

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY  
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# The Politics Of Cultural Visibility: Latin American Arts Practices in Sydney



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## ABSTRACT

This professional doctorate is an empirical research grounded in theoretical and creative methodologies. It has produced work that combines scholarly research, creative arts publication and academic writing, with clear relevance to industry issues faced by Latin American artists in Sydney. The areas of study are: cultural diversity, arts and culture and memory and creativity. Within these areas the following themes emerged: the construction of a Latin American Australian identity, the use of artistic practice as methodology for cultural research and the application of new web technology. In accordance to academic requirements this thesis also includes three academic papers submitted for publication:

“Where Memory Lies-*El Lugar de la Memoria*”, published in *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, UTSePress (2009), Artistic Practice as Methodology for Cultural Research, presented at the “Next Generation of Cultural Research” conference, University of Western Sydney (2010) and submitted to *Visual Methods* journal and “Latinamerica en (in) Australia Arts-Politics-Culture: On line and Off Centre” presented at the “Imagining Latin America in Australia” conference organised by the University of Western Sydney-Centre for Cultural Research (2011) and submitted to the *Latin American Cultural Studies Journal*, UK.

Artistic and professional practice are represented in the form of the exhibition “Syncretic: En Una Pieza”, produced in May 2010 which included a series of talks on Latin American folklore, a catalogue and a DVD. The creative work “*Los Sentidos de la Noche*” submitted to *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, UTSePress and the production of documentary play “*Mujeres de Arena*” for SBS Spanish program (2010). Further creative and professional work can be accessed through the *Latin America en Australia* social network.

The primary contribution of this thesis is the development of a community of practice, furthering the concept of borderwork, that facilitates a continue exploration of cultural visibility by Latin American artists in Australian. This thesis represents my personal ongoing commitment to develop a cross-disciplinary critical cultural dialogue and in this way affect preconceived ideas about Latin American arts and culture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Por un hacer que nos cambie*

*A Camila y Lucas por ser parte de mi vida.*

The work presented in this portfolio is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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## OVERARCHING STATEMENT

### **The Politics of Cultural Visibility: Latin American Arts Practices in Sydney**

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My connection with this land, therefore, is based on dispossession – which is true for the whole of settler society. We cannot wave this history away (...). (Connell 2007 p. 203).

The whole history of imperialism, migration and colonial settlement involves dispossession and loss of connection. (Connell 2007 p.203)

*Herstory: Two ends of two southern lands containing histories, as similar as they are different. Close to the ground I can feel the breeze passing over my neck. Slowly, ever slowly, I move. I want to fly, extend my wings, jump onto the air... fly... float... slide and let go. Yes, just let go... Awaken one eye still in midair the other fixed on my ceiling... dislocating my wings in one direction, my legs another, I want to move... A sound is stuck between my heart and my throat and the sound is dead, mute... then I dance, following a stream of light breaking through the glass on the other side of the room. Desire takes me to the other side. Dance the dancer, dance away, breath in and out, let the body float and reach for the window in a continuous line, and if there is no window then make one with the tip of my fingers. Para llegar a casa solo hay que abrir las alas y saltar al vacío. Comenzar al principio y dejarse llevar. All I need to do to arrive home is to spread my wings and jump into empty space. Start at the beginning and let myself go. Begin where all stories begin. Following the line that will make me move from one moment to the next. Then I feel her hand holding mine tracing lines on a kitchen table and the window is hers; her smells and tastes of magically produced never-ending sources of nourishment. I learn to make do and to write. And that is herstory, full stop. Arriving at myself – inscribing myself on this land. The sound is finally formed and pushes out of my chest, like a newborn: another story begins one summer in Dorrigo National Park.<sup>1</sup>*

I feel my culture in my skin. I was made to believe that this does not change. But one can shed a skin. Women do this all the time, growing new ones that allow us to cross the next desert. A new skin requires more walking so we keep on walking across, under, or over

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<sup>1</sup>I have intertwined through the text a personal and creative voice. This is signalled by the use of italics. Also when Spanish is used a translation will follow immediately after.

highways. Other times *páramos* appears and we stay still, in one spot, looking far away into the horizon, listening to the call of drums across the ocean. A guarding thought frames my thinking as I begin this journey; a fear of losing and not being true enough to my history. My language was masculine and my concepts around culture, essentialist. Both changed, shifted, shed old skins, and moved on, crossing waters, arriving to the other side, still shaking and sometimes confused. I reiterated myself in the masculine without even realising that the visible 'he' was a travesty of myself. As Connell proposes, my connection with this land and my own is also one of dispossession, a Creole with Guarani and Spanish blood, I cannot speak my mothers' language nor can I claim either ancestry. Daughter of dictatorial regimes, the language I learnt had patriarchal undertones and qualities of resistance. One more skin to shed. In literal translation from Spanish to English I acquired a new language and reinvented myself one more time on this side of another South, without waiving my responsibilities or losing my core. At a personal level this journey made me question, rethink, and challenge how to negotiate my position as a cultural worker in Australia. My thinking changed and literature took me back to the continent I had left and was still trying to understand. I found an intellectual home that does not need me to be in translation. I found my own '*escritura femenina*'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This is in reference to the literature imprinted on my own writing with the influence from French feminists writers such as Helene Cixous. One tension that arose earlier was between the masculinity of a language I learnt as my 'mother tongue'-ironically- and the new acquired language, in a culture I am trying to understand.

## **Introduction**

The main aim of the research that forms the basis of this professional doctorate is the exploration of issues affecting the professional practice of Latin American artists in Sydney within the context of the Australian multicultural environment. This inquiry is framed by the following questions: How do Latin American artists make meaning of their experience of migration and exile? What is the role of cultural memory in this transition? How do Latin American artists locate their creative practice in Australian cultural contexts? How can Latin American artists contribute to the ongoing renewal of Australian cultures? The areas of study are contained within the scope of cultural studies and sit in academia in the context of cross-disciplinary research and practice-led inquiry. To the best of my knowledge there has been limited academic and artist-led research conducted into Latin American arts practices in Australia. For example, by exploring the complexities of this relationship or how cultural productions affect the on-going redefinition of a Latin American identity present in Australia. In 2008 I gained a scholarship that gave me the opportunity to consolidate an original project titled the Latin American Arts Forum. This forum took place in 1999 at the University of Western Sydney, old Theatre Nepean, where I completed my Bachelor degree in Theatre, Theory and Practice. It gathered artists from a diversity of disciplines working in Sydney to share stories, exchange skills, and engage in critical dialogue about their practices. After many conversations with friends and in particular with the encouragement of one, I submitted a research proposal that formed the basis of my candidature. Based on practice-led methodology, I designed a multimodal research strategy involving testimonials, photography, and exhibition, and auto-ethnographic creative work. Over the last three and half years this professional doctorate gave me the opportunity to develop skills in research and academic writing and establish new networks in the academic sector. At an artistic and professional level it gave the opportunity to reconnect with old networks and develop artistic affiliations for future creative professional work. From the beginning stages of the research it was evident that Latin American artists, in particular women, continue to strive for cultural visibility within mainstream Australian cultures. It was also evident that this was an issue shared with other artists from diverse cultural backgrounds.



Besides, all practitioners who are not already working for mainstream cultural institutions or arts organisations develop their practice in what I believe is the space of borderwork, and are in turn framed by the idea of an Australian multicultural. A definition of borderwork “as process” and posing it as a “core concept” from which Australians can interrogate the idea of a multicultural society (Hodge & O’Carroll 2006 p. 2), offers the potential of an active dialogue between those who self-define as inhabiting this space and mainstream society. Borders are created, mediated and managed by more than one technology with a diversity of geographical and institutional locations, concrete or imagined, or politically manipulated, and large numbers of displaced refugees and migrants move across borders of many different kinds. As stated by Coronado (2003), “[Borders] appears each time an interaction with others happens, each time individuals represent the distinctiveness of their culture.” (p. 113).

A number of Latin American and Australian academics have explored the relationship and impact of Latin American culture in Australia. Offering insights through ethnographic and sociological studies. (See for example: Cohen, 2003; Coronado, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Bendrups, 2001). Nevertheless, I found materials exploring the cultural visibility of Latin American artists in Sydney from an artist’s perspective were limited and focus on specific genres. Some ethnographic research focusing on particular cultural groups, such as Chileans, Salvadorians and Cubans (see Dawson & Gifford, 2001; Charon Cardona, 2003) did not articulate the problematic that artists experience when migrating or forced into exile as transnational artists from the artist’s perspective. In the same manner it is their important contributions to a growing field of enquiry, what facilitated my initial incursion into this complex field. They are, as suggested by Gunew (2004), “writers that invent community not in the sense of the nostalgic return to the past and a lost place, but as the impulse forward, the potential carried by the seeding of diaspora in hybridity, the reality of a process (...)” (p. 109). Their interventions and contributions enable me to creatively explore the following main themes: Latin American Australian identity, artistic practice, memory and place, cultural visibility, and cultural relevance. Each theme was investigated through a series of professional and academic projects. These projects and their creative and academic manifestations constitute the body of my portfolio.

Drawing from interviews collected for the purpose of this research and from auto-ethnographic notes, I explored issues of memory, identity and place from an artist's perspective in my first academic article, "[Where Memory Lies-El Lugar de la Memoria](#) " Practice-led methodologies allowed me to utilise photography and testimonials to begin to build an archive of histories about different artistic practices. The academic article titled: "Artistic Practice as Methodology for Cultural Research" looks at this process. This article was submitted to the online international peer reviewed post disciplinary journal *Visual Methodologies*. The result of this work was presented in a public exhibition during May 2009 at the Institute Cervantes, Sydney, under the title: "Syncretic: En una Pieza: Stories from Latin Americans in Sydney". A further development arising out of my methodology and exhibition was the creation and design of the on-line community of practice (<http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com>). A third academic article "Latin America *en* (in) Australia: Arts-politics-culture-online and off centre" reflects on the use of new web technologies and their application in my research. This article was submitted to *the Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies, UK*. Latin American in Australia website as a As a Latin American developing my work in Australia, I position my practice and academic studies with a focus on decolonial theory and borderwork theory. Border theory informs aspects of my work and it is evident that the concept of borderwork resonates with border studies emerging in the United States, but borderland/in the United States arose from very different historical and political contexts. Australian political and historical relationship with many Latin American nations and the countries immigration history from Latin America, in particular since the early 1970's, offer local practitioners the potential to develop research not only drawing from related theoretical frameworks such as those from border studies/borderland in the USA, but also develop a unique analytical space with the possibility to contribute to the development of an Australian Latin American cultural studies paradigm.

Commenting on the “subaltern conundrum in transcultural discourse”, Allatson (2002) states: “The subaltern is a figure produced by historical discourses of domination, but it nevertheless provides a mode of reading history different from those inscribed in elite accounts” (p.40). This formulation allows me to deconstruct the idea of borders and what they may define. If the centre is defined by its’ borders, what will be the nature of the centre if those same borders refuse to be defined by their relationship to the centre and instead inhabit a space that defines itself? I argued the necessity as practitioners to critically examine our practices from these perspectives. And I believe this is important for the development of Latin American cultural studies in Australia. In my view the obvious intellectual home for a study about Latin American artistic practices and cultural visibility in Australia would be within Latin American cultural studies. But I still face the practical problem of finding an appropriate institutional setting for my work. Though there exists in Sydney a number of organisations such as *La Casa Latinoamericana*—Sydney, a social community-run space, the Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (SLASSA) focussing primarily on social welfare and assistance to newly arrived migrants, and a number of sports and recreation clubs serving the community, there is no organisation equivalent to *La Casa de la Cultura Latinoamericana* (Habana Cuba) or the *Chicano Cultural Centre* (San Diego/Tijuana) where an artist can develop research and studio projects. Latin American artists in Sydney don’t have such a centre, yet this very lack of an institutional home gave me an opportunity to develop an independent viewpoint and, as a freelance arts worker, open up a space for a wider conversation to emerge amongst practitioners. (See the article *Latin America en Australia: Arts-politics-culture: online and off centre*).

The aim of this research was to raise the cultural visibility of Latin American artistic practices in Australia and contribute in this manner to the inclusion of multicultural creative industries as an accepted, respected and valued way of practice outside of and within academic contexts. This statement provides an overview of my process and a reflection on the research findings which are manifested through creative and academic work. This research furthers the development of knowledge in the field of contemporary Latin American cultural studies in Australia,

with its own political and historical trajectories influenced by the symbolic productions and living experiences of social realities in Latin America (Trigo 2003 p.3). My proposition is, as Latin Americans in Australia, we can continue to explore the tensions within these social realities as a way to problematise and challenge existing power relations, and to self-reflect as practicing artists, writers and academics on our work in the Australian multicultural context. If cultural practice in Australia has traditionally looked outwards and towards the metropole, that is Europe and the United States, Australian Latin Americans can, in our process of creating and becoming subjects/objects of enquiry, perhaps look inwards and South.

### **Overview of the research**

Approaching my problematic from interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives, I sought to produce an impact on learning across disciplines while engaging in research to provoke larger visions and deeper questioning of each other from our places of practice. This also allowed me to ground my research within a number of different and complementary theoretical paradigms, framed by concepts arising from the critique of post-colonial theory dominated as it is by western epistemologies (Southern Theories perspectives). As a practitioner I also looked at theories used by artists, utilising practice-led research methodologies and new media theories. (Barrett & Bolt 2007; Carter, 2007; Haseman 2006; Lovink 2008; Rossiter 2006).

Approaching my work in this manner required me to concurrently fulfil different roles and confronted me with very different issues to other Doctorate of Cultural Research candidates who are embedded within a particular cultural organisation and have to report in accord with that organisation's requirements. It also gave me a freedom that sometimes felt overwhelming. At times I wished I was contained or restricted within parameters of a specific cultural organisation. These tensions were resolved as the research project evolved and I creatively adapted to circumstances arising along the way, dividing my work between artistic production and academic activities. But this is only a conceptual division. In reality one is constantly thinking about the aesthetics involved in building a body of artistic work, sorting out and solving issues to do with producing the work and, in my case, grappling with a process that had two different purposes. One was the compilation and preparation of the artwork to be exhibited, and the other the recording of testimonials.

The production aspect involved very practical and time consuming tasks, such as searching and applying for funding and exhibition spaces, organising interviews and shooting times, and mediating the various meetings involved. At this level intercultural and cross-cultural communication skills were essential to engage across institutions and cultural organisations and amongst practitioners. This included interviews and photographic testimonials and exhibition work. My creative methodology also validated the importance of previous professional experiences and allowed me to expand my practitioner's kinship and cross-disciplinary networks. It is from these spaces of collaboration and dialogue that I drew the inspiration and emotional sustenance that fuelled a personal commitment to critical and reflexive artistic practice. (See article "Artistic Practice as Methodology for Cultural Research").

The initial stages of my research included the collection of testimonials from artists of Latin American background living in Sydney<sup>3</sup>. In-depth interviews were conducted with nine artists working in New South Wales in the following art forms: music, theatre, writing, painting, installation art and ceramics. The purpose of these interviews was to collect autobiographical information in order to gain understandings of how each artist negotiates her/his practice as a migrant artist and a producer of culture. Participants were chosen based on year of arrival to Australia, arts practice, gender, and country of origin. In this way a range of experiences and perspectives were covered. These interviews were conducted at the artists' studios and working environments. They were based on past and current events relevant to their life histories and migration experiences. Except for one, they were all conducted primarily in Spanish, translated into English, and edited in collaboration with each participant. Interviews were approached in a conversational and reflective style, allowing common themes to emerge through loosely structured dialogue. Five of these interviews were also recorded in both digital and analogue photographic format and one was recorded in DVD format. An edited version in Spanish and English can be read in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition "Syncretic: En Una Pieza." (See catalogue)

3. It is outside the scope of this thesis to include second and third generation of cultural producers and newly arrived artists. Budget limitations and time restriction were determinate factors to exclude testimonials from artists with high mainstream profile such as, Juan Davila. I wanted to use this space to discuss the work for less visible artists.

### **A space for other voices**

We may think of the problematic as a complex of heterogeneous but interrelated concerns that the work articulates. A problematic is related to its historical moment as much by what it excludes as by what it includes; in the jargon, these exclusions are its 'structuring absences'. (Burgin 2010 p. 184)

There is no shortage of Australian scholars dedicated to Latin American studies. This scholarship was built on the establishment of Spanish and Portuguese language schools at the University of New South Wales, La Trobe University and Monash University between 1962-1968 (Carr 2005). A combination of social and political factors in Latin America and consequent economic and political migration to Australia, stirred an interest in Latin American literature, languages and culture in this country. By 1991 the Association of Iberian and Latin American Studies of Australasia (AILASA) was created. A number of publications also emerged over the years providing a recognised publishing space for academics: *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research: JILAR* (Formerly *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies, JILAS*) a trilingual journal by AILASA; *Antipodas*, from La Trobe University; *Tahuintinsuwo*, a bilingual publication with a focus on anthropology, archaeology and Andean history edited in Canberra; *Ixcuic*, published at Monash University in Melbourne; and *Hontanar*, a digital bilingual, publication from the Cervantes Publishing Company. According to Carr's recollections of its history, Latin American cultural studies in Australia had a chaotic and disorganised beginning. Victor Burgin's (2010) defining of 'the problematic' in relation to his own work resonates with the genesis of the Latin American Cultural studies in Australia. In the wider sense Latin American Cultural studies in Australian are constrained by its origins in language studies. This does not help the development of an organic and inclusive Latin American research community leaving this responsibility to individual researchers. Allatson (2007) elaborates on this characteristic, stating: "the field requires multidisciplinary and broad research and theoretical capacities. One practical result of this situation is that practitioners of Latino/a Studies may continue to encounter a range of institutional obstacles derived from the inherent disciplinary unhomeliness of the field" (p.2). I concur with Allatson, on his reflection that the strength of the field lies on its multidisciplinary. This can also apply to the Australian context, if as practitioners we not only develop research that focuses exclusively on Latin America and its relationship to Australia, but from within, as many emerging scholars are currently doing in their discipline of interest.

Prior to the beginning of my studies I came into contact with academics who participated in *La Peña* during the 1980s and supported democratic transitions in Latin America. Later, during my undergraduate years at UWS Nepean and postgraduate work at UTS, and through my artistic and activist work, I was extremely fortunate to encounter committed academics that provided me with mentorship and inspiration. This experience led me to the view that it is through multidisciplinary work, collaborations, and community engagement that the most innovative research can emerge. The interest of Australian governments in Latin America has tended to be based on potential trade and economic links. And support for Latin American arts and culture has often been driven by purposes other than fostering strong cultural, academic or artistic links. Latin America is visible so long as it is profitable. While the interest of governments shifts with global economic trends, Australian intellectuals and artists have continued to engage creatively with Latin Americans both in and outside Australia. Australian authors, such as Bob Hodge and John O'Carroll (2006), by questioning the invisibility of Latin America in Australia and by facilitating dialogue across borders, have opened up spaces for *other voices* to emerge.

