

This is the first anthological exhibition of the work of Daniela Ortiz (Cuzco, 1985). It offers a selection of thirty-one projects carried out over the last ten years that explore the institutionalization of violence against migrants, and the withdrawal of child custody on classist, patriarchal and racist grounds.



Daniela Ortiz

**THIS LAND WILL
NEVER BE FERTILE
FOR HAVING
GIVEN BIRTH
TO COLONISERS**

23.11.2019 – 16.02.2020

[LA VIRREINA]
CENTRE
DE LA IMATGE

Ajuntament de
Barcelona



The first anthological review to be held on her work, this exhibition brings together a selection of 31 projects carried out by Daniela Ortiz (Cuzco, 1985) over the past decade.

From her early works, in which she questions the Spanish National Day in its threefold connotation of a colonial anniversary, a glorification of war and a celebration of white supremacy, to a series of proposals that explore legalised violence against the migrant population, the privileges of whiteness and the employment-related aggressions inflicted by the upper classes on women domestic workers, Daniela Ortiz has thoroughly investigated all the processes and institutions on which the system of persecution, exclusion and criminalisation of racialised people is based.

In this respect, as we can see in *Walter* (2019) and *Risk Factors* (2019), both of which were conceived specifically for this exhibition, one of the main lines of discourse of *Esta tierra jamás será fértil por haber parido colonos* (*This Land Will Never Be Fertile Because It Spawned Settlers*) is the analysis of how the authorities in charge of withdrawals of child custody operate with class, patriarchal and racist motives.

Other works that are exhibited here for the first time, with renewed formats, include *Europe Will Kneel to Receive the Anticolonial Spirit* (2019), which distances itself from the secularism that characterises the Eurocentric left, connecting with the various anticolonial resistance movements and currents of political spirituality originating from the global South; *FRONTEX – Decoration* (2016–2019), which spotlights the individuals and corporations that exploit borders for financial purposes and political interests, under cover of the lobbies of “humanitarian” profit; and *Reparations* (2017–2019), an intervention that hinges around *The First New Chronicle and Good Government* (1615), by Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, a manuscript in which the Peruvian scribe portrays the abuses committed against Andean society by the colonisers.

Lastly, there are two projects that have been done expressly for La Virreina Centre de la Imatge. The first is *Casta Paintings* (2019), in which the artist recovers the pictorial genre of the same name that was developed throughout the 18th century in the Viceroyalty of Peru, in the same period in which this territory was governed with an iron fist by the despot Manuel d'Amat i de Junyent, who owned the Virreina Palace. Using the iconographic codes of this type of canvas, Daniela Ortiz denounces situations of institutional racism. The fact that the portrait of Viceroy Amat presides over the space in which these "other" *casta* paintings are hung gives a new meaning to the message sent out from certain hegemonic areas of whiteness.

The second proposal is the publication *Nueve ensayos de interpretación del racismo y el mal gobierno colonial* (*Nine Essays to Interpret Racism and Bad Colonial Government*, 2019), a critical anthology that brings together thematically some of the most incisive discussion and confrontation threads generated by Daniela Ortiz on her Facebook profile, which the artist sees as a platform from which to give voice to those anticolonial structures that lack a place of articulation and development in the public sphere.

This Land Will Never be Fertile Because It Spawned Settlers is the first anthological exhibition dedicated to the work of Daniela Ortiz (Cuzco, 1985). It offers a selection of 31 projects carried out during the last decade. Three of the works, *Europe Will Kneel to Receive the Anti-Colonial Spirit* (2019), *FRONTEX–Decoration* (2016–2019) and *Repair* (2017–2019), are exhibited in a new way, using new formats. Four of the works, *Walter*, *Risk Factors*, *Caste Paintings* and *Nine Essays on the Interpretation of Colonial Racism*, were created specifically for La Virreina Centre de la Imatge.

Room 1

The exhibition begins with three works that anticipate several themes that were later investigated by Daniela Ortiz.

