

UCLA
CSW Update Newsletter

Title

Public Territory | Territorio Público

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2cp266mg>

Author

Galindo, Regina José

Publication Date

2007-11-01

PUBLIC TERRITORY | TERRITORIO PÚBLICO



BY REGINA JOSÉ GALINDO

THREE OIL RAINBOWS swirl around the lukewarm waters of wells in Cobán. A shaft of 75 meters opens up in the neighborhood of San Antonio. The body of a woman is discovered in a hotel in Zone 1, her back bearing the death threat “to all sluts.” Two hundred and fifty families protest in front of Congress against being evicted from their land. In a presidential debate, the “firm hand” calls Colón a “limp wrist.” The legs of a woman, cut into 8 pieces, are



REGINA JOSÉ GALINDO
Limpieza Social
Trento, Italy
March, 2006



REGINA JOSÉ GALINDO
perra
2005

This video documents
the artist cutting the word
"perra" into her thigh
to protest
violence against women.





REGINA JOSÉ GALINDO
himenoplastia
2004

This video documents the artist undergoing surgery to reconstruct her hymen. Galindo had the operation without anaesthetic and in the same precarious conditions in which many working-class women in Guatemala undergo this surgery.

left in a cardboard box in Zone 3. Ash rains down on the capital after a volcanic eruption. Foot soldiers of the Salvatrucha gang assault a bus of tourists and kill all the employees. In congress the winner of the Noble Peace prize is spit upon by a FRG sympathizer. Unemployed workers start day 3 of their hunger strike downtown. A group of protesters are electrocuted by plainclothes policemen in front of the U.S. embassy. In a tortillería in the city center, an indigenous woman has her baby stolen. In Totonicapán a group of restless men burn the town hall and two police cars, while in Chimaltenango a woman accused of stealing a child is burned alive. A shop owner in the neighborhood of Verbena is shot and killed by gang members for refusing to

pay a 100 quetzales “tax,” while on Elena St. a bus driver is shot for the same reason...

In Guatemala we are surrounded by images of every type. Things that in other places are just the stuff of legend actually happen in Guatemala and happen everyday: in the street in front of our homes, on sidewalks by the office, in our cousin’s neighborhood, on the street that we take to the supermarket, in the buses, in the churches, in the schools, on football fields, in the banks, in shopping malls, at red lights.

The white sheet in the middle of the street is part of our collective memory. “Everyone” in Guatemala has seen, and seen more than once, that sheet; first in person and then multiplied millions of times in newspapers and on televi-

sion. The white sheet covering death is the most widely diffused image. Is it simply an irony of life or a Machiavellian form of keeping people in line? As someone once said, in times of peace, the best weapon is fear.

In Guatemala, we signed the peace accords in '96, but peace is not at all what we've had since. The minds of Guatemalans are filled with images of war; however, in our imaginary, while based primarily in images of violence, we also find images of peace and struggle.

These images are the ones that have been the starting point for my actions or that have contaminated them. My work is rooted in both fiction and reality, with my body between, as the *public territory* (territorio público) where they meet.

Recorrido

Regina José Galindo

November 13
4 pm
UCLA Faculty Club

Regina José Galindo is an artist and poet. She was born and works in Guatemala. She received the Golden Lion award for best young artist at the 51st Venice Biennial in 2005. Regina José Galindo was recently published by Vanilla

Edizioni and Prometeo Gallery. Galindo's poetry appears in numerous poetry anthologies and journals, and she is the author of Personal e Intransmissible, a collection of poetry published in 1999 by Coloquia, Guatemala.

Videos and other information about her work can be found at <http://www.karaandrade.com/>

Translated by Brian Whitener

