

# Geological politics of opacity

In an earlier essay, written for the first monographic book on Mónica Giron's art, I proposed an exploration of her production based on what not only from Mónica's perspective, but also from my own perspective seemed to constitute the core of a thirty-year-long journey: the slow, steady, and extensive movement from the empty body to the full body, from the inert body to the vibrant body, from the repressed, annulled, and even annihilated body to the recovered and reborn body.()

Over the course of that work, which is actually a number of intersecting and divergent courses, Mónica makes art that makes her, makes a body that makes her body. Making the work is an act of performing and that consciously sustained act of performing yields self-analysis and—I would now add—self-healing. The work is the exteriority that restores the artist's interiority, a non-self that relocates the self so that it can experience itself and, in so doing, set out to encounter what lies beyond the self, her own body.

In these thirty years, during which her work has shown itself to be the effect of deeper and deeper meditation—which is what has allowed the initial violence that organized it to turn into a palpable but by no means transparent knowledge of emotion, energy, and matter—the body appears in many forms, most of them disconcerting. Forms of the body as image (a relentless repertoire of ways of becoming animal, vegetable, mineral, human) and of the body of the image (the medium or support, usually made of basic materials like soil, stone, charcoal, wax, fat...), forms that are themselves constantly altering one another.

And what are all these forms, densities, modulations for? One of the most striking qualities of Mónica's work is its ability to express what is itself unknown to her, even after she has expressed it. To reveal an obscurity as obscure and to make us feel the unsettling, destabi-

lizing power of the obscure. In no way does that mean that intellectual work is not involved. But it's as if the intellect performed the primordial function of piercing the obscure in order to bring it to the surface of our sensibility.

That is why, when Valeria Balut and I began working on what would eventually be the exhibition *Ejercicios con el modelo terrestre*, we found ourselves once again in unknown territory, even though we knew Mónica's art in some detail. At first sight, each of the new works that addressed the planet Earth by means of partly discernible and partly baffling maps and globes seemed quite different from her earlier works. And that was the case even of those earlier works—a number of paintings of Patagonia from the early nineties, for instance—that had proposed an idea of landscape as accumulation of elements for an imaginary of the earthly body rather than as aesthetic arrangement of the view of a territory. Not a vision reasoned according to the protocols of art's optical tradition, but rather an inquiry formulated from the multidimensional sensoriality of the telluric.

Over time, Mónica had realized that these and other paintings from those years posited an analogy between her body and the body of Patagonia;() hence, my intention in that essay was to interrogate what category of images of the body and of bodies of the image constituted that analogy, and what other relationships could be established to her later work. In that study, I distinguished two large iconic groups within which certain recurrences were patent: the cut, the mutilated, the slashed, and the decapitated as images central to a first stage; and the porous, the woven, and the entwined as images central to a second. That distinction was, however, only generic; there was a long phase of transition between the two and later reformulations of the images of the first group in the second.

None of that appeared in her more recent work. Or, at least, that was what Valeria Balut and I thought at the beginning. These images of maps seemed too scientific for a universe that, by comparison, was irrational, shapeless, blind. Before Torres García's upside-down map of South America, Horacio Zabala's burned, slashed, deformed, tied, cut, and axed maps of South America, Öyvind Fahlström's world maps with continents joined, jumbled, and redistributed by country, the Bureau d'Études and Iconoclastas' map-diagrams of territories and power circuits, Jorge Macchi's cut-out maps or maps left to chance, or even Juan Downey's maps of South America with highly vibrant coloristic surfaces, Mónica's maps were, in a way, not maps at all.

That was exactly what a number of viewers said they felt before *Ejercicios con el modelo terrestre*. The first approach to the *Continentes de barro* [Mud Continents] did not, for them, involve distinguishing the shapes of those masses of clay, stone, and wax—let alone making out the image of a map—but rather coming into contact with something shapeless, usually experienced as unpleasant. In some cases, those optically undistinguished maps triggered emotional and spiritual processes. It is by no means sentimental to say that, in certain people, they awakened unexpected and unfathomable crying fits—even in persons who were, on a rational level, more concerned with expressing their reservations before those works than with steering the emotional whirlpool that these same works had suddenly gotten them mixed up in.