N-T (2009) documents an action in which the artist "takes part" in the celebrations of Hispanic Day by eating a chocolate from Guanaja, Honduras, covered with gold leaf. She stole the ingredients from the sweetshop where she was working at the time. Gold and chocolate, products that symbolize colonial plunder, acquire new meaning not only from the point of view of the person consuming them, but also as a political restitution within the celebrations of the Spanish nation and as a sign of the exploitation to which the migrant population is subjected.

On a similar topic, *P1-P2* (2010) records the conflict between Daniela Ortiz and the company that employed her. The conflict was triggered when the artist published a plan of her workplace, including technical information restricted to the shop's staff. The management's intimidating tone and the pressure they placed on Ortiz reveal the lack of transparency and aggression that workers suffer systematically under the protection of the law. The artist finally resigned from her job and agreed not to exhibit the information.

Finally, *Phrase for a Feminist Festival* (2009) recovers Ortiz's intervention in FEMART09, an event promoted by the feminist action space Ca la Dona de Barcelona. Initially, Ortiz presented the proclamation "IT'S FUCKING GREAT TO BE A WOMAN", which became the slogan of the festival. A few days before the opening, she suggested changing the phrase, which was to be reproduced as a large-scale graffiti. The organization rejected this new proposal, but after discussions with the other participants, it approved the text "SPANISH, WHITE AND MIDDLE-CLASS".

Room 2

The playground is an image that represents the separation between productive time and leisure time that is so characteristic of opulent capitalism. Moreover, from the late 19th century to the present, playgrounds have been explored by architects and artists as a possible metaphor for reinventing social ties and the very notion of citizenship.

Rejecting the previous Eurocentric imaginaries, *Walter* (2019), an installation specifically created for La Virreina

Centre de la Imatge, reinforces one of the main lines of discourse of this exhibition: research on the naturalization and institutionalization of violence and, more specifically, on how the bodies responsible for taking custody of minors have classist, racist and patriarchal motivations.

In response to the above project, Daniela Ortiz presents another new work entitled *Risk Factors* (2019), in which a photograph of her newborn child appears next to the list of indicators that the Directorate General of Child and Adolescent Care (DGAIA) of the Generalitat de Catalunya use to predict which environments are “appropriate” and which mothers should be investigated. The artist has marked in red the indicators that she herself fails to comply with. None of these serves as an objective value that determines a legal action. Indeed, they all leave a wide margin for subjective interpretation, but most of them are used to prosecute violations related to the economic and the citizenship status of families.

Room 3

The workplace, the house and the monument are three architectural elements that Daniela Ortiz has analysed intensively throughout her career. *Maid's Rooms* (2011) examines the spatial distribution of a set of high-class houses in Lima. Photographs, drawings and comparative data on the various rooms emphasize the location and size of the living spaces allocated to the maid in each house. The “surgical” tone of this series resembles that of historical architecture museums or heritage inventories, but this aseptic format is used to reveal the hierarchical relations of the oligarchies in their treatment of the people they consider “their servants”. The proposal is accompanied by a documentary video based on a sequence taken from a vintage film, in which a maid is instructed on the cleaning work and the spaces where she will sleep. Finally, the series includes a book that brings together the above examples and includes giclées from publications on sumptuous homes and contemporary decoration.

Also analysing power relations in the home, *97 Domestic Workers* (2010) is a set of photographs from Facebook

illustrating everyday scenes of the wealthy classes in Peru. Each image presents a situation in which domesticity is celebrated uncritically and ostentatiously. The domestic workers who participated in these moments were left out of the photographs, but traces of their presence and work persist, contradicting the smug atmosphere of these self-representations.

Room 4

This area contains two lines of work, one denouncing the normalization of racism in Euro-white mentalities and one denouncing the introduction of a series of laws and institutional protocols that are used to harass migrants.

The *ABC of Racist Europe* (2017) is an alphabet for children in which each letter articulates concepts and ideas for a possible anti-racist and anti-colonial narrative. The ideological alphabet—a resource that, since the *ABC of War* (1955) by Bertolt Brecht, has been used as a replica against any form of totalitarianism—is used with a deliberately educational aim: that of relearning and not forgetting the foundations of xenophobia and the tools that can be used to fight it.

