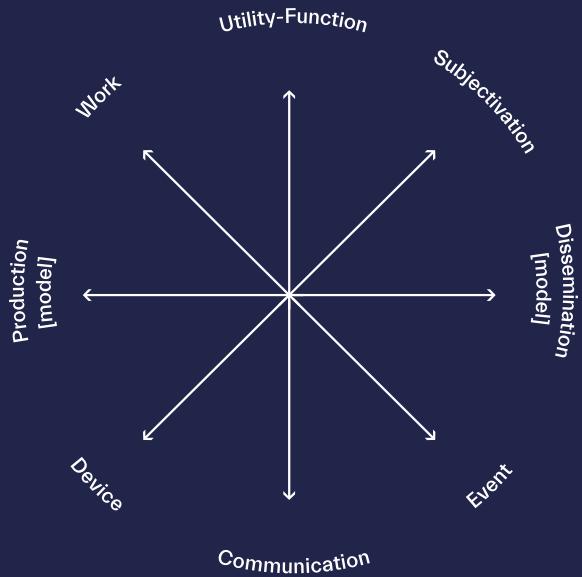


RECONSTRUCTING
THE DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC SPHERE

NEW BABYLON REVISITED



MARCELO EXPÓSITO



Ajuntament de
Barcelona

[LA VIRREINA]
CENTRE
DE LA IMATGE

When the public intellect is turned into the principal productive force, a hybridisation of thought, politics and labour takes place. This is the real score played by contemporary workers-virtuosos: the general intellect.

(Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 2003)

New Babylon Revisited comprises a broad selection of those activities of mine I developed between 1982 and 2021 that cannot immediately be viewed as artistic. It is for now the diagrammatic outline of a narrative whose very heterogeneous content would be characterised by a dual common denominator. First, it brings together works that strongly question whether artistic practice should have an object-centric nature and be inevitably geared towards the exhibition format. Second, it comprises the ongoing production over four decades of a variety of constructive models – based on cooperation and pedagogical commitment, in the Brechtian sense of *lehrstücke* and in the wake of radical pedagogies – aimed towards manufacturing a radical democratic public sphere, to use a phrase that is a cross of ideas between Alexander Kluge and Chantal Mouffe. It therefore consists of an artefact still in the making that overlaps a biographical trajectory, a collective narrative and a historical cycle: the rise of neoliberal hegemony, its global crisis and the emergence of resistance from within it.

This diagram takes the form of a chronological journey, but it should by no means be understood as a progressive evolution. On the contrary, it is a timeline divided into lines and clusters that are not conventionally organised by formats or supports, much less so by the cliché of styles. It adopts the matrix of a pre-modern or avant-garde musical score that consists of four “notations”: a tetragram whose horizontal lines accumulate vertically not for a hierarchical reason, but to allow us to visualise how a polyphony evolves through transversal interrelationships that simultaneously reverberate forwards and backwards on a timeline. Artistic, editorial, pedagogical, documentary or informative elements in this tetragram are arranged in harmony with each other, interrelating through connections that are in some cases obvious and in other cases can be deduced by those performing each interpretation of this score according to their own experience. Viewed in another manner, it can even be said that this

tetragram is the current visualisation of an earlier performance: the prolonged collective and virtuoso performance given without a prior script of alternative forms of life that have been modified on a colossal scale, over the course of decades in which they have also been forced to challenge the control of post-Fordist transformations from neoliberalism. The contents of *New Babylon Revisited* arise from the way in which we have experienced the hybridisation of thought, politics and work that is characteristic of contemporary counter-powers, given that thinking, politicising ourselves and working have become integral aspects of what Suely Rolnik calls “existential consistency”, as opposed to the fragmentation of a life dissociated by governmentality that Michel Foucault detected in the prehistory of neoliberalism.

Articulating *New Babylon Revisited* as a biographical account implies the familiar risk of reducing an ocean of collective practices to be capitalised by an individual name. In this case, the intention is exactly the opposite: for a personal name to be transformed into a collective agency, as demanded by Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze. It would be a question – as Brian Holmes suggested – of identifying the traces left by subjective trajectories in a field of collective actions. Explaining the position of the subject from that which one speaks, one can model the trajectory of experiences that would vanish into thin air if they were not specifically incarnated in a body. They would be made to disappear into thin air by dominant policies, sublimated by official histories that abstract them from their initial emergency conditions, or normalised institutionally in the classic manner in which their different and antagonistic nature is violated. My intention is to write this score ex post in such a way that, by demonstrating the subjectivity of its journey, it does not cancel out others, but invites other subjects to write their own notations. Only through clusters of polyphonies will it be possible to organise a general counterhistory on our own terms, without resorting to the totalising pretensions of the historiographic impositions against which we rebel.