That seemingly corny example is, in fact, much closer to angst in the face of something beyond our control, something that seizes us or holds us captive. More pertinent than any judgment, then, would be the question: what makes a mound of earth, stone, or wax produce such impertinent effects? There is, in that concentrated presence of earth (and of the telluric, even when earthliness is not recognized in it) an unbearable provocation: suddenly, without my consent, I have come apart, lost control, exploded. My rationality has been decapitated, my individuality overrun. "The world has come tumbling down around me," one of those affected by these *Continentes* might have said. And so the material composition of the work, its invisible charge, its particular process of ripening, its constituent link with other things, with other processes... all of that is worth bearing in mind.

But, at a certain moment, the maps became visible. As if the encounter that began by disturbing that unconscious, immemorial bodiliness culminated effortlessly before our eyes, enabling retinal vision after having laid an indispensable sensorial base. On this other level, each of the four *Continentes* displayed a different geopolitical distribution: in one, the center of the circular map was occupied by Africa; in another, by Oceania; in a third, by Eurasia; and in a fourth, a South America flanked by China and Japan to the north and by Africa to the west (or to the south and to the east, respectively, depending on point of view).

At play, then, is a double movement: first, experiencing (unconsciously) how deeply moving the Earth is, the direction and intensity of slow and thick currents that seem to come together as platforms, beds, and surfaced masses, the different but not readily discernible mixes of elements, the mineral suggesting the organic, and vice versa. Masses of dense, almost solid, liquid that—despite delicate scent—bring to mind shit or some other rotting matter or waste, and shit that looks like nourishment or vomit, and so on, in a jumble. And masses that also suggest the idea of a feedback loop, the balance between opposites in a composition without precedent.

The second movement: the disconcerting experience of a physically, geologically reorganized world map. An earth not only composed of other compounds and depicted with forms that tend to entropy and to shapelessness, but one altered to its very foundations: a radical geopolitics. Or not even a geopolitics, but a geological-politics. Beyond the equitable distribution of territories, knowledges, and epistemes, a geological-politics of the man-Earth commonwealth. Rather than the re-composition of the disaster caused by centuries of colonialism, expropriation, and war, a proposal to reinvent our perception of the globe. And, as a consequence, a bold and currently indispensable horizon of imagination. (Now more than ever, to find a way out of this world we need an imagination of the unimaginable).

A map like the one Torres García drew (*América invertida* [Inverted America], 1943) appears to incite an inevitable physical upheaval because it introduces a new and almost inane simple point of view—notwithstanding everything that had to be put up with before that inversion was even imaginable—that makes it possible to take apart codes long a part of power and subjugation.

A manifesto condensed in an image, synthesis of two decades of Latin American avant-gardes, with echoes of the Borges of “The Argentine Writer and Tradition,” and of the Oswald de Andrade of the “Antropophagic Manifesto.” An inversion whose physical impact is produced by a clear-cut, graphic visual idea as perfect in its economy as it is in its power of transmission, depicted by a barely vibratile black contour line.

Zabala’s action on or against the maps of Argentina and South America also have a profound—and very violent—physical dimension. In *Hacha* [Axe] (1972) and *Argentina empaquetada* [Argentina Packaged] (1974), the maps—by relativizing the logic of representation because combined with objects from daily life or because manipulated (in one case, a map is stuck to a wooden box to then receive a blow of the axe; in another, a map, tied with string, wraps up something we cannot see)—turn into objects or parts of objects and, in that sense, they are bodies as well. In the end, they become object-bodies because the support or medium (body) of the image is what is slashed or tied up. They are also, however, mental bodies, because the “mistreatment” they endure renders explicit a political metaphor.

What many of Zabala’s maps express as metaphor is the mass of women and men murdered by the imperialist-dictatorial alliance of the seventies. Maps as figures of peoples in a post-colonial context of U.S. encroachment on Latin America and the emergence of local dictatorships that provided imperialism with political support essential to its expansion. Still, Zabala seems interested in going beyond geopolitics understood in the strategic sense to touch the very body of maps. In his series *Seis imágenes del fragmento 30* [Six Images of Fragment 30] (1973), he places a handwritten transcription of Heraclitus’s fragment 30 (“This universe, which is the same for all, has not been made by any god or man, but it always has been, is, and will be an ever-living fire, kindling itself by regular measures and going out by regular measures.”) next to various maps of South America that have been cut out and burned. In this most enigmatic approach, the “ahistoric” geological, once it “goes beyond” geopolitical eventuality, acts as foundation for a radical criticism of territoriality and of domination.