Europe Will Kneel to Receive the Anti-Colonial Spirit (2019), a work that is presented for the first time in this exhibition, departs from the secularism that characterizes the Eurocentric left. Through a set of drawings in the form of stained glass, it proposes an imaginary linked to anti-colonial movements of the Global South, including political spirituality movements such as the Latin American Liberation Theology and the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, which call for an alternative justice to the hegemonic one.

Since 2003, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency has used forced sedation for deportation operations. Sedatives are given to people with no psychiatric diagnosis requiring them, and the officers in charge of the deportations determine subjectively whether the detainee shows signs of rebellion at the time of expulsion from the country.

The doses used, up to 55 mg, include anxiolytics, sedatives and muscle relaxants—a cocktail of Haldol, Cogentin

and Ativan. In 2009, a total of 387,790 citizens were deported at the United States border, of whom 251,664 had no criminal record. In the same year, 1,188 Peruvians were deported.

FDTD, Forcible Drugging to Deport (2012) is a video in which Daniela Ortiz receives sedation while reading the Free Trade Agreement between Peru and the United States, which also came into force in 2009 with the aim of removing obstacles to trade between the two countries and promoting private investment. Previously, the artist provides information on the numbers of Peruvian deportees and the use of sedatives in these expulsion processes.

The action *Ius Sanguinis* (2016) questions the “blood right”, a legal criterion for the granting of nationality that is used in Spain. It is based on Article 17.1 of the Spanish Civil Code: “all children of Spaniards are Spanish”. In this performance Ortiz receives a blood transfusion from a Spanish citizen while she is four months pregnant. The body of her baby thus transcends national boundaries, becoming a complex cultural terrain. The use of blood is reminiscent of the real violence of immigration laws and the deadly damage flowing through the veins of the media.

In relation to the rise in price and commercial manipulation of artists’ work after their death, the work *Testament* (2015) is a kind of anti-capitalist last will and testament. It includes a sealed document, which can only be opened after Ortiz dies, with eight clauses on the posthumous management of her work and any improper profit from it.

Room 5

Although the colonial system operates through the economy, the media and the laws, one of its most persistent weapons is that of symbolism and imaginaries.

With *Anti-Colonial Monuments* (2018) Daniela Ortiz proposes replacing five statues of Columbus located in New York (Central Park), Barcelona (Las Ramblas), Lima (Paseo Colón), Los Angeles (Grand Park) and Madrid (Plaza de Colón) with a series of counter-monuments that refer to various historical

and contemporary forms of colonialism and structural racism and to the movements that fought them. These polychrome clay monuments include inscriptions in Spanish, English and Spanglish.

The Rule of Law (2019) is an audiovisual essay that critically analyses colonial legal anchors, paternalism as a principle of and alibi for white supremacy, and the prolongation of colonial rule over peoples in resistance through the totalitarian structure called the nation state.

The last concept gives name to the series of projects entitled *Nation State* (2014), whose first episode was created in collaboration with Xose Quiroga. The proposal explores how sovereignty is built on discourses, laws and regulations affecting the rights and freedoms of the migrant population, who are denied citizenship. Some of the works shown are *Exercise #1 History Photography*, a set of photographs documenting the recognition given by the city of Barcelona to people and institutions involved in colonial processes; *Exercise #2 Alienage Report. Settlement and Renewal*, in which Ortiz uses a ball pen to transcribe the complete legal document of the Directorate General of Immigration of the Generalitat of Catalonia, dated 2013, establishing the “general criteria for drawing up alienage reports”; and *Exercise #3 Media Discourse*, a video of a Catalan language class taught to non-EU migrants, who learn pronunciation by repeating speeches by local politicians on migration issues.

Finally, *The White Prince and the Resistance of the Nearby Town* (2018) is an installation composed of an artist’s colouring book alongside a series of fabrics serigraphied with scenes from an allegorical story in which a prince tries to dominate a town by exploiting its gold, but his power is overthrown by the disobedience of the inhabitants.