The artefacts included in *New Babylon Revisited* raise the problem of defining a work as “artistic”. They do so by confronting both an essentialist conception of art and the institutional authority that sanctions this denomination in each different historical moment. In that scheme of things, as well as more generally, this account underlines the strategic relationship with public institutions as one of its

central political questions – a battlefield during the neoliberal era – a problem experimentally confronted through the creation of what the eipcp (European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies) described as “project institutions” and the Universidad Nómada called “monster institutions”. On the other hand, the creation of “technical inventions” (as Walter Benjamin called for in the 1930s in order to politicise art as a practice, and not only its contents) classified in this diagram has been deduced from a two-pronged approach drawn from the historical avant-gardes. First, from an interpretation of Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917) as an institutional critique, as opposed to the conservative reproductions of ready-made practice, and, second, from observing how El Lissitzky recombined a massive amount of avant-garde aesthetic and formal creations into a device that he chose for tactical reasons to present not as artistic, but rather as a prototype of what Benjamin H. D. Buchloh described as “semiotic architecture”: the Soviet Pavilion for the International Press Exhibition (Pressa) in Cologne (1928). (The same considerations could be drawn from the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic for the Paris International Exhibition, conceived by Josep Renau and others in 1937.) This dual conceptualisation was therefore updated in few historical examples of the neo-avant-gardes with such fertile proliferation, on such a considerable utopian scale and through such an organic multidisciplinary practice as in the project of “unitary urbanism” for the unattainable construction of an anarcho-socialist technified city completed by Constant between 1956 and 1974: *New Babylon*.

NOTATION 1

COUNTERCULTURAL PRODUCTION PROTOTYPES

This Notation 1 consists of initial experimentation and management activities that were conducted over two periods. The first period (1982–1987) dealt with the independent publishing activity narrated in my series of interviews published by RRS (Radio del Museo Reina Sofía, 2017–2020) under the title *Necronómico. Una conversación con Marcelo Expósito sobre ruido, redes y cultura industrial a la sombra de la nueva ola* (Necronomicón: A conversation with Marcelo Expósito about noise, networks and industrial culture in the shadow of the new wave). And my organisational activities in the field of video art began in the second period (1985–1990). The initiatives of these two originating periods continued throughout the 1990s. They involved initiatives carried out in the heat of countercultural, subcultural or counterhegemonic movements or groups in the field of culture, characterised by independent self-publishing, self-organisation or collaboration with institutions and revolving mainly around sound and video practices.

Our fanzine editions in Puertollano were indicative of a type of both creative and existential experimentation that was extremely prevalent at the time, against the backdrop of the new waves that had emerged throughout Spain in the form of transforming the lifestyles of the young. If *Decibeliós* (1982–1983) was a typical publication of the fanzine boom of the new local musical waves, *Experiencias* (1983) moved towards the more radical fringes of these scenes and, finally, *Necronómico* (1984–1987) constituted a cassette-magazine publishing experience that played a major role in the Spanish and international networks of so-called “industrial culture”.

One of the main functions of these youth subcultures – which were not always a minority or marginal – can be viewed as producing participatory “climates” made up of communities of prosumers and making use of communicative tools – mainly postal mail, but also radio or even people’s own physical movements – which in some cases became an expressive medium in their own right. The publication of fanzines, sound editions, mail art networks (in which I intensively participated between 1985–1987), radio programming and video distribution were often inseparably structured. The cooperative production that flowed constantly throughout those years was immense and literally unquantifiable. And the events organised autonomously or through unstable relations with art and cultural institutions – alternative venues, music concerts or independent video festivals, such as, for example, and in particular, the popular Bideoaldia festival that we organised between 1987–1990 with Bosgarren Kolektiboa, as well as many other organisational experiences focusing on video art on which

I collaboratively worked until the end of the 1990s – could be considered exercises in cultural public counterspheres. The latter idea was already consciously implemented at Bideoaldia, assuming a programmatic character in a jointly written book entitled *Plusvalías de la imagen. Anotaciones (locales) para una crítica de los usos (y abusos) de la imagen* (The surplus value of the image: [Local] annotations for a critique of the uses [and abuses] of the image, 1993); and it took shape again on a relatively large scale at the Video/Altermedia Encounters that we organised in 1997–1998 as part of the Pamplona Film Festival. The video-art programme I designed for the experimental audiovisual platform Hamaca in 2010, *Inocencia perdida. La última generación del vídeo en el Estado español en los años 1980/1990* (Innocence lost: The last generation of video in Spain in the 1980s-1990s), involved looking back on the characteristics of this generational cycle of aesthetic and organisational experimentation.

For all the aforementioned reasons, the objects and documentation shown here should not be considered works in the traditional sense, or isolated activities, but rather archaeological remains of our exercises in ongoing collective experimentation.

FOOTNOTE 1.1

The only released issue of the fanzine *Experiencias* (Puertollano, 1983), published in collaboration with Luis Ernesto Gómez Arévalo, alongside a selection of the four published issues of the cassette-fanzine *Necronomicón* (Puertollano, 1984-1987), published with Eduardo Mugas. They are from the private archives of L. E. Gómez (Córdoba), ROTOR (Andrés Noarbe, Madrid) and Morada Sónica (Josep Maria Soler, Almería). Alongside them are mail exchanges (1984-1986) with Maurizio Bianchi (Milan), Jordi Valls (World Satanic Network System / Vagina Dentata Organ, London) and Die Tödliche Doris (Berlin), as well as a couple of untitled mail art objects –from the many editions or series I made and distributed between 1985 and 1987 – which are kept in the archives of Tape Mag (Frank Bull, Friedrichshafen, Germany) and Comando Bruno (Rafael Flores, Andújar). One 1987 issue of Montreal's *Stamp Axe*, one of the most famous international mail art magazines, contained a small contribution of mine alongside others by artists or musicians such as Clemente Padín or Zoviet-France. The compilation cassette *Registro de voces* and its graphic work booklet, published by IEP (Luis Mesa, Madrid, 1987), typical of the thousands of cassettes that were distributed in the international circuits of “industrial culture”, is one of the few occasions that a fragment of my own noise music production was published.