While in *Todos los fuegos el fuego* [All Fires Fire] (1973) the analogy between the destroyed map and the human body annihilated is maintained, geology

and geopolitics come together in total massacre: the map, torn to pieces and unrecognizable, is no longer even remain of a world. It’s still less than that: it is void, body emptied out.

Juan Downey’s *Map of America* (1975) combines the “Pan Americanism” developed by the artist pursuant to his many journeys around the continent—trips that yielded a whole series of works, the most important of which is the video-installation *Trans Americas* (1973-1989)—geopolitical criticism (with a gesture along the lines of Torres-García’s *América invertida*), a conception of the universe as interconnected multidimensional energy system, and a meeting of contemporary and indigenous cosmologies. This *Map of America*, which takes the shape of a multicolored spiral that goes from the center of the map to its edges (even though it gives the sense of expansion beyond them), proposes a new relationship between political discourse and energetic transformation: what, in the map, is chromatic-kinetic force is, in speech, a projection of social energy for a political organization based on historical premises other than those of coloniality.

In Mónica Giron’s cartographic bodies, where the morphology and materiality are more important than the metric function of conventional maps, the geological dimension appears, at first, to be more decisive than the geopolitical dimension. Indeed, our first approach to these mud *tondi* is of another order: when we are faced with its opaque and silent mass, the Earth becomes physically concrete, and suddenly we can truly grasp the simple phrase “the Earth has a body, just like me.” Even if we don’t know or cannot say what the Earth really is, the verification of our physical familiarity with it is fundamental. That is what activates in us the micro-perceptive disposition that allows us to enter into these other maps’ diagram of forces.()

### The foul and the smooth

If there is something repulsive in the *Continentes de barro*, the repulsive is inevitable in the five globes called *Mundus*. To shape the previously treated piece of deer, cow, or sheep hide into a globe, its edges had to be stretched and folded to come together at a single point, like an orifice. A sort of anus.

The disproportion between that anus and the body to which it belongs is these *mundi*'s first monstrosity. The second is the animal's scalp, which was not removed; it suggests the remains of a skinning or of a death by burning. An annihilated body that, uncannily, still throbs with a pulse that can be perceived, albeit very subtly and confusedly, as a life that is not alive or as a death that has not fully taken place. An undesirable "over-life," a minimal foil life.()

In the repellent and the abject of these *mundi* and, to a lesser extent, of the *Continentes de barro*, an aspect of the world that, as civilization, we no longer tolerate endures or reappears. The still almost damp skin of these leather globes is the trace of a body that we have not understood for centuries. The foil is not the dirty, but rather the cosmos as necessarily and differently chaotic living multiplicity that civilizing order is on the verge of ravishing. That is why the life we think we see still throbbing in these *mundi* may be just the genetic memory of a world about to disappear, a world that, nonetheless, still breathes.

These repellencies make reference not only to the detritus of civilization, then, but also to the "disorder," "dirtiness," and "confusion" of the living. To avoid that living chaos—immoral because not compatible with human appetites and unproductive because useless to them—man sanitizes, flattens, removes, untangles, smooths, tends to a supposed neutrality. And, since the social hygiene movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, he has done so systematically. With bio-capitalism and digital rationality, the violence unleashed by that project of sterilization and pairing has grown exponentially.

An Earth redesigned on that basis can only be a *tabula rasa*. These are lands deprived of any form of life whatsoever except for the commodity crops of agro-toxic culture. It is a beach of limpid sand cleared, deforested, and raked and sea with no microbiological broth, as close as possible to a swimming pool in the backyard of a neurotic mansion. These are the artificial ponds of new gated and armored urbanizations, replicas of landscapes that exist only in the imaginaries of multi-media zombies, inert Caribbeans constructed nowhere near the sea—though some are near its shores—sometimes built on terrains stolen from nature reserves, ponds that are electronically monitored to ensure the water's temperature, transparency, impeccability. These are water parks and other sites of unique amusement that understand "the natural" as

the bland badge of what once, on that same enclave, nature had been. It is earthly surface turned into endless and overwhelming Epcot platform.

