for legal purposes in a courtroom setting, the field itself is about more than delivering findings and scientific facts. It is also about creating social truths that create transparent processes and a sense of verifiable collective answers. While Rosenblatt does not provide a clear definition of what he means by "social truth," I take it to mean a collective understanding and socially agreed upon account of verifiable events of reality that specialists and residents can attest to—apart from, but not necessarily beyond, other discourse processes like police reports, biometric photography, and official investigations. Rosenblatt argues that forensic practice relies on non-specialists in order for the cases to be considered a crime. Taking a lead from Rosenblatt, I maintain that artist events attending to forced disappearances are forensic performances contributing to the enactment and maintenance of real events that extend from public spaces and the courtroom. These are the

reenactments of medical-legal methods in combination with creative aesthetic practices for the purpose of furnishing verifiable collective answers in the public square that is the theater.

Rosenblatt maintains that forensic experts can include non-specialists or other forms of laborers. Social workers, cooks, security guards, farm workers, or database technicians are considered forensic specialists because these laborers intersect or collaborate with families of the missing or possess a "crucial expertise, without which the forensic process in their country would lack the credibility and humanity it needs to move forward" (Rosenblatt 16). These persons provide witness accounts of events where crimes might have occurred. It is this notion of social truth and this expanded framework of forensic science that highlights the fact that—in certain cases—the law and the courtroom are already suspect, or seen as failing to prosecute people who are culpable of a crime.[158] This expanded notion of forensic specialists accounts for forensic science's capacity to serve the law outside of courtroom settings.

An expanded notion of forensic science explains a non-professional's capacity to serve outside of courtroom settings because they add to collective experiences where answers to criminal cases may be needed. Performances such as *BUSCARTE* and *Buscando a bruno* expand forensic methods beyond the courtroom setting. *Buscando* relocates the investigative scenario from the legal courtroom to the performance stage and other public spaces. Avendaño first performed this piece in front of the Mexican consulate in Barcelona, Spain, in June 2018.[159] In subsequent iterations, the artist has performed in festivals and their hometown of Tehuantepec. Through this process of reenacting the forensic scene through performance, the artist enacts a sense of forensics in a manner closer to the discipline's etymological meaning. Forensic science takes its name from the seventeenth-century Latin noun *forensis,* meaning "forum" or open court, public square ("Forensis"). The term forum shares a connection with the terms *foras,* meaning outside.[160] Each term emphasizes the public as the organizing principle. Thus, forensic science is the use of medico-legal techniques for the purpose of the public square that is the courtroom and taking up the public space to deliberate those findings. From this perspective, the courtroom is like any other public forum for discussion. Similarly, artists are bringing cases of public concern to the forum that is the theater. The artists are learning and adapting legal investigative methods for the context of performance.

I include artists such as Kajiyama and Navarrete as forensic specialists. They are either collaborating with parents of the missing or using crime scene investigation practices designed for the legal courtroom, but adapting them for the purposes of commenting on the social impacts of living under the violence of a necro-state. For example, during the development of the piece from 2015-2017, NAKA travelled to México and conducted forensic studies research. The artists supported pro-Ayotzinapa demonstrations and gathered testimonies from the parents who had gone to Guerrero to conduct their own investigations after federal authorities reached a conclusion in their investigation.[161] According to federal authorities, local Iguala authorities passed the apprehended students to the criminal organization Guerreros Unidos. After that, the organization abducted the students, burned their bodies, and dumped them in a landfill. Yet the parents of the missing students continue to dispute these claims, believing that the official story erases the involvement of the state. Also, the Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes (GIEI) has

158 Now with so many eyes on the overwhelming number of mass graves and forced disappearances in many countries, there is already disbelief in the credibility of the law to carryout impartial investigations.
159 See https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/cultura/artes-escenicas/artista-oaxaqueno-exige-justicia-por-desaparicion-de-su-hermano
160 Source https://www.etymonline.com/word/forum#etymonline_v_11832. Accessed 16 Mar. 2020.
161 Their investigation took place from September through November 2014 and in January 2015

strong evidence suggesting that thirty-four of the perpetrators accused of the crime were tortured, in some cases by agents of the Policía Federal Ministerial (Suárez-Enriquez). Later, from September 17-29, 2017, Navarrete and Kajiyama were in Mexico City to meet with some of the parents of the forty-three missing students, produce an initial version of *BUSCARTE*, and participate in public demonstrations commemorating three years of the event.[162] Hence, at the center of *BUSCARTE* is this conflict between the public's claims and the official narratives. Their process is outside but not beyond the realm of a law enforcement space. The performance concerns the evidence from the investigation, the authorities' choreography of truth, and the families' desire for verifiable outcomes. The artists reenact and transmit a historical record of the events, transiting the scenario in debate, using the theater as a site to dispute the past.

The final moments in *BUSCARTE* make this observation clear. Navarrete, who dons an oversized plaid shirt, bounces his knees and bops his head to the sound of a rhythmic *cumbia* beat. He buckles his right knee and his neck breaks back, both appearing to snap, but then recoil. This broken motion intensifies to the point that his limbs convulse to the verge of falling off. However, rather than break down completely, his body resets before it discombobulates again. He repeats this sharp sequence as if he is receiving continuous blows to his stomach. Then, Kajiyama joins Navarrete and they begin a syncopated march where they parade their faces, alternating between grimaces and sad faces. Rhythmic beats are suddenly overlaid with the interrogation voiceover from earlier in the performance. The overlay makes the otherwise rhythmic cumbia sharp and jarring. Kajiyama lunges at Navarrete and the unison sequence ends. They begin to tussle, grabbing each other desperately and rearranging each other on the floor. Eventually their skirmish ends and they separate again. The narrator on the recorded audio transitions from the testimony to a monologue about being uncomfortable with a contortionist in a circus. Kajiyama says, "Each time he is brought out to the table, a chopping block. The music is grandiose…He folds himself flat…I cannot watch…The audience goes wild…I bite the drawstring from my hoodie to keep from cursing at the audience." While the narrator trembles these words, Kajiyama and Navarrete buckle at the hips again and collapse to the ground, wrapping themselves inside of oversized plaid shirts. They contort their bodies into odd shapes.

Cumbia indexes dispersal as the sonic rhythm extends its hemispheric tentacles and creates the tempo to working-class everyday life. This specific low tempo cumbia sonidera is a mixture of Afro-Colombian beats and rhythms with pianos that began in the mid-twentieth century in the high-crime neighborhood of Tepito, Mexico City, a region that has been a centuries-long site of legal and social battles. J.V. Marvin has called Tepito the "purgatory of the miserables."[163] Throughout México, cumbia sonidera, both the music and dance style, blast from trucks, *taquerias*, and dance halls; a reminder of a working-class disposition.

Unlike in the other sonic spaces, the cumbia steps executed by Navarrete and Kajiyama are rough and jerky. Their knees buckle and their necks break, appearing to receive a blow to their bodies. Collapse. Recoil. Convulse. These gestures intensify. By the time they are in unison, their bodies are exhausted, sloshing around and dragging their feet as if they were puppets being dragged across a stage by an invisible hand. In the middle of those drags, they persist to the cumbia beat and step. They transfer their weight from the balls of their feet unto their knees and lean into their hips. All of the controlled collapses on one side are repeated on the other side. The artists step

[162] Unfortunately, the group was not able to complete the performance because a deadly earthquake struck the city. They felt they could not perform while thousands of people either searched for missing loved ones or dug through the rubble to get bodies out.
[163] See https://www.razon.com.mx/cultura/una-historia-negra-de-la-ciudad-de-mexico-2/.

forward, undercut their own feet, lunge, and rebound with other steps toward the front, as if an invisible force gets in the way of their step; they stumble momentarily, adjust, and then resume. While this action happens, the sound of the interrogation is overlaid on the cumbia. They jointly flinch back and subsequently recoil to progress forward. This advancing action underscores the artists' collective efforts as they listen to the music of the interrogation. This sequence demonstrates the artists as they persevere in the face of the legal consciousness that runs parallel to dance. In other words, legal conditions shape, though not necessarily dictate, what we think is possible to do with our bodies as we dance and move. This effect is achieved because the interrogation interview represents the legal dimensions that shape and dictate how an individual can move. The text for the interrogation was taken from headlines of real cases. In this moment, the space of the theater becomes the public forum to consider the case and how it connects to everyone in the theater. The artists connect the space of the courtroom, Ayotzinapa, and the theater.