Room 6

In the analysis of the border state in Europe, the migrant population is subjected to overexposure in the media, in ideological debate and in society at large, in stark contrast to the invisible operations of the institutions that persecute, detain

and deport thousands of people every day. Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, which is responsible for the migration system in the EU, is an example of a platform in which political interests, corporate lobbying and “humanitarian” profit-making come together.

The project *FRONTEX – Decoration* (2016–2019) seeks to draw attention to the people responsible for exploiting borders for economic and violent purposes. It does so through a series of actions carried out on the images and iconography of these people, including the “assaulted” bust of Fabrice Leggeri, current director of Frontex, the life-size photograph of a meeting of Frontex members to reach agreements that are opaque to public opinion, and drawings of prominent members of the security industry. This work provides an iconoclastic response to the sacralization of border powers and the lack of clarity in their discriminatory practices.

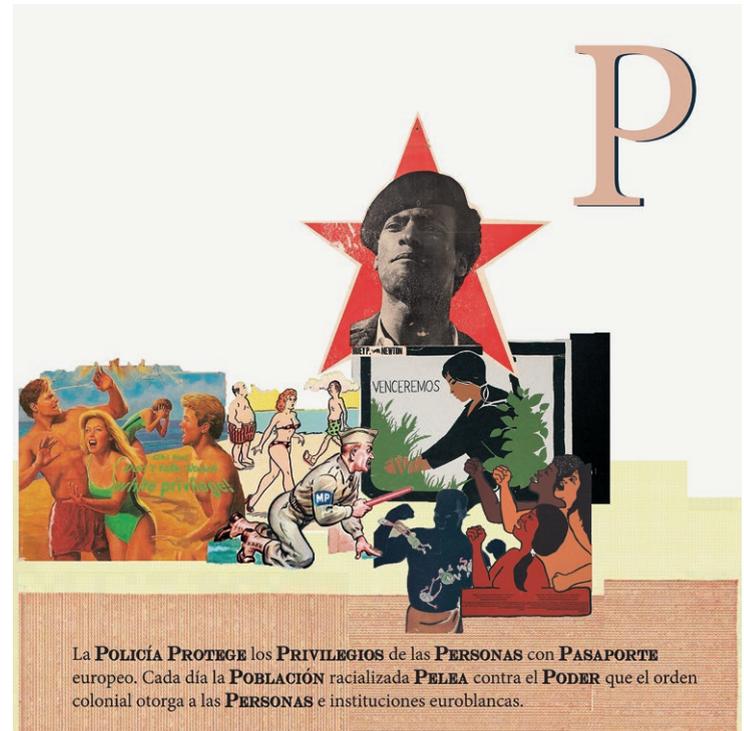
Room 7

Between 2012 and 2017, Daniela Ortiz carried out numerous actions (some of them in collaboration with Xose Quiroga) dealing with the National Day of Spain, exploring its triple meaning as a commemoration of colonialism, a monarchical and military ostentation and a celebration of the Hispanic race.

Recorded on 12 October, *CP12* (2012) is a visual promenade in the vicinity of Barcelona’s Passeig Marítim. The camera focuses on the replica of one of the caravels used by Christopher Columbus during his colonial voyages, on the flags flying above the buildings, and on tourists who photograph themselves leaning on the reliefs depicting the subjection and persecution of indigenous peoples. The music of *Prelude to Columbus* (1922) by the Mexican composer Julián Carrillo plays in the background.

Offering (2012) documents the theft of a floral arrangement deposited at the foot of the statue of Columbus on the National Day of Spain and its transfer to the door of the Barcelona Immigrant Detention Centre.