FOOTNOTE 1.2

Poster of the 1st International Video Week, organised in collaboration with Joseantonio Hergueta (Colegio Mayor Chaminade, Madrid, 1986) and the catalogue of the 3rd Bideoaldia eta Muzak-Crash, a festival organised with the Bosgarren Kolektiboa (Tolosa, between 1987-1990). *OFF Vídeo* magazine, published by Gabriel Villota and others (Donostia, 1992-1995), which functioned as a documentary and theoretical support for the video series screened at the Casa de Cultura de Larrotxene, often travelling to other institutions in Spain. Programme leaflet of the video series *Políticas de género. Feminismos, representación, arte y medios* (Gender politics: Feminisms, representation, art and media), organised in collaboration with Carmen

Navarrete (Valencia, 1993). *Plusvalías de la imagen. Anotaciones (locales) para una crítica de los usos (y abusos) de la imagen* (The surplus value of the image: [Local] annotations for a critique of the uses [and abuses] of the image), a book published in collaboration with Gabriel Villota (Sala Rekalde, Bilbao, 1993). The two editions of the Encuentros de Vídeo/Altermedia (Video/Altermedia Encounters) in Pamplona – in whose organisation and publications I collaborated as part of a flexible collective comprising Eugeni Bonet, Maite Ninou, Marta Martín, Josu Rekalde and others – were staged as part of the Pamplona Film Festival (1997-1998). They were the last milestones in a decade of shaping the public sphere of independent video in Spain, which maintained close bonds with the circuits of international video art festivals and distributors. Some time later, the video programme *Inocencia perdida. La última generación del vídeo en el Estado español en los años 1980/1990* (Innocence lost: The last generation of video in the Spain in the 1980s-1990s) – which the distributor Hamaca asked me to produce in 2010 – recapped the significance of that public sphere of independent video that we inhabited in the 1990s.

FOOTNOTE 1.3

The collective research 1969-... *Algunas hipótesis de ruptura para una historia política del arte en el Estado español* (1969-... Some hypotheses of rupture for a political history of art in Spain) (2002-2005), which I coordinated for the *Desacuerdos* project (a great deal of which can be found in Notation 4), included an area of research in which the thesis was put forward that a major part of the countercultural practices of the 1990s consisted of the production of cooperative networks that were rooted in the new artistic behaviours of the 1960s-1970s and which prefigured specific institutional outpourings that occurred in the 2000s.

DEMOCRATIC RADICALISATION MODELS

Neoliberal and neoconservative hegemony was imposed throughout the world in the 1980s, sinking its pillars in the rubble of the revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1990s, this post-utopian triumphalism produced both the resulting symptoms of its violence and its counterpart: the rise of resistances. Two apparently dissimilar events mark our generation of artists and activists as the dual epicentre of the same big bang: the Zapatista uprising of 1994 and documenta X of 1997, which made the counterpowers that had been growing since the end of the previous decade burst forth at an international level.

I began a dual militancy during that climate of the time, simultaneously in reconstructing the movements of democratic radicalisation and in repoliticising the artistic field. These involved efforts immediately demanded by the emergencies of the present, but they also entailed the need to reconstruct our own memories and genealogies. My 1996 seminar at the Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe (CGAI, A Coruña), entitled *Entre sueños: discurso narrativo audiovisual y representación histórica* (Between dreams: Audiovisual narrative discourse and historical representation), rescued Spain's oppositional film practices from the late Francoist period and its transition to democracy. The long workshop we started in that same year at the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Tours – which culminated with the production of the work *Narration de l'expérience. Pièce didactique à propos de l'exposition des identités* (Narrative of the experience: Didactic piece on exhibiting identities) – set in motion what Félix Guattari viewed as “processes of alternative subjectivation”, in the heat of the first French anti-neoliberal revolts and confronted with the danger of what Étienne Balibar called “crisis racism”, triggered by the growth of neo-fascism. While we were editing the special issue of the magazine *Omnibus* on documenta X (1997) in Paris, I designed the archival, assembly and pedagogical exhibition models that culminated in *El malestar en la libertad* (The malaise of freedom, Sala La Gallera, Valencia, 1998), the same year that I was faced with a judicial sentence for my refusal to do compulsory military service, given that I had declared myself insubordinate in 1994, thereby joining the increasingly loud anti-militarist civil disobedience movement in Spain. Similarly in 1998, I carried out a project for the Tallers de la Quam in Sabadell that was important as a prototype of a simultaneously genealogical, pedagogical and productive experiment entitled *Nueva Babilonia: la práctica del arte en la reconstrucción de la esfera pública* (New Babylon: The practice of art in reconstructing the public sphere).

Two books on political theory had a particular influence on the artefacts contained in this Notation 2: *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (1985) by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (1993), Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt's book discussing Jürgen Habermas' thesis on the historical evolution of the enlightened public sphere. The methodologies of these books were shaped, on the one hand, by articulating the organisational tools of autonomous social movements and, on the other hand, by the Brechtian dramaturgical model of the *lehrstücke*. Usually translated into English as "lesson plays", Brecht preferred to call them "learning plays", in other words, aesthetic devices of co-presence in which some manner of collective learning critical of reality takes place.