## **Recent Developments**

Over the years scholars who were integral to establishing Latin American cultural studies in Australia, together with a new generation of Latinamericanist academics, extended the conversations outside conventional academic frameworks through their connections with the wider Latin American community. For example, the Sydney University Research Community for Latin American Studies (SURCLA) works in collaboration with community-based groups such as the Sydney Latin America Film Festival and promotes artistic activities outside academia. To me this shows movement towards a multidisciplinary approach to practice, research and teaching. Other examples are two recent conferences: the SURCLA, “Indigenous Knowledge in Latin America and Australia: Locating Epistemologies, Difference and Dissent” (December 8-10, 2011); and the Association of Iberian and Latin American Studies of Australasia (AILASA), “Centring the Margins: Reconfiguring the Map of Knowledge in Australasia”. It is not surprising that in current global economic conditions discussions about rethinking the geography of knowledge production are revitalised. It is interesting to notice that the theme of circulation of knowledge from the South – that is knowledge not arising from understandings of peripheral others through the discourse of the centre – have been in discussion for Australian postcolonial theorists through the work of, for example, Helen Tiffin, Meaghan Morris, and Bill Ashcroft on postcolonial and subaltern studies. The terms of these conversations were set up by the Subaltern Study Project with its genesis in the South Asian experience (Ranjit Guha 1982), impacting across continents and leading to the creation of a similar project in Latin America and the United States.

In recent years works produced by Australian scholars, such as Raewyn Connell’s (2007) “Southern Theory”, and debate around the decolonial turn in Latin America are of primary importance to Australian academics. This work also has particular importance for artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, cultural brokers and community educators, including Latin American Australians, who work cross-disciplinarily and cross-culturally and collaborate with Australian academics. Southern Theory and decolonial critiques can help in furthering the field of Latin American cultural studies from an Australian perspective focusing on decentred and relational understanding about cultures.

Humanities and Social Sciences in the Iberian and Latin American World” (4-7 July , 2012).



An important reference in this context is the influential work of scholar-activists such as Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonising Methodologies* (1999). Both are concerned with the necessity to critically examine tensions that exist between Western epistemologies and other ways of knowing and interests, highlights the need for researchers to reposition themselves deconstructing a dominant discourse and allowing the possibility for the construction of renewed critical methodologies. While Smith's work focuses on Indigenous research and how to make a concrete impact on the location of knowledge by proposing practical strategies building an Indigenous research methodology, (p. 107). Sandoval's work is a provocation to break through an established theoretical apartheid within mainstream academic institutions. In her concluding comments to *The Methodology of the Oppressed*, Sandoval (2000) asserts that "The means for entry is "the methodology of the oppressed", a set of technologies for decolonizing the social imagination" To my understanding the means to entry into a stage of personal, collective and institutional emancipation that gives room for the continual renewal of what the author names as a "differential social movements and consciousness" (p. 178). Coming from a community cultural development and community educational background, the work of Smith and Sandoval are inspirational and validate my first impressions and experiences within the academic context. I see them as fundamental to understand the current research environments, whether one is or not from Indigenous or Latin American background.

Informed by earlier experiences with academics outside Universities, I entered my new cultural and academic context as a doctoral student with a particular awareness about the distinctive qualities of both contexts. Arjun Appadurai's (2001) analysis of the global cultural and political contexts comes to mind when reflecting on the difficulties of conducting research that involves a negotiation of meanings and cultural understandings from, for example, the Latin American communities in Sydney and their associated artistic community to the academic and professional artistic contexts. Appadurai's influential work on globalisation, asserted that debates about globalisation do not include the subjects affected by this debate, that there is a vernacular debate happening outside academia, and that subjects – that is, marginalised people – feel removed from both discourses. Reflecting on his arguments in relation to how globalisation in essence means "a world of disjunctive flows" and the implications for academia, made me think about my own research context.

I saw myself as part of this 'disjunctive world' in which, for the purpose of my research case, 'disjunction' meant the need to navigate through complexities at different levels of professional artistic practice, academic life, and personal community life. One obvious tension that arose during the first stages of research was between languages, that is, academic language, the language I use in my bilingual life outside academia (Spanish and English), the particularities of the cultural studies language, and the language use by artists and the arts in general. Another one was the issue of the categorisation of professional artists from diverse cultural backgrounds into 'community artist' and 'emerging artist' and how, in my view, Australian governments have come to manage cultural diversity by classifying artists under such terms. It seems to me that categorising artists from diverse cultural background utilising such terminology references 'subaltern artistic articulations', subaltern to the hegemonic culture, and clearly shows the prevalence of a vertical integration of culture. This impact on how arts organisations function, what type of initiatives they support, and how governments manage the cultural life of the nation. I avoided framing my research project and those involved in it within these terms. As a result I faced limitations insourcing external funding. The categorisation of my project by mainstream cultural institutions as 'cultural specific' shows also how Latin American arts are perceived as culturally homogeneous, belonging to the 'community arts' or the 'commercial entertainment' sectors.

Being associated with a university also represented, in my case, a limitation on sourcing funds from arts funding bodies, as it is wrongly perceived, by those outside institutions, that universities can provide substantial funding and support to students undertaking professional doctorates. Thus, in order to carry out my research, I had to think creatively and navigate around many different challenges including, for example, the absence of a Latin American cultural centre from where to develop the research and to which I could report. The doctorate of cultural research requirements presented challenges that impacted on the way and shape on how the research and its representation were going to be delivered.

I take on Appadurai's concepts about the role of an 'academic imagination' in reconfiguring and relocating other thinking, ways of practising, and articulating theory. "Imagination", he emphasises, is also an "asset from where collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life can emerge." (Appadurai 2001 p.3) Reconciling both contexts, academic and community, seems at times an insurmountable task, but I do concur with Appadurai about the power of imagination, particularly when dwelling between cultural and linguistic diverse spaces. Developing my research within the new technological environments by making use of web technologies and tapping into the resources that collective and collaborative artistic work offer, allowed me to overcome some of the difficulties I had to face as the research project developed.

### **Visibility**

Cultural visibility as one of the themes linked to the politics of cultural representation provided the impetus to conceptualise the artistic component of my research in the form of a public exhibition. "Syncretic: En Una Pieza" was initially thought of as an installation of artwork and performances to showcase the work and stories of artists from Latin American backgrounds. Putting emphasis on our capabilities as artists and producers, I intended to develop the exhibition only with Latin American artists and for it to be shown at a mainstream gallery in the Sydney central business district. In hindsight I realised that only inviting Latin American artists was a very rigid approach and the curatorial process should have included an aspect that focussed on our extensive collaborations across sectors and other cultures. Instead, the essentialised approach I adopted could have reinforced misconceptions and negated our complexities and diversity.

Placing the exhibition in a centrally located mainstream venue had the objective of offering greater exposure to the participating artists. It also attempted to raise the community's cultural visibility and to deconstruct the idea of Latin American artistic expressions as 'community arts', a concept that encapsulates terms such as 'ethnic ', 'culturally specific', 'emerging ' and 'folkloric ' that, when used as descriptors, restrict perceptions of the artist's work.

When the term 'community' is used as an adjective qualifying the word 'art', it carries the connotation of amateur, placing the artist in a space considered unprofessional. But regardless of how or who is using this term, I found this problematic, especially when certain terminology is used to access funding for short term projects or events that only allow temporal and tokenistic visibility. In the same manner the term 'community arts' and 'community artist' can be used to reject cultural and arts grants applications on the basis that such 'art' is regarded as not professional enough. These arguments are tied up to larger and more complex cultural discourses and enforces conformity with what the dominant group considers relevant, valuable and innovative.

I have included an aspect that focussed on our extensive collaborations across sectors and other cultures. Instead, the essentialised approach I adopted could have reinforced misconceptions and negated our complexities and diversity.

Placing the exhibition in a centrally located mainstream venue had the objective of offering greater exposure to the participating artists. It also attempted to raise the community's cultural visibility and to deconstruct the idea of Latin American artistic expressions as 'community arts', a concept that encapsulates terms such as 'ethnic ', 'culturally specific', 'emerging ' and 'folkloric ' that, when used as descriptors, restrict perceptions of the artist's work. When the term 'community' is used as an adjective qualifying the word 'art', it carries the connotation of amateur, placing the artist in a space considered unprofessional. But regardless of how or who is using this term, I found this problematic, especially when certain terminology is used to access funding for short term projects or events that only allow temporal and tokenistic visibility. In the same manner the term 'community arts' and 'community artist' can be used to reject cultural and arts grants applications on the basis that such 'art' is regarded as not professional enough. These arguments are tied up to larger and more complex cultural discourses and enforces conformity with what the dominant group considers relevant, valuable and innovative.

### ***La invisibilidad de nosotros - Our invisibility***

In Australia Latin American cultural invisibility reflects the demographics of a numerically small community in a richly multi-cultural setting. The Australian-Latin American cultural problematic is very different to that of the United States with which it is often compared, particularly within academia:

The demographic conception of the Latinos, or of a “Latino community”, refers to An agregate of people whose existence is established on the basis of numerical Presence: count them, therefore they exist. (Flores 1997 p.186).

Unlike United States where the Latino communities are highly visible and a substantial body of literature and artistic expressions represent a constant reminder of its presence, sometimes clearly contesting geographical and political borders, in Australia, as we say in Spanish, *los números no dan* – the numbers don’t add up. Here the borders are more subtle and engrained within culture, institutions and government. Flores’ (1997) statement quoted above resonates ironically for Latin Americans in Australia where the latest Australian Bureau Statistics census (2006) shows that Latin American Australians comprised only 0.46% of the total Australian population of 22,681,075 (ABS, August 2006). Therefore arguing about our ghostly existence and contribution as artists to this culture in terms of demographics becomes a fight against windmills, reiterating our experience of “invisibility”. So, rather than focusing on individual practices, I believe we should be looking at collaboration and in this way move away from discourses framed as *Ellos y Nosotros* – them and us, and *Nosotros y Nosotros* – us and us. Latin Americans in Australia cross and inhabit borders of different kinds. Whether cultural or institutional, we constantly negotiate our presence and artistic practices within and outside of borders. It is our relational skills and our capacity to continually reinvent our practices that allows us to survive in the new culture and facilitates the creation of unique cultural and artistic spaces that also contribute to a renewal of the hegemonic culture. The testimonials I have gathered reveal that Latin American artists make meaning of their new cultural setting through their practice and that cultural memory is one element that supports them in this transition.

Sometimes these memories are clearly and directly manifested on the artists' artwork, such as in the case of the painters Abigail Lutzen, Carlos Barrios and Rodney Araujo. For musicians who specialise in Latin American folklore, for example Justo Diaz, Jorge do Prado and Julio Cienfuegos, cultural references are directly expressed in their choice of the instruments they play, their repertoires and their original compositions.

In other instances references to place of origin and culture are subtle and not as evident, for example, in Maria Fernanda Cardozo's body of artistic work. Artistic expressions act as points of reference and emotional sustenance to many members of the Latin American community, in turn becoming the community's backbone ameliorating the experience of migration and dislocation. Latin American artists locate their creative practice in what I see as a space of fluid conversation. They move easily from community contexts to mainstream practices and from one continent to another, negotiating between languages and cultures in a state of constant translation. These movements facilitate the development of a network of practitioners that act as an artist' kinship. Latin American artists contribute to the ongoing renewal of Australian cultures through practice, skills exchange, and developing links between cultures and continents. I see it as essential to stimulate critical thinking about our practices and what emerges within the interstice, in zones of cultural exchange and collaborations. In doing so we move towards decolonial thinking and praxis. This is my purpose in utilizing web technologies to create the *Latinamerica en Australia* website as a space within which to facilitate the development of a community of practice. The issue of cultural visibility for Latin American artists in Australia is one of mutual responsibility. By critically engaging in cross-disciplinary work, Latin American artists can both raise their own visibility and make a unique contribution to the development of Australian cultures.

## **Access**

Applying for funding external to the University and looking for partner organisations was also an aspect of the curatorial process and research experience. In order to carry out the creative component of my research I had to source external funding to supplement the already allocated funds under my candidature. In December 2008 I completed my Confirmation of Candidature and Ethics approval that allowed me to proceed with interviews and begin funding applications to several government and non-government funding bodies. By the beginning of 2009 I had approached the following funding bodies: Australia Council for the Arts, City of Sydney Grants and Sponsorship Policy under Cultural Services Local Community Grants Funding, Marrickville Council Cultural Grants, Randwick City Council Development and Support Expenditure Scheme, The Australian Geographic Society funding under the project category: Community, and Community Development and Support Expenditure Schemes (CDSE) from Clubs Funding NSW.

The issue of funding is always problematic for all artists and arts workers, whether freelance or attached to community organisations. Funds for the arts are highly competitive and limited. Over the years policy and studies to support and revitalise Australian artistic and cultural life have been developed. Recently the federal government developed the first National Cultural Policy in almost twenty years. This policy will set up the framework for public support for the arts over the next ten years. (Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Office of the Arts <http://culture.arts.gov.au>). The recently released survey: "Do you really expect to get paid? An economic study of professional artists in Australia" ([www.australiacouncil.gov.au/artistcareers](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/artistcareers)) is relevant to the implementation of this policy. Funded by the Australia Council for the Arts and carried out by Professor David Throsby and Anita Zednik from Macquarie University, the survey is the fifth in a series carried out over the past 30 years that shows the level of commitment from government toward the current state of the arts and cultures in Australia. Discussion of the full relevance of these documents is beyond the scope of this overarching statement. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning a few important points arising from the survey.

The first point is the survey's definition of who is considered a professional artist. This includes those currently employed, those seeking employment, and those whose creative work is not their main source of income. This is an important point for Latin American artists the majority of whom derive their main source of income from other jobs. In this way the survey recognises a ghostly market of entertainment and arts production. At the same time the survey's definition of who is considered an artist is based on merit and continuity of practice. These are very difficult measurements particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse artists, including Latin Americans. It is also interesting to notice the inclusion of arts workers under the artists' category as many artists gain an income in this sector as managers and organisers and not through their artwork. The survey excludes indigenous artists, film-makers and the film industry.

One of the survey's findings shows that even although 73% of artists were born outside Australia (p.82 of Executive Summary), significant factors inhibiting the professional careers of non-English speaking background (NESB) artists compared to other artists are not identified (Table 63 on page 85). While the Americas are included (Figure 2, p. 23), there is no clarification of whether this incorporated artists from Spanish, English and Portuguese speaking countries or if artists taking part in the survey were fluent in English, or second and third generation Latin American Australians. In my view language is a variable that may have produced quite different outcomes, highlighting the risk of such research perpetuating mistakes and replicating zones of invisibility at an institutional level.

Initiatives by artists from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have, in the past, addressed this issue, for example through work carried out during the 1990s by The Multicultural Theatre Alliance (MTA) and The Multicultural Arts Alliance (MAA). These groups actively lobbied the government for equal opportunity and rights for NEBS artists, greater visibility of multicultural arts, and access to performing and exhibition spaces. Many involved in both organisations, including myself, directly benefited from these activities. I was able to develop my creative and community education work through mentoring by committed professional artists from all corners of the world as well as by indigenous and Australian mainstream artists. This was a unique time that informed the practice of many young artists.



The recently formed group Groundswell: Creative Thinkers, Creative Solutions (<http://groundswellctcs.blogspot.com/p/arts-nsw-research-phase.html>) is another example of an attempt to bring the needs of multi-cultural arts practice to the attention of policy-makers. The group is a consultative body to an Arts NSW research study which is currently on hold. It is not a new or Unique initiative and acknowledges past histories and previous attempts to open up new perspectives on this issue and develop a constructive critique. The re-emergence of such activity reveals that tensions between what is considered mainstream and other arts are still present. In my view both the National Cultural policy and the Thorsby survey show the need for research that accurately reflects the current artistic practices of culturally diverse communities.

Considering the difficulties inherent in research in the arts that is inclusive of the complexities of a multicultural society, it is important to make a shift from simplistic views about the arts and culture, and move towards research framed in terms of the intersections, collaborations and connectivity that arts-making produces across diverse communities.

This professional doctorate is a contribution to a more inclusive and understanding view of the professional artistic work of a cultural and diverse community, such as Latin American Australians.

### **Translating Culture**

Translation is a mode. To comprehend it as a mode one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translation: its translatability. (Benjamin 1968, p.70)

As a migrant dealing with double codes of existence, socially and culturally, I observed how I found myself continuously in translation. This is an on-going process of bringing across elements of one's original culture and language to be interpreted in a new context. To learn a second language as a migrant implies also relearning one's first language and requires an on-going engagement that shifts our thinking and asks us to become alert to both languages when communicating with others. We update ourselves about how our first language changes over time as we also repopulate our memories with new cultural references that give us meaning and recontextualise our stories in a new space. The façade of a building, a narrow street, or the unexpected roots interrupting footpaths that carried great significance are not here to mark points of arrival or departures, so spaces and places have to be regained with newly acquired vocabulary. As we rewrite ourselves in a different language we carry ourselves across in translation and in a continuous learning and interpreting of new meanings.

I learnt my first language in the context of a dictatorial regime and a patriarchal education, that is to say, a masculine language, expressed with precaution and under threats, a repressed language. But these conditions also gave rise to creativity, imagination and subversion. The only way to redefine my own language and the newly acquired language is to transgress them both through the endless possibilities that language itself can offer, coming through the cracks and holes to find relief in creativity. Catapulted into the in-between linguistic space of a new migrant, I then entered the limitless space of translation – carried across, transported. And yet it is with transgressions and infiltrations of different kinds that one finds a voice that is at once personal and collective. Benjamin's (1968) observations on translatability come to mind as a metaphor since, as we move across linguistic borders, we never lose what informed our first language, that is our history. In the context of my ongoing acquisition of a new language, I cannot indulge in sharing my heritage of an endless labyrinth of stories because they hold no meaning other than to me. As bell hooks (1995) says, "We need to make English do what we want it to do". In agreement with the author I also believe in the need to find a way in which making English work for me, does not imply forgetting my own language's legacy and the existence of a bilingual context in which many migrants exist.

To be in a state of continued translation is an emotionally charged, affective exercise. In order to relate someone else's story it is essential to understand this complexity and what role, for example, emotion and memory or the impact of cultural dislocation plays in how one retells the story. This complexity conditions one's choice of words and expressions and the often very personal associations that arise as we engage in listening, transcribing, translating and interpreting biographical information. When the story intersects with meanings that are in English, Spanish and 'Spanglish' at the same time, and the temporality shifts as the story unfolds, one must judge how best to convey the story for English speaking Australian audiences. Taking the listener from one continent to another, from one language to the next, and from one historical context to a different one; clarifying colloquialisms particular to one language, for example the differences between Mexican Spanish and Argentinean Spanish; deciding what aspects of the story to share with the public and what to conceal as the politics of personal and social stories and networks are exposed in the narration. These are some of the issues that must be faced and resolved to the best of one's abilities and understandings. They are not only intellectual and rational decisions but also affective intuitions that come into play when one is in the process of translating another and, at the same time, one's self.