A theater venue where *BUSCARTE* is exhibited is evidence of the performative commons. Performance studies scholar Elizabeth Dillon Maddock identifies performative commons as those settings where bodies enact and maintain a shared, but nonetheless negotiated sense of space.[164] In the case of *BUSCARTE,* a performative commons extends between juridical spaces where the interview recording was made and theater venues where NAKA Dance Theater shares their work. The cumbia beat and the overlaid interrogation voices become one sonic and incorporated space where the artists negotiate how the interview is used in the legal courtroom. I observe the commons created in performances such as *BUSCARTE* to be understood through its etymological understanding. Commons in its original meaning establishes a clear difference between the collective people and the feudal, monarchical system of power. This is particularly important to highlight in a context like México and its democratic system. Even though México established its independence from Spain in 1821, and updated its constitution in 1917 following a revolution, the country's power continued to be concentrated around the feudal hacienda system and a one-party system.[165] The feudal hacienda system did not start to become undone until the early twentieth century when some rural lands were returned to indigenous groups.[166] The single party system of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) endured until 2000. Thus, to speak of the commons in México in relationship to democratic systems is to understand the lasting legacy of the feudal system in the way residents conceive of public space. Such a feudal perspective of the term allows us to attend to the fact that colonial structures and logic from the fifteenth century about space and laws continue to shape our sense of movement in our daily realities.[167]

Kajiyama's and Navarrete's effort to tussle in their own bodies after the cumbia music ends accentuates a collective pursuit. They collectively persevere in the face of the state's pacifying effect. By this, I mean to say that, as violent conditions continue to expand into other public squares outside of the courtroom, such as dance floors, subjects who are under duress change their own bodies as a practice of resisting the "official" narrative. They do not leave the chopping block. Instead, they stay within it to make visible that which is slowly disappearing. As the voiceover says, "He contorts himself." Giorgio Agamben affirms that a commitment to the use of one's body is part of the political affirmation. Agamben states, "[I]n the using of something, it is the very being

[164] See *New World Drama: The Performative Commons in the Atlantic World, 1649-1849*. Duke University Press, 2014.
[165] The first constitution was written in 1857.
[166] Russel, Philip. *The History of Mexico: from Pre-Conquest to Present*. 177-277. New York: Routledge, 2010.
[167] See Walter Mignolo's *On Decoloniality: Concept, Analytics, Praxis* co-authored with Catherine Walsh. Duke University Press, 2018; and Aníbal Quijano's *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America*. Nepantla: Views from South 1(3): 533-580, 2000.

of the one using that is first of all at stake" (30). Using one's body and caring for oneself, the author of the plan, is the necessary political affirmation. Thus, devotion to the body of the author and the impersonal devotion to the collective plan creates a new event in the world. That we hear the interrogation of a presumptive criminal and then witness Navarrete and Kajiyama devote their time to resisting collectively but individually creates and upholds their agency in the midst of gory conditions where spectators are engrossed with the spectacle of violence. The contortionist devotes herself to changing her body and preserving a social truth that is being pressured to change in the face of increasing force from the legal field. As mentioned above, I use social truth to mean a collective knowledge of and socially agreed upon account of verifiable events of reality. Kajiyama commits to the story of Ayotzinapa as told from the parents' perspective and other members of the community that remember the incident. Thus, Kajiyama connects to the parents in Ayotzinapa and establishes a common net to keep the story alive. She devotes herself to the story and to changing her body into new ways of moving because they both may disappear.

Their commitment to the maintenance of the story complicates Rebecca Schneider's claim that art encounters concerned with reenactments are not a "march towards an empiric future of preservation" (6). As mentioned earlier, *BUSCARTE* traces the story of the forty-three students who were forcibly disappeared on the night of September 26 into the early hours of September 27, 2014. It draws from news articles and forensic reports published after the disappearance. Performers reenact an interview to preserve the narratives, both the falsified truths based on forensic methods and the collective narratives as told by the parents that are not yet official but that are nonetheless based on empirical and verifiable outcomes of the examinations. The artists preserve the story reached by the independent forensic experts and the stories maintained by the parents, marching with this information until the bodies are found. They are enacting a forensics from below. Unlike the forensics from above, which the state deploys in its theater of operations to assure the public that it has done its job, a forensics from below maintains contested collective truths in the open public. Forensic performances, which are central to the forensics from below, do just this, they become spaces for using empirical and unobserved methods to challenge the "official narratives" where bodies, both physical and social, are pulled up to the chopping block, made to disappear. It is important to note that the performance is not only a theatrical representation of the dispersed violence in México, but it is also the material and embodied vestige of the checks and balances needed in a fragile democracy. In the final section I analyze this observation and identify the way in which performances such as this find possibilities for attaining a truth that is different from forensic sciences precisely because they are only partial.

Forensic Performance and Democracy

Artists concerned with forced disappearances maintain a fidelity to interviewing parents, checking forensics and police reports, and telling stories based on their experience with these cases. They pursue knowledge and communicate real events in public spaces akin to what investigative journalists do. However, because they do not call themselves journalists, nor do they take on the full responsibilities of the journalist, their contribution to investigative exercises is in the role of what I might call the performance citizen. Performance citizens adopt the practices of forensics and journalism in a performance setting to draw attention to the lapses in democracy.

BUSCARTE reenacts the forensic scenario about the missing students from Ayotzinapa to bring to the fore a larger concern about democracy. Navarrete ends a monologue behind a translucent clear white sheet. He sticks out his head wearing the eagle head. At first, the eagle rests on the ground, facing the audience directly. It grabs the plastic sheet from the bottom edge and

shakes it, creating the illusion that it is flying. Meanwhile, the eagle laughs menacingly. He stops laughing, facing back. The sharp beak is silhouetted and it resembles a large knife. The eagle returns to resting on its back and grabs the plastic cover one more time. It shakes the semitransparent cover violently and the point where it is grabbing creates concentric circles. Waves reverberate across the plastic as if a rock was brutally thrown into the water, creating a mesmerizing tableau with each undulation rippling a hypnotic arch.

After this section, Navarrete diverges into inarticulable phrases. The half-bird, half-man meanders through his thoughts as it expresses its love for flight, appetite for squirrels, desire for entertainment, and attraction to breaking hearts. Throughout the entire story, a voice modulator distorts the creature's words. Its utterances are elongated, each word lagging behind the other, creating a slippage between them. Stopping mid-sentence, the eagle proceeds to interrogate the audience with the confrontational phrase "Are you satisfied?" The creature challenges the audience to preserve the official version it retells about Ayotzinapa and to hold up this version against what the public knows. The half-man ends with the phrase "This is your democracy now."

According to political economist Guadalupe González González, democracy in México is a system that was unable to establish a robust set of institutions and dynamics for accessing power or channeling public demands.[168] This situation is partly due to the fact that the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s pushed the country towards a true multi-party system, but the judicial branch of the government failed to convict political members who committed crimes or abuses against its citizens prior to these changes. The government did not pacify criminal and political violence, thus failing to reform civil, military, and intelligence agencies and consolidating these processes as non-partisan entities, as would need to happen in an ideal democracy. Inadequate prosecutions led to the politicization of justice based on party affiliation. Public security, the protection of substantive rights, and the phenomenon of violence were deliberated across party lines. However, democracy itself was not the problem. González González argues, "Rather, it is the context of a debilitated state and extreme social inequality that operates beyond democracy's containment walls" (142, My Translation). What exists instead is a social-political condition where state agents are constantly experimenting with governance and development.