Another of these models for democratic radicalisation was the series of projections, conferences, debates and conviviality entitled *Cantos de territorialización: palabras e imágenes de identidad* (Songs of territorialisation: Words and images of identity), which we staged in Bilbao to intervene in the atmosphere generated by the ETA ceasefire in 1999. Several projects also emerged from this series of experimentations after the 1990s: the collaborative group exhibition *Ecosofías. Un prototipo de exposición sobre construcciones del sujeto y espacios de identidad* (Ecosophies: A prototype exhibition on constructions of the subject and spaces of identity, Sala Amadís, Madrid, 2001), my curatorship of the retrospective exhibition *Historias sin argumento. El cine de Pere Portabella* (Plotless stories: Pere Portabella's films, MACBA, Barcelona, 2001) or the workshop with inmates from Murcia prison that was part of *Country Europa*, our most extensive project for Manifesta 8 (2010). It should also be noted that my activities contained in this Notation 2 – solo exhibitions, several interventions in group exhibitions, seminars, workshops or meetings – as well as the exhibitions that I curated were treated indistinctly as fields of experimentation in which the same matrixes of genealogical recovery, pedagogical radicalisation and expressive creation were used.

FOOTNOTE 2.1

One of my biographical epicentres was between 1997-1999. My joining the anti-militarist civil disobedience movement in 1993-1994 ended up precipitating my judicial sentence for insubordination in 1998. At the same time, my solo exhibition *El malestar en la libertad* (The malaise of freedom, Sala La Gallera, Valencia, 1998) brought together militant, organisational, pedagogical, genealogical and productive knowledge from both social activism and institutional experimentation in the artistic field, exemplified in projects such as the long workshop held at the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Tours (1996-1997) as part of an educational-exhibition project designed by Jean-Christophe Royoux: *Politique des identités : l'exposition comme médium* (Identity politics: The exhibition as medium). The features of all those experiences were intertwined: our militant work contained a pedagogical component (for example, by organising training in civil disobedience, as well as the pedagogical dimension inherent in the exercise of disobedience) and there was an activist aspect to our pedagogical experiments (for example, by promoting the exercise of analysis and institutional critique within the artistic, cultural or educational field). This gave rise to hybrid artefacts such as the series of projections, debates and conviviality *Cantos de territorialización: palabras e imágenes de identidad* (Songs of territorialisation: Words and images of identity, 1999), organised together with Gabriel Villo-ta and produced by Consonni, which was held in a movement space (Hika Ateneo de Bilbao) with the aim of participating in the social, political and emotional atmosphere created by the ETA ceasefire.

FOOTNOTE 2.2

Poster for the collaborative group exhibition *Ecosofías. Un prototipo de exposición sobre construcciones del sujeto y espacios de identidad* (Ecosophies: A prototype exhibition on constructions of the subject and spaces of identity, Sala Amadís, Madrid, 2001), alongside the information leaflet and book of the exhibition and series of projections *Historias sin argumento: el cine de Pere Portabella* (Plotless stories: Pere Portabella's films, MACBA, Barcelona; Museo Reina Sofía,

Madrid, 2001). Despite their dissimilar appearance, both curatorial projects – which were carried out simultaneously – were built upon the basis of the same organisational, cooperative, historical, graphic and pedagogical matrixes that were experimented with in the activities conducted during the latter part of the 1990s.

FOOTNOTE 2.3

Dossier of readings for the prototype of a roving seminar through various institutional, university and autonomous spaces carried out with Paolo Virno (2003); brochure of the seminar *La revolución (no será) retransmitida* (The revolution [will not be] broadcast, 2004), with the European premiere – among other contents – of the film by Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein on the Argentine crisis and social uprising of 2001; and the book *Los nuevos productivismos* (The new productivisms, 2010), published as a result of the seminar of the same name. All these activities took place in Barcelona. During the first decade of the 2000s, MACBA attracted around itself a local and international collaboration network through which experiments were promoted at the margins of the institution, civil society and social movements. The 2004 seminar documented here, for example, was designed with the aim of linking up with the celebration in Barcelona of the first May Day demonstration of the precariat organised by the international EuroMayDay network. In the context of these dynamics of institutional experimentation, I participated in organising various series, courses and seminars, the experiences of which ended up catalysing the launch of the Programa d'Estudis Independents (PEI) in 2006 together with Xavier Antich, Joan Roca, Beatriz Preciado (now Paul B. Preciado), Miren Etxezarreta, Manuel Asensi, Carlos Prieto del Campo, Jorge Ribalta and Manuel Borja-Villel. The PEI was conceived as an instituting essay: the idea was to try to ensure that several experimental dynamics that were to some extent dispersed and informal would lead to the formalisation of a regularised programme of radical pedagogy. I was in charge of an area of studies that I called *Imaginación política* (Political imagination) during the years that followed. Franco Berardi (Bifo), Allan Sekula, Ana Longoni, Neil Smith, George Yudice, Suely Rolnik and Enric Berenguer,

among many others, also taught on a regular or occasional basis during that initial period.

FOOTNOTE 2.4

Book and booklet of the project *Country Europa*, produced for Manifesta 8 – the European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Murcia, 2010) and republished for the group exhibition *Zweite Welt*, curated by WHW (Steirischer Herbst festival, Graz, Austria, 2011). This large-scale project was held in collaboration with Verónica Iglesia and driven by a training and production workshop with inmates from Murcia prison. Applying many of our tools put into practice over more than a decade in the militant, artistic, journalistic and pedagogical fields, the project had a dual objective of constructing a temporary existential autonomous zone inside the prison and guiding critical analysis towards the role of spatial enclosures and geopolitical borders in globalisation.