All of these processes of eliminating tissues and agents that keep bodies micro- and macro-scopically bound and their sensory surfaces active contribute to the aesthetic catastrophe. But the fibrillation and collapse of our muscular and sensory relationship to the Earth is just one of the many formulations of the aesthetic catastrophe of the social tie, of the disappearance of the "diffuse aesthesia" of which Bifo speaks:

No discourse on social relations can do without sensibility understood as diffuse aesthesia, as com-passion in the etymological sense: extensive perception, participation in the feeling of the other, carnal comprehension of the felt as capable of being felt. Without that comprehension, there is no longer any basis for coexistence, for ethics, or for politics as ethically grounded science.()

Aesthesia is possible, of course, only if it includes the earthly body. That sensibility is not possible if one understands one's own body and, by extension, one's own individuality, as external to everything else that exists. Because one does not feel without being felt and because sensibility is, by virtue of its very being, not only collective, but also infinite. That is why a relationship of respect, care, and reciprocity with the Earth underlies all the laws of every non-Western community past and present and upholds all of their cosmologies. Western modernity, though, supposes the repeated and mechanical severance of that constituent bond, particularly in its globalized phase.

Sensibility is the faculty that allows human beings to comprehend psychically contents that are not and cannot be verbalized. The more human attention is absorbed by verbalization, by digital codification, by the connective modality, the less sensible conscious organisms are.

Unhappiness may mean just that: consciousness without sensibility. Consciousness deprived of the gift of harmony between cosmic play and lone drifting. Inharmonic singularity.()

There is, in fact, a perfect correlation between, on the one hand, the current pursuit of smooth bodies with no markings or history, bodies that are objects of a

desensitized and hyper-stimulated social and sexual activity—which is what Bifo describes—and, on the other, the generation of smooth natural spaces with no inner vibration, spaces leveled out by a predatory and discouragingly fainthearted greed that, as soon as it stops exploiting those spaces, sets them adrift like monstrous ruins unworthy of visiting. The aim is to homologize as much as possible the surfaces of current bodies—be they of a human, animal, object, or terrestrial nature—so that they are immediately inter-connectable. But also so that they are instantly dis-connectable.

Conjunction is the encounter and fusion of rounded irregular forms that infiltrate in an imprecise, unrepeatable, imperfect, continuous way. Connection is the punctual and repeatable interaction of algorithmic functions, of straight lines and points that can be perfectly superimposed onto each other, inserting and detaching themselves according to discrete modalities of interaction. Modalities that establish a compatibility between diverse parts according to predetermined standards.()

The most powerful recent evidence of this inaesthetic logic of smoothing out and plunder is the irreversible alteration that, as part of a two-century-long process, the human species has introduced in the biosphere. On the basis of Dipesh Chakrabarty's idea() that, with that alteration, man has gone from being biological *agent* to geological *force*, Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro argue:

The price of [this phenomenon] is [...] the intrusion of Gaia on the human world, giving the Earth System the menacing form of a *historical subject*, a *political agent*, a *moral person* (Bruno Latour). [...] the “environmentalized” becomes environment [...] and vice versa in what is, in effect, the crisis of a more and more ambiguous environment; we no longer know where it is in relation to us or where we ourselves are in relation to it.

This sudden collision between Humans and the Earth, the terrifying communion of the geopolitical and the geophysical, makes a decisive contribution to the breakdown of the fundamental distinction of the Modern episteme, mainly the distinction between the cosmological and the anthropological orders, which have been separated

“forever” (or since at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century) by a twofold disjuncture of essence and of scale.()

The irony is that this extreme inversion of roles is what is, ultimately, jeopardizing the *essential* distinction between the anthropological order and the cosmological order. Only that Modern distinction could justify a conception of nature as object of domination and as economic resource such that we could forget that—though discernible—the anthropological and the cosmological are, in *essence*—to put it in Spinozian terms—modes of a multiplicity both infinite and unique.()

### The latest news in geopolitics

In order to exemplify the perseverance of Eurocentrism, Walter Mignolo writes in the introduction to his now-classic book on the geopolitics of knowledge:

The great distance between Greece and Latin America is not only geographic, but also geopolitical. Though Greece and Latin America are separated by five hundred years of colonial difference, Greece seems to be closer to Latin America than Anáhuac or TawantinSuyu.()

The argument—put forth in 2001 and largely unquestionable from the point of view of the history of coloniality—can be used in another direction in order to adjust its geopolitical conception to fit the reality of 2016. Greece, for Mignolo in this passage, represents the origin of Europe (of philosophy, of democracy, etc.) as Europe itself postulates it. That is why he can hold that, after five hundred years of Eurocentrism, the impact of Greece (of what it represents) Latin America is vastly greater than that of other civilizing processes in existence prior to conquest.