In *BUSCARTE,* the eagle creature explicitly expresses a concern with democracy. As Navarrete dons the eagle's mask, he begins a monologue about the current conditions of democracy. The half-man, half-bird is illogical and it is motivated by destruction and a desire to kill. Democracy here is represented as violent and spectacular. A grandiose systemic violence exists underneath the story about the missing students from Ayotzinapa. Instead of guaranteeing the residents' protections it is motivated by a government that pacifies the citizens' critiques. When residents make harsh assessments, the government dismisses them with the clap of a hand in the name of efficiency. This attitude is best expressed when the creature tells the audience the government did its job in investigating the story. After it recounts the story as told by the government, the half-man-half-bird says, "Finito," clapping his hands. This type of democracy envelopes and destroys all aspects of social and historical life, breaking down emotional life with the objective of creating governmental processes that use existing institutional apparatuses, such as the judicial and legal systems, to create the illusion that a job was performed. Democracy, in this instance, is a violent system able to furnish a "truth" that is fluid and free of troubles for the government, and sensible only to the government, regardless of whether or not it brings justice to

[168] See *Fenomenología de la violencia: Una perspectiva desde México.* Coordinator Luis Herrera-Lasso. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.2017, pp. 126-142. This anthology provides an interdisciplinary focus to the study of violence in México.

the victims. For example, as recently as September 2018, then-President Enrique Peña Nieto maintained that the investigation in Ayotzinapa was transparent and clear ("Crearán comisión de la verdad por caso Ayotzinapa en México"). These claims came despite the fact that the parents still do not know what happened to their children in September 2014 and that the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights maintains that irregularities were present in the investigation ("Informe de Balance"). The supposed transparent and clear democracy referenced by the President is not satisfactory; his comments are at odds with the social distortions the organizations and the parents have identified.

Juan Caloca's installation *Crónica de las destrucciones* expresses a similar concern about democracy and the nation. Instead of a free-flying eagle that loves to destroy other creatures like the one represented in *BUSCARTE*, a taxidermied eagle in *Crónica* exists in perpetuity inside a wall. The eagle's head pierces through the white gallery wall while the rest of its body parts are non-existent. Its soft black and white feathers rest backward over its head, caressing the edges of the wall. Its beak is partly open, as if it is in mid-screech, and its eyes are missing. Battered and debilitated, the democracy represented in Caloca's *Crónica* is not the destroyer. Instead, democracy is the incomplete project. Its head made it into the room, but the rest of its body suspends in perpetual stasis.

In a review of Caloca's creative work, art critic Gaby Cepeda remarks that there is not much value in the pieces that are more literal representations of democracy and nationalist symbols. Caloca's use of the Mexican flag being dipped in oil or the taxidermied animals on the walls are too obvious of a critique about the violence of petrocapitalism and the lack of justice.[169] Instead, she finds works such as *Big Bang* and *Change of State* more intriguing because Caloca completely disassembles and reconstructs nationalistic symbols on his terms. In *Big Bang*, Caloca embroiders the icon in the center of the Mexican national flag using fragments of the coat of arms and flag. Similarly, in *Change of State,* Caloca creates monogram pictographs by employing an eagle's blood, snake skin, and pigmentations from flowers to make the colors for the paintings. In both artistic projects Caloca exposes the empty signs of nationalism. Cepeda is accurate when she observes that these projects are powerful because they reveal and appropriate the performative power behind the nationalist signs. Caloca reenacts the social-political ideology behind the symbols to demonstrate the ease with which these symbols can be recreated. The seriousness of this act is evidenced by the fact that Caloca is violating the 1984 law that criminalizes any misuse of the Mexican flag. Caloca is taking known nationalist symbols and adding new meaning to them. However, the significance is enacted and maintained on other objects: the eagle, the blood, and the snake.

By contrast, in *BUSCARTE,* Kajiyama and Navarrete theatricalize democracy on their bodies and I think the piece suggests a larger role for forensic performances in relationship to democracy. *BUSCARTE* is an exercise of practices concerned with using forensic reenactments to hold the democratic processes and their arbitrators accountable based on real events. As Navarrete dons the eagle's head mask, the artist transforms into the symbol of democracy and its caricature. He becomes a barker on stage, calling on the audience to reflect about their desire for an efficient democracy as he retells the story of the authorities' investigation. He recounts the official report that says the students were burned in a landfill by criminal gangs. According to the eagle, the government's work was complete in that it utilized governmental agencies to conduct a rigorous investigation. Finalizing the investigation and presenting the findings attests to the government's

[169] See "Juan Caloca" on https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/juan-caloca/#slideshow_99673.3. Accessed 7 Jan. 2019.

ability to carry out its duties. Laughingly, the eagle provokes the attendees by asking them if they are satisfied with the story about Ayotzinapa. And it is the eagle's question "Are you satisfied?" that evidences the performance's indictment of the audience.

The contrast between Caloca's installations and the performances *BUSCARTE* and *Buscando a bruno* demonstrates performance's capacity to offer an alternative approach for representing a real event in a violent democratic context. Journalism in México is a risky practice. According to González González, "Journalism has become a high risk profession, and the exercise of freedom of expression, a precondition of democracy, is probably a death sentence" (González González 141, my translation). In such a context, alternative modes of expression and social commentary become necessary. *BUSCARTE* and *Buscando* carry out the work of journalism, investigating the verifiable truth of events and honoring the freedom of expression in the midst of dangerous conditions. As I mentioned in the previous section, these performances pursue investigative aesthetics in the public square. Kajiyama, Navarrete, and Avendaño have reviewed declassified police reports. In Avendaño's case, they visited the police station multiple times to either request or contest reports carried out by municipal authorities in search of the artist's brother.[170] For example, on May 14, 2011, three days after Bruno went missing, Avendaño and their family met with the local authorities. The municipal president accused the family of fabricating the missing person's report. The authorities had phone records indicating that Bruno had called his mother the day after he went missing. Bruno's mother contested this. Similarly, in the same meeting, the authorities presented what were supposedly recent pictures of Bruno carrying out social activities. His sister objected, saying the public minister's office had downloaded those images from Facebook.

Artists such as Navarrete, Kajiyama, and Avendaño are part of the long history of artists who have used theater as a forum to provide alternative expressions of reality alongside other discourse practices like journalism, religion, and officialdom. Building on the work of theater scholar Carol Martin, Julie Ann Ward argues that there is a strong tradition of artists in México who have employed theatricality to investigate, question, and report real events.[171] In the face of corruption, a sensational press, and unreliable politics, the "theater of the real" is a discourse of truth-telling that offers sources of information outside of the Catholic church, yellow press, and family written narratives. In the late 1960s, theater of the real prioritized historical texts as evidence to support the notion that theater was an equal source of reality.[172] This approach shifted in the 1990s towards plays that questioned the incorruptibility of a text, wherein theatrical productions incorporated partial stories of real events to give a fuller account of incidents taken up by the yellow media.[173] More recently, theatrical performances use false reports in combination with autobiographical narratives to illustrate that truth-telling and reality can only be mediated through an embodied experience in the space of the theater. In outlining this genealogy of theatrical practices, Ward demonstrates how artists in México employ performances on stage to guard "truth."

170 In an interview with *RompeViento: Televisión por Internet*, Avendaño recounts their experience of searching for their brother.

171 See "Making Reality Sensible: The Mexican Documentary Theatre Tradition, 1968-2013." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 69, no. 2, 2017, pp. 197–211. Web. Accessed 15 Mar. 2020.

172 Ward uses Leñero's play *Pueblo Rechazado* to illustrate how the artist cites the Christian Bible to make the play real.

173 In contrast to Rodríguez and Leñero, Rascón Banda cites newspaper headlines to underscore the realness of the event in order to reveal how these sensational headlines only tell partial realities. The theater offers other points of view of the event.

Ward outlines a genealogy that ultimately emphasizes what the ritual of performance offers in contrast to other modes of truth-telling. She says, "The ritual presence that theatre offers can be considered a more reliable source for facts than other discourses more traditionally associated with reality" (Ward 201). When other modes of disseminating information are suspect, the experience of being in a theater, where performers and audiences gather in the same space, is as, or more, real of an event than encounters with print media. Ward contends, "Theatre gives credence to what we know to be true, including bodily experiences, memories, and desires" (200). Theatrical encounters and their rituals of placing performers before an audience offer a more reliable sense of reality than other media and discourses of truth whose role is to document real events. The immediacy of being present before the actors, where bodies are breathing and moving on the stage, is an undeniable fact more real than the partial truths and constructed reality fabricated in print media. Performances make reality sensible even though the reality on stage may be constructed of partial truths that serve as the impetus for the theatrical event.

Ward underlines the immediate embodied experience that theater provides as a source of the "more real." She uses an autobiographical play to make the argument that theater offers a physical experience that other media cannot. Examining Gabino Rodríguez' autobiographical play *Montserrat*, Ward describes the artist's use of falsified evidence to trick the audience into believing that the story of his search for his mother is true. It is Rodríguez' desire to find his mother, in combination with the artist's use of semi-autobiographical details, that serves as the ultimate evidence for the reality of the experience. According to Ward, the artist constructs truths about his mother in order to reveal the theatricality of truth claims. In the end, Rodríguez leaves the audience with the undeniable felt experience of witnessing his longing for a truth that will never come.