FOOTNOTE 2.5

Leaflet of a version of the seminar *Líneas de fuga. Historia, estética y política del arte* (Lines of fire: History, aesthetics and politics of art) held at Fundación Luis Seoane (A Coruña, 2021). This is a travelling training project that is still in progress, based on the genealogical reconstruction of theoretical heterodoxies produced over the past century in the wake of aesthetic debates of modernity. Its experimental nature has been highlighted by combined prototypes of presentability-virtuality because of the conditions caused by the pandemic, with the aim of constructing critical public spheres that are contextual and situated by means of dialogue procedures of co-learning within the restrictive conditions of mobility.

CRITICAL, GLOBAL OPPOSITION PUBLIC SPHERE

The Zapatista eruption of 1 January 1994 can be described as a big bang because it was not an episodic outburst, but rather an event that encapsulated the resistance to neoliberalism that had already been emerging in many parts of the world in a scattered fashion, and for the first time succeeded in articulating this by refracting it on a large scale. In other words, it had the power to highlight that it was possible to construct a critical public sphere of global opposition to the planetary hegemony of neoliberalism. This revitalisation of the autonomous policies of social movements, confronted with the pairing of the public and the private – a partnership that even today devastates the commons and applies criminal policies against humanity – discovered its main tools during the 1990s, on the one hand, in self-organisation and the construction of networks and, on the other hand, in civil disobedience expressed through direct action. These tasks to recover an anti-neoliberal utopian horizon basically began in Spain after the institutional celebratory apotheosis of 1992 (fifth centenary of the discovery of America, Seville Expo '92, Barcelona '92 Olympic Games, Madrid as European Capital of Culture) and were implemented by insubordination against compulsory military service, the construction of social centres through squatting, the progressive articulation of the environmental movement and the mainstreaming that autonomous feminism brought to all these other movements.

In my talk entitled *El arte, entre la experimentación institucional y las políticas de movimiento* (Art between institutional experimentation and the politics of social movements, SITAC, Mexico City, 2009), I discussed the relationship that in my opinion existed between the public appearance of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in 1994 and the celebration of documenta X, curated by Catherine David, in 1997. If Notation 2 of this diagram begins with my activity in the antimilitarist movement in 1993–1994, Notation 3 commences with the activities I conducted during my stay in France (off and on between 1996–1999) for three consecutive reasons. The first was to collaborate in the monographic issue of the Parisian magazine *Omnibus*, published on the occasion of documenta X. The second was to carry out a long-term workshop with students from the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Tours, infused with the citizen protests against neoliberal government policies and against the backdrop of what Étienne Balibar viewed as the “crisis racism” caused by the rise of neo-fascism in France. Third, an attempt to revive a legendary utopian experience: the neighbourhood cable TV channel that operated during the beginnings

of Villeneuve de Grenoble, one of the most radical architectural and urban planning projects constructed in the wake of May '68.

If the countersummits of Seattle (1999), Prague (2000) or Barcelona (2001) against the meetings of the World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund or World Bank marked the irruption of the anti-globalisation movement into international public opinion, the progressive articulation of global networks for a new politicisation of art was also backed by political and exhibition events of various kinds in the experience of my generation. In this sense, the art activist collective Las Agencias (which collaborated extremely intensely with the anti-globalisation movement and its local chapters, especially in Spain and Italy, between 2000 and 2003) and exhibitions such as *Non Place Urban Realm* (curated by Montse Romaní, South London Gallery, London, 1999) or *Procesos documentales* (curated by Jorge Ribalta, MACBA, Barcelona, 2001) were, as far as I was concerned, decisive experiences that were always focused on the conflictive experimental hinge between social movements and art institutions. Part of my activity shifted towards a new international network of artistic activism and institutional experimentation that connected post-socialist Eastern Europe with post-neoliberal Latin America as the anti-globalisation movement became weaker. It was driven by agents such as the curators' collective What, How & for Whom, which I accompanied in a tour of Croatia and Serbia in 2006, the same year that the Chto Delat? collective staged a programmatic exhibition in Moscow entitled *Self-Education*.

My relationship with Abya Yala has been constant since 2004, and the activities I have conducted with spaces or programmes such as the Centro de Investigaciones Artísticas (CIA, Buenos Aires), Centro de Residencias de Arte Contemporáneo (CRAC, Valparaíso), Lugar a dudas (Cali), La Curtiduría (Oaxaca), ComPosições Políticas (Festival Panorama, Rio de Janeiro) or Campus Expandido (MUAC, Mexico City) are simply the most visible aspect of what has been a major transformation of my way of life and my way of conceiving and practising art, influenced by what I consider my extended Latin American family.

FOOTNOTE 3.1

I collaborated with Brian Holmes in publishing this monographic issue of the journal *Omnibus* (Paris, 1997), which was published by Jean-Christophe Royoux. We completed this editorial project in the same three-year period that also included our work for the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Tours (to be found in Notation 2), as well as a third, even more ambitious project that was not completed: the attempt (together with Royoux and Nick Gee) to revive the local TV network that was one of the tools for constructing the Villeneuve conurbation in Grenoble. Villeneuve was one of the most ambitious urban and architectural projects created under the influence of May '68, but what in the early 1970s was the materialisation of a radically democratic social utopia later became, because of the neoliberal dismantling of welfare state public policies, the kind of urban periphery that has been the breeding ground for the social uprisings that have occurred periodically in the French *banlieues* over the past few decades. This Notation 3 displays just two of the many working documents produced during our successive stays at Villeneuve, intermittent residencies that resulted in almost two years of experiential experimentation and documentary research.