I have noticed when conversing with Latin American artists about their current or future projects that the bureaucratic and official language used in funding guidelines and applications presents an aspect of language that it is not always easy for them to grasp, regardless of English proficiency. This issue is often linked to evaluation processes and the reporting of outcomes. Generally one can say that artists don't think in the same terms as the institutions and organisations that administer these funds. For the artists, outcomes are presented in the symbolic language of their practice, that is, of performance, installation, documentary, sculpture and so on. There is, on the other hand, a tacit understanding of ethical practices and language amongst practitioners. Words such as: impetus, desire, encounters, Eros, imagination, faith, production, invention, collaborations, and conversations are part of the artists' repertoire. But when used in project proposals these terms have subjective, emotional or impulsive associations to ephemeral outcomes that can be interpreted by funding bodies as signifying unprofessional and high-risk projects. Therefore opportunities for potential innovative collaborations may be lost if the artist has not mastered a way to translate her ideas into an appropriate language that will enable a project to come to life.

Regardless of English language issues, art practitioners working across disciplines approach projects with intellectual rigor, discipline, and loyalty to the process, the project and those involved. Projects are carefully tailored, literature and techniques are studied and analysed, project processes are documented, and outcomes are evaluated. Planning, documentation and accountability are, for example, essential elements of any project. It is evident that the necessary skills used in creative research are not different from those needed in any other social research enquiry. The difference perhaps lies in the open-ended manner in which a project is initially approached. Creative projects often begin with impetus, a desire that is intrinsically fluid and dynamic rather than a clearly formulated question. For artists the most appreciated outcomes are usually the process skills and learning that arise from collaboration or from self-reflection and study. As I work my way through issues of language and funding I creatively adapt my research to emerging issues and changing contexts throughout my candidature. These artist's traits were integral to the success of my project.

The following is an example of how the Lino Alvarez Carrasco interview developed and reflections about this particular experience. (A DVD of his testimonial together with a personal account this process can be accessed on the [latinamericanartsforum.nign.com](http://latinamericanartsforum.nign.com) website. I approached Carrasco's interview with an awareness of my own experience in the space of translation.

For the purpose of this interview I collaborated with filmmaker Walter Rojas. Prior to our arrival in Hill End I telephoned Carrasco to explain the purpose and details of my project. This pre-interview preparation gave me an idea about what kind of speaker he is. For example, whether he is easy to engage in conversation or needed prompting. He turned out to be a natural storyteller whose conversation had an easy flow and whose stories were rich in detail. These 'warm up's or ice breakers' before the scheduled filming and recording facilitate the process when one is unfamiliar with the subject. They also gave me clues about how to prepare for the interview.

Choosing to only have his testimonial on film rather than with accompanying portraiture as with the rest of participating artists was not arbitrary but due to budget restrictions. I also decided to film him in his studio at Hill End because I discovered an interesting connection between the land and his work as a ceramic artist. Pottery is considered an art form in decline and is always striving to be recognised as more than a craft form. Hill End is also a fascinating location and very significant for Australian artistic history. Filming there allowed me to capture Lino's story through him speaking directly to the audience, rather than mediated through me in the role of a biographer. In this instance I became the facilitator of a conversation between Lino and his audiences that I hoped would prompt them to reflect on their preconceptions about Latin American artists, trigger memories of personal experiences of migration, and perhaps provoke a fresh appreciation of ceramics as an art form.

As the director of the piece I needed to take into consideration a multiplicity of factors. When details escaped me they were brought up by Walter from a different perspective and sorted out in discussions before making decisions about what to include or not. Questions such as: Should we set the interview in the kitchen or his studio? What kind of backdrop to have? Which music to use? Why should the interview be conducted in English? Why is Spanish used only towards the end? These are just some examples of the questions that arose during the interviews and while preparing for them. A range of technical aspects also had to be taken into consideration that, under other circumstances, specialist personnel would have been responsible for. In our case I had the responsibility for the more broadly aesthetic details as well as decisions about language and story structure, and Walter took care of the technical aspects. Considering our limitations, we succeeded in producing an interesting testimonial rich in textual material that can be useful for further analysis.

Through the method of story-telling, the subjective experiences of Lino's narrative aimed to facilitate audiences' understanding of the cultural visibility of migrant artists. According to Denzin (2003, p. 28) this " (...) is an inter-subjective, emotional process. Its goal is to build shareable understandings of the life experiences of another. Creating verisimilitude or 'truth

like' inter-subjectively shareable emotional feelings and cognitive understandings." The "I" in a story told in the first person is brought to life as the narrative shifts from past to present and from one geography to the next. The artist brings himself to life in an "historical claim" (Denzin, p. 21) facilitated by interviewer and camera. While not initially conceived as a documentary, the process of filming and laborious editing produced a testimonial that resonates as a documentary. Conducting the interview in English and allowing bilingualism to filter through its narration validates the way in which many bilingual speakers communicate in everyday life, sometimes in Spanish, other times in English, or in Spanglish – a mix of both.

These complexities related to funding support, language, and community connections demonstrate that the conceptualisation of art projects as research method is layered with intricate stages of negotiation that precede the actual research proposal. Carter (2007, p. 21) asserts:

The impulse to make or invent something stems, rather, from a growing sensation of silence, of loss, lack, incoherence or absence. The need to draw together what has been scattered apart originates not in the will, but in the realm of Eros; it is the frustrated desire of connection that inspires the recreative act.

Thus, imagination and desire are both integral components of creativity and Carter's assertion strongly resonates in relation to my research project and in particular with the exhibition. The absence of certain resources provoked creativity and solidarity amongst participants allowing new possibilities to emerge. This solidarity is a fundamental characteristic of artistic collaborations. In most cases relationships established through the process of collaboration become integrated within a kinship of practitioners forming the genealogy of one's work and life.

Work with other communities, centres not on English as our common language but on our shared experiences of belonging to communities rendered invisible by a dominant culture. Ironically this sense of dwelling in zones of invisibility is what we recognise in each other.

## Housing Syncretic: En Una Pieza and Performing Culture



**Catalogue cover by Francisca Sallato**

Research using creative methodologies requires dialogue prior to the initial stages of research and continuing until after the artistic project has finished. Intrinsic to creative methodologies is the capacity for action in the present conveyed through the many languages of the arts and the artist's body as a performative subject. Creative collaborations, in turn, truly begin during the first exchanges with other artists and communities.

According to Thomas (2009, p. 85):

[Researching through the practice of making art] is not just doing, but it's a complex informed, physical, theoretical and intellectual activity where public and private worlds meet. Art practice is the outcome of intertwined objective, subjective, rational and intuitive processes. Considered in this way art is a discipline informed by conceptual and linguistic conventions of its culture and history.

These complex processes of the rational and the intuitive, involving artistic metaphors as representations require equality of voice and agency. Artistic collaborations across disciplines and cultures involve cultural and linguistic translations or interpretations. These in turn require establishing common ground where the relational practice of the research can be performed. Australian cultural diversity makes this society resourceful and unique and offers the possibility of artists from a broad community (such as the Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities) to interact with other artists from quite different backgrounds and experiences. But these interactions and collaborations develop over years of exchange and the building of reputations amongst peers.

“Syncretic: En Una Pieza” was welcomed at the *Instituto Cervantes*–Sydney for different reasons. One of them was the fact that I was introduced to Isidoro Castellanos, the Institute Director, by musician Justo Diaz who had over the years gained a reputation as a respected artist. Castellanos was very interested in exhibiting a collection of folkloric instruments that Diaz and his band *Papalote* collected over years of touring and performing in Australia and Latin America. At the same time, through my own cross-cultural connections, I was able to invite Shane Rozario to take part in my project. Rozario is known in Sydney’s world music industry for his work as a photographer. He was the only project member whose background is not Latin American. This was not intentional but circumstantial. His professional approach, photographic aesthetics, and camaraderie gave the project a special resonance and quality.

The original portrait exhibition proposal became a performative research exercise where a mini installation of artwork, photography, videos and performance talks complemented each other within the exhibition space and offered audiences an experience of the work and life of Latin American artists in Sydney never presented in this manner before. All artists involved in Syncretic approached my proposal as a form of collaboration. Collaborations begin as a building up of relationships within ones’ cultural environment and through the connections of one’s creative kinships and in cross-cultural collaborations. Over the years the participating artists build up a professional reputation reflecting a commitment to their practice, their cultures, and to diverse Australian cultures.

“Syncretic: En Una Pieza” showcased the work of thirteen artists working in the visual arts, music, performance, literature, film, graphic design and sound engineering. Five artist portraits and photo-essays were displayed, each accompanied by an English edited version of the artists’ stories. A soundscape with excerpts of interviews, music and poetic narratives

was also included as a constant reminder of the diversity of voices, stories, and language present in Australian cultural context. Painter Abigail Lutzen lent one of her works that is part of a series of paintings exploring the relationship between *Candombe* in Uruguay and the Day of the Dead in Mexican folklore, currently a work in progress. *Papalote* music group lent twenty-five folkloric instruments from the different regions of Latin America, out of a collection of three hundred instruments that the group has assembled over the years. Throughout the month of the exhibition, four lecture demonstrations were presented by the following musicians: Justo Diaz on Latin American and Argentinean folkloric instruments and rhythms, Julio Cienfuegos on Mexican folklore, and Jorge do Prado and Christian Isola on *Candombe*, an Uruguayan music and dance form. The exhibition also featured five short films by the following artists: Alejandra Canales ('A Silence Full of Things' and 'Solid\_ Liquid \_Gas... H2O'), Paulo Alberton ('My Father My Master' and 'Going to the Dogs') and Walter Rojas ('From Hermosillo to Hill End' an interview with ceramist Lino Alvarez Carrasco). A catalogue was also produced in English and Spanish. The exhibition was on displayed from 1<sup>st</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

### **Women-Arts-Politics: A Body of Evidence**

*In the kitchen plays and documentaries are cooked alongside nightly dinners. Over sleepless nights banners are painted. During school pick-ups, on the way home from the park, or pushing a pram back from the supermarket, poetry is written along the footpath. On rainy patches etchings drawn as lullabies soften the afternoon's work. And in the lover's bed a promise is heard.*





**Colombian music presentation at The Institute Cervantes-Sydney**

**Image: Liliana E. Correa**

As a migrant woman working in the arts and education a most evident theme arising from the very beginning of my research project was how Latin American women artists are constructed within Australian cultural contexts and how we contribute to reproducing stereotypes and sometimes commoditising our artistic practices in order to sustain them. If cultural visibility and relevance presents a challenge for Latin American artists in general, representations of Latin American women artists are even more layered with cultural and political complexities. I feel it necessary to reflect on my own experience and that of the Latin American women artists who participated in my research project. As a critical feminist my research approach reflects this stand. However, I believe that an in depth feminist critique on gender politics and gender construction including the contributions of the Latin American-Australian gay and lesbian artistic community should be conducted in the future.

In this section I touch on some common themes arising from the testimonials of painter Abigail Lutzen, installation artist Maria Fernanda Cardozo, and actress Zulema Capielli.

Then, in a different role, integral to my practice as an educator and artist, I reflect on my collaboration with the feminist group Sydney Action for Juárez. This group has been working in Sydney since 2009 to raise awareness about femicide in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

It was inspiring and empowering to interview women artists from my community and listen to their stories of migration and how they continued to pursue artistic careers against all odds. Cardozo, Capiellie and Lutzen come from Colombia, Argentina and Uruguay respectively. They migrated to Australia for very different reasons and at different stages of their professional careers. All three women share a deep commitment and passion for their work.



***“La que se murio de amor”*** by Abigail Lutzen in the artist’s studio. Image by Abigail Lutzen

Lutzen reflected on how working in a childcare centre to earn a living gives her a sense of inhabiting two realities. When I asked her opinion about dropping her fulltime day job and making her work more commercially viable she commented: *"In Uruguay I had the title of visual artist and arts-worker or painter, I was wearing the "artist suit" full time. There is a point where one does not compromise ones' work, because my art is my way of seeing and feeling. It's what I want to do. The first person I must respect is myself. That is why I am a cook...but I also paint."* (Excerpt from edited transcript.) The image above shows one of Lutzen's latest's paintings, inspired on a poem by Jose Marti titled: *La niña de Guatemala*, and later popularised by musician Oscar Chavez, becoming a well known song amongst activists throughout Latin America.

Cardozo's case is very different since she has been in Australia for a shorter time than Cappiellie and Lutzen, is fluent in English, and came with a successful career in Colombia and the United States. Maria migrated to Australia to join her husband and raise a family and is well supported by her network of fellow artists and her family. When we talked about developing her work in Australia and issues of gender and parenting she commented: *"I thought my international career would die when I moved here, but it didn't. So I can now show here and overseas as well. Becoming a parent takes a bit of a toll on your career but it is quite an interesting challenge. Women artists always compete in disadvantage but art itself does not have gender."* (Excerpt from edited transcript.)



**Portrait of artist Maria Fernanda Cardozo, mozaic style for Syncretic exhibition catalogue by Shane Rozario**

In 2009 Cardozo developed “Emuwear”, an installation presented at the Grantpirrie Gallery in Sydney, as a way to honour and become in her own words ‘an Australian artist’. Inspired by the flora and fauna that surrounds her in her new home, she wanted to reflect on her immediate environment. This is an example of the artist’s way of interpreting and interrogating her new adopted culture. Another characteristic I found especially amongst women artists is their capacity for multidisciplinary work and cross-disciplinary engagement.



**Portrait of artist Zulema Cappielli, mozaic style for  
Syncretic exhibition catalogue by Shane Rozario**

In Zulema's case it can be argued that, as an actress, the challenges of developing an artistic career in theatre are perhaps more evidently linked to issues of language, accent, looks and age. Zulema recalls: *"My experience in this country has been complex for issues that all actors from other cultures face. I am Argentinean born from Argentinean parents who have European ancestry, German, Russian and French. To look European and to have an Argentinean accent has been my most difficult barrier to developing my work in Australia. Despite many difficulties I continue to love the profession I cherished as a child. Theatre fulfils my life."* (Excerpt from edited transcript.)

Their stories are not extraordinary. Indeed the very ordinariness of their stories and those of other women I have documented was, for me, their value. Migrating to a country like Australia can offer greater financial stability and security by comparison with, for example, sustaining artistic pursuits in Argentina or Uruguay. But there are other obstacles and issues

one must confront when migrating to such a different culture. For some it might be easier to give up and focus on achieving economic stability. For the women I interviewed no such compromise was possible. Their art is who they are. For them their life and work are intertwined. There is no demarcation between 'full-time' or 'part-time', 'community' or 'professional' practice. The artist's sensibility is always present. She is at work at every moment, picking up children from school or cooking in a childcare centre's kitchen. And as a woman and an arts practitioner I feel the need to document our trajectories and interpretations of our experiences in this country.

In my experience men are more visible than fellow women artists both within our community and in the general society. Even when, as currently in Sydney, there is no shortage of Latin American women artists contributing in dance, music, theatre, visual artist and film, men continue to be front stage. Women work on their artistic careers while at the same time they are heads of families and work in daytime jobs mostly unrelated to their art practice. Our multitasking and skilful juggling of parenting, family, and creative responsibilities makes me think of an article included in a collection edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Analousie Keating, entitled: "This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation" (2002). The book, honouring the 1981 seminal publication of "This Bridge Called My Back", presents a selection of essays from women of colour in academia. The article: "Andrea's Third Shift: The Invisible Work of African-American Women in Higher Education" by King, Barnes-Wright, Gibson, et al, resonates profoundly with our problematic as Latin American women working in the arts and education. Our invisibility is also complicated by what they, framed as the "third shift", a concept that articulates yet another level of invisible contribution by women of colour in academia. The writers used this term as a metaphor to build on the main premise of Arlie Hochschild's Second Shift concept where working-women, after fulfilling their responsibilities in the paid labour force, return home to fulfil the majority of the household duties and family responsibilities. (King, et al 2002, p. 403) This concept touches the core of the problematic of Latin American women artists who, in order to sustain professional artistic careers, hurdle through the difficulties of personal and community public life. For the migrant woman social and familial responsibilities carry double cultural, social and personal implications since in many instances she is not only responsible for her families' well-being in the new culture, but also for the one left behind in their country of origin.

On reflection the idea of a “third shift” takes me back to questions of power relationships, child rearing, cultural responsibilities and imposed sexual stereotypes amongst a number of other issues affecting migrant women artists. All the basic questions posed by the early feminist struggles for equal opportunity and a fair share of roles and responsibilities at a domestic, social or political level come to mind as recurrent themes. I don't see necessary, within the context of this statement, to present statistics to argue that women play multiple roles in society in disadvantage form their male counterparts. Often neglecting their artistic and professional careers they carry the burden of family and cultural responsibilities. Especially when dislocated from their places of origin, community and family often support them through different stages of their family and professional lives. Investigating the ethnic identities through a sociological study of a group of Australian women, of South and Central American background, Zevallos ( 2003) exemplifies the complex dynamics and management of familial life that women deal with as they negotiate and reformulate a particular identification with one or more identities: “The complex relationship between history, tradition and practice embodied in migrant cultures highlights the way in which culture is constantly reinvented through social interaction” (p. 2). On reflection lack of social interaction and stimulating intellectual and creative ‘zones of contact’ contribute to a sort of double invisibility of Latin American women currently working in the arts and academia.

In my short experience in academia I observed that a dialogue involving academic women of culturally diverse backgrounds was not evident. This is also true in relation to theorisation of Latin American women artists and their contribution to Australian cultures. Of course this does not reflect a lack of interest or the absence of such dialogues and that university corridors witness many exciting conversations about potential or current projects. However it seems that the current economic and political environment within universities is not conducive to such dialogue.

To claim silence and invisibility surrounding our artistic or academic work is not simple. Specially in relation to the arts, because, generally speaking, one can say Latin Americans in Australia are appreciated through a variety of commercial enterprises from tango classes to Zumba and culinary experiences from various countries. Latino/as are present in the culture in half shade - *A media luz* - a little bit like the famous tango lyrics: *Y todo a media luz, a media luz los dos, a media luz mis besos, a media luz mi amor...* And everything in half shade, both of us in half shade , my kisses in half shade, my love in half shade...A shaded love relationship, almost clandestine.

I have noticed, especially in Sydney, how the mini Latino/a industry is developing a more commercially sophisticated approach to the tokenistic use of women's' images in advertising. This reminds me of Coco Fusco's premise in showcasing the work of Latinos in the United States. She (2000, p. 2) states: "I wanted to break the tropicalist stereotypes about Latin American performativity and to unhinge the tokenistic approach that characterizes much "cultural diversity" programming, limiting it to the repeated representation of one or two artists".