NAKA Dance Theater's *BUSCARTE* falls within this genealogy of theater of the real. It expresses a concern with representing the real events of Ayotzinapa by drawing upon news reports of the events, using official state narratives published by the state, and incorporating testimonials from the missing students' parents. Yet, unlike performances described by Ward, *BUSCARTE* is being produced parallel to the development of real events and it is not autobiographical. Because the incident in Ayotzinapa is still unresolved, the performance is doing work different from other theater of the real. Navarrete and Kajiyama are witnessing the events and relaying those events into other contexts. And, in contrast with performances where artists use historical materials or materials fabricated to appear historical, *BUSCARTE* relays information about the case of Ayotzinapa in tandem with the other modes of distributing information as details emerge. Also, in the performances, Navarrete and Kajiyama do not take on character roles and represent specific people in the stories. They become witnesses of the events and relay stories, data, and official reports. In a question and answer session after one of the performances, Kajiyama said that she does not believe they can speak for the families or for the events in totality. They can only be witnesses to the events as they develop.

In this way, the performance is akin to investigative journalism. Through investigative journalism, a reporter is supposed to witness real events and add contextual information to give the reader enough information to think critically about the details provided.[174] The practice is concerned with disclosing information of public interest. It uses first person perspectives and interviews with people close to a case to implicate and expose possible crimes committed by an individual, organization, or private entity. Investigative journalists in México assume serious risks

[174] I am grateful for Lauren Hepler's insightful comments about this chapter. Hepler is a news reporter and she provided useful resources and poignant questions that helped me better articulate the relationship that I see between performance and investigative journalism.

for this work. Investigative journalism poses a threat to mayors and state officials.[175] In addition to receiving death threats, reporters face many obstacles. In order for a story to attract attention in traditional outlets, a publication must agree that the story has a wider audience. If a story does not have that potential, it will not be picked up. Or, in certain cases, if a story has the potential to implicate a local official who has connections with the press, a publisher may not run the story for fear of retribution or exposure.

I see in *BUSCARTE* the larger critique that performances are similar to, but not entirely the same as, journalism and that difference is what gives performances power in the face of corrupted and stultified democracies. Theatrical performances circulate through networks of distribution different from print and digital media. Performances in the vein of the theater of the real, like *BUSCARTE,* benefit from their sheltered confines. The performances do not carry out the work of journalism in the same way; if they did, they would be the targets of retribution. It is a theatrical performance's ability to be spatially and temporally bounded, circulate under the radar, and involve smaller audiences that gives it its power. Performers can address issues that would not otherwise be covered because they do not require an editor to agree to publish the performance. The difference between theater of the real and journalism, in spaces where retribution is a common tactic carried out against people who reveal identifying information, is that the performances lack the capacity to circulate as quickly as print and digital media. But, while lacking that capacity, they hold the power of getting information out. Performances operate across iterative networks where exposing information happens in smaller settings and across temporal and spatial frames where performers relay information at a slower and more direct pace as they search to answer questions related to crimes committed against innocent victims.

Navarrete's and Kajiyama's preoccupations with investigative methods underline the artists' search for a democracy other than one that continues to be unaccountable because it has yet to secure the full protection of a free and independent press. By asking the audience members if they are satisfied with this version of democracy, they are really asking if the audience is happy with the story and the report as it was represented. This confrontation underscores the slippery slope that occurs when citizens demand justice but the government pacifies the citizens' requests by fabricating events. The reenactments of the enigmatic interrogation in *BUSCARTE* and in Avendaño's quintessential question "Where is Bruno?" remind us to keep reenacting real events and disputing reports through performance, even when we cannot tell if we are the perpetrators or the victims of a crime. As long as we have at least one or two people continually raising disputes in performance spaces, we have more than is available when print and digital media cannot circulate or broadcast our violent realities for fear of retribution. We must maintain a commitment to rehearsing frank expressions of disapproval and questioning whether we are satisfied with our reality, as leaders become tyrants and those elected to represent us violate our agreement by using our phone calls and social media life against us even in our death. When one or two people gather to recall and search the events as we remember them, there is the slight hope of doing things differently and surviving in the face of so much violence.

[175] The Committee to Protect Journalists details the death of fifty-two journalists who have been killed in México since 1992 because of activities related to their work.

Searching for an End

By way of conclusion, I return briefly to Violeta Luna's performance *FOSAS* and reassess it given our new understanding of the reenactments of the forcibly disappeared, the role of forensic performances, and the performance citizen in violent democracies. Again, in *FOSAS*, the forensic scene loops behind Luna. An enigmatic hand holds a small brush and searches black dirt. She pulls out objects that are difficult to tell apart. After extracting a black object, the searcher inspects it with her hands. There is a tenderness and ordinariness to the gesture. She brushes off the dirt and then takes it outside of the frame. We see only fragments of the scene and the investigator's hands. While this forensic scenario unfolds in the video, Luna sits with an incalculable number of black bones around her feet. She looks down at them, staring at their features and then opening her jaw wide as if she is screaming in silence. Luna opens her jaw to scream.

Luna's critique of democracy is less explicit here. We do not see any symbols of democratic institutions. Nor do we hear her bellow diatribes about the failures of democracy. Instead, we only see Luna dressed as Tlaltecuhtli, the forensic scenario, and the pile of bones. The bones abound and frame her breathing body while the forensic scenario hovers behind her. Luna reminds us that every day is the day of the dead, but it is the search for those who were, are, and will be forcibly disappeared in the wake of violence that makes us shout in agony. In a silent, but nonetheless effective, scream, she criticizes the gruesome conditions that result in innumerable deaths that surround the living. Her forensics rise to demand justice from below.

After Luna exposes her legs and the cranial figure comes out, it slithers right, then left, slowly advancing forward. It controls Luna's body and searches, or *busca*. Its black eyes and white smile scan and envelope the space, peering into the audience, processing whether the bodies in the audience are alive or dead. Reenacting the process of giving birth to death, Luna, as Tlaltecuhtli, is not dressed up as a pre-Hispanic deity to blame it on the indigenous people or to accept the deadly conditions as part of a culture that accepts death on all terms. Luna is not representing an inoperative death. Meaning, she is not symbolizing death as a passive condition where those victims that are killed end up. Rather, she performs a fidelity and devotion to seeking the thousands of missing bodies. She gives life to a devotion of investigative gestures so profound that, even in death, her decaying body's scents, bones, and hair rise from clandestine mass graves as evidence of the dead searching for justice among the living.

Conclusion
The State of Performance

On Monday, June 10, 2019, the Mexico City-based performance artist Jesusa Rodríguez sparked controversy at her keynote address organized by the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. She discussed the challenges that México was experiencing and she commented about the value of the arts and performance in society. Titled *The 4T's. Enigma Against Hate, Humor*, her presentation focused on the four traumas that define Mexican life.[176] These traumas are colonization, the Catholic Church, Porfirio Díaz' dictatorship, and corruption.[177] After her talk, unexpectedly, a frustrated audience member in the back of the conference room pressed her to answer why she had blocked him from Twitter and why she opposed government subsidized arts. Rodríguez defended herself by saying that she had not blocked him and that she had opposed subsidized performance practices long before 2019, when residents started challenging her polemical stance. During the heated exchange, Rodríguez insisted that poor residents need financial support more than artists do.

In 2018, Rodríguez had become a federal senator as part of a political shift towards the left-of-center that occurred in the elections that year. She joined hundreds of leaders voted into office with the political party MORENA,[178] which was led by now-President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. In her role, the artist-now-elected official has called for austerity measures to defund the *Fondo Nacional de Cultura y Arte* (FONCA). The national program was created in the late 1980s to support artists and cultural workers. Rodríguez claims that the national fund has for too long served elite artists.