FOOTNOTE 3.2

Information sheets for the exhibitions *Non Place Urban Realm*, curated by Montse Romaní (South London Gallery, London, 1999), and *Procesos documentales. Imagen testimonial, subalternidad y esfera pública* (Documentary processes: Testimonial image, subalternity and the public sphere), curated by Jorge Ribalta (La Capella, MACBA, Barcelona, 2001). The critical and oppositional global public sphere that the anti-globalisation movement was constructing arose from articulating silent, decentralised and widespread processes with resounding events in the form of concentrated uprisings. The activities that were developed simultaneously for repoliticising the artistic field were similarly based both on the construction of collaborative networks and on the organisation of specific events that summarised extended dynamics in order to immediately strengthen them

by refracting them. This is the case of exhibition projects designed with a hybrid nature that combined exhibition, spaces for public discussion, coordination meetings, etc., in many cases conceived in relation to other social, political or movement dynamics that were taking place at the same time. *Non Place Urban Realm*, for example, was staged barely a month after the spectacular mass direct action by which the ecofeminist and anti-capitalist Reclaim the Streets movement paralysed the City, London's financial centre, and barely four months before the anti-globalisation uprising in Seattle. *Procesos documentales*, on the other hand, took place immediately after the cancellation of the World Bank's Barcelona meeting – achieved by the Campaign Against the World Bank BCN 2001 – and at the same time as a decentralised global protest campaign was taking place: the temporary installation of bordercamps – activist camps against borders – in many parts of the world, one of which was in Tarifa, on the southern Spanish-European border.

FOOTNOTE 3.3

Working script for a conference on art and activism at MACBA (Barcelona, 1999). The book *Modos de hacer. Arte crítico, esfera pública y acción directa* (Ways of doing. Critical art, public sphere and direct action), published in collaboration with Paloma Blanco, Jesús Carrillo and Jordi Claramonte (Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2001). Document recapping two years of activities of the artistic activist collective Las Agencias (2001-2002) and an informative dossier on its project that we call New Kids on the Black Block, a sophisticated “communication guerrilla” work designed to intervene against the tense security backdrop that was triggered in international public opinion during 2001, mainly due to the police violence at the Genoa countersummit and the attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11. These documents also testify to the essentially collaborative and nomadic practice of Las Agencias, which was originally launched to be a hinge between the art institution – MACBA – and the anti-globalisation movement – the Campaign Against the World Bank BCN 2001 – to later drift towards increasingly offshoot initiatives.

FOOTNOTE 3.4

Working documents – communications, annotations and minutes of meetings – created to organise movement spaces as part of the European Social Forum in Florence (2002), as well as the poster and preparatory dossier for the *Sconvegno* (de-congress) organised in Milan (2003). These are the kind of frequent activities in which Las Agencias and those around it have participated uninterruptedly in the heat of the anti-globalisation movement and its local chapters, primarily in Spain and Italy. Since the turning point in 2001, the global movement against capitalist globalisation began to experiment with other forms of intervention different from those put into practice in the Seattle-Genoa phase (1999-2001), hitherto more focused on specific problems, such as social and job insecurity. There were constant collaborations with other collectives and networks in these types of initiatives, such as Chainworkers, Sexy Shock, EuroMayDay, Precarias a la Deriva or Universidad Nómada, as well as with social centres in Barcelona, Madrid, Málaga, Milan or Rome.

FOOTNOTE 3.5

These scripts for the lecture given at the MACBA (Barcelona, 1999) or the seminar given at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cuenca (2004) are a very small sample of the numerous interventions I carried out during the very intense time period covered by the anti-globalisation movement: talks, lectures, seminars, workshops, courses, etc. that attempted to weave a narrative that brought together expressive forms from the artistic avant-garde, political art and social movements. This was also the effort invested in the collective book *Modos de hacer* (Ways of doing, 2001). The diagram entitled *Globalización desde abajo* (Globalisation from below), produced as a result of one of the research areas of the project 1969-... *Algunas hipótesis de ruptura para una historia política del arte en el Estado español* (1969-... Some hypotheses of rupture for a political history of art in Spain, 2002-2005) – more centrally focused on in Notation 4 – and developed in a more ambitious way through choral work, this attempt was specifically to produce an account of the characteristic collaborative ex-

pressive forms of the collective counterpowers that emerged within globalisation, an account that did not differentiate a priori between artistic, political and movement practices.

FOOTNOTE 3.6

Brochures, information sheets, working scripts, interviews, editions and pedagogical scripts from the activities conducted between Eastern Europe and, primarily, Latin America from 2004 onwards: Rio de Janeiro, Oaxaca, Cali, Bogota, Buenos Aires, etc. In this intense series of public or semi-public interventions, I often used my video works as revitalisation tools. This was primarily the case with the video *Primero de Mayo (la ciudad-fábrica)* (First of May [the City-Factory], 2004), which served both to introduce activist themes into art exhibition spaces – in the form of an installation – and to revitalise discussions relating to the forms of expressive experimentation in activist spaces. (This is why I produced simple versions of some of my videos, for low-cost distribution as agitation tools. This was the aforementioned case of *Primero de Mayo*, as well as *Sinfonía de la ciudad globalizada n.º 1 Valparaíso* [Symphony of the Globalised City no. 1: Valparaíso], which was released during the 2011 wave of Chilean student protests.) These interventions sometimes also included research or collaborative production dynamics. Reflecting on the impact of globalisation on modern metropolises is introduced more centrally in this series of my activity.