This is from Fusco's introduction to *Corpus Delecti*, a collection of historical and critical studies of contemporary Latin American performance work in the United States. Her idea of "breaking down a tropicalist approach" matches my desire when year after year I come across another Latin Festival with its folkloristic approach to cultural diversity. The darkest gaze of a free and young "Latina" invite us every year to the few highly contested stages that the Darling Harbour Latin American Festival or the Bondi Pavilion South American Festival offer to Latin American performers. There musicians and dancers are expected to perform for less than minimum wages as the half naked figure of a Rumba dancer exhibits her skills in the courtyard. There is nothing wrong with commercial entertainment and publicity that portrays beautiful women except when they become tokenistic gestures reinforcing stereotypes of the 'Latin Other' and perpetuate exploitation.



Testimonials of women artists show that even for established artists or newly arrived younger artists who see themselves as part of a fluid community with no fixed tags (for example: 'Latina'), the social construction of a exoticised image prevails over a appreciation of the intrinsic value of the art they make, independent of its cultural/ethnic origin. The body of the female Latin American artist is highly immersed in the politics of cultural visibility. At the same time commercialisation of a sexualised image opens professional doors to monetary rewards and community status. Sexuality plays a fundamental role in access to performing spaces and resources. It is essential to critically question ourselves about what kind of visibility we are settling for and how much agency we exercise in the whole business of enacting our "*Latinidad*" in the arts and commercial entertainment world.

I believe that there is a general tendency that presupposes homogeneity of Latin American arts and this of course includes women artists. Being of Latin American origin or decent does not imply instant affiliation to Latin America or a Latinamericanist position, just as being a woman does not imply automatic identification with feminist struggles. One stand does not negate the other in the same way nor should it be assumed to imply knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the diverse cultures of Latin America or an interest in our problematic in the Australian context. Not only are our origins extremely diverse but the ways migration impacts on our personal and professional lives are very different, as are our capacities to deal with these challenges.

Many factors influenced how women position themselves and find their artistic practice in the new culture, from how proficient they are in English and how long they took to learn the language to their reasons for migrating. Women artists daily negotiate their practices and presence within a male dominated scene and creatively develop strategies to overcome their cultural and familial constraints and reclaim terrains historically occupied by men. However, being able to continue one's practice does not equal consistency of practice and eventual recognition or success. Tensions between domestic and professional spaces are present for all women, regardless of ethnic background. Women artists negotiate this daily and it is their creativity and resilience that is their most valuable skill to survive in the new culture.

My friend Diana and I, in casual conversation at a dinner party one night exchanged stories about our first impressions of Australia. We are both Argentineans but she arrived in early 1970's while I arrived in 1984. She and her sister migrated to Australia to join their father but she soon realised she could not stay with him so decided to move to another city. Asking which is the largest city in Australia she decided Sydney was the place to go. "You should go to EL Cabalo Blanco", a friend told her. The name of the tavern led her to expect to find Spanish speakers there, but "El Caballo Blanco" turned out to be a Blacktown pub run by a North American woman who asked her what she was looking for? With guitar in hand and a combination of sign language and broken English she explained she was looking for work. So that same night Diana was centre stage, dressed in full Spanish costume and introduced to local patrons as the latest act from Spain. When she picked up her guitar and started singing Sambas and Chacareras from Argentina the audience responded with enthusiasm. No one complained about the lack of cultural correctness or inappropriate music. Fortunately she was not expected to sing or dance flamenco. The patrons expected a show and they got a night of colourful, exotic entertainment. Today if Diana were to appear on any stage to perform in the same way, the reading of her performance would be very different. Perhaps we have come a long way since then and audiences now would see the event as a post-modern representation of a "Latin Other".

### Creating a Community of Practice



**Detail from Rodney Arujo Moya's painting. Image: Rodney Arujo Moya**

“La naturaleza es una esfera infinita, cuyo centro está en todas partes y la circunferencia en ninguna” Así publica Brunschvicg el texto, pero la edición crítica de Tourneur (París, 1941), que reproduce las tachaduras y vacilaciones del manuscrito, revela que Pascal empezó a escribir *effroyable*: “Una esfera espantosa, cuyo centro está en todas partes y la circunferencia en ninguna.” Quizá la historia universal es la historia de la diversa entonación de algunas metáforas. (“La esfera de Pascal” by J.L. Borges, Buenos Aires 1951)

‘Nature is an infinite sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere’. Thus do the words appear in the Brunschvicg text; but the critical edition published by Tourneur (Paris, 1941), which reproduces the crossed-out words and variations of the manuscript, reveals that Pascal started to write the word *effroyable*: ‘a fearful sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere’. It may be that universal history is the history of the different intonations given a handful of metaphors. (The Fearful Sphere of Pascal, translated by Anthony Kerrigan, 1959)

Borges' fascinating text, in which I can recognise a hint of a particularly Buenos Aires idiosyncratic irony, makes me think about translation, interpretation, and mistakes made when reading and interpreting others. Borges' story also reminds me of one of Rodney Araujo's paintings I saw recently when I visited his studio in Marrickville, Sydney. The image above is a detail of a larger work in progress that the artist began when he was living in Paraguay. He explained to me his thinking behind the use of the tetrahedron and its connection to a theory of colour he is developing. A sphere is the perfect imagined symbol of creativity, representing the universal, a metaphor that makes me think of connectivity across time and space. In my own poetic manner I see the relation between these two very different memories: Borges' story and Araujo's image of the tetrahedron. They stay with me as I reflect on my process of imagining and setting up the Latinamerica en Australia website and the community of practice it is designed to enable.



**Rodney Araujo in the artist's studio, Addison Road Community Centre, Marrickville**

**Image: Abigail Lutzen**

In Araujo's work the inter-relationships between points of contact that give form to the sphere suggest zones of exchange defined by the points of intersection between cultures where new forms and relationships emerge. Borges' search for the precise word reflects the challenge to express our artistic and intellectual purpose through a process of translation from one language to another and from one context to another that can alter our meaning. I chose these two metaphors as a way of making sense of the continuously changing, multi-layered and intensely contested space of the Internet. It is a space defined by diverse users across a spectrum from the technically naive to highly skilled information technology professionals, powerful corporate interests, educational institutions and governments. With limited knowledge of this technological, social, political and economic complexity, I seek to shape a space within it that can serve my creative purpose and that of my colleagues. It is a space where the imagination of artists can be transposed and translated to each other and for wider audiences, and in this manner our subjectivities can become agents of change within the cultures of Australia.

### **The art of inhabiting borders**



In spite of an ongoing and long-time collaboration and skills exchange between artists and academics of both continents, limited research has been conducted from an artist's perspective into the Latin American community in Australia. Such research can begin to bring to the foreground and document the contributions and impact of Latin American cultural influences on Australian cultures, as well as enhancing our understanding of how an emerging Latin American Australian identity is formed. It can also be argued that the artwork produced by Latin American artists living in Sydney, in the form of publications, exhibitions, cultural events, performances and music concerts, is in essence the historical account of this contribution. They inscribe on mainstream Australian cultures other forms of practicing and understanding the world. But there have not been previous attempts to produce an archive of materials that can be easily accessed or referenced by academics and others interested in Latin American cultural studies in Australia.

As a Latin American living in Australia I see this professional doctorate as a contribution to what Mignolo and Dussel call the “transmodern space and decolonial critique”(2007 pp 25-46). Within this space artists and academics can engage in critical dialogue. In my view one way to approach this dialogue is by facilitating a deeper understanding of the complex way in which cultures interact and how artistic articulations play a fundamental role in facilitating the multiple ways in which these interactions occur. For these scholars border zones are where new alternative forms of reason can emerge. They argue that *“la genealogía del movimiento decolonial es planetaria y no se limita a individuos, sino que se incorpora en movimientos sociales”* (p.34) [The genealogy of the decolonial movement is global and is not limited to individuals, rather it incorporates social movements. My translation] To me this means that the understanding of cultures and of collective and grassroots work is fundamental to this discussion.

Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel (2007) argue that: *“Un componente básico del grupo modernidad/colonialidad es la crítica de las formas eurocéntricas de conocimiento. Según Quijano y Dussel, el eurocentrismo es una actitud colonial frente al conocimiento, que se articula de forma simultánea con el proceso de las relaciones centro-periferia y las jerarquías étnico/raciales.”* (p.20) [The core component of modernity/coloniality is the critique of eurocentric forms of knowledge. According to Quijano and Dussel, eurocentrism is a colonial attitude towards knowledge that simultaneously articulates in relationships of centre-periphery and in ethnic-racial hierarchies. My translation.]

To shift this perspective is to alter the terms of the conversation, that is, to be able to voice different interpretations of histories. In reasserting our subjectivities as Latin American artists in Australia we must understand our roles and responsibilities and engage in critical practice as subjects with agency, not as passive receivers or cultural curiosities. Latin American artistic expressions, dislocated from the larger Australian cultural context by incorporation into special festival events, degrade the very concept of culture and deny the artists their right to express, produce and articulate themselves as a dynamic part of this culture. It seems that in the creative industries ‘multicultural arts’ are, as Moreira states, reduced to an administrative category rather than being respected as viable cultural and economic expressions that need to be supported. If cultural and artistic articulations, whether by Latin Americans or others, are seen merely as a process to be packaged for commercial gain or to serve transitory government policies, other less dominant creative voices are denied expression. Moreira (2001) asserts, “Globalisation once

accomplished, dispenses with alternative localities of enunciation and reduces politics to the administration of sameness." (pp.36-37) I believe that structural transformations at the level of public cultural institutions are needed, but as practitioners we must also play a proactive part in this transformation.

A popular folklore song by renowned Uruguayan musician Alfredo Zitarrosa says: "*crece desde el pie, musiquita, crece desde el pie...*" 'music grows from the feet up', that is, from connection with the land, with place and its people. Culture to me must organically grow from this place. Thinking about culture from 'the feet up' opens up a space where transformative interventions such as the Latin America en Australia on line community of practice can emerge. This web mediated space fits Mignolo's (2001) concept of 'semiotic resistance'. In his words: "(...) *Nos referimos a una resistencia semiótica capaz de resignificar las formas hegemónicas de conocimiento desde el punto de vista de la racionalidad posteurocéntrica de las subjetividades subalternas*" (p.20) [We refer to a position of semiotic resistance capable of resignifying hegemonic forms of knowledge and validation of a post- Eurocentric rationality of our subaltern subjectivities. My translation] This professional doctorate, embedded in my community and artistic practice, is situated within this framework, validating my professional and personal experiences and allowing a space for professional growth.

I wanted to understand what I have witnessed and experienced for over twenty-seven years in Australia - to see my community, its cultural and folkloric events, its fundraising events, its move towards an increasingly commercialised concept of cultural products, through different eyes. My vision has expanded, my eyes have widened as I have found a deeper understanding the artists' language. Sydney-based Uruguayan musician Jorge do Prado talking about the meaning of drums in Uruguayan folklore at one of the seminars I organised in 2010, explained that the drum beats are calling to the ancestors, to the other side of the ocean where the slaves came from (Africa). The ocean is *Yemanya*, carrier of history. She is the ocean of memory. *El toque de tambor es una convocatoria* - a corroboree-  
The drum bits are a call, when musicians play they are one with the drum beat, a universal language bridging continents and ages. They connect past to present and land to land. Thus the responsibility of the artist is not to forget.



**Jorge do Prado sharing the stage with fellow musicians from Morocco, Portugal, Uruguay and Argentina, Café Carnivale, 2010. Image: Abigail Lutzen**

Between Australia and Latin America is the interstice, a liquid mutable space which carries messages and stories and, through the artist's work, brings across the representation of collective imagination; a new narrative that re-inscribes itself in a new cultural context. How I narrate myself in this space is directly related to how I engage with others through my work and story. Scott's (1991) affirmation that: "It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (779) provided me with an anchor to sustain my belief that, as individual artists, we can provoke critical thinking and affect the notion of collective identity. In this manner we can work towards the decolonisation of thinking and deconstruct engrained ideas about culture. As a Latin American, this is how I see my contribution to the collective Latin American migrant imagination and the forming of a new identity in the Australian context.



## Art-activism



**Detail of "Ofrenda" by Abigail Lutzen, created for Sydney Action for Juárez first artistic and cultural activity responding to an international call to raise awareness about the killing of women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Image: unknown**

In 2009 I received an email message from Mexican artist and activist Pilar Aranda calling for participation in a month of art-activist events to bring the issue of femicide in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to international attention. Femicide, a term coined by Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagarde and used by feminists in Latin America to signify the murder of women for being women. It is not a term widely used in this country and generally speaking Australians know very little or nothing about this issue. Even feminists and comrades from left organisations who are aware of drug related violence in Mexico have very little or no knowledge of what is happening in Mexico.

The original email to artists and activists around the world was the catalyst that brought a friend and myself together again after many years of absence from the activist scene. In casual conversation at one of Café Carnivale's concerts we decided to respond to the Mexican

artists' call. Using our own networks we set up a meeting to begin organising two main events during March 2009. Our objective: to create a presence at the International Women Day march of that year and organise a fund-raising concert that would bring together Australian and Latin American musicians and dancers. Our first meetings were held in the studio of musician Justo Diaz at the Addison Road Community Centre, Marrickville. They were attended by anthropologist Pilar Angon and translator Andrea Ballesteros, two young Mexican women who just migrated to Australia, musician Jeannie Lewis, poet Eileen Haley, journalist Penny O'Donnell, writer Jacquie Baswell, sociologist Raewyn Connell, painter Abigail Lutzen, activist Rosarela Meza and myself. All members have a direct and strong connection with Mexico and a history of artistic, academic and political practice that made them respond to our initial call. At a more personal level the disappearance and brutal murder of women, and their families' desperation about their situation, touched me deeply and revived memories of my youth. Growing up during one of the most brutal dictatorial regimes in Latin America and belonging to a working class family struggling to make ends meet, I knew the fear and insecurity of gratuitous violence and abuse. The helplessness one feels living injustice day in and day out when family members, neighbours, school friends and boyfriends are constantly at risk or disappearing.

To me Sydney Action for Juárez (SAFJ) represents a political stand and through my professional practice I can safely contribute to this cause. From our early meetings I realised that the strength of our group resides in the diverse skills, experiences and professions of our members. All of these qualities are essential for the successful running of the group and production of activities. An example of this was the production of a DVD featuring a presentation by Professor Raewyn Connell on masculinities to which she added the topic of femicide and the work Sydney Action for Juárez is doing in support of the women and relatives of Ciudad Juárez. The DVD was produced in English and Spanish and sent to the 2011 conference "*Vida y Resistencia en la Frontera Norte*" held in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. This is a clear example of the potential that resides in multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practices. Over the last three years SAFJ has brought the discussion of femicide to the foreground through art activism, conference presentations and publicity in mainstream media.



**Juárez Quilt by Eileen Haley. Image: Rus Herman**

Australia has a long history of art-activism, even if it has sometimes been known by other names throughout the history of political activism in Australia such as agitprop, community cultural development, or cultural action. From the establishment of the Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit (1953-1958) to the latest political schools organised by the Occupy Sydney members, art-activism is present in Australian cultural life through different manifestations. In essence it is the use of creative methodologies and art-based activities to represent a different vision of an unfair or unjust reality.

The group has an open participation policy about the inclusion of men as members, but the participation of men has been mainly through collaboration at particular events rather than direct involvement in the running of the SAFJ's business and activities. My earlier training and experiences in popular education and cultural action has shown me the effectiveness of creative methods. And as one of the artists involved in setting up the group and coordinating and curating the main artistic events, I consider this work directly related to my academic research project. As Augusto Boal argued through his work and life, the personal is political, and this is how I see my professional and artistic life.

All of our work can be accessed through the Sydney Action for Juárez Facebook page and the Latinamerica en Australia web site.

### **Cyber Borderwork**

The culture of the network society is a culture of protocols of communication between all cultures in the world, developed on the basis of a common belief in the power of networking and of the synergy obtained by giving to others and receiving from others. (...) It is the process by which conscious social actors of multiple origins bring to others their resources and beliefs, expecting in return to receive the same, and even more: sharing a diverse world, and thus ending the ancestral fear of the other. (Castells 2004, p.40)

From the beginning stages of my candidature until the completion of the exhibition phase of the research, this journey positioned my practice within the space of digital humanities. But this is a complex interplay between technologies, cultures, and economics that condition the evolution of the dense and potentially transformative patterns of information flow across the planet. Critical Internet theory (Lovink 2002, 2005, 2008, Campanelli 2010, Castells 2004, Rossintler 2006, Munster 2006) gave me a panoramic view of this complex emergent universe with its incredible possibilities to transform the contradictions inherent in our current political and economic systems and its as yet poorly understood limitations. I would like very much to believe in Castells' conceptualisation of the network society as built around a core value of freedom from "fear of the other". He also argues that: "(...) the network society is a global society. However this does not mean that people everywhere are included in these networks. In fact for the time being most are not. But everybody is affected by the process

that takes place in the global networks of this dominant social structure.” (Castells 2004, p.22)

Responding to the possibilities of this technological environment, I ventured into cyberspace. Initially I created a personal webpage using Blogger (<http://lilianaecorrea.blogspot.com/>) that proved to be too limited for what I had in mind and how I wanted the site to function. I realised that a blog essentially allows for streams of personal content that to me seem like endless monologues, and for diary entries dominated by self-referentiality. I saw this space as defined by one-way communication. What I was looking for was an online forum where on-going and deepening relationships between creative practitioners could grow. As a person with a strong inclination to value process and community dynamics in which dialogue is a core component of collective wellbeing and creative activity, my project required a different architecture and functionality with greater flexibility. After consultations with experienced web technicians I subscribed to NING, an online platform that enables the creation of social networks, allowing for the integration of diverse forms of communication and expressive modes. Members of the template-based sites created on NING can develop their own personal pages to present examples of their work in words, images and videos, share information, invite comments, and promote events. The site also allowed me to integrate diverse views and expressions from artists and academics interested in my project. In this more dynamic digital space I became increasingly literate in the medium and learnt to change the site’s architecture and aesthetics to suit my purpose and the needs of the members.

The creation of what was originally called the Latin American Arts Forum on NING (<http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com>) was an obvious development from the previous stage of my research focusing around the exhibition “Syncretic: En Una Pieza”. At first my intention was to create an on-going manifestation of the exhibition with an associated online forum but, as I proceeded, my deepening appreciation of the possibilities of the Internet fed into my thinking about critical borderwork. My focus progressively shifted from utilising a technology-mediated space to reproduce content, to a tool to facilitate connection and dialogue between practitioners. So the notion of a community of practice emerged, a development in my thinking stimulated by conversations with social learning facilitator Kenneth McLeod. Today the site is a work in progress, a living space with the potential to continually reconfigure and adapt to the interests and needs of its members and the diverse contexts within which they work by facilitating cross-cultural conversations from decentred spaces of knowledge. It offers its members four distinct zones of functionality:

- i. A showcase and publication space,
- ii. A forum for exchange of information and sharing of experience between practitioners,
- iii. A space for critical reflection and dialogue, and
- iv. A cultural archive or collective memory.