But, if reinterpreted in light of the radical instability that the last fifteen years have brought to the world—permanent economic crisis, the proliferation and atomization of the strategies, actors, and zones implicated in conflict, mad climate revolution—the same argument could mean something quite different.

Modern Greece, it is well known, never took part in the colonial project. And, in the more recent geopolitical order, its forced surrender to ultra-orthodox policies imposed by the European Community constitutes a

very explicit case of how global corporate and financial pressure can wipe out a population's ability to act, divide it from its neighbors, plunder its resources, and condition endlessly its internal affairs.

If, then, Greece is geographically closer to Germany than to Latin America, it is geopolitically much closer to any “underdeveloped” country than it is to Germany or to London, global financial center. Because, considering the treacherous increase in inequality even in the countries and cities where global plunder is devised,() it would not be incorrect to state that any population is heading straight to a “Greek crisis.”

If, by now, there is one thing that anyone—and I mean anyone: an academic in Johannesburg, a bar owner in Tokyo, a Syrian refugee in Iceland, or a beggar in Argentina—can see, it is the advance of two factors decisive to our experience as humanity today: first, the diffuseness and ungraspability of a power that lies beyond States (but that uses them at its discretion) and that is capable of making anything at all happen and of doing anything at all with human beings; second, the widespread sense of social powerlessness resulting from that power, the cause of vast horizons of sorrow, rage, and madness.

This present, which Santiago López Petit calls “the overflow of capital” takes shape “with the political, economic, and social dismantling of the working class central to the cycle of struggles that ensued in the late seventies.” “And so,” he says, “[...], capital, unstoppable, advances around the world. Globalization can no longer be explained in terms of exceeding or displacing a limit. [...] it lies beyond any limit, and that is the case to the extent that it is an overflow that repeats itself.”()

One of the most salient features of that overflow is the arbitrary relationship between production and value. In a financialized economy, it is impossible to determine the value of a product because what's at stake is not the production of material objects, but rather the endless proliferation of linguistic signs, which the market controls by determining the functioning of immaterial work networks.() The immediate result is a landscape of signs with no referent, signs gone mad. Thus liberated, signs refer to themselves, which leads to a radical rupture between language and body, and between economy and social order.

Bifo, meanwhile, speaks of the “neco-economy,” an alliance between the business of violence (war, terrorism, drug trafficking, weapon sales to civilians, etc.) and financial abstraction() that “does not discriminate criminal money from any other kind.” An economy based on the privatization of a war that spreads around the world as unpredictable, mutating, simultaneous micro-clashes. The conclusion is that “When war is privatized, no geopolitical order in the world can be imagined, no arrangement [...] can be pursued.”()

From this perspective, the violence of ISIS is one of the many pathological reactions to the devastation caused by neoliberal globalization. Bifo once again:

Some American Republicans claim that the killings [by jihadists] are related to mental illness. In a way, they are right. But they misunderstand the causes and the extent of what they label mental illness. Mental illness is not the rare malady of an isolated dropout, but the widespread consequence of panic, depression, precariousness, and humiliation: these are the sources of the contemporary global fragmentary war, and they are spreading everywhere, rooted in the legacy of colonialism and in the frenzy of daily competition.()

The fact that the rhetoric of a video put out by Dubiq, ISIS's advertising agency, imitates conventional advertising() is an example of how the impossibility of belonging to the only world there is—a world of more and more powerful elites spread further and further around the globe and of more and more exploited, and eventually disposable, multitudes—is replaced by the possibility of destroying that world *without the slightest alteration of corporal tone, of sensibility*. Because the person whose life is structured around consumerism is no more immersed in the world, no more enmeshed in its endless ties, than the person who suffers because unable to structure his or her life around it. Insensibility devastates, albeit differentially, jihadists, hired assassins, mass murderers at schools and universities, global elites, and middle classes (ever fewer in number the world over, of course) ridden with despair before the threat of permanent exclusion.

A capitalism in absolute degree (out of control), Earth as historical subject and human species as geological agent, permanent global war, and permanent global

economic crisis (the end of crisis): these factors together make us think, first, that geopolitics today is more tied to the planet as source of common life now endangered than to settling the differences between humans; and, second, that the way we decide to relate to the Earth has a more and more immediate and perceivable effect, even if that effect is a crescendo of confusion.