FOOTNOTE 3.7

The book *Discursos plebeyos. La toma de la palabra y de las instituciones por la gente común* (Plebeian speeches: The common people taking the floor and institutions, Icaria, Barcelona, 2019) and the series *Conversaciones en trance. Nuevos liderazgos políticos en América Latina* (Conversations in a trance: New political leadership in Latin America, 2020-...). The book is a compilation of 23 speeches and other types of public interventions in 14 cities in Europe and

Latin America between 2016 and 2019, in other words, the period of my activity in institutional politics as Secretary of Congress and Member of the Spanish Parliament. It is a publication that now forms part of the same general project as my series of “diagrammatic writing” works of the same name, *Discursos plebeyos*. For its part, the *Conversaciones en trance* series brings to the Latin American sphere a similar set of themes, problems and questions raised in *Discursos plebeyos*, in this case in the form of conversations with colleagues of the generation exercising governmental or legislative functions. This is an ongoing project that adapts in real time to the changing social, political and historical circumstances in Latin America. The two projects combined in fact consist of an enquiry into the current conditions of possibly reconstructing a global democratic public sphere after the dual financial crisis of 2007 and the public health crisis of 2020.

ARTISTIC, MILITANT RESEARCH NETWORKS

The research experiences that vigorously began during the 2000s as a hybrid mix of artistic and militant practice arose from the confluence of three historical elements. On the one hand, they were heirs to the foundational moment when the avant-garde de-essentialised art practice in order to emphasise its character as an ongoing process of research. The constructivist group in Moscow in some of its documents produced in the early 1920s, for example, called for a refunctionalisation of the exhibition-form as an archive that would help to reveal the state of an experimental process. On the other hand, the new forms of artistic and activist research of the early 21st century returned to the way in which, during the 1960s-1970s, the militant field of workers' autonomy in turn updated the instrument of sociological "inquiry" that was practiced early in the history of Marxism. (I translated Raniero Panzieri's classic paper from 1965, "Socialist uses of workers' inquiry", for a monograph of the online magazine *transversal*, specifically entitled *investigación militante* [militant investigation], April 2006.) Finally, the exercise of institutional analysis that also arose around 1968 as a characteristic practice of anti-institutional movements is by no means a stranger to the tradition of avant-garde art: although the institutional critique of the museum finds its expression in certain politicised derivations of conceptualism in that same period, it can also be considered that self-reflexive analyses of the art institution — as Peter Bürger deduced — are consubstantial with the anti-bourgeois utopian project that dates back to Dadaism in the 1910s. Among the most influential references when it came to articulating this artistic-militant hybrid mix of research in the 2000s were the writings of Colectivo Situaciones — produced in the heat of the Argentine crisis and social outcry of 2001 — and the practice and reflections — in the same period — of the Madrid collective Precarias a la Deriva, to which must be added the book *Nociones comunes. Ensayos entre investigación y militancia* (Common notions: Essays between investigation and militancy, Traficantes de Sueños, 2004), edited by one of its members, Marta Malo de Molina.

We came up with the idea of the magazine *Brumaria. Prácticas artísticas, estéticas y políticas* (Brumaria: Artistic, aesthetic and political practices) in 1999. Its first issue was published in 2002 and it was co-edited until 2006, when we were invited to join the international network *documenta 12 magazines*. I collaborated particularly intensively with the eipcp (European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies) between 2005 and 2012, primarily on two large-scale parallel projects: *transform and translate* (2005–2009), an important part of whose production was poured into

its multilingual online magazine transversal, with the corollary of a more modest project than previous ones, *creating worlds* (2009–2012). To mark these platforms, the eipcp set up around itself an international European network of museum institutions, art collectives, activist organisations and independent publishers that was dedicated to updating institutional critique, reflecting on translation policies and considering artistic practice as the production of knowledge. There were probably more than two hundred people who took part in these far-reaching processes, which were also modelled in accordance with social, political and historical transformations, in line with the evolution of the social movements of those decades. With these eipcp projects, we were somehow able to build on a large scale and with considerable transnational impact through prototypes of “project institutions” – implemented in an extensive number of initiatives throughout Europe: seminars, workshops, meetings, exhibitions, publications, etc. – which we were testing in the Universidad Nómada as laboratory essays revolving around the concept of “monster institutions”. (Two summaries of these conceptual elaborations can be found in the online monograph of *transversal: instituciones monstruo*, May 2008, and in the book *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes: líneas de ruptura en la crítica institucional* [Cultural production and constituent practices: lines of rupture in institutional critique], Traficantes de Sueños, Madrid, 2008.) The atmosphere at the time was conducive to all manner of connections in various directions between artistic and militant research, often in experimental collaboration with institutions. In 2007, I participated in the founding of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualisms Network), a mainly Latin American platform to reactivate the activist forms of art practice, criticism and historiography inherited from the revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. And before that, in 2002, I wrote the embryonic documents for a research proposal: *1969-... Algunas hipótesis de ruptura para una historia política del arte en el Estado español* (1969-... Some hypotheses of rupture for a political history of art in Spain), which ended up taking shape in 2004–2005 as part of a much broader museographic project: *Desacuerdos. Sobre arte, políticas y esfera pública en el Estado español* (Disagreements: On art, politics and the public sphere in Spain).