Homage to the Fallen (2012) is a video that records Ortiz’s visit to several points of Madrid during the National Day



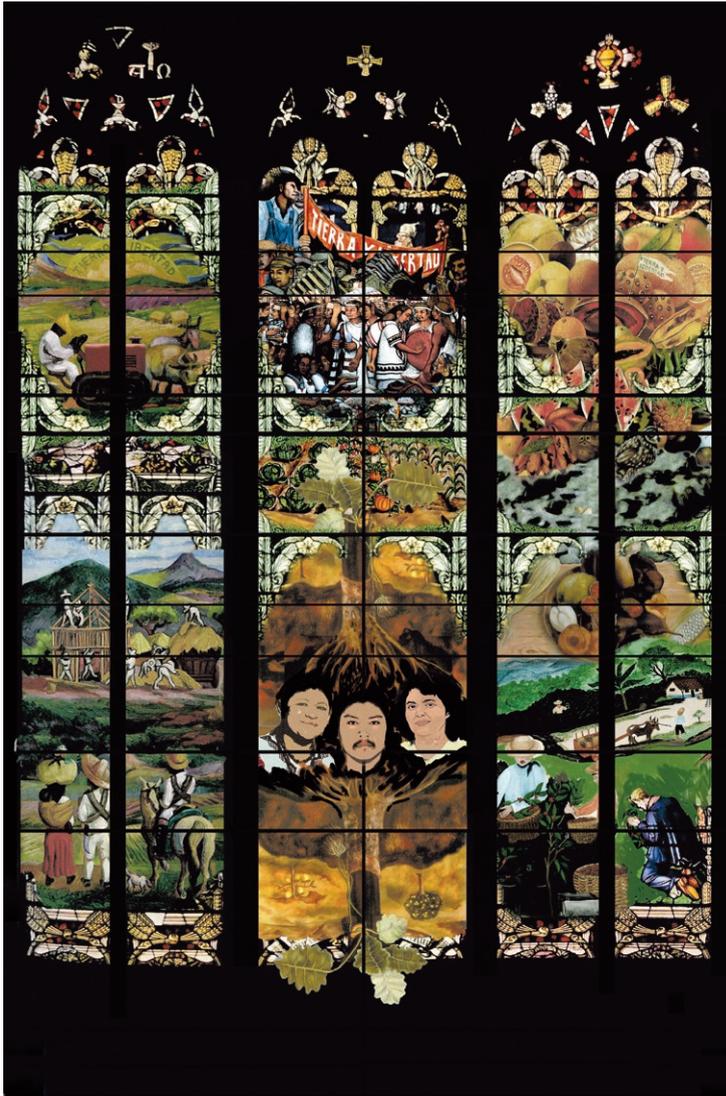
ABC of Racist Europe, 2017



This is the Gold You Eat, 2019



Anti-Colonial Monuments, 2018



*Europe Will Kneel to Receive
the Anti-Colonial Spirit, 2019*

of Spain on 12 October while carrying an image of Samba Martine, a Congolese emigrant who was held at the Aluche Immigrant Detention Centre, was denied the medical assistance she repeatedly requested, and died 38 days later.

The itinerary begins in Madrid's Plaza de Colón, where the military parades of that day usually end. It continues to Calle Doctor Fleming no. 48, the residence of Moise Tshombe, former President of the State of Katanga, who was responsible for the death of the anti-colonial prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, in 1961. Tshombe was later given political asylum in Spain. Ortiz then goes to the Aluche Immigrant Detention Centre, where persons who considered themselves "illegal" immigrants are imprisoned for periods of up to two months prior to forced deportation. The route ends at the Hospital 12 de Octubre, the clinic founded by the dictator Francisco Franco in 1973 where Samba Martine died. According to Court of Instruction number 38 of Madrid, her case warranted no criminal investigation.

In *Replica* (2014), Ortiz kneels before the crowd that had gathered in Plaça Catalunya during the celebration of the National Day of Spain. With this gesture, she reproduces the scene that appears in the monument to Christopher Columbus, in which an indigenous person kneels beside Bernardo Boyl, a priest who accompanied Columbus on his second trip to America.

Another project carried out on 12 October, next to the base of the statue of Columbus in Barcelona, was *Mother – Homeland* (2016), in which four Euro-white citizens carrying the flags of the colonial powers involved in the Migration Control System mark out territory on the artist's body. At the time of this action, Ortiz had 27 days left before her residence permit expired. She was also 24 weeks pregnant.