Rodríguez' remarks should be cause for concern. The dispute between Rodríguez and the audience member occurred in the auditorium of one of the largest public universities in the Americas, as part of an international gathering dedicated to valuing the role of performance in society and politics. That an elected official, with a performance background, made the statement negatively impacts how residents value theater and dance.[179] More noteworthy, the senator asserted that artists have been privileged for far too long and that they need to "aguantar un poco" [bite the bullet]. And, if artists want support to develop their artistic endeavors, they need to request monetary relief from the private sector. For Rodríguez, FONCA is an extension of the trauma of corruption. Funds like FONCA are signs of wasteful spending that benefit the elite few who have received federal financial support for decades. Rodríguez was arguing that the state should not be responsible for guaranteeing funding pools for artists, that it does not need to provide access to the arts, and that performance must exist separate from the state. Money going to artists would be better spent on those residents who have never had anything at all. The most egregious remark came when she stated that all of her prior experience in mounting political performances was a hobby. She claimed that she can begin the actual work now that she is a senator.

From Rodríguez' perspective, it appears that poor residents and art makers are different groups. One population needs and deserves more resources than the other, versus both at the same time. Meanwhile, the only option for artists is to hold on and wait for better conditions because their precarity is less important than the precarity of the poor. Ultimately, Rodríguez' declaration

[176] A recording of Rodríguez's talk can be found here: https://vimeo.com/349894908.
[177] She identified four therapeutic responses to these traumas. These include: independence, secular reform laws, the Mexican revolution, and decolonization.
[178] MORENA is an acronym for Movimiento Regeneración Nacional.
[179] Her remarks reverberated across media outlets that same night.

foregrounds the contentious debate about performance's role in society and its relationship to the state. Yet this stance also fails to acknowledge the ways in which poor, female, and indigenous artists have also been excluded from such funding pools. While her opinion might have some value, as some companies have received notable and consistent funding through FONCA, she has not provided enough data or justification to warrant the eradication of the system to support artists. Furthermore, arts that are dependent on the philanthropy of the elite, will undoubtedly come to represent the political interests and aesthetics of the elite, further stifling forms of aesthetic resistance or critique to those very systems. If anything, her initiatives push artists at the margins even further into precarity, and they become part of the state's symbolic and structural violence, saying artists are not welcome here.

Like Rodríguez who wished to confront the forms of entrenched historical state hierarchy by foregrounding forms of national trauma, I set out to track Mexican traumas and I examined them as addressed in the work of artists from the near past. However, unlike her, I identified that artists are doing tremendous work to refuse the impact of the four traumas. The purpose of this study was to describe and track the role of dance and movement-related practices in the face of figurative and literal state violence, and how artists are enacting political work. I expressed a preoccupation with understanding what dance and performance allow artists and residents to access and create, in social situations where access to substantive justice and representation do not exist or are suspect. Chapter One examined the work of Asaltodiario in the 1980s during a time of economic development. The chapter highlighted the economic and political conditions that motivated artists to generate performances outside of concert dance venues and choreograph alternative methods for residents to relate to each other. Chapter Two evaluated the collaborations between feminist video artist Sarah Minter and disaffected youth from the punk rock commons. I uncovered how video art practices allowed artists from economically different communities to find a common cause under the umbrella of dispossession.[180] Chapter Three assessed artists' usage of forensic aesthetics in performance practices. I contended that concert dance theater practices were doing the work of journalism because the discipline has become a high-risk profession, and that these practices provide alternative forms of accountability in a lapsed democracy where the management of death is part of political systems. A survey of these practices evidences the critical role that performance makers play in creating encounters of embodied healing in the space of the public trauma, in order to transform the meaning of the public space.

Importantly, the project placed an emphasis on disaffection and discontinuity, stressing the way in which unhappiness and displeasure can be deployed choreographically across different performance genre styles as forms of resistance. Disaffected choreographies created new communities by insisting on the body's relationship to material realities, underlining this contact zone as the terminal site where racialized, gendered, and classed systems are reconfigured. Disaffection was a useful concept to understanding how and why people dance and are resilient under violent conditions. It was about expressing the negative of affection and underscoring the process of impacting the social conditions of injustice. In this way, subjects and objects moved between classed, aestheticized, and gendered spheres across circuits of disaffection where artistic practices ride on the surface of seeking and creating less violent conditions. Disaffected choreographies created intimate communities across difference.

My project departed from other dance and performance studies projects in two important ways. First, it foregrounded the material conditions in which dance performances occur or that are

[180] While Minter's video pieces included many fascinating sonic elements, exploring the unique qualities of sound and its relationship to performance exceeds the scope of my project.

used as motivation for new relationships. I determined that experimental dance practices relied on waste generated by residents deemed unproductive, in order to comment on the economic and social conditions that leave homeless residents and drug users to die on the street. I concluded that artists deemed unproductive enacted temporally and spatially bounded artistic-political homes, what I call *choreotopias*. I identified how choreotopias are created by feelings of refuse, both embodied and material. This reading of artistic practices allowed me to identify the following interpretations: analog video technologies were choreotopias that anticipated new social imaginaries; disaffected women in the punk rock commons created class-crossing communities through the use of video art; and punk mosh pits were different for women than for men because women experience gender-based discrimination even in the punk rock commons. Second, I expanded dance and performance studies to interrogate the relationship between the embodied, the material, and the political by adding emphasis to the state's management of dead bodies and its response to cases of forced disappearances. As a result of my analysis of dance and movement-related practices through an expanded idea of choreography, I offered a new analytic for tracking the resistive movement of bodies and objects across political terrains where the state attempts to limit the avenues for social truth-telling.

This project unfurls two future areas of investigation in terms of methods and content. The first one relates to the methodological approach. In my effort to expand our understanding of choreography, I examine three different performance genres. In most dance studies projects, the agential body entity is the site of analysis. In this project, I move from the study of experimental street dances to the movement in video to a focus on dead bodies. This trajectory, from moving bodies to dances on screen to transporting dead bodies, complicates the use of movement analysis as a methodological approach to the study of dance. Such an approach generates methodological and analytical questions about the transferability of movement analysis from one social and political site to another. This project leaves open this methodological inquiry into the study of movement in dance and its expansion to other aesthetic practices.

The second opportunity relates to the case studies. In Chapter Two, I evaluate Sarah Minter's collaboration with many punk youth and other video artists to produce *Alma punk* and *Nadie es inocente*. Ana Hernández, the lead protagonist in *Alma punk*, is featured in the project. I have been unable to locate Hernández and interview her about her experience of the process. Hernández' voice will add an additional layer to the study of gender in the collaboration between Minter and the punk youth, contributing her experience of the creative process. Similarly, I am aware that several *Mierdas Punk* are still alive but I do not interview them here. For example, Pablo "Podrido" Hernández continues to haunt *El Chopo*. He developed his own cultural center in the city of Nezahualcóyotl.[181] I include Ana Hernández and Pablo Hernández here to add them into the archive as a trace of punk's afterlife, and to provide future researchers in the growing field of non-white punk studies with some directions as to the artists' whereabouts.[182]

[181] I unexpectedly met and spoke with Pablo Hernández during one of my visits to *El Chopo* in August 2019. He spoke fondly of the development of *Nadie es inocente*. I visited during a weekend when they were supposed to have a small fanzine exhibition that commemorated the beginning of the punk movement. This conversation was not part of the official study and I did not have the opportunity for a follow-up discussion nor to attend the exhibition.
[182] University of California, Riverside graduate and undergraduate students organized and hosted the inaugural punk conference on Saturday, May 4, 2019. Notably, conference organizers and attendees consisted of punk participants.

Strange Love

I conclude by inviting the reader to the work of Lía La Novia Sirena [Lía the Mermaid Bride].[183] Lía is a trans* artist and activist based in Mexico City who uses performance to create affective encounters with the public. She addresses her concerns about trans violence, femicides, sexuality, and social change by creating public opportunities for the audiences to hear, touch, and dance with these issues. For example, in her earliest works, she dressed as a mermaid and was ushered throughout the city via a dolly designed to carry wooden pallets, on wooden boats transporting her across Xochimilco lake, or in inflatable swimming pools in and out of cinema centers. She asked audiences to pick her up, transport her to her destination, and listen to her voice. In another project, she danced in plazas and restaurants to celebrate her *quinceañera*, her fifteenth birthday, because she did not get one before her transition from male to female. She wore large colorful gowns, and transited across different locations and attended public festivals, accompanied by escorts because she believes that gender is transitory and can be regal and celebrated. In her most recent work, *Subtle Strangeness*, she wears a pink fitted sequined dress that shimmers in public as she announces the names of trans violence victims, blows black feathers to the audience, and orchestrates collective screams of justice.[184]

On June 11, 2019, I had the pleasure of participating in Lía La Novia Sirena's workshop during the same week that Jesusa Rodríguez sparked controversy at the Hemispheric Institute's *Encuentro*. Lía was a featured guest artist in the *Noise of the Borders* working group, in which I was a presenter. She facilitated a series of embodied and sound focused activities, and she spoke about her methodology and aesthetic. For that day's activity, we gathered at the Espacio Escultórico, a large open-air sculpture installation located in the cultural sector at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.[185] We were in the middle of petrified volcanic rock and surrounded by giant geometric concrete structures. Lía started the session by breaking up the participants into groups of two, each facing one another. She invited us to close our eyes and listen to the person standing across from us. Then, she asked us to do the unexpected. She guided use through a series of exercises where we listened to each other's throats, hearts, and stomachs.