FOOTNOTE 4.1

Founding document (1999) of the magazine *Brumaria. Prácticas artísticas, estéticas y políticas* (Brumaria: Artistic, aesthetic and political practices), which we began publishing in 2002 and which I co-edited until issue 7, with which we participated in the *documenta 12 magazines* network (2006). Launched together with Darío Corbeira and with the initial participation of Gabriel Villota and Francisco Felipe, *Brumaria* functioned during that period as a publishing platform for theorisation and information on new political and activist art practices, returning to the links with the insufficiently histori-cised experiences of the 1960s and 1970s. Both attempts ultimately expanded internationally, weaving a network of regular or periodic collaborators, including Brian Holmes, Gerald Raunig, Ana Longoni, Suely Rolnik, Maurizio Lazzarato, Iconoclastas, Isabell Lorey and Hans Haacke.

FOOTNOTE 4.2

Sharing a similar programmatic aim as *Brumaria*, in 2002 I wrote the embryonic documents for a research project: *1969-... Algunas hipótesis de ruptura para una historia política del arte en el Estado español* (1969-... Some hypotheses of rupture for a political history of art in Spain), which was finally produced within the museographic framework of *Desacuerdos. Sobre arte, políticas y esfera pública en el Estado español* (Disagreements: On art, politics and the public sphere in Spain, 2004–2005), launched by MACBA and other Spanish art and cultural institutions. *1969-...* was the backbone of *Desacuerdos* and it ultimately involved more than a hundred researchers, activists, artists and collectives under my coordination – Fefa Vila, Carmen Navarrete, María Ruido, Marta Malo de Molina, Raúl Sánchez Cedillo, Amador Fernández-Savater, Marisa Pérez Colina, Montse Romaní, José Pérez de Lama, Luis Navarro, Paloma Blanco and a very long list of others – producing materials that were summarised in the first two books of the *Desacuerdos* series, published by Jesús Carrillo. The diagrams produced from some of the research areas

of 1969-..., distributed in various notations of *Nueva Babilonia revisitada* (New Babylon Revisited) were designed together with Vanni Brusadin.

FOOTNOTE 4.3

The activities conducted by the european institute for progressive cultural policies (eipcp) in which I collaborated between 2005 and 2012 were designed in many European cities in the form of exhibitions, meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, publications and other hybrid formats. Conducted by a network of institutions, collectives, artists, activists, philosophers, researchers, etc., comprising some two hundred participants in total, the main platform was the multilingual online journal *transversal*. This open access publishing platform has become increasingly influential over the years. It was published monthly in three set languages (English, Spanish and German) during this period, with regular translations into other languages (Italian, French, Serbo-Croatian, Russian, etc.), and in its transnational editorial collective – in which Gerald Raunig, Stefan Nowotny, Birgit Mennel, Boris Buden, Hito Steyerl or Simon Sheikh regularly participated – we constantly argued about creating concepts arising from new political and activist practices. The contents of its numerous online monographs were also frequently published in printed volumes in various languages, as in the case of the book *Producción cultural y prácticas instituyentes: líneas de ruptura en la crítica institucional* (Cultural production and constituent practices: lines of rupture in institutional critique, 2008), which we published in collaboration with Traficantes de Sueños. This publishing house in Madrid was linked at the time to the Universidad Nómada, a platform that in turn promoted initiatives of militant research and radical pedagogy – such as the series *Nociones comunes* (Common notions), later continued by a “monster institution”, heir to the Universidad Nómada: the Fundación de los Comunes – as well as other attempts of collaboration between militant networks and artistic, cultural or educational institutions that occurred during those years in various cities in Spain.

FOOTNOTE 4.4

We published the book *Desinventario. Esquirlas de Tucumán Arde en el archivo de Graciela Carnevale* (Disinventary: Shards of Tucumán Arde in Graciela Carnevale's archive, Ocho Libros, Santiago de Chile, 2015) as a project that formed part of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualisms Network), a platform intensely dedicated to reactivating the memories and archives of radical Latin American artistic practices from the 1960s to the 1980s. *Desinventario* is the most extensive publication to date devoted to documenting and contextualising the contents of the archive formed by Graciela Carnevale initially around the materials preserved from *Tucumán Arde* (1968), a historical milestone in the politicisation of Latin American artistic practices, which in turn constitutes an outstanding original example of the intertwining of artistic and militant research.

FOOTNOTE 4.5

La pandemia en germinal (The Pandemic in Germinal) is an ongoing, large-scale project that takes as its raw material a series of conversations recorded with artists, activists, thinkers, etc. who form part of the networks of international relations in which I participate. These exchanges are dedicated to reflecting on the conditions arising from the pandemic and the constraints resulting from the global public health crisis. Its various formalisations (oral editions in podcast format, transcribed publications, sound performance works, etc.) seek to produce hybrids between research, reflection, criticism and narrative, while adopting various expressive forms, some more evident than others in their identification as artistic. It is a project designed after my long period of collaboration with artistic and militant research networks in the 2000s and 2010s, thereby making an adapted use of procedures, tools and knowledge from those practices.