This room also includes the work *Reparation* (2017-2019), based on *The First New Chronicle and Good Government* (1615) by Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, a profusely illustrated manuscript of great historical originality, in which the Peruvian-born writer portrays the abuses committed against

Andean society by the colonizers and calls for the Spanish monarchy to reform the colonial government. The work includes a video in which, with her back to the camera, the artist reads excerpts from the book by Guamán Poma, a facsimile of which had previously been expropriated from the Library of the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Barcelona and taken to an anti-racist and anti-colonial cultural space managed by migrants and racialized people. The expropriation was carried out during the days close to the celebration of the National Day of Spain, which commemorates the violent invasion of Abya Yala, a term given by the Kuna people to the territories that, after 1492, were stripped of their name and began to be called America. In addition to this audiovisual document, the work presents the expropriated manuscripts and a large mural reproduction of a miniature about the events denounced by Guamán Poma in his chronicle.

Finally, in dialogue with the previous work, the publication *Nine Essays to Interpret Racism and Bad Colonial Government* (2019) is a critical anthology specifically created for this exhibition. It brings together thematically some of the main lines of debate and confrontation created by Ortiz on her Facebook page, which she considers a platform for forms of anti-colonial protest that have no other suitable place to be presented and developed.

Room 8

The history of the Palau de la Virreina, one of the best examples of Catalan civil baroque architecture, is also a clear testimony to the plundering and accumulation of wealth of the ruling elites of the Spanish empire on both sides of the ocean.

Originally known as Casa de la Rambla, the building was a mansion commissioned by Manuel d'Amat i de Junyent (1702-1782), Marquis of Castellbell and viceroy of Peru between 1761 and 1776, to demonstrate his enormous power to Barcelona society.

Amat was an enlightened military commander and despot who ruled Peru, which occupied practically all of South

America, with an iron fist. His highly authoritarian government saw considerable economic growth based on mining. (Thousands of *mitayos* died in the excavations of Potosí, Huancavelica, Cerro de Pasco and Hualgayoc, where the viceroy amassed his immense fortune.) However, Amat's rule was an unfortunate episode that demonstrates how the representatives of the Spanish crown acted during the colonial period. The viceroy was charged with multiple crimes and, at the end of his term of office in America, he had to report to the Council of the Indies.

The name Palau de la Virreina (Vicereine's Palace) is based on a series of misunderstandings. Shortly after returning to Barcelona, Amat married a young woman of the Catalan nobility, Maria Francesca de Fivaller i Bru, in order to resolve a family dispute. Together they settled in Casa de la Rambla, but the sudden death of the viceroy left the young widow in charge of the mansion. The building then began to be known as Palau de la Virreina, though it had never had the category of a palace because Amat had retired and Maria Fivaller had therefore never exercised as a vicereine.

After being used as a home in the late eighteenth century, between 1835 and 1930 the property was used for various purposes, becoming successively a commercial space, an exhibition hall and—between 1936 and 1937, after being requisitioned by the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM), which renamed it the Maurín Institute—a meeting centre, a public library and the headquarters of the Marxist publishing house.

In 1939, when the Francoists took over Barcelona, the building was assigned to the Service for the Defence of National Heritage. The premises were restored, starting with the living room, the only area that still has its original decoration. Josep Gari, a member of an important dynasty of Catalan bankers who supported the dictatorship, made a generous financial contribution and donated the frescoes that appear on the walls. The sculptures on the ceiling with allegories of the four seasons and the four elements by the well-known artist Carles Grau (1714-1798) and the Carrara marble fireplace by

Olivieri were also restored. Presiding over this space is the portrait of Manuel d'Amat painted by the Lima artist Pedro José Díaz in 1773 before Amat's return to Spain. In it we see Amat flaunting his lineage and his decorations, including the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Januarius. On one side is a war scene, the assault on a walled fortification, with which the artist intended to glorify the military deeds of his subject.

Caste Paintings (2019), a work that Daniela Ortiz conceived for the living room of La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, recovers the pictorial genre of the same name that developed during the eighteenth century. The genre was used mainly in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, one of the areas of land most plundered by Spanish colonizers, but it was also common in Peru.