Home page of the Latinamerica en Australia website

I envisage this community developing as an open gathering of practitioners sharing information and experiences and engaging in critical debate about the artistic practices of Latin American artists in Australia. My intention is that it be informed by a shared understanding that, as a community and as social actors within it, we exist in cultural and

linguistic spaces intersected by others and affected by technology. That is, we daily inhabit spaces of cyber-borderwork.

Connecting to others offers the possibility not only of exchanging information but also skills and ideas. Social networks are essentially meeting spaces that can result in renewed affiliations and lead us to develop further projects. The fluid and fast changing web environments, as Campanelli (2010, p.95) states, are also zones of connectivity: "The Web is crossed not only by flows of goods and ideologies, but also by the relational flows of social networks. The 'myth of interactivity' finds new life in discussions of sociality on the Internet, in which interactive tools are seen to encourage the formation of new social relationships." Even when it seems a utopian endeavour, core values such as decentralised knowledge and the sharing of information are basic components of social networks, as is the dialogic trait of the webspace. Castells (2003, p.3-4) provides a useful definition of a network society as "a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies. By social structure, I understand the organisational arrangements of humans in relations of production, consumption, reproduction, experience, and power expressed in meaningful communication coded by culture."

In spite of the ceaselessly changing nature of this flow, social networks are also defined by the cultural codes of those who create particular contexts within the webspace. The preconditions for me to exist within this space, or topography, are access to the Internet and a functional grasp of basic concepts about how to move within it. Communicating on a daily basis using the information and mobile communication technologies to interact with others, for example through social networks, is becoming simpler. The *Latinamerica en Australia* website is a platform with the potential to create dynamic social and professional relationships between practitioners and cultures. It brings practitioners together and in some cases helps to break down a sense of isolation by facilitating communication with peers. At another level the site offers the possibility of connecting across cultural frontiers.

Campanelli's (2010, p. 97) critique of the way in which the webspace and blog users have become normalised and inoffensive rings true to me as I wonder if the web is truly a platform from which to challenge stereotypes about Latin American arts in Australia. For Campanelli, "Today, starting a blog intended to host political content is about as revolutionary as wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt." In spite of Campanelli's cynicism and the apparent flaws and

contradictions of the web, as a person with basic Internet literacy it seems to me that the power of this medium lies in the context in which it is used. In Latin America, as in other more politically unstable regions, mobile phones are not only used to send Valentine Day messages or the Internet to find the cheapest pair of shoes. These technologies are also widely used with clear political intent, demanding the right to free education, denouncing corrupt and brutal governments, and organising public manifestations of popular resistance. Thus, in spite of whatever manipulations global corporations and powerful governments are engaged in that affect the flows of information across the world, and how these technologies are used by the millions of invisible producers of content, I believe my position is determined by my context. For the moment at least I can use this technology to reflect my immediate context in real time and voice and image myself to my peers in whatever form I choose. In this way I can make use of social network and mobile communication technologies to build collaborations for change.

Latinamerica en Australia offers enormous possibilities through its creative engagement with the potentialities of the webspace: its relationality across time and space, its dialogical characteristics, and its core values of sharing knowledge and information. The community of practice the site fosters also aims at capturing cultural and artistic work that otherwise may be lost due to the nature of our transient community and because some of our collaborative expressions arise from spontaneous encounters or bring forth inherently ephemeral products. It offers the space for reflexive autobiographical narrative to emerge and for the artist-educator-researcher to engage in an ongoing dialogue with a larger and more complex cultural milieu. In contrast with other social networks such as Facebook, our emerging community of practice is grounded in a collective enquiry with a creative and thus potentially transformative purpose. It is a utopian territory where no passport is required, only a creative passion and a desire to contribute to the flow of ideas with diverse and critical views.

One fundamental value supporting the community is collaboration and dialogue that allows us to expand and enriched our original ideas. The issue of collective work and ownership of ideas against the concept of individual authorship is one tension that emerged as I began this project. The collective nature of the approach to creative work that underpins my methodology presented some difficulties and made me reflect on creative processes and values within a cultural context that prizes individualistic expression while homogenising cultural products. As the site convener I must grapple with these issues in practice as I manage and circulate information and gather specific material related to the community's



interests. I facilitate conversations around selected themes and curate the site's main pages. As a creative writer the site also offers me the possibility of using bricolage combining images, sounds and poetic narratives that reflect and express my experiences as a cultural worker in this country. It provides me with a point of reference regardless of where I am located geographically; it offers me the potential to renew affiliations for future collaborative work; and it provides me with inspiration and stimulates my thinking at a creative and intellectual level. It is a space where I can "hang out" without having to explain myself and that gives me a sense of continuity and connection to peers and culture. But I establish the site not only as a personal but also as a collective space.

The Latinamerica en Australia community of practice is one possible response to the challenges and demands of creative practice in a particularly challenging historical moment. It is a constantly evolving space, an open-ended question, an imagined community containing movement and song.

### **The Portfolio**

This portfolio consists of a combination of artistic and academic explorations

about Latin American artistic practices in Sydney and the politics of cultural visibility. I use auto-ethnographic and creative texts though out the portfolio directly reflecting my practice as an educator and artist. The portfolio consists of the following sections and items:

#### **Section A: Cultural Visibility and Memory**

In this section I explore the themes of cultural visibility and the role that memory plays for Latin American migrant artists. It consists of an academic, "El lugar de la Memoria-Where memory Lies", and documentation of the exhibition "Syncretic: En Una Pieza". The exhibition included testimonials from Latin American artists in Sydney, a catalogue and one testimonial in DVD format.

#### **Section B: Women-Arts-Politics**

This section is dedicated to the use of artistic practice as methodology for cultural research. With a focus on women arts and activism and my personal artistic contributions as a founding member of Sydney Action for Juárez, a feminist collective that works raising awareness about gender violence and in particular educates the Australian public on the issue of femicide in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. Included in this section are: "Artistic Practice

as Methodology for Cultural Research” academic article, “Los Sentidos de la Noche” cultural work submitted for publication and the documentary play “Mujeres de Arena – Women of Sand” produced for SBS radio, Spanish program.

### **Section C: Building a Community of Practice**

This section corresponds to the development of a digital habitat that can be use by members of the community and those interested in arts, politics and culture of Latin America and Latin American Australians. It looks at concepts of border works within the new technological environment. Includes the academic article “Latin America en Australia: Online and Off Centre” submitted for publication and the ongoing moderation of the Latin America en Australia social network. The site can be accessed at:

<http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com>.

The NING platform has certain limitations and I envisage in the future migrating the site to a friendlier platform where I can incorporate a Spanish and Portuguese language specific section in order to widen participation.

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## SECTION A: CULTURAL VISIBILITY AND MEMORY

### **Introduction**

In this section I explore, through the experience of the Latin American diaspora in Australia, the role of artistic practice and memory in facilitating an artist's transition through migration and exile; how emigrant artists make sense of their new culture through their practice; how creative expression in turn provides emotional and psychological support for the rest of the migrant community; and the ways artists contribute to developing a Latin American-Australian identity and interact creatively with the broader Australian cultures. I discussed this theme in the academic article titled: "El Lugar de la Memoria – Where Memory Lies" published in *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, Vol.7, No. 2 (2010). This article can be access at the following sites:

<http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/portal/article/view/1348>

and Australian cultures and the

[http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com/profile/01h81r22lhq5r?  
xg\\_source=profiles\\_memberList](http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com/profile/01h81r22lhq5r?xg_source=profiles_memberList)

This section also includes a professional practice report in the form of the exhibition entitled: *Syncretic: En Una Pieza*. I developed this exhibition and associated activities as methodology for my research project. It aimed to raise the cultural visibility of Latin American artists working in Australia and at the same time stimulate discussion about how the artists' practice is positioned in a new cultural context. The main body of the exhibition was a series of artists' testimonials presented as photo essays and portraiture. A night of performance and three lectures on Latin American music presented during June 2010 at the Institute Cervantes Sydney accompanied the exhibition. I also produced a catalogue and a DVD testimonial of ceramist Lino Alvarez Carrasco. Photographic documentation, the catalogue, and the DVD can be accessed through the Latin America en Australia website.

## ***El lugar de la memoria: Where Memory Lies***

**Liliana E. Correa, University of Western Sydney**

*The Victim Speaks:*

*Labelled as 'the femme from the South of this Border'*

*The Woman Latin other*

*The Mother Single Lover*

*The lover: plural and fluid*

*Sometimes more the mother than the woman*

*Sometimes more the lover than the mother*

*Never-the-Less nor the-More*

*Always Mother Always Woman Always Other*

*Then with that 'sudden contraction' in a split of soul and a second of pain: she, the whole of who she has to become, arises from memory, place and responsibilities. From a minuscule and obscure sphere of silence, and salivating over her own body, she awakes to one word while the South of her heart, in an incommensurable and transcultural sound, calls to her: toc toc toc ... with the wisdom of generations and latitudes breaks the silence and speaks in tongues.*

*Image 1. Viajes: Taking my mother's ashes to Mar de Cobo, Buenos Aires, August 2008, photographed by L. Correa.*

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**Then where does the story begin?**

The longing for the most familiar takes me back every time to a repetition, a reenactment of some sort. I rehearsed over and over those daily rituals with my own children trying to reconstruct my version of what was part of my childhood's memories, extending myself through what I know best in this, our new context. Memory, belonging and continuity based on history and those unthinkable events, somehow unnamed that stay somewhere: they will get re-told, over and over again, letting the storyteller continue to unravel and recuperate moments.

Memory gives us context and place, a geographic and historical location with references to the past. At the same time memory places us in an active present, making my actions relevant to this here and now in a space of absolute belonging. Perhaps this is why we, migrants repeating our millennial customs with a sense of attachment, continue to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary so a story then must be told. Within this space are conflicting desires and responsibilities, and constant negotiations take place; here is where memory plays an essential role mediating between geographic and imaginary homes.

For Bennet 'sense memory is about tapping a certain kind of process; a processes experienced not as a remembering of the past but as a continuous negotiation of the present with indeterminable links with the past. The poetics of sense memory involve no so much *speaking of* but *speaking out* of a particular memory or experience—in other words speaking from the body *sustaining sensation*' (2008: 38). Through my own process of 'speaking out' selected memories, I rebuild as an affective construction a space that contains me; only then this 'space' can be named and pronounced in English and Spanish alike: 'home/*hogar*.'

I purposely construct a mise-en-scene: objects, books, toys, newspapers, photographs or paintings, kitchen utensils, materials and clothes laden with traces of our stories, constant references to what is to come for my children and I, our memory of our culture. Nevertheless, while these reconstructions are dynamic, memory is not static. Eventually my children will add or delete bits and pieces as they create their ownership of their cultural context. In the meantime our present space resembles the most familiar of past places, making us feel contained and secure, in particular when what waits on the other side of the door is, at times, incomprehensible.



In *A Lover's Discourse*, Barthes writes:

Language is a skin: I rub my language against the other. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tip of my words. My language trembles with desire. The emotion derives from a double contact: on the one hand, a whole activity of discourse discreetly, indirectly focuses upon a single signified, which is "I desire you" ... on the other hand, I enwrap the other in my words, I caress, brush against, talk up this contact, I extend myself to make the commentary to which I submit the relation endure. (1990: 73)

Reflecting on Barthes's fragments that form his structural discursive portrait brings me to a justification, and to my own linguistic repertoire: the language I own and its intrusion into the domineering English-academic language. My language as a site of loved metaphoric games: 'Language is a skin' and a skin is what you see, seeing is what I speak: of—from—at. I then speak my skin. Because my language is 'I,' English cannot be allowed to overwrite me. My language makes me visible, and every time I trip over mispronounced words and wrong spellings, my subalternity is reiterated. Nevertheless to be heard, seen and understood I must attain the voice of another. My proposition, then, is to explore an inter-language in an attempt to reconcile both languages: English and Spanish and a creative academic practice. But Barthes continues: 'I cannot write myself ... what, after all, is this "I" who would write himself? ... All I might produce, at best, is a writing of the Image-repertoire; and for that I would have to renounce the Image-repertoire of writing—would have to let myself be subjugated by my language' (1990: 99).

In a self-reflective manner I want to show the role memory plays as psychological and emotional sustenance. And through examples from Latin American Australian artists' testimonials, I want to demonstrate how memory also permeates the migrant/exile artists' work.<sup>1</sup> In *Emphatic Vision* Bennett (2008: 11) argues that the 'affective quality of art' contributes to understanding trauma and loss. In my experience, art has the capacity to change perceptions by triggering reflection and understanding about others. Artistic practices help to alleviate a sense of fracture and isolation by reasserting their maker's identity, and by facilitating a transition between cultures as well.

I felt seduced by the storyteller role and a strong desire to document the stories of artists I have encountered since my arrival in Sydney in 1984. Toni Morrison's analysis of her role as a writer, and in relation to the slave narratives, autobiographies and memoirs,

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<sup>1</sup> The term artist refers to those people who have managed to sustain art practices, whether or not these provide them with a source of income or fulltime employment in this sector.

clearly showed me that what gives us access to artists' lives is found in the intersection between histories, memories and imagination. She states:

The exercise is also critical for any person who is black, or who belongs to any marginalized category, for historically, we were seldom invited to participate in their discourse even when we were its topic. Moving that veil aside requires therefore certain things. First of all I must trust my own recollection. I must also depend on the recollection of others. Thus memory weights heavily in what I write in how I begin and what I found to be significant ... these "memories within" are the subsoil of my work. But memories and recollections won't give me total access to the unwritten interior life of these people. Only the act of the imagination can help me. (1990: 302)

The artist's work is the material representation where the factors that make the work unique and express the artist's identity and visibility can be found. Writing in both languages creatively is one form of reflecting on and analyzing our experiences.

### **Where memory lies**

Memory dwells in objects, informs our attitudes and stimulates our senses. Aided by material and symbolic memory, migrants reconstruct and recreate an idea of 'home.' At the same time, this cultural memory, when perceived by others, may generate certain expectations about the kind of artwork or performance that artists from a Latin American background are supposed to produce.<sup>2</sup> For example, some artists were prey to a private entrepreneurialism that took over the spaces and activities born out of culturally specific needs, not necessarily commercial ones. This commercialization or privatizing turned potential spaces for transformative interventions into exercises in the management of difference, one which sustained borders of 'otherness.' To challenge these notions and demarcations, cultural productions must be articulated in such a way as to be relevant to contemporary Australian audiences. As Bal notes, reflecting on borders, identity and exile:

Borders are not lines but spaces- territories that are contested and fought over, but shared spaces nonetheless .... Some forms of occupation (colonialism, for instance) can generate a mode of resistance that may enhance survival. In a more cultural dynamic, the negotiation of borders can also be a model for interpretation .... Practices of occupation, resistance, and interpretation-are all forms of negotiation. (2008: 10)

In Bal's understanding, borders should not be seen as dividing lines but as places of negotiation and exchange. In my view artistic expressions are a mode of negotiation. Bal also refers to the fact that experiences such as exile assault the relationship between place and person, and produce strong emotions, such as nostalgia (2008: 26). Our

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<sup>2</sup> I am using the term Latin American to refer to people coming from Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America and who reside in Australia.

memories feed this emotion, in many cases giving impetus to imaginative and creative work. Cohabiting that borderised place are grief and the irrecoverable loss of place, dislocation, frustration and pain. But it is not enough to inhabit this space: it also requires a capacity for a constant transformation and self reinvention, like that represented in the work of migrant-exile artists.

Homi Bhabha, reflecting on the Mexican American Guillermo Gómez Peña's performance work, states:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia of living. (1994: 7)

Some Latin American artists in Australia have moved between disciplines and commercial and artistic contexts, enabling them to continue their artistic explorations and, in turn, renewing themselves and their artwork. Many immigrant/exiled artists approach their work in a multidisciplinary manner, since becoming fluent in new artistic expressions and learning to negotiate across sectors is a necessary survival skill. Multidisciplinary practice and cross-cultural engagement have offered opportunities for many Latin American artists to develop their skills and aesthetic approaches in Australia.

### **Lino Alvarez Carrasco: La Paloma**



Image 2. *Lino Alvarez Carrasco. En el banco: La Paloma*, photographed by L. Correa, 2009.

Mexican potter Lino Alvarez Carrasco is an example of an artist who moves between

commercial and artistic fields successfully. In April 2009 the filmmaker Walter Rojas and I visited Lino at La Paloma Pottery in Hill End, NSW, for the purpose of documenting his story and work. During our conversation Lino recounted one of his recent experiences, a collaboration with the painter Garry Shead. Between 2000 and 2006 Shead produced a series of etchings inspired by the poems of Ern Malley, a made-up literary character from the 1940s. These formed the bases of Shead's paintings on urns made and designed by Lino. This collaboration is an example of a successful and creative partnership between a potter who utilizes traditional techniques learnt in his home country, Mexico, and one of Australia's most acclaimed lyrical figurative painters.

When recounting this experience Lino talks about how, after completing a number of urns for Garry to paint on, they both agreed that the urns as designed were not working adequately to translate the emotions depicted in the paintings inspired by Malley's poems. After playing around with different options, for example, severing the tops or cracking and sculpting parts of them, they came to the conclusion that the work had to be done all over again; so in ritualistic mode all the urns were destroyed and buried, and they started the next morning afresh. Lino agrees that the creative process mediates the intensity of artistic collaboration. In the same way artistic processes are the artists' language, creative articulations that mediate between the artists and mainstream culture. These collaborations are productive because what might for some people be a cultural border that prevents dialogue, is for others a meeting space where creative encounters produce previously unforeseen work.

In the introduction to *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha urges a move away from:

narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments and processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1994: 2)

Listening to Lino's stories gave me insights into how negotiations take place in 'in between spaces'; at the same time they are material proof of how artistic practices can make powerful interventions that challenge cultural representations. Colonial discourse may attempt to place Lino and his work within reach of 'dependency on the concept of "fixity" in the ideological construction of otherness' (Bhabha 1994: 66). As Bhabha explains, racial classification through stereotyping is a necessary component of

colonialist discourse, for ‘the construction of the colonial subject in discourse and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference-racial and sexual’ (1994: 67). When Lino arrived in Australia in 1982, his intention was to live off his work as a potter and contribute to his new culture by facilitating an appreciation of ceramics as an art form—in his own words, ‘subir el nivel de la cerámica como forma de expresión artística’ (to elevate ceramics as another form of artistic expression) (phone conversation 6 April 2009). While filming his testimonial Lino recalled his experience as a new arrival and his first job as a potter:

I was determined to live off my job as a potter, so each morning I would look through the job vacancies section of the Sydney Morning Herald, they were saying to me you must be crazy- a potter! You wouldn't get a job as a potter here. There are no potters in this country, you know? This went on for 8 or 10 days and one day I say to [my father in law] you won't believe it but look at what this says: “potter required” and he couldn't believe it either! ... I went there ... I asked where is the kiln? That is not the job she said, the job is you are going to be seated here in front of the window with a lump of clay and you are going to make pots, but make the pots really slowly. I suddenly realised oh no! I am going to be on show here to attract people into the gallery. At the end of the day I had made all these pots and asked her are we ever going to burn them, oh no, no, destroy them and pack them tightly into the bag and tomorrow when you came back wedge the clay and start all over. I stayed for 3 weeks then I quit and we moved to Balmain. (Original spoken in English, Hill End, April 2009)

Artists, in particular those perceived as ‘belonging to another culture,’ must manage a fluid existence in order to sustain their practice in commercial and mainstream artistic spaces. This fluidity creates dissonance and tensions that challenge or question one's sense of identity. For the artist whose identity is strongly linked to the place of origin, memory is an anchor and a source of inspiration, intrinsically connected to self-representation.