From another perspective, one totally enmeshed in the first, Mónica's cartographic bodies underscore the correlation between geophysics and geopolitics, not as cause of an imminent catastrophe, but as basic and originary link of any human life on Earth.

### The politics of aesthesia

Returning to the passage from Mignolo, it is important to remember that, in recent months, Greece has been a clear target of worldwide solidarity that aspires to a geopolitics of equity and of respect for other forms of life on the planet. To round off the argument, then, the terms "Anáhuac" and "TawantinSuyu" used by Mignolo could act as metaphors for the genealogy of the geopolitics to which this range of worldwide solidarity movements aspires. Recovering, reworking, and proliferating the practices, knowledges, aesthesias, and principles of sociability of those cultures that colonial power decimated and ravished—the Aztec, Inca, Mao-ri, Zulu cultures and many more—is one of the pillars of global transformation of another sort.

The legacy of the movements of the sixties (the hippie, vegetarian, ecological and New Age movements, among others) that proposed radical alternatives to the Western way of life and constitute the basis for today's counterculture is complex, diverse, and multifaceted. But, whereas in the sixties counterculture and radical politics were largely unconnected and even somewhat wary of one another, today the knowledges that originated in those movements are valued by and incorporated into global solidarity collectives and networks. And, what's more, there are also individuals and groups that, though not actively politicized, are willing to take part in collective action at any moment because contemporary communication technologies allow them to but also—and mostly—because the new technologies of quantum bodies, continuities of knowledges produced or recovered by the movements of the sixties, allow them to.

That is why, in order to redirect planetary energy, whether human or not human, towards the common good, it is more and more necessary to unlearn the tacit premises that uphold humanity as conceived since the origins of capitalism. Through that very unlearning of the inaesthetic body and relearning of how to feel with others, many of the new political practices have been developing, as part of their autonomy, a therapeutic dimension. And, as opposed to therapy applied as strategy to control bodies (bio-power, therapeutic power,() etc.), this therapy or politic(s) of aesthesia implies the construction of a common individual-collective-Earth body, the collective exercise of the reinvention and broadening of aesthesia.

Mónica participates in these politics mostly—though not solely—through her art, which is her primary technology. And that is the case because her art enables her to refute the order of inaesthesia by designing surfaces of unpredictable sensibility. In *Telúricos* [Telurics], for example, a supposed attempt to represent the ensemble of ocean masses shows us a system of solid waters of evident and indefinable structure made from thousands and thousands of grooves and tracks camouflaged in the reflecting mirror of a spectral shell that is complete onto itself, one that draws or, perhaps, grazes a bountiful mobile void open to its mutable and multiple exterior.

In *Ejercicios con el modelo terrestre*, we combined Mónica's new cartographic work with some earlier works in an attempt to demonstrate not only the continuity between the old and the new images, but also the politics implicit in the path between the two. A continuity evident in the expansion of the repertoire of images of bodies and in the quality of the line and the color, and of certain compositional structures in which different bodies come together. That continuity is evident as well in the interlinks between this repertoire of consistencies and the repertoire of ties that Mónica had worked on with such insistence starting in the first decade of the 2000s.

It was very easy, for instance, to relate *Esquema. Perspectivas* [Scheme. Perspectives] to the drawing from the "Lazos familiares" [Family Ties] series, even though the former is a commentary on perspective and on the impossibility of perceiving all at once the entire surface of the Earth (as long as satellites capture the image of the Earth from space, one side of the globe will be hidden) and, therefore, of having a total and *true* image

of it. (We have to make do with a reconstructed and, in that sense, inevitably out-of-synch representation). In other words, despite the scientific nature of the object depicted in that later work, it is—by virtue of the type of line and how that line floats, the forms it draws when it circulates on the paper, and the type of color that makes it vibrate—akin to earlier works from the “Lazos familiares” series. That in no way means a mere formal continuity. What it means, rather, is that the Earth moves, throbs, breathes, exists in tones it shares with other classes of beings in the universe. And works of art can capture, invent, and introduce those tones at any scale, in all imaginable directions, at all the intensities and speeds conceivable.

Therein lies the singularity of works like “SX”, “Lazos familiares”, and *Bonding II*, which are peopled with subtle figures—their heads peering out and their bodies interposed (placed within or inside one another). Beings of indeterminate specie, gender, and origin that are determined by a structure of linkage, sets of ties made of lines and color fields, and their intersections.