As a dancer and choreographer, I felt uncomfortable with the prompt. Prior to this moment, I had participated in and facilitated many exercises where the dancers and audiences were asked to touch and feel each other, usually at the hand, a cheek, or the neck. Lía's activity made me squeamish, and I was not the only one. This simple action caused unease among the attendees. We laughed uncomfortably at the idea of putting our ears up to a stranger's gut and neck. The exercise seemed absurd. We approached the task with hesitation. One by one, people started to lean their torsos forward and orient one ear toward their partner. We each crossed the dividing space that separated our bodies. We bent over slowly, holding our weight on our knees while our heads pressed forward into the other person's body. We began to press our ears into our partner's clothes and skin. We listened to each other's internal sounds. I heard my partner swallow saliva three times. The sound was thunderous. Then, after I placed my ear on their stomach, I heard their digestive system process what I imagine was the food that they had just eaten during lunch. A high-pitched sound echoed inside my partner's abdominal wall. It pierced my ear and I had to look away

183 Lía's full name is Lía García

184 Lía performed this intervention at the 2019 *Encuentro* at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Documentation of the performance can be found via https://vimeo.com/354998899.

185 The sculpture is comprised of sixty-four large triangles that form an expansive circle, surrounding petrified lava. It was designed and built in 1979 by Helen Escobedo, Manuel Felguérez, Mathias Goeritz, Hersúa, Sebastián y Federico Silva, and Roberto Acuña.

momentarily, but I felt compelled to listen again. As a recipient of those same actions, I felt exposed having a stranger listen to the gurgling sounds in my stomach. I was also uncomfortable with a person that I had known for just one day listen to my heart beat, and throat. These are gestures mainly reserved for the most intimate loved ones in my life.

After several minutes of unease, we all became hypnotized with the task. My partner's body and its sounds became an alien experience and I could not pull away from it. What first appeared to be a ridiculous task turned into an intimate strangeness. We hardly knew each other and we were already intently looking and listening into each other's crevices. The simple activity challenged me to become more soft with my gaze, looking at the other person with care and concern but also listening to their body and touching the surface of their skin. The exercises ended and we had time to reflect, but we were all speechless. I could only hear the resonance of churning intestines, swallowing throats, and thumping heartbeats. We nodded and smiled at each other, having few words to express the experience of a shared sociality that exists beyond the utterable but facilitated through strange sound, touch, and movement. From this shared sense of unease emerged a collective sense of vulnerability. In this exercise, as well as across Lía's other embodied, vocal, and material interventions, she invites us to create small, temporary and spatially bounded worlds of strange intimacy that honor the feminine spirit. As she says, "This is also rebellion. Touching. Loving ourselves. Liking ourselves. And making our voice one song…Being together" [My translation]. Her siren call invites us to move, touch, listen, and think in less violent ways, and to choreograph a more strange though nonetheless loving world.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Use of Bodies*. Translated by Adam Kotsko, Stanford University Press, 2015.

Alma punk. Directed by Sarah Minter, 1992.

Alvarado, Leticia. *Abject Performances: Aesthetic Strategies in Latino Cultural Production*. Duke University Press, 2018.

Antivilo, Julia. " Llevar la Fiesta y la Protesta en el Cuerpo. Un Siglo de Performance y Disidencia Sexual." *Heterotopías del Cuerpo y el Espacio*, edited by Verónica Rodríguez Cabrera, Chloé Constant, María Guadalupe Huacuz Elías, and Jaqueline García Bautista, Mexico City: La Cifra, 2017.

Arte Acción en México: Registros y Residuos, edited by Ekaterina Álvarez Romero. Mexico City: Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2019. Exhibition Catalogue.

Ávalos Tenorio, Gerardo. *Ética y Política Para Tiempos Violentos.* México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2016.

Battle, Robert. "Joining Generations: Robert Battle." Cal Performances, Stephens Hall, University of California, Berkeley, 12 Apr. 2018. Lecture.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Harvard University Press, 2002.

Bernstein, Robin. "Dances with Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race." *Social Text*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2009, pp. 67-94.

Biddle, Ian, and Vanessa Knights. *Music, National Identity and the Politics of Location*. Ashgate Publishing, 2013.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Buenfil, Rosa. *Reflexiones Metodológicas de Investigación en Análisis Político de Discurso: Relato de una Experiencia sobre el Discurso Educativo en la Historia de México.* Presentación al Diplomado de Ciencias de la Comunicación, DIE/ Cinvestav, México, 1995.

Butler, Judith. "Out of Breath: Laughing, Crying at the Body's Limit." Encuentro, 2019, Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México, Mexico City. Keynote Address.

Cabranes-Grant, Leo. *From Scenarios to Networks: Performing the Intercultural in Colonial Mexico*, Northwestern University Press, 2016.

Cadena, Evelina Corona. “El sismo del 85: un antes y un después.” *Las Cosas Como Fueron.* México: Documentación y Estudios de Mujeres A.C., 2007.

Camp, Roderic Ai. "The Democratic Transformation of Mexican Politics." *The Oxford Handbook of Mexican Politics,* Roderic Ai Camp. Oxford University Press, May 01, 2012. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Date Accessed 20 April, 2020. <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195377385.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195377385-e-1>.

Cantú, Norma. "The Semiotics of Land and Space. " *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos*, edited by Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma E. Cantú, and Brenda M. Romero. University of Illinois Press, 2009, pp. 97-115.

Caroll, Amy Sara. *REMEX: Toward an Art History of the NAFTA Era*. University of Texas Press, 2017.

Cepeda, Gaby. "Juan Caloca." *Art in America*, Art News, 1 Nov. 2018.

Chen, Yin-Zu. "How to Become a Feminist Activist After the Institutionalization of the Women's Movements." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2014, pp. 183–206. Accessed 24 April, 2020. *JSTOR*, 10.5250/fronjwomestud.35.3.0183.

Chen, Mel. *Animacies*, Duke University Press, 2012.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Routledge, 2000.

Cornejo Portugal, Inés and Maritza Urteaga. "México: Movimiento Punk e Identidad Femenina."*Chasqui: Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación*, no. 62, 1998, pp. 17-21.

Córdova, Kimberlee. "Ojo en Rotación: Sarah Minter at MUAC." *SFQA*, 11 Jul. 2015, http://sfaq.us/2015/07/ojo-en-rotacion-sarah-minter-at-muac/.

"Crearán comisión de la verdad por caso Ayotzinapa en México." *TeleSUR*, 21 Sept. 2018. https://www.telesurtv.net/news/ordenan-crear-comision-verdad-normalistas-ayotzinapa-20180921-0010.html. Accessed 25 Oct. 2018.

Christensen, Angi M., Nicholas V. Passalacqua, and Eric J. Bartelink. *Forensic Anthropology: Current Methods and Practice*. Amsterdam: Academic Press, 2014.

Croft, Clare. *Dancers as Diplomats*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Davis, Diane E. "Globalization, Governance, and the Collision of Forces in Mexico City's Historic Center." *Urban Latin America: Inequalities and Neoliberal Reforms*, edited by Tom Angotti. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017, pp. 79-99.

Delgado Martínez, César. *Diccionario Biográfico de la Danza Mexicana*. Mexico City: CONACULTA, 2009.

Danzón. Directed by María Novaro, performance by María Rojo, Fondo de Fomento a la Calidad Cinematográfica, 1991.