Susan Engels's work on memory and context clarifies my understanding of the strong presence of memories I see at the core of new work by Australian Latin American artists. Engels explains why in memory and recollections one must always be the protagonist portraying a positive image, helping in this way to defuse conflict: ‘We use the process of memory to reduce dissonance. If we are always working to maintain a positive and consistent self concept, then one of the main ways we can do this is through the stories we tell about what happened ... Recollections of the immediate and distant past allow us to reduce dissonance and maintain a positive self-concept’ (1999: 45). In hindsight I recognise that continual questioning helps this process. Expressed in day-to-day interactions, questions that are asked of us circle around the language of origin, the year of arrival, and the reasons for living from our artistic practices versus

merely practising a 'hobby.' Once territory is marked by borders, different questions arise that tend to be more inclusive, indicating superficial interest and appreciation of our expertise about everything to do with our countries of origin, from cooking to sports and politics (see Coronado 2003: 117). The host country's questioning of our cultural origins not only creates dissonance but sustains a sense of otherness, constructing us as ethnicised subjects, ensuring that our professional choices, identities and ethnicities become the focus of debate, rather than the work and histories affecting our personal and professional life.

For Arias, we are performed into being ethnicised subjects:

By means of performance and in this reiterative re-enactment of our culture, within a space dominated by other more powerful groups, [we] sustain a collective identity ... Ethnicity is constructed performatively and functions metonymically. Ethnic performativity is a function of the reiterative practice of regulatory discursive regimes that control the formation of personal and collective identity' (2001: 81)

Reenactments and interpretations of my own 'Latinamericanist' self have similarly required a participatory audience. To call oneself Latin American in Australia implied in the 1970s and 1980s that one was an expert about some cultural form or another. If one did not play guitar surely one could dance tango. A different dish must be cooked each week in order to merit the title: 'expert.' But if unable to deliver the dish or the entertainment, we Latin Americans became prolific lovers and, in true revolutionary spirit, embraced the Sydney Latin Myth, roaming the streets of the city into the early hours.

Alongside the ongoing reconstruction of ethnicity in and outside our personal-familial spaces, memory plays a crucial role in the reconstruction and sustenance of identity. As Willis asserts:

Cultural identity is certainly about the maintenance of the self as a separate and viable force, irreducible to institutional role, ideological definition or dominant social representation. But the meaning making involved is not free and open but intrinsically framed and constrained, as well as enabled, in specific and contingent ways, by powerful external structural determinations. (2000: 4)

Memory is dynamic; it carries and plays distinctive social and cultural functions and makes past histories relevant and contemporary, while offering another dimension of understanding to the act of ethnic performativity, particularly in relation to art practices. The relationship between memory, cultural self or identity, and ethnicity is complex,

and further modulated by displacement from one's culture. Whether one is a migrant, traveller or exile by choice or force, many possible 'structural determinations' are at work in these relationships. Observing and challenging those determinations is one way of understanding the importance of self-representation for Latin American artists in Sydney.

Gabriela Coronado, reflecting on the emotional sustenance required by migrants, argues that memories play an undeniable role in sustaining a sense of self:

La importancia de los recuerdos es innegable, y en el contexto migratorio adquieren además un valor central como sustento emocional, para uno mismo y para el reforzamiento, o no, de los vínculos con nuestros espacios sociales y afectivos. Representan un anclaje con nuestro pasado y nos conectan con aquellos que se quedaron.

The importance of memories is undeniable, and within the context of migration they acquire a central value as emotional sustenance, to oneself and as reinforcements, or not, of social and emotional bonds. They represent an anchor to our past and connect us with those who stayed behind.<sup>3</sup> (2009: 1)

Context and interactions in the new environment play an enormous role in remaking artists' life stories and work. Memories also connect us in different ways and at different levels of experience. When the first Latin Americans arrived in Sydney during the early 1970s, they brought with them all the elements of a Greek Tragedy, including the Chorus. That first wave of Latin American migrants left behind countries either at war or under dictatorship. They brought with them cultural traits, culinary customs, traditions, musical instruments and artefacts. Above all they arrived with lived memories and stories, real and fictional. Sydney was ready to see the spectacle, take part in it, pay for it and embrace it from every angle. Newly arrived Latinos realised that to proclaim themselves Latin American exiles and artists was not disadvantageous, and they were not considered 'less professional' or mere amateurs. In the new environment artistic expression was indispensable for facilitating the transition between cultures.

Willis states that everyday creativities and their sensory affects, which penetrate us, can be imagined as a culture 'thinking' for its members; these penetrations guarantee the longevity of the cultural form: 'They are not simply autonomously meaningful in an enclosed and cultural world, but meaningful with respect to context' (Willis 2000: 35). Artistic expressions work as sensory penetrations and at their heart are the memories mapping our histories. Visual, sound, performance and other modes of art-making

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<sup>3</sup> Translations in this essay are mine unless otherwise noted.

mobilize affect, reasserting or validating our memories and identities. As I enter spaces where artists from the Latin American community perform, memory stimulates my senses; even when I feel nostalgic or melancholic I am at ease, at home. The arousal of past memories and experiences softens the tensions emanating from our daily performance of multiple roles. This sensation, a sensual rather than cognitive one, is as personal as it is collective, without necessarily confirming the existence of a common migrant-artist imaginary. Artistic expression reiterates and reasserts a sense of belonging that is normally absent in daily life: proactive cultural interventions occur in the specific spaces that enable a culture to think. There memories lie.

In Sydney and the surrounding region a number of such spaces exist. Located within the Addison Road Community Centre in Marrickville is La Casa Latinoamericana (Latin American Hut), which functions as a cultural and social gathering space. Café Carnivale is run from different venues in the inner city, and in the west and north of Sydney. This world music event is an initiative of its musical director Justo Díaz. He acknowledges that Café Carnivale is a continuation of La Peña, the Latin American Cultural Centre based in Sydney from 1980 to 1994. Another example is Studio 40, established by the painter Carlos Barrios and his wife, in Robertson, NSW.

### **Carlos Barrios: Studio 40**



Image 3. *Carlos Barrios, Studio 40*, photographed by L. Correa, 2009.



Empecé como autodidacta en El Salvador. En 1990 vine a vivir a Australia y entré a la Escuela Nacional de Arte, estuve un año y medio. Sentí que querían influenciarme, yo ya tenía algunas ideas formadas, tal vez por el mismo hecho de haber crecido en la guerra civil, hay ciertas cosas que sentía necesario expresarlas que la escuela las miraba, creo como muy superficiales y para mí eran importantes y luego yo miraba lo que ellos querían hacer y era un poquito aburrido. Entonces formamos un estudio con Darío Palermo, Juan Rosales, Carlos Fimenias y otros artistas. Le pusimos Consortium of the Artists Student Association (CASA) era nuestra casa, en Rozelle, Sydney. Cuatro de Latinoamérica: Darío Palermo, Carlos Fimenias, Juan Rosales y yo. Hoy esta cooperativa tiene dos fábricas con más de 60 artistas, la mayoría Australianos. (Carlos Barrios, Robertson, NSW, 2009)

I am a self-taught artist. I came to Australia in 1990 and entered the National Art School where I stayed for one and a half years. I felt that they wanted to influence me. I came with some preconceived ideas perhaps because I grew up during the Salvadorian Civil War. There were certain things that I felt necessary to express that the School thought were superficial, but they were important to me. Then I looked at what they wanted me to do and I thought they were a little boring. So with Dario Palermo and nine other artists we formed The Consortium of the Artists Students Association (CASA). This was for us our home, in Rozelle Sydney, four of us from Latin America: Dario Palermo, Carlos Fimenias, Juan Rosales and myself. This cooperative of artists today hosts 60 artists in two studios, most Australians.

In El Salvador Carlos attended a Jesuit school where the emphasis was on science rather than arts, but the curriculum also had a strong social agenda. At the age of 18 he decided to become a painter: 'Antes de aprender a leer y escribir ya había elegido mis libretas de dibujo' (Before I could read or write I had chosen my sketching books).

Carlos began taking private lessons with the renowned Salvadorian painter, Ramón Merino, who lived in a nearby neighbourhood. In 1990 he migrated to Australia. Fascinated by trains he would travel from Auburn into the city and, through observation and drawing, started to understand the ways of the city. In response to my question about whether memory is kept alive through his work, Carlos said:

Yo llevo una memoria genética donde hay memorias y memorias, europeas, indígenas de Latinoamérica-Mesoamérica y todas esas cosas me dan elementos nuevos, tengo la memoria de mis padres, de mis ancestros, entonces muchas veces los siento a ellos también, no sé si es una ilusión o una realidad .... Andamos llevando nuestros espíritus y cuando estoy trabajando pienso muchas veces en el pasado y todo eso se queda plasmado. Puedes estar trabajando 5 horas en el estudio y en esas 5 horas que estás trabajando hay memorias, hay deseos, luego hay cosas del presente y todo se va mezclando allí están todos esos elementos y el trabajo va a mostrar todos esos elementos. (Carlos Barrios, Robertson, NSW, 2009)

I carry a genetic memory where there are memories and memories, Europeans, Latin American-Mesoamerican indigenous peoples' memories, and all those things give me new elements. I hold my parents, my ancestors' memories then many times I feel them too, I don't know if it is an illusion or reality .... We carry our spirits and when I am working I think very often about the past and all those elements are portrayed. One can be working 5 hours in the studio and in those 5 hours of work there are memories, desires and other things about the present moment, and it all gets mixed up and your work is going to show all those elements.



Image 4. *El trabajo de Carlos*, photographed by L. Correa, 2009.

This image shows examples of Carlos's work. Entering his studio space in 2009 I felt strongly connected to these and other pieces, in particular his drawings, the black and white free style figurative work as strong as other pieces where bold colours took me back to the depth, strength, and yet subtlety of the colours of the land and landscapes of my country and others I had visited. Creative work allows us to process emotions in creative modes that, in turn, reassert cultural visibility.

### My recollections

*Todo está escondido en la memoria refugio de la vida y de la historia* (Everything is hidden in memory, refuge of life and history). Song by León Gieco.



Image 5. *El Rio: Quilmes, Buenos Aires*, photographed by L. Correa, 2007.

By 1981 in Argentina I had joined the early morning queues of my city's unemployed, attended Teachers College in La Plata, and actively engaged with one of the Socialist parties of Buenos Aires. This was not uncommon practice for a young student, since at the time most Latin American countries were ruled by bloody dictatorial regimes and corrupt governments. In Buenos Aires one was either on the right or the left of politics: being neutral, apolitical or apathetic was rarely an option. After the Malvinas war I agreed to follow some family members who had migrated to Australia. It is not difficult for me to remember those years—full of idealistic activism, love, camaraderie, creativity and political debate, I was perhaps one of the few who, by chance or luck, was untouched by the military, the police or the extreme right that abused, tortured, killed, and made many members of my generation disappear. I carried with me to Australia a highly idealised memory of political-cultural practices, emotional sustenance for reinforcing my identity. As I entered this new culture I sought out spaces in which I could still be an activist in some way or another, and situated myself within a community of expatriates and cultural activists who spoke the same tongue. From 1984 until the late 1990s our common language, rather than English, was predicated on our memory of who we were and how we were to continue our cultural politics outside our countries of origin.

As a newly arrived migrant coming into a contrasting culture with a language different to my own and very different social dynamics, I noticed that the Latin American families I interacted with during my first years in Sydney would repeat the same daily practices as those performed in their countries. During the first year after my arrival I moved between three different households. An ethnographic account of one family would have shown the following. This family consisted of a father, mother and two daughters who attended high school and worked casual jobs. Every morning the family would leave the house after breakfast to attend to their respective activities, the father to the factory, the mother to a cleaning job, the children to school. In some cases factories provided English language courses and there were also other 'English as a second language' courses that migrants attended after working hours. In most cases, however, those working in factories would have learnt Italian first instead of English. Back in the family home Spanish language reigned through the SBS radio, TV programs and local Spanish press. Family conversations covered topics ranging from Latin American politics and show business, family news, and updates from home about neighbourhood

births, deaths, marriages and disgraces. The domestic space was marked by common rituals: unlike the Australian evening meal time of 6.30-7.30 pm, for the usual Latin American family dinner was not served before 9.00 pm. For emergencies and communication in English children became the family's interpreters. Families who came earlier, or around the same time as I did, have expressed to me the sentiment of living in two different 'worlds,' with English beyond the front door and Spanish behind it. Another common practice was to leave the house after dinner and roam the streets in search of spaces to socialize and meet friends. Somewhere in the Northern beaches, for example, Lino Alvarez would walk the streets after dinner in search of the coffee shop, as the musician Justo Díaz did in the 1970s up and down King Street, looking for a space to play with other musicians, or as the painter Abigail Lutzen did in the early 1990s around the streets of Liverpool, in the southwest of Sydney, also seeking a bar or coffee shop. And when the coffee shop, the bar or a book in Spanish was found it was as if a lost family member had arrived unexpectedly, a moment for celebration. A play written, a poem recited or song sung, all became our shared experience of memory in the making a geography traced by all the stories, in which the real, quasi-real and unreal dared to be pronounced in our accents. Most of us encountered a very empty and silent nocturnal city; places of social interaction were scarce and not easy to find for the newly arrived. One image of the city I hold during the early 1980s was an endless set of empty night-time escalators and quiet streets dressed in fluorescent lights. Nevertheless this is not to say there were no bars, clubs and bands where young and not so young Latin Americans would gather for social and cultural interactions of any kind. Most would remember The Taxi Club or The Journalist Club and a few other Jazz venues open until early morning, and coffee shops such as The Piccolo and Badde Manors.

In 1984 my day began with a trip from Petersham to Warringa Mall at 4 am where I earned my weekly allowance as a cleaner. I would finish in time to get to my 'On-arrival' English class at Caltex House in Circular Quay and, at the end of the day, I packed my bag with a bunch of new words, and headed for the Spanish Café on Liverpool Street. Here an irritable Spaniard with dirty finger nails provided me with the most exquisite *chocolate con churros* and, depending on his mood, I could end up being kicked out or offered a glass of free red wine to extend the conversation until closing time. Here I had my first encounters with other Latinos who made me understand the possibility of remaking oneself. There was no chance that facts discussed were going to

be corroborated by anyone, no reason to doubt any story told and, so far away from home in the new land of possibilities, *al mejor postor un impostor!* To the highest bidder comes the best impersonator.

We had them all, the Victor Jaras and Ché Guevaras, true protagonists of revolutionary causes; with our capacity for reinvention, and thanks to so much poetic license and magic realism, we played, dressed and acted such roles. There were times when one had no need to finish a sentence; our interlocutors would conclude it in the most tragic and romantic manner. Romanticizing our 'Latinidad' was not purely up to us; but it was a construction suited to the times and place. Latin America was not totally unknown by Australians, though particularities of language, idiosyncrasies and distinctive cultural expressions and practices were not taken into much consideration in the Australian construction of us 'Latins.' During the 1970s Australians associated with the Trade Union movement, and the Communist and Socialist parties, played important roles in supporting transitions to democracies in Latin America, and many Australian artists and activists supported these causes. There were many stories, most tragic rather than magical.

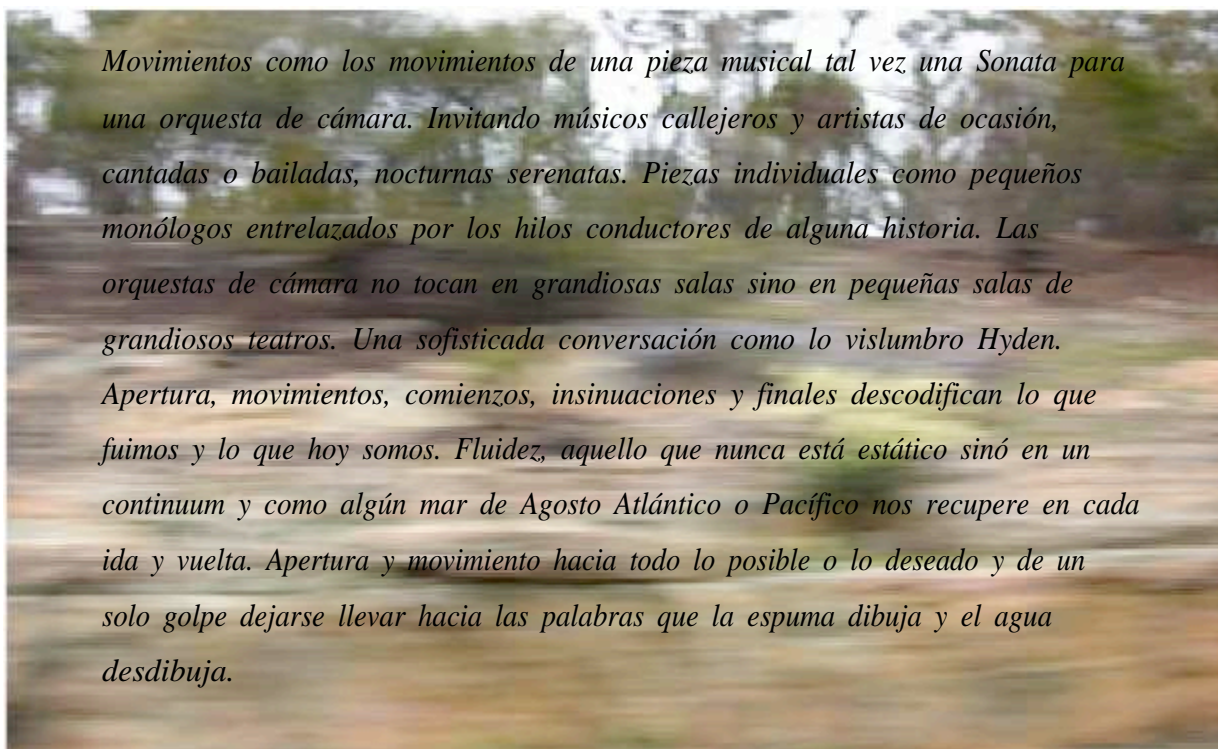


Image 6, *Viajes interiores, Bundanoon*, photographed by L. Correa, 2009.