But the fact that they are indeterminate does not mean that they are not specific, but rather that we do not know them except by virtue of that fundamental structure or by virtue of some equally fundamental lines (a form of looking, a form of being) that allow us to say that they are intelligent beings. For that very reason, they could be subtle images of all the bodies that exist in the universe. Or, to put it differently, they are bodies of which all existences are composed. Including the Earth.

Santiago García Navarro, 2016

In *Modelo de Ejercicios terrestres*, Editorial Arta, Buenos Aires. Argentina, 2016. Pag. 36 to 41

Translated from spanish by Jane Brodie

## Notes

(1) García Navarro, Santiago, "Hacerse un cuerpo", in Pacheco, Marcelo; García Navarro, Santiago; Giron, Mónica, *Mónica Giron, ZavaletaLab Arte Contemporáneo*, Buenos Aires, 2011.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 137.

(3) 3 Cf. Rolnik, Suely, "Uma cura em tempos de poesia", in Rolnik, S. (ed.), *Lygia Clark. Da obra ao acontecimento*, Cat. Ex. Nantes: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2005, pp. 13-27.

(4) The word used in Spanish is *inmundo*, which is a word play with the noun *mundo*, the Spanish word for world. *Mundo*, which is derived from the Latin *mundus*, originally referred to the case where women kept their implements, cosmetic powders and creams, as well as those implements as a whole. From there it went on to designate the firmament and its stars, and then the planet Earth and the community of men or humanity. The adjective *mundus* meant "clean, well-kempt, coquettish, elegant." There does not seem to be an etymological relationship between the two terms, though, or between *mundus* and the Greek noun *kósmos*, "the good order" from which the Latin noun is said to have been derived. Regardless, the homonym is operative in *Mundus*, both as metaphorical reference to the planet and as ironic reference to the clean, the well-kempt, and that which is in good order. Cf. <http://etimologias.dechile.net/?mundo>.

(5) Berardi, Franco ("Bifo"), *Generación Post-Alfa. Patologías e imaginarios en el semiocapitalismo*, Buenos Aires, Tinta Limón, 2007, pp. 204-205. (English title: Semio-capitalism and the Pathologies of the Post-Alpha Generation)

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 199.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 245.

(8) Chakrabarty, Dipesh, "The Climate of History: Four Theses", *Critical Inquiry*, Chicago, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter 2009), pp. 197-222.

(9) Danowski, Déborah; Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo, "¿Hay un mundo por venir?", in *Otra Parte*, Buenos Aires, "Duración" issue, October 2015, pp. 11-12. (English title: Is There Any World to Come?)

(10) I still remember the perplexity with which a guy from a tribe from the dessert of Sonora, Mexico spoke to me of urban life in a conversation during a bus ride through Tijuana sometime in 2006. The city seemed to him a splintered and unhinged world, whereas in his community—for which he was terribly homesick whenever he was far away—everyone lived in harmony with nature which also the universe.

(11) Mignolo, Walter, "Introducción", in Mignolo, W. (comp.), *Capitalismo y geopolítica del conocimiento. El eurocentrismo y la filosofía de la liberación en el debate intelectual contemporáneo*, Del Signo, Buenos Aires, 2001, p. 13.

(12) The most striking case is the United States. One of the preferred targets of Bernie Sanders, the socialist who is contesting the Democratic candidacy of Hillary Clinton at present, is that of the Walton family, owner of Walmart. According to Sanders's campaign speeches, the Waltons' wealth is equivalent to that of the poorest 40% of the population of the United States.

(13) López Petit, Santiago, *Breve tratado para atacar la realidad*, Tinta Limón, Buenos Aires, 2009, p. 30. (English title: Brief Treatise for Attacking Reality)

(14) Cf. Berardi, Franco, "Bifo". *The Uprising. On Poetry and Finance*, Semio-text(e), Los Angeles, 2012.

(15) According to data collected by López Petit, in 2008, 95% of the world's economic activity was financial. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

(16) Berardi, F, "The Coming Global Civil War: Is There Any Way Out?", *e-flux*, New York, January 2016. Available at [http://www.e-flux.com/journal/the-coming-global-civil-war-is-there-any-way-out/#\\_ftn3](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/the-coming-global-civil-war-is-there-any-way-out/#_ftn3).

(17) Berardi, op. cit.

(18) *Ibid.*

(19) López Petit, op. cit.