Caste paintings often depicted and typified racial mixes, constituting a sort of derogatory record that exalted white supremacy. Ortiz uses these iconographic elements to denounce situations of institutional racism. The fact that the portrait of Viceroy Amat presides over this space gives new meaning to the omnipotent message issued by certain forms of whiteness since the origins of coloniality.

Corridor

This area features the series entitled *This is the Gold You Eat* (2019), a set of porcelain plates with collages depicting iconographic characters that allude to colonial violence and the imaginaries of blood and death associated with it. The area also presents several works published by Daniela Ortiz during the last ten years, including *White Weapon* (2011), a colouring book that reproduces the one that the FBI distributed in 1968 in the mostly white, middle-class neighbourhoods of the United States. The FBI claimed that the book was a guerrilla manual of the Black Panthers in order to discredit the organization. The original text has been replaced by Arabic texts explaining the book's true origin.

THE INDIAN IN ME, BETRAYED BY 500 YEARS

Francisco Godoy Vega

The process of “miscegenation” in Abya Yala involved the construction of 16 racial identities that would be born between the 16th and 18th centuries, including mixed-race, mulatto, Moor, *no te entiendo* (a mixture of Indian and mulatto) and *torna atrás* (a mixture of Spanish and albino). This white Western invention validated the supposedly benevolent process of mixing carried out by Catholic Iberian colonialism, which was nothing more than the violent result of the “original rape”¹ of our non-white ancestors by Euro-white settlers. The ill-named miscegenation attempted to nullify ancestral black and indigenous memories by creating a “new race” or a “cosmic race” from the start of colonization.

In 1987 Gloria Anzaldúa identified this elimination of memory in her poem *Vivir en la frontera* (To Live in the Borderlands), in which she stated, “To live in the Borderlands means knowing / that the *india* in you, betrayed for 500 years, / is no longer speaking to you”. Silencing is one of the key strategies of European colonial processes in both Abya Yala and Africa, as Grada Kilomba has stated.² To paraphrase her, we recall a long history in which non-white peoples have been silenced. The mouth is the organ that racist white people want and need to control. If the colonized subject speaks, the colonizer will have to listen.

Undoubtedly, the political process undertaken by migrants and racialized people in the kingdom of Spain in the last 10 years—in which Daniela Ortiz is a key figure—has involved a painful effort to recover our stolen voice.³ Through political and artistic action, racialized anger against white

¹ Yuderlys Espinosa, “12 de octubre conmemora la violación originaria”, in *Estudios descoloniales*, GLEFAS, 2016.

² Grada, Kilomba, *Plantation Memories. Episodes of Everyday Racism*, Münster, Unrast Verlag, 2008.

³ It should be noted that the forced migration from Abya Yala and Africa began as early as 1492, with the colonial transportation of enslaved and exoticized people. The migrant anti-racist political movement of the last ten years is nothing more than the legacy of many struggles of non-white people and

supremacy has been able to expose historical violence in order to understand its contemporary reproduction, seeking not only to denounce the open and infected colonial wound but also to imagine forms of reparation or, as Jota Mombaça would say, of “gender-disobedient, anti-colonial redistribution of violence”.⁴

This cross between gender and colonialism undoubtedly connects with many of the issues that Daniela Ortiz, along with other artists and activists, has approached from the intersection between political anti-racism and decolonial feminism. Being a woman or being heterodissident⁵ are not universal experiences but hierarchical constructions generated by both Hispanic–Catholic and Anglo–Saxon–protestant settlers, who used different strategies to impose Western social and sexual norms. In order to understand the sexual division of labour and the social division of labour that are generated in modernity/coloniality, one must first assume that there is a racial division of the world that has conditioned these other divisions of the capitalist system. Capitalism was founded in 1492 on human, ecological and sexual exploitation through the enslavement of black and Indian people to perpetuate white supremacy, whether bourgeois or proletarian, whether female or male. Euro-white proletarians, as well as Euro-white women, have also been responsible for the extractivist massacre as heirs to the benefits of colonial theft. Because of this long history of pain, because it spawned settlers, this land, Europe, will never be fertile.