Movements like those written for a chamber orchestra's sonata, inviting street musicians and occasional artists, danced or sung nocturnal serenades. Individual pieces like intertwined monologues hung by threads of stories from somewhere. Chamber orchestras don't play in grandiose salons but rather in small salons of grandiose theatres. A sophisticated conversation as Hyden might have foreseen. Opening, movements, beginnings, insinuations and finales decode who we were and who we have become. Fluidity, that which is never static rather in a continuum, like Atlantic or Pacific oceans in August, recuperate us in departures and returns. Opening and movement towards what is all possible and desired and with one blow let oneself be carried towards those foam drawn words that the waves will then make fade away. Histories, retold, transformed by present interactions and collaborations rendering place to new forms as in poetry.

**Mario Licón Cabrera: *El Poeta***



Image 7. *Portrait of Mario Licón Cabrera*, photographed by S. Rozario, 2009.

‘Hermosillo City Blues’:

Those nights in Hermosillo; rather than walk  
All the way down to my sister’s place,  
I would sleep under *Yucateco* trees  
On steel park benches, or just over the *mosaicos*  
Of *plazas kioskos*,  
*Like a real loafer*.  
This was nothing; I bypassed the long hike  
In a high risk area.  
Public transport stopped at ridiculous hours.  
There I slept in the city’s core  
Amid the night-birds’ song and cars skidding past  
And some trios rehearsing for a *serenata* nearby. Memories  
Arrived, memories from a distant childhood  
And so on to memories of a non so distant Sydney.  
I saw myself selling catholic newspapers at a cathedral.  
So many big long *marchas* against university *rectores*.  
I saw myself reaching the Palm Beach lighthouse.  
Unpacking a ten-ton truck packed with clay  
At Newtown. Dancing over the ferry  
On the way back from Mackerel Beach.  
I saw myself climbing *El Tepozteco*, the holy mountain.  
Walking through pitch-black nights  
Among *rabiosos perros* and their barking.  
Missing Hermosillo, Sydney, Tepoztlán  
And all at once.  
Missing the nearby the far away  
And the far close.

Mario Licón Cabrera was born in Chihuahua. He worked as a professional photographer and writer, and toured with a famous Mexican performing troupe as a puppeteer before arriving in Australia in 1992 and settling in Sydney. Since then he has continued his literary work. I asked Mario: What does it mean to be a poet? He answered: ‘It is as if I

asked you what does it mean to be alive? One has to breathe, it is who I am as you are who you are and to be alive you must breathe.' His poem, 'Hermosillo City Blues,' shows the complexities at play when memories take us to the many geographical locations along the trajectory of one's life. The transient artist's chronology is never lineal. There is no beginning-middle-end, accompanied by the weight of ancestral physical signifiers and referential points that surrounds our present moment in our present physical space. All the elements drawn by memories sustain us emotionally and psychologically, reassuring our sense of place and identity. In Mario's case, the role of memory summons the past to the present and the complexity of his daily interactions is shown in two languages, English and Spanish.

His poem begins with a recollection, 'Those nights at Hermosillo,' and the reader is prepared to enter a memory that will be expressed in both languages: 'Among rabiosos perros and their barking.' And as the poem and the night evolve we are taken through a nostalgic trip between Mexico and Sydney, a journey that will end in contradictions: 'Missing Hermosillo, Sydney and Tepoztlan all at once. Missing the nearby and the far away and the far close.'

Memory reinforced our sense of place and who we are, in Mario's case his life as a poet, writer and translator. There is a constant tension between who we are, what our work represents, and how that work is valued or taken into account. Who determines how relevant this work is, challenging the artists' identity and how they choose to express and produce their work? All artistic expressions confront some level of resistance, opposition or categorisation. For the writer language becomes another mode of complexity. In most cases Australian Latin American writers are published in their countries of origin, and in Sydney by Cervantes Publishing, a well-known publishing company that, since its founding in 1981, has supported bilingual publications in Australia from Spanish-speaking journalist and writers.

The artist's capacity is to see what is not evident. When we entered this new culture we had to learn its ways, manners and whims. Carlos saw this culture almost as an empty canvas and learnt it through his drawing pad and pencil. Mario sees his physical detachment from his place of birth and his bilingual capacity as enriching him as a writer.



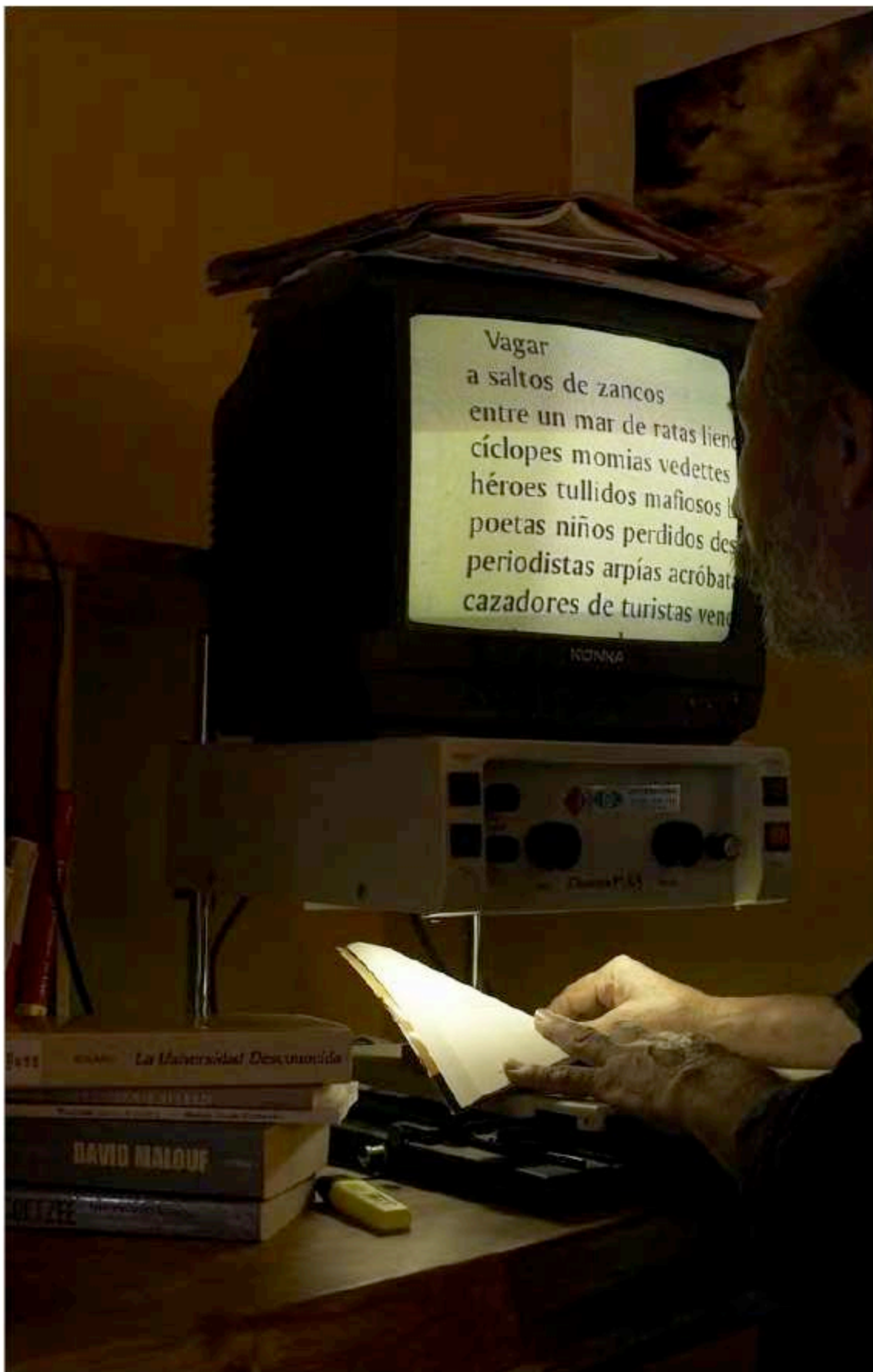


Image 8. *Mario y la máquina de leer*, photographed by S. Rozario, 2009.

**Walter Rojas: *En el ojo de la cámara*—Through the eye of a camera**

Another example of transformation and creativity is the way in which Walter Rojas, a professional oboe player, once in Sydney learned new skills by taking on the camera to document his community's cultural and political activities.



Image 9. *Walter Rojas en La Paloma, Lino Alvarez's studio, Hill End, photographed by L. Correa, 2009.*

Walter was a graduate in music from the Centro Nacional de Artes de El Salvador, and when the civil war pushed him into exile, first to Mexico, he studied at La Escuela Nacional de Música de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Walter arrived in Sydney with his son in 1989. Once here he entered the Conservatorium of Music to finish his Bachelor of Music. I first met him at the studios of Radical TV in Leichhardt, where a group of Latinos had got together to work for 'Romperemos TV,' a series of programs for the Spanish speaking community to be broadcast through Channel 31 community TV.

I had been invited to introduce the Argentinean guitarist Luis Grimaldy; the TV program consisted of interviewing him about his career playing classical and Argentinean folklore music, while Carlos Barrios spontaneously painted to the music. In recent conversations I asked Walter about these early beginnings:

Se inicio en 1994 un proyecto que se llamaba Nueva Imagen en Bankstown Community Housing Association y allí había un fotógrafo Salvadoreño reconocido que había trabajado en los periódicos en el Salvador y le propusieron hacer un programa acerca de la cultura Salvadoreña y no conocía a

otro artista y yo era el único artista en Sydney proveniente del Salvador que había estudiado música y arte el único artista que había era yo- Los demás eran músicos pero no eran artistas entonces éste compadre, Luis Aguilar me invitó a participar del proyecto fotografía y música esa fue la idea central de exponer sobre la cultura Salvadoreña. (Walter Rojas, Bronte, July 2009)

In 1994 a project titled New Image begun at Bankstown Community Housing Association and there was a renowned Salvadorian photographer who had worked in the Salvadorian media and they proposed to him to run a program about the Salvadorian culture. And he did not know any other artist and I was the only artist in Sydney coming from El Salvador who had studied music and art, all the others were musicians but not artists. Then this comrade, Luis Aguilar, invited me to take part in a project involving photography and music and that was the central idea how to display Salvadorian culture.

By 2009 Walter Rojas had collected large amounts of film footage of the Latin American community: political rallies, poetry readings, music, dance, theatre performances and festivals. He negotiated a space of visible existence in which Latin Americans were no longer categorised as ‘hot – medium – mild,’ but rather in relation to one’s professional achievements. After many years of crosscultural collaborations, and projects ranging from mainstream film productions to community events, Walter today is a freelance filmmaker and teacher who, by documenting Australia’s Latin American artistic contributions, provides a different perspective about Latin Americans in Australia. The cultural memories of the Latin American community translates into their artwork and have influenced how mainstream Australians perceive us as a community and as artists. Over the years I have seen numerous innovative approaches by exiled artists to their art practices and to their making sense of being unrooted.

Where is the value in rescuing some of these stories? Reflecting on this, and remembering my own experience and encounters with such a diverse, transient community, I have looked at the role of memory in artistic practice done outside one’s culture of origin. And in an exercise of self-reflection, I have incorporated my own memories as a young migrant in the early 1980s, as well as testimonial excerpts by artists who migrated to Australia between the late 1970s and the late 1990s. To recuperate some of these stories in the form of testimonials allows me to translate a desire to show and express who we are and how we work into a language that the cultural mainstream can understand.

In this way I want to challenge the notion of a fixed ethnic object, while exposing to full visibility Latin American subjects in constant motion, action and change, with memory sustaining our identity. The testimonials I gathered have shown me that artists acknowledge that the memory of place is pivotal in their artwork’s conceptualisation

and production in a new cultural context. Arias claims that testimonials allow us to express our subjectivities in a way that is true to our own modes of expression, since it uses our choice of aesthetics and language: ‘*Testimonios* are often a first attempt to frame a rhetoric of being and to name agency for a particular subaltern group .... Their argument is framed in an ethical insistence on the right of subalterns to be themselves and thus implicitly defends cultural plurality or hybridity. Ethnicity is a language- and power-driven self-awareness’ (2001: 80).

At another level I recognise that Australians have developed an appreciation of different artistic practices and aesthetics. They have come to terms with diverse cultural interventions not directly related to this country’s indigenous history and legacy of colonisation. These cultural interventions, which I call permeations, do not perform ethnicity or simply represent difference or otherness; rather their impact rests on occupying a space of understanding and sustained integrity of practice, which contradict preconceived government agendas and definitions of ethnicity. Bhabha asserts:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The ‘past-present’ becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living. (2004: 10)

The artists’ works are encrypted with their makers’ identities and, therefore, their memories. But these articulations are embedded within a space of present temporality, claiming and asserting a new sense of place and belonging while ‘renewing the past.’ In a sense a story begins in that precise moment with someone picking up the line another left, with decisions to tell and continue the writing.

**Jorge y Marcela: *En el cotidiano arte del hacer*—In the daily making of art**

Jorge Bagnini is the Multicultural Arts Officer for Canberra, actor, theatre director and playwright. Since his arrival to Australia Jorge has created and managed many cultural projects at a mainstream level as well as with the Canberra Spanish speaking community. His productions are in English and Spanish, or with subtitles when necessary. In February 2008 *María de Buenos Aires* was presented at the Canberra Playhouse as part of the Canberra Multicultural Festival. This operetta is the work of



Image 10. Jorge Bagnini y Marcella Fiorillo, photographed by L. Correa, 2009.

renowned Argentinean composer Astor Piazzolla, with poetry by Horacio Ferrer.<sup>4</sup> Producing this work in Australia was one of Jorge and his wife Marcela's projects for a number of years. Their second attempt to introduce Australian audiences to one of the greatest pieces of contemporary Argentine music did not entail mere reproduction of some learnt act or technique. Nor did it mean replaying Piazzolla's love story to his most beloved city, or bemusing audiences with exotic representations. Rather, as Jorge Bagnini states:

Seguimos haciendo lo que sabíamos mejor hacer. El motivo detrás de montar *María de Buenos Aires* o seguir haciendo teatro en Español va más allá de que un recuerdo se realice y se muestre sino es que todos los días nos cuestionan o nos niegan la identidad. (Jorge Bagnini, Canberra, May 2009)

We continue doing what we knew best. The motivation behind producing *María de Buenos Aires* or continuing to make theatre in Spanish goes beyond the realisation of a memory that can be shown. It has to do with the fact that everyday our identity is negated or gets questioned.

When it was finally staged, *María de Buenos Aires* was considered one of the highlights of the Canberra Multicultural Arts Festival. Attending one of the performances, it was impossible not to notice the complexity of what had been achieved. Copyright issues prevented the material from being performed in any other language but Spanish, so the poetry that narrates the story was interpreted for the English-speaking members of the audience, and projected onto a screen.

Ferrer's poems were originally written in *lunfardo*, the slang of Buenos Aires that is

<sup>4</sup> *María de Buenos Aires* premiered at Sala Planeta, Buenos Aires, in 1968.

almost impossible to translate. Nevertheless, despite limited arts funding, Jorge and Marcela invited a personal friend baritone, Eduardo Cogorno, to perform the main role. Eduardo flew to Australia at his own cost. The performance went ahead after Marcela's sleepless nights arranging the material within limited resources. On stage was also the Australian mezzo-soprano Bronwyn Sullivan, the Sydney-based Argentinean actor Alejandro Machurón, Marcela Fiorillo on piano, members of the Australian Chamber orchestra on strings, and a chorus made up of community members who gave their time to the production free of charge.<sup>5</sup>

One audience member mentioned that when he heard on the radio that Piazzola's work was going to be performed live, he decided to travel from his country property on the outskirts of Canberra into the city, since he had been a fan of the work for many years. The audience was a mix of ages and cultures. It was impossible for me to witness such a transcultural experience without thinking about the work's production. I recognised members of the performing troupe, and knew in detail, through my past experiences producing and directing performances in cross-cultural contexts, how enriching and complex these experiences can be. Yet as a member of the audience and community, my feelings ranged from an enormous sense of pride to frustration. I was aware of how the quality of the work could have been improved with better conditions.

These conditions are not always the result of limited funding. If the telling of a story is perhaps the telling of many stories, then Jorge and Marcela decided to unfold one story by means of theatrical and musical language.

## Conclusion

Valuable cultural memories are embedded in the cultural work produced in the Australian Latin American community. Performances, art works, and cultural spectacles and spaces, are symbols of identity directly connected to the perception and appreciation by mainstream Australians of Latinos and their cultural productions. Exiled Latin American artists transform themselves through innovative art practices that allow them, and their communities, to deal and negotiate with a profound sense of being unrooted. The loose mapping in this paper of selected Australian Latin American cultural achievements and stories indicates the extent to which art productions are also

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<sup>5</sup> One unfortunate absence was the *bandoneón*—a type of concertina, and a pivotal instrument in a *tango* orchestra—for economic reasons rather than due to a lack of skilled performers.

testimonials of our community's cultural memory.

*Dónde comienza la historia? La que quiero recuperar y contar sólo por un capricho o una necesidad de sentir algún hilo conductor hacia lo posible en medio de tanto desfase cultural. En los '60s cuando dos misioneros paraguayos visitaron Australia y en casa de Pedro y Susan por primera vez en este país se palpo y se escuchó el sonido de un arpa paraguaya? O cuando a Diana la presentaron en el Caballo Blanco de Blacktown como el último acto de la canción española mientras ella se preparaba para entonar zambas de la pampa argentina? Tal vez la historia comience en todas partes, en el café del español cascarrabias y en Georgina Street donde nació La Peña y con cada "unsound less ideological naïve mistake or assumption" como un quilt Welsh o como un tapiz peruano. Pedazos de historias, matices, sonidos, olores y sabores, que se tejen y destejen con cada muerte en el exilio, con cada partida y en cada llegada. Es aquí entonces y desde este pedazo de herencia cultural en un intento de rescatar recuerdos y vivencias que alguna historia comience.* Does the story begin in the 1960s when two Paraguayan missionaries arrived at Pedro and Susan's house and, for the first time in Sydney, the sound of a Paraguayan harp was heard? Or perhaps with Diana's story when she decided to travel from Argentina to Australia to join her father during the early 1970s? She asked a friend what was Australia's largest city and where she could find work. Landing in Sydney Diana found her way to the Blacktown pub, *El Caballo Blanco*, where a North American woman, the pub's manager at the time, met her. Half in sign language with guitar in hand, half in broken English, Diana embarked on her first job in Australia, and on the same night was introduced centre stage, dressed in full Spanish costume, as the latest act from Spain. Picking up her guitar she begun to sing *zambas* and *chacareras*, folkloric rhythms from Argentina, to bemused audiences who had never heard or seen anything like it. Perhaps the story begins everywhere: with the sound of a harp playing somewhere in Glebe, with Diana singing in Blacktown, with the ill-tempered Spaniard café owner on Liverpool Street, with the birth of La Peña on Georgina Street. Does our story begin with each unsounded naïve mistake or the assumption underwritng the inquisitive and challenging gaze of *others*? Like a Welsh quilt or Peruvian tapestry, pieces of histories, shades of color, smells, sounds and tastes, all inter-woven with each exiled death, with each arrival and departure.