Dodds, Sherril. "Slam dancing with the Boundaries of Theory and Practice: The Legitimization of Popular Dance." *Routledge Dance Studies Reader 2nd Edition*, edited by Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea. Routledge, 2009, pp. 344-353.

del Castillo Troncoso, Alberto. "El movimiento estudiantil de 1968 narrado en imágenes." *Sociológica (México)*, vol. 23, no. 68, 2008, pp. 63-114.

"Desmadrar." *Real Academia Española*. https://dle.rae.es/desmadrar. Accessed 20 Apr. 2020.

Díaz, Miguel Ángel. Interview by author. Mexico City. 14 May, 2018. Personal Interview.

Delgadillo Martínez, Emiliano. *Estudio y Edición Crítica de Los Hombres del Alba de Efraín Huerta.* 2016. El Colegio de San Luis. 2016. Master's Thesis.

Doxiadis, Constantino. *Between Dystopia and Utopia.* Athens Publishing, 1974.

Ferri, Claudia. "La Masacre de Tlatelolco." *La Izquierda Diario*, 2 Oct. 2017. Accessed 13 April 2018. http://www.laizquierdadiario.com/LamasacredeTlatelolco.

Fisher, Marv. "Mexicans Block U.S. Pop Events." *Billboard*, 6 Mar. 1976, p. 3.

Fortuna, Victoria. *Moving Otherwise: Dance, Violence, and Memory in Buenos Aires*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Foster, Susan. "An Introduction to Moving Bodies." *Choreographing History*, edited by Susan Foster. Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 3-25.

————. "Choreographies of Protest." *Dance*, special issue of *Theatre Journal,* vol. 55, no. 3, 2003, pp. 395-412.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, translated by Jay Miskowiec. 1984.

————. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow. Pantheon Books, 1984. pp. 77-100.

————, "The Subject and Power," in *Power*, ed. James D Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley, 2000, pp. 327–48.

"Forensis." *Oxford English Dictionary.* https://www.oed.com/. Accessed 12 Apr. 2018.

Franko, Mark. "Dance and the Political: States of Exception." *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 38. no. 1/2, 2006, pp. 3-18. Accessed 3 Mar. 2016.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda, panelist. *Those Who Are No Longer Here* Performance, 6 Oct. 2018, Eastside Cultural Center, Oakland, California.

Garay Aguilera, Héctor Manuel. "Sismos Y Danza." *Interdanza*, vol. 25, 2015, pp. 6–10.

————. "Un extraño en un espacio extraño." *La Tradición Hoy en Día.* Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1998, pp. 71-83.

García, Cindy. *Salsa Crossings: Dancing Latinidad in Los Angeles*, Duke University Press, 2013.

Giersdorf, Jens. *The Body of the People.* University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.

Gigengack, Roy. "The Chemo and the Mona: Inhalants, Devotion and Street Youth in Mexico City." *International Journal of Drug Policy,* vol. 25, no. 1, 2014, pp. 61–70.

Gillingham, Paul. *Cuauhtémoc's Bones*. *Forging National Identity in Modern Mexico*. University of New Mexico Press, 2011.

Gobierno de México. "Quiénes Somos." *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia*. https://www.inah.gob.mx/quienes-somos. Accessed 1 Jul. 2019.

González González, Guadalupe. *Fenomenología de la Violencia: Una Perspectiva desde México.* Coordinator Luis Herrera-Lasso M. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno.2017, pp. 126-142.

Gutiérrez, Laura. *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage*. University of Texas Press, 2010.

Hamera, Judith. *Dancing Communities*. Palgrave, 2007.

Hebdige, Dick. *Subcuture: The Meaning of Culture.* Routledge, 1979.

Heidegger, Martin. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." *Basic Writings: From* Being and Time (1927) *to* The Task of Thinking (1964), Harper and Row, 1977.

Hellier-Tinoco, Ruth. *Embodying Mexico: Tourism, Nationalism, and Performance*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Hernández Islas, Juan. *Barro Rojo Arte Escenico (1982-2007): La Izquierda en la Danza Contemporánea Mexicana.* Mexico City, CONACULTA, 2010.

Hughes, Sallie. "Democracy in the Newsroom: The Evolution of Journalism and the News Media." *The Oxford Handbook of Mexican Politics,* edited by Roderic Ai Camp, *Oxford Handbooks Online,* Oxford University Press, May 01, 2012. Date Accessed 13 Mar. 2020.

Huitrón, Cynthia Citlallin Delgado. "Haptic Tactic: Hypertenderness for the [Mexican] State and the Performances of Lia García." *Trans Studies en las Américas*, special issue of *TSQ*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2019, pp. 164–179. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-7348454

Huyssen, Andreas. "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia." *Public Culture,* vol. 12, no. 1, 2000, pp. 21–38.

Jestrovic, Silvjia. *Performance, Space, Utopia: Cities of War, Cities of Exile*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Keenan, Thomas and Eyal Weizman. *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of a Forensic Aesthetics*. Sternberg Press, 2012.

Lamas, Marta. "The feminist movement and the development of political discourse on voluntary motherhood in Mexico." *Reproductive Health Matters*, vol. 5, no. 10, 1997, 58-67, DOI: 10.1016/S0968-8080(97)90086-0.

Larasati, Rachmi. *The Dance that Makes You Vanish,* University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Leal Martínez, Alejandra M. "Neoliberalismo, Estado y Ciudadanía. La Crisis del 'Pacto Revolucionario' en Torno al Sismo de 1985." *Relaciones*, vol. 147, 2016, pp. 51-84.

Leblanc, Lauraine. *Pretty in Punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a Boys' Subculture*. Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Lepecki, André. *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance.* Routledge, 2016.

————. "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: or, the task of the dancer." *TDR/The Drama Review*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2013, pp. 13-27.

Limon, Jerzy. "Time in Theater." *Performance Studies: Keywords, Concepts, and Theories*, edited by Bryan Reynolds, Palgrave, 2014, pp. 215-226.

Lipsitz, George. *Footsteps in the Dark*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Lomnitz, Claudio. *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

————. "Narrating the Neoliberal Moment: History, Journalism, His- toricity." *Public Culture*, vol. 20, no.1, 2008, pp. 39-56.

López-Cabello, A. S. "La Música Punk como un Espacio Identitario y de Formación en Jóvenes de México. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud,* vol. 11, no. 1, 2013, pp. 185-197.

López Castañer, Xesqui. "Genre and Postcolonialism in Video Creation: Women Writing in Video Camera and Captivating on the Screen." *Dossiers Feministes*, vol. 18, 2014, pp. 259–274.

Madrid, Alejandro L. 2008. *Nor-Tec Rifa!: Electronic Dance Music From Tijuana to the World*. Oxford University Press.

Marquié, Hélène. "Dispositif: When What is said is Not Shown." *Dance Discourse,* edited by Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera. Rutledge, 2007, pp. 236-250.

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual*. Duke University Press, 2002.

Matheron, Aurelie. "Performing Waste, Wasting Performance: The Ecology of Fluxus." *Resilience A Journal of the Environmental Humanities,* vol.6, no.1, 2018, pp. 102–117.

Mbembé, Achille. "Necropolitics." "Necropolitics." *Public Culture,* vol. 15. no. 1, 2003, pp. 11-40.

"Mexperimental Cinema." *Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive*, panel discussion with Jesse Lerner and Ximena Cuevas. 7 Apr. 1998, Berkeley, California

Montejo, Iván. "La Misteriosa Identidad de 'La Encuerada de Avándaro." *Playboy México*. Accessed 2 Oct. 2019. https://www.playboy.com.mx/playboy-se-lee/la-misteriosa-identidad-de-la-encuerada-de-avandaro/

Muñoz, José Esteban. "'Gimme Gimme This... Gimme Gimme That': Annihilation and Innovation in the Punk Rock Commons" *Social Text*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2013, pp. 95–110.

Nadie es inocente. Directed by Sarah Minter, 1986.

Nadie es inocente-veinte años después. Directed by Sarah Minter, 2006.

Nail, Thomas. *The Figure of the Migrant*, Stanford University Press, 2015.