The only things that can flourish in this territory are colonial monuments, settlers’ mansions, slavedrivers’ parks, Euro-centred celebrations and demands for white supremacy.

groups who have inhabited the kingdom of Spain from the 16th century to the present day.

⁴Jota, Mombaça, “¿Rumbo a una redistribución de la violencia desobediente de género y anticolonial?”, in *Devuelvannos el oro. Acciones anticoloniales y cosmovisiones perversas*, Madrid, CRA, 2018, pp. 174–187.

⁵ See Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí, *La invención de las mujeres. Una perspectiva africana sobre los discursos occidentales del género*, Bogotá, en la frontera, 2017; and Leticia Rojas, and Francisco Godoy (eds.), *No existe sexo sin racialización*, Madrid, El porvenir de la revuelta, 2017.

The migrant anti-racist movement has denounced these devices of reproduction of Euro-centred power. Consider, for example, the monarchical, military and civil celebration that every year commemorates its imperial power in front of the sculpture of Columbus in Madrid, created to commemorate the Fourth Centenary of the Conquest in 1892. Every 12 October, proud of their murderous past, thousands of Spaniards gather together with the power elite, including the king, the queen, the infantas and the mayor of the city—and Manuela Carmena was no exception. Every 12 October, every year, every Columbus Day, every National Day of Spain, every Hispanic Day, the Spanish capital reiterates the power of its decayed empire by recalling the military colonization of Abya Yala, the Philippines and Africa. Madrid, this land of colonial violence, will never be fertile.

Another statue of Columbus, in Barcelona, is a symbol of the same reinvention of imperial power, now in an alliance between the Spanish monarchy and the Catalan bourgeoisie. Created in 1888 for the Universal Exhibition, this first monument to genocide in Spain commemorated Columbus and the Catalans who participated in the first wave of colonialism in the 16th century, including the priest Bernardo de Boyl and the military commander Pere de Margarit. The monument’s pre-eminence in the city, its use and abuse for tourism and advertising, only reflect the Catalan subjectivity that prides itself on its past and present of colonial violence. Barcelona, this land of slave-trade violence, will never be fertile.

Since 2009, Daniela Ortiz has carried out various confrontational actions against the celebration of 12 October and the colonial monuments that commemorate the conquest of America. Among these actions was *Replica*, dating from 2014. Carrying a photograph of the sculpture of an anonymous indigenous man kneeling beside Bernardo de Boyl, which is at the base of the monument to Columbus, Ortiz replicated the scene of the photograph. To passers-by, who were carrying Spanish flags to commemorate Hispanic Day, Daniela explained the colonial burden that the sculpture represented for someone from a former Spanish colony. Thus, by

challenging a Catalan Hispanity immersed in the colonial unconscious, she touched a sore spot, as emerged in racist responses like “Are you Peruvian? Well, why don’t you go back and spout this bullshit in Peru.”

Seeds sown in Europe fall on infertile soil. The political fiction of its democracy, its development, its human rights, its international cooperation, only whitewash the violence that it has practised since 1492. To plant here, to practice communality here, to love each other here, to reproduce here, to dance with our children here, can only be understood as a practice of resistance that explicitly opposes the entire European death apparatus. Reproducing as an affront to white supremacy is our way of resisting because, as Audre Lorde would say, “they did not expect us to survive”. Our migrant and racialized disturbances have thus been spaces for cultivating the memory of our ancestors and contradicting the heroic imaginary of European, Spanish and Catalan imperialism.

In the 16th century, in an engraving of the series *Americas*, Theodor de Bry depicted natives torturing settlers by pouring molten gold into their mouths, with the caption “Eat gold, eat gold, insatiable Christian”. Today we can understand that phrase as an affront to the European’s failure to understand a harmonious communal life without hierarchy, with children, plants and animals. The settler only eats gold, plunders gold, gets rich from gold. And their land will never be fertile, because it spawned settlers.

Curator: Valentín Roma

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**La Virreina Centre de la Imatge
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**Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday
and public holidays, 11 am to 8 pm
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