Natera, G. "Estudio Sobre la Incidencia del Consumo de Disolventes Volatiles en 27 Centros de la República Mexicana." *Inhalación Voluntaria de Disolventes Industriales*, edited by C. M. Contreras Pérez. México: Trillas, 1977, pp. 329–351.
Nayfack, Shakina. ""¿Por qué estás aquí? Dancing through history, identity, and the politics of place in Butoh ritual Mexicano." *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos*, edited by Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma E. Cantú, and Brenda M. Romero. University of Illinois Press, 2009, pp. 148-164.
O'Connor, Alan. "Anarcho-Punk: Local Scenes and International Networks." *Anarchist Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2003, pp. 111–121.
Ojo en Rotación: Sarah Minter. Imágenes en Movimiento 1981-2015, edited by Ekaterina Álvarez Romero. Mexico City: Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015. Exhibition Catalogue.
Padilla, Ignacio. *Arte y Olvido del Terremoto*, Oaxaca de Juárez, Almadía, 2010.
Palacios, Simón Pedro Izcara. 2012. "Coyotaje Y Grupos Delictivos en Tamaulipas." *Latin American Studies Research Review*, vol. 47, no.3, 2012, pp. 41–61. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23322173.
Pinkering, Robert B. and David Bachman. *The Use of Forensic Anthropology*. 2nd ed., CRC Press, 2009.
Piñon, Ana. "Los Bailarines Tomaron las Calles Para Ayudar con su Arte." *El Universal.* 14 Sept. 2015. Accessed 3 Jan. 2019.
Poma, Alice and Tommaso Gravante. "Fallas del Sistema": Análisis Desde Abajo del Movimiento Anarcopunk en México." *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, vol. 78, no. 3, 2016, 437-467.
Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession*, 1991, pp. 33–40. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25595469. Accessed 20 Mar. 2020.
Program for *NAKA Dance Theater's* Still Unaccounted For at the Eastside Cultural Center, Oakland, California. Playbill, 2018.
Quijas, Fabiola Palapa. "Una Cartografía de la Resistencia se Alojara en Recinto de la UNAM." *La Jornada*, 9 Jun. 2018, https://www.jornada.com.mx/2018/06/09/cultura/a06n1cul.
Ramos, Iván A. "The Viscosity of Grief: Teresa Margolles at the Scene of the Crime." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, vol 25.3, 2016, pp. 298–314. Web. Accessed 11 May 2016.
Ramos Pintle, Fernanda. "La Mujer Que Hechizó Avándaro." *Reversos*, 22 May 2016. http://reversos.mx/la-mujer-hechizo-avandaro/. Accessed 9 Apr. 2019.
Rancière, Jacques. "Shifting Borders: Art, Politics, and Ethics Today." Wheeler Hall, University of California, Berkeley. 20 Feb. 2018. Lecture.
Rashkin, Elissa J. *Women Filmakers in Mexico: The Country in Which We Dream.* University of Texas Press, 2001.
Reed, Susan. *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka*. The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.
Rivera-Servera, Ramón. "Choreographies of Resistance." *Modern Drama*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2004, pp. 269-289.
Rodríguez Everaert, Ana Sofía. "La Danza Del Temblor." *NEXOS*, 27 Sept. 2017, https://cultura.nexos.com.mx/?p=13538.
Rosenblatt, Adam. *Digging for the Disappeared: Forensic Science after Atrocity.* Stanford University Press, 2015.

Rosler, Martha. *California Video: Artists and Histories*. Paul Getty Museum, 2008.
Rubio González, Javier and José Carreño Carlón. *México, 30 Años en Movimiento: Una Cronologia.* Distrito Federal: Universidad Iberoamericana. 1998.
Russel, Philip. *The History of Mexico: from Pre-Conquest to Present*. New York: Routledge, 2010, pp. 177-277.
Sabisch, Petra. *Choreographing Relations: Practical Philosophy and Contemporary Choreography*, Epodium, 2011.
Salverson, Julie. "Change on Whose Terms? Testimony and an Erotics of Inquiry." *Theater*, vol. 31 no. 3, 2001, pp. 119-125. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/34187.
"Sarah Minter." *Radical Women: Latin American Art*, 1960-1985 Digital Archive. Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, 2019. https://hammer.ucla.edu/radical-women/artists/sarah-minter.
Sarquiz, Oscar. "De Sarquiz a Aceves." *La Jornada*, 14 Sep. 2001.
Schneider, Rebecca. *Performance Remains*. Routledge, 2011.
Sherman, Stephanie. *(Dis)Plazas and (Dis)Placed Danzas: Space, Trauma, Moving Bodies in Mexico City.* 2016. University of California, Berkeley, PhD dissertation.
Stanger, Arabella. "Heterotopia as Choreography." *Performance Research*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2016, pp. 65-73.
Stark, A., & Tortajada, M. "Dance Research in Mexico." *Dance Research Journal,* vol. 26, no., 1994, pp. 73-77. https://doi.org/10.2307/1477939.
Steingo, Gavin and Jim Sykes. *Remapping Sound Studies.* Duke University Press, 2019.
Suárez-Enriquez, Ximena. "La nueva Comisión de Investigación para el caso Ayotzinapa." *WOLA*. https://www.wola.org/es/analisis/comision-investigacion-caso-ayotzinapa/. 28 Jun. 2018.
Taylor, Diana. *Disappearing Acts*. Duke University Press, 1997.
Teutle, López, Alberto. "Male homoeroticism, homosexual identity, and AIDS in Mexico City in the 1980s." *The Sexual History of the Global South: Sexual Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, edited by Saskia Wieringa, and Horacio Sívori. Zed Books, 2013, pp. 187-205.
Thacker, Strom C. "Big Business, Democracy, and the Politics of Competition." *The Oxford Handbook of Mexican Politics*, edited by Roderic Ai Camp. Oxford University Press, May 01, 2012. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Accessed 1 April 2020.
Thiong'o, Ngūgī wa. "The Enactment of Power: The Politics of Performance Space." *TDR*, vol. 41, no. 3, 1997, pp. 11-30.
Todres, Les. *Embodied Enquiry*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
Tatro, Kelley. "The Hard Work of Screaming: Physical Exertion and Affective Labor
Among Mexico City's Punk Vocalists." *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2014, pp. 431–24.
————. "Performing Hardness: Punk and Self-Defense in Mexico City." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2018, pp. 242-256.
Valencia, Sayak. *Capitalismo Gore*. Spain: Melusia, 2010.
Valle, Ivonne del. "Mexico's Re-Colonization: Unrestrained Violence, Rule of Law and the Creation of a New Order." *Política Común*, vol. 7, 2015, n.p. http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/pc.12322227.0007.002
Vargas, Deborah R. "Punk's Afterlife in Cantina Time." *Social Text,* vol. 31, no. 3, 2013, pp. 57–73.
————. "Ruminations on lo Sucio as a Latino Queer Analytic." *American Quarterly*, vol. 66, no. 3. 2014, pp. 715-726.

Velazquez Garcia, Mario Alberto, and Helene Balslev Cluasen.
"Tepoztlán, Una Economía De La Experiencia Íntima." *Latin American Research Review,* vol. 47, 2012, pp. 134–54.
Ward, Julie Ann. "Making Reality Sensible: The Mexican Documentary Theatre Tradition, 1968-2013." *Theatre Journal*, vol. 69 no. 2, 2017, pp. 197-211. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/tj.2017.0024.
Wilderson III, Frank B. "The Vengeance of Vertigo: Aphasia and Abjection in the Political Trials of Black Insurgents." *InTensions Journal*, no. 5, 2011, pp. 1-41.
Wilson, Elizabeth. *Gut Feminism*. Duke University Press, 2015.
Zavala, Adriana. *Becoming Modern, Becoming Tradition: Women, Gender, and Representation in Mexican Art.* The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.

Appendix: Figures

[Fig. 1. Barro Rojo members Arturo Garrido, Daniela Heredia, Alejandra Mendoza, Serafín Aponte, Laura Rocha, and Francisco Illescas. Photo courtesy of Jorge Izquierdo. 1986.]

[Fig. 2. Jaime Leyva in *Todo aquel sorprendido, todo aquel consignado*. Walker Art Center Archives. Photo courtesy of Sal Salerno. 1992.]

[Fig 3. Kara and his friends sit on a couch in the middle of a landfill. Still image from *Nadie es inocente*, directed by Sarah Minter, 1986.]

[Fig. 4. Alma and Yola discuss women's history in México, and their friend Marilou rests on the couch. Still image from *Alma punk,* directed by Sarah Minter, 1992.]

[Fig. 5. Debby Kajiyama holds a tape recorder while collaborator José Navarrete casts a light on her. Photo by Scott Tsuchitani, 2017.]