It is here, then, in an attempt to recuperate what was lived, that a story begins. As we

move from one country to another we carry with us a cultural identity, and an idea of place, that enable our creative practices to continue. Memory, dynamic and in interactive dialogue with others, sustains us in this journey. Artists from distinct cultures to the dominant one they encounter in the host country must always validate and justify their locations and choices of art practice. Tensions arise through a constant questioning of one's origins, and skills, which may diminish the relevance of our art work in the context of mainstream Australian culture. Nevertheless, the artists introduced here continue to engage at many levels with both mainstream professional practices and community or grassroots contexts. They are in motion and interaction, transcending culturally specific boundaries, continuing to negotiate our sojourn in this country.

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# SYNCRETIC

enunapieza

Stories from Latin Americans in Australia





Partner organizations are: University of Western Sydney - Centre for Cultural Research, Instituto Cervantes, Sydney and Spanish Community Care Association. This exhibition is a non-profit exercise to reinforce our true commitment to cross-cultural collaboration and dialogue between artists, academia and communities.

# Syncretic: En Una Pieza

Stories from Latin Americans in Australia

Syncretic: *En Una Pieza* is referring to the participants' multifaceted and interdisciplinary practices. This exhibition aims at providing cultural visibility outside pre-conceived ideas regarding Latin American artists' expected performative constraints.

Syncretic is a collaboration between Sydney based photographer Shane Rozario and myself researching and documenting the creative professional achievements of some Sydney based Latin American artists. The use of "Testimonials" allows spectators to enter the very personal space of the artists' stories narrated in sound, visual and written format. Told by those who have over many years contributed in the many languages of the heart to a richer and complex Australian cultural matrix. In this manner also capturing aspects of the community's cultural memory.

Participating artists have been working professionally in Australia and overseas, training and supporting artistic expressions by collaborating cross-cultural as well as multidisciplinary.

Participating artists are: Filmmaker Paulo Albertón, Potter Lino Alvarez Carrasco, Documentary Director Alejandra Canales, Actress Zulema Capielli, Installation Artist Maria Fernanda Cardoso, Musician Justo Diaz, Poet Mario Licón Cabrera, Painter Abigail Lutzen and Filmmaker Walter Rojas.

Photographer Shane Rozario produced in the style of "Mozaics" five of the artists' portraits and a series of photo-essays to accompany the artists' stories. Sound engineers Carlos Arango and Diego Ruiz facilitated interview recordings. Carlos Arango also produced the soundscape that accompanies this exhibition. Catalogue designed and concept by Francisca Sallato.

Syncretic also includes the presentation of four lecturers' demonstrations about Latin American music history under the title: "Performing Culture". Presenters are: Justo Diaz, Julio Cienfuegos, Christian Pirhanalsola and Jorge do Prado.

Research and Curated by Liliana E. Correa  
New photographic works by Shane Rozario  
April 2010 Sydney, Australia

## Liliana E. Correa



Liliana was born in Buenos Aires and came to Australia in 1984. She brought with her the smell of ripe mangoes while rolling down sand dunes in San Pedro, a coastal town in the Argentinean Litoral province of Corrientes.

The memory of thousands of chalk-traced human figures delineating her sorrowed city and a strong desire to learn, this her maternal inheritance.

Liliana has worked as a community arts worker, theatre performer and director, educator, and arts activist.

Collaborating in cross-cultural and interdisciplinary projects for a number of organizations. In 1994 a professional development grant from Australia Council for the Arts, took her to Cuba to study with *Teatro de los Elementos* an itinerant educational theatre company.

On her return to Australia she continued developing skills as an arts worker and teacher, in writing and performance.

Liliana is a recipient of a scholarship to complete a Doctorate of Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney - Centre for Cultural Research.

She lives in Sydney with her children Camila and Lucas where arts and activism are an integral part of her life.

## doPrincipiohayundelirio- In every beginning exists a delirium

how it is that I see from my  
wisdom imperfect, and holds mistakes.  
ne unnamed shrubs grow  
riminately. Somebody's hand had  
d this ceramic pot leaving traces  
it resembles a familiar space. The  
rriest these marks only because my  
nary want to be somewhere else  
y at it through another window  
than this one, in this moment and  
geography of unfamiliar sounds.  
imperfection carries beauty and  
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ject. The imperfect also carries  
n questions, like a search.

etic's process started as an  
igation to find myself as a  
dant subject. She (It) is imperfect,  
erfect as the Latin American that

athis imperfection links us as  
ur common transitory existence,  
ourney in between waters. Latin  
can artists have in common a

itic: *En Una Pieza* is a fundamental component  
in research "The Politics of Cultural Visibility:  
merican arts practices in Sydney." The exhibition  
roviding and raising cultural visibility of  
merican artistic articulations outside expected  
cial performative's constraints.

journey and a point of convergence  
within the space of meticulous creativity.

*La silueta que miro a través de la  
ventana tiene errores, es imperfecta. En  
ella crecen indiscriminadamente unos  
arbustos, sin nombre. En la vasija de  
greda, hecha a mano, quien sabe por  
cuales manos, alguien ha dejado trazos  
que simulan lugares familiares. La vasija  
lleva estos rasgos, porque mi imaginario  
de cuando se empieza a mirar a través  
de alguna otra ventana se encuentra  
aquí, en este momento y en esta  
geografía presentándose en sonidos poco  
familiares. Pero su imperfección también  
conlleva belleza a lo jolgorio. La palabra  
mal pronunciada, el gesto equivocado o  
la luz que se filtra y dibuja sobre el objeto  
un disonante maravilloso paisaje. Lo  
imperfecto también tiene preguntas  
escondidas, como un abús queda.*

*Syncretichasidoyes el principio de  
un abús queda para entenderme como  
disonante sujeto. Syncretices imperfecta.  
Como veo imperfecta la Latinidad  
Americana que camina en las calles de esta  
ciudad. Tal vez sea imperfección también  
nos vincule como nuestro andar transitorio*

*El artista latinoamericano no tiene como  
y un star constante entre dos aguas.*

*historia como un viaje y un punto de  
encuentro en sumeticulosacreción.*

*En Una Pieza* - which means in one  
piece and in a singular location. I was  
inspired by Cuban historian Marcelino  
Fajardo, who once explained to me  
the concept of syncretism and its  
meaning in relation to Cuban culture  
and society. This word stayed with  
me, resonating in my imagination as  
descriptive of what I observed in relation  
to Latin American cultural expressions,  
particularly in Sydney. At the same time  
the title references the multifaceted and  
interdisciplinary arts practices of Latin  
American artists in Australia. Syncretic  
is not an exhaustive exercise. It is one  
possible beginning to a story I saw  
evolving and changing since my arrival  
to Sydney in 1984, a story I believed  
important to recuperate.

In my role as a researcher I invited  
photographer Shane Rozario to develop

to highlight the work of current Latin  
American artists. At the time Shane  
was refining a photographic technique  
he began in 2006 where he shot ten  
consecutive frames of film to depict one

subject, similar to the mosaic technique  
in ceramics. I realised his photographs  
were expressing what I intended to  
show with the exhibition as a whole. A  
multiplicity of frames presented in one  
single sheet of photographic paper,  
showing at the same time many facets of

became contained within the metaphorical  
as a single subject. The exhibition concept  
interpretation gave Shane's *SMozaics*.

showing the artists' stories depicted  
within the intimacy of their studios and  
personal spaces where the art is produced  
and conceived. Each shot of each photo-  
essay was thought, discussed with the  
artists and Shane. In this way, singular  
images are connected to the text almost  
in a literal manner but not absolutely. I  
intend to produce an alternative reading  
of Latin American artistic expressions  
by showcasing examples of arts practice  
through biographical accounts of artists  
and their work.

As a member of the Latin American  
community who has been involved  
in arts, activism and educational  
projects for over twenty years, I had  
the opportunity to establish strong and  
long-lasting networks as well as gaining

community's trust and support. It facilitated the interview process; the less this trust also carries implications and responsibilities like any other researcher who does not belong to the community. The research project also included all aspects of production, such as applications for funding, communication with potential organisations, proposals to sponsors and sponsors, as well as organising interviews, photoshooting and artist collaborations. Each interview and photographic shot needed many weekends and valuable time that took artists away from their creative work. The project also included editing, translating, selecting quotes, corroborating conversations, and concepts. All participants were extremely generous and standing throughout the process.

Since the late 1980's until the end of 1999, it is clear that Latin American arts practices and expressions and forms, gained increased visibility and today one can see a revival of interest about different practices that constitute Latin American art practices in Australia. During the late 1990s, music, dance and film festivals were held all over Australia. However

this awareness has the tendency of viewing the Latin American culture and its artistic expressions without considering its particular idiosyncrasies. What is 'seen' as Latin American arts and culture is generally packaged under one condition and as one object or product of consumption. Further, the community who is producing "the goods" have little to gain (material or otherwise) from it. The mainstream and entrepreneurs ignore the differences within Latin American arts practices and instead manage them as a single commodity to be packaged and consumed. Art practitioners deal with these tensions on a daily basis, justifying their choice of practice and negotiating their daily economic sustenance and visibility in the context of mainstream society. Nevertheless, despite little economic gain or cultural status within Australian cultural mainstream, artists continue collaborating and developing new work as well as touring Latin America and Asia with music concerts or exhibitions.

For Appadurai (1986:15) "Commoditization lies at the complex intersection of temporal, cultural and social factors". This is the space where I see most Latin American arts practices

today. In a cross-section of time and social factors constantly having to negotiate and compromise in order to continue practicing. It is different for every artist since some artistic expressions are easily absorbed and consumed by the general audience. Some artists target Spanish-speaking audiences, eager to see and hear music or theatre in Spanish. In other instances the event is linked to a social cause and targets the larger community with events such as the Latin American Film Festival. As Moreiras (2001:40) states "Globalisation, once accomplished, dispenses with alternative localities of enunciation and reduces politics to the administration of sameness." It is important to mention that some artists transcend boundaries and imposed labels producing extraordinary work as in the case of Chilean born visual artist Juan Davila or Colombian born Installation artist Maria Fernanda Cardoso. There is no doubt that there exist in Australia a small number of successful artists from Latin American background but there is also

lingered between more or less visible a large number of artists whose works spaces of relevance in the context of contemporary Australia. Latin American artistic articulations offer valuable cultural contributions influencing society

at many levels from commercial gain to education as well as providing emotional sustenance to many migrants.

The role, impact and interpretation of the arts have been discussed from many different perspectives, from post-modern art through the critiques of art historians, such as Rosalind E. Krauss, to contemporary post-modern anthropology through the work of Renato Rosaldo and through social anthropologists such as Arjun Appadurai. How is it that this valuable contribution when perceived off centre becomes another 'manageable object' incorporated into an array of expected performative acts or simply uncompromised visibility? In my view, general audiences expect to see an entertainment act when one's place of origin is revealed and your name spoken. The Latin American artists in Australia are productive producers of entertainment but they are also - and foremost - producers of a range of artistic expressions.

and representation as political questions linked to power relationships and agency. Artistic expressions arising from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in

alia are still seen through the filter of raciality with judgements resting deep in colonial mentality. This perception has become a determining factor affecting the work of artists especially when they are judged by the dominant criteria. This is seen in relation to funding allocation and the development of new work or ways for the management of spaces, such as theatres and cultural spaces where artists for example can access these spaces. How are shades and degrees of cultural visibility determined? Is it in the two possible polarities of more or less exposure, how do we negotiate our position and our practices? The real question is, how is the negotiation of sameness managed?

According to Bhabha (1999:110) there are a repertoire of conflictual positions that situate the subject of colonial discourse:

King up of anyone's position, within a discursive form, in particular a racial conjuncture, is thus always a problematic - the site of both fixity and slippage. It provides a colonial 'identity' played out - like all fantasies of stability and origination - in the face and of the disruption and threat from the heterogeneity of other positions.

In that sense I have noticed that in Latin American arts practices, in particular music and dance, artists reproduce a repertoire of 'ethnic acts' for a gullible audience, the expectation of entertainment is fulfilled and bills are paid. At the same time, new technologies allow the artist a range of means and forms to make their practices visible to the rest of the world. Technologies mediate an array of possible positions from which to disrupt preconceived and fixed concepts. Therefore it is not any more a matter of visibility and presence, the question is then about what kind of presence and in which context the particular visibilities are reconsidered of cultural relevance and valued.

Bhabha's (1999:3) post-colonial analysis on culture states:

The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of a pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed table of tradition. The social articulation of difference from the minority perspective is a complex, ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation.

Artistic articulations in all their complexities become a mark of certain historical transformation as societies' material diaries, where memory is kept, tracing an interpretation of an identity of a particular historical time. Artists and their work are no more part of the jigsaw puzzle of the cultural and symbolic capital (see Bourdieu 1986) that migrant communities bring to Australia. This exhibition has captured in the form of testimonials, examples of what constitutes an integral part of contemporary multicultural Australian culture.

The presence of the female artist is particularly strong and her construction and representation as an artist is very complex. I want to emphasize the powerful presence of women artists through the portraits and work of very different artists, not only in their artistic expressions but also due to their experiences and relationship to Australia. Argentinean actress Zulema Cappielli has worked in theatres since her arrival to Australia in 1978. I asked her to write a short piece in relation to her experience as an actress. The following is an excerpt from her statement:

My experience [as an actress] has been problematic due to issues that exist in this country associated with factors from other cultures. Coming from

immigration has left a mark not only in my country such as Argentina where I was born but also in the way we look physically [in my case] I look European and have an [Argentinean] accent these are remain obstacles in my career as an actress in Australia. In spite of all difficulties I still love my profession I cherish it since

(Translated by Liliana E. Correa, March 2010)

Zulema's realisation about the impediment that signified, in her case, to have a physical appearance and accent that did not fit the expected 'latina' stereotyped did not stop her from pursuing

work in English and Spanish as well as a career in theatre. She continues to teach. Zulema is a recognised member of the Latin American artistic community.

For young Uruguayan painter Abigail Lutzen migrating to Australia has offered her a different perspective about Latin America as a whole. Abigail studied under Anhelio Hernandez from the Constructivist School of Uruguayan Torres

1. She recounts her post-arrival experience about recognising a continent and how it was hidden while growing up in Uruguay:

Australian culture, I found myself in communion with Latin America. It felt like I had come to Australia and I gained a sense of the diversity of our cultures. (...) Migrating distanced me geographically but brought me closer to Latin America. I feel a sense of longing that I did not have before. (...) Origin has to do with everything, to do with what one believes in and the land we walked on, like when I came here and give our respect to the Aboriginals. I feel in debt for the privileges of being here and I also feel very much connected to Latin America. (Translation from original Spanish interview by Liliana E. Correa, Marrickville 2009)

For instance, Australia offered artists the opportunity to develop careers such as in the film industry. This is the case of Jorian Walter Rojas, Brazilian Paulo Bonifacio and Chilean Alejandra Canales.

She started her artistic career as a dressmaker, inspired by one of the most

significant theatrical and cultural events in the final years of the dictatorship in Chile in 1988, in particular with Andres Perez and his *Teatro Callejero, Gran Circo Teatro* and *La Negra Ester*. She has worked and developed projects in theatre, film and television production working in various roles. During a conversation with Alejandra about her work and experiences, she expressed:

My work as a documentary director goes beyond archival collections. I am interested in talking about the time we are living in through my own perception, vision, feelings and thoughts. My work reflects what one does with all those elements, my work grows from the edges, from the "in-betweenness" of many kinds of geographical territories and these borders are in permanent movement. (Original written in English by Alejandra Canales Marrickville, 2010)

Artists who have settled in Australia since the early 1970's coerced by political upheavals in their countries experienced

generation of artists, who chose to live in a very different Australia to the new one in Australia with already developed strong professional careers overseas. They also have in my view, a less rigid

approach about their work and easily move from one geographical space to another, approaching their practice in

conversation in a much more fluid manner, more like a

An example of a significant powerful presence is represented through the portrait of Colombian Maria Fernanda Cardoso, a leading artist who has produced installation work in Europe, North America, Latin America and Australia. In conversation with Maria Fernanda regarding what it means for an artist to feel successful and the importance of being able to produce artistic work, she expressed:

It's a complex thing [success]; one wants recognition, status and you want an audience. I believed that the artist existed through her artwork. It is my visible being more than just my body. In order to exist I need to show and I need to be seen. My work has to do with discovering the extraordinary things that have been neglected, finding what is hidden. Passion and a sense of surprise [inspired me] (original interview in English, Rozelle 2010)

Common to all participating artists there is an impetus of creativity as a driving force and at the same time their

countries of origin are a strong signifier and reference present in their work. But in all their differences (historical and of practice) artists also converged within

necessity to continue a creative practice as a space of meticulous creativity. This is a fundamental activity, intrinsic to everyday life. Artists' visibility is expressed through their work, this work may or may not be a historical diary of the time they choose to represent and they may or may not choose to transgress expressive forms but the commitment and passion is a common thread that unifies all stories. Artwork emerging from such a commitment transcends cultural demarcations at the same time containing the artists' identity and memory. Their artwork expressed through each particular aesthetic becomes universal in itself. One can then argue universal appreciation should avoid questioning of origin or ethnicity and what is 'judged' by the cultural cringe is not based on such characteristics but rather on individual capacity to transgress all expectations and make us wonder.

Syncretical so it includes an abridged collection of folkloric instruments from the countries of Latin America, this collection complements Argentinean musician Justo Diaz testimonial and



it. Over a period of two years in 1987, Diaz compiled a collection of 200 instruments, most which he used in performances. Today this collection holds over 300 folkloric instruments from Latin America and the Caribbean. Associated with this tradition, there exists a body of recorded audio materials, documentaries, music produced, music lectures, workshops, performances and traditional activities (Diaz 1987). This is a significant contribution to the global culture.

American art practitioners are not just innovators in a range of expressions, from classical to temporary music and dance, but also to Folklore. For those Latin American artists who practice folklore in Australia, the question of visibility and cultural relevance is also a question of recognition and interest. Where in a temporary Australian context can such an art have a real and intellectual space to practice? The art of Latin America may have connotations of being obsolete within the space of the global mainstream culture, seen as a practice that is 'allowed' public representation through token gestures

at particular times of the year, such as the Bondi Pavilion Latin American Festival and the Darling Harbour Latin Fiesta and other Multicultural Festivals.

In other countries in Latin America, folkloric expression is considered a valid and alive cultural expression and source of cultural identity that influenced the work of many artists in particular in music and dance. Young composers and performers used many traditional instruments as a source for new musical exploration, for example in Chile during the 70's *Los Jaivas*, fusing folkloric instruments with rock sonority or in Argentina the works of renowned *Astor Piazzolla* fusing tango rhythms and the *bandoneón*,<sup>2</sup> with contemporary classical and Jazz. In Australia artists such as Jeannie Lewis and the *Mambologist* Jazz musician Lloyd Swanton have been influenced and explore the connection with Latin American music.

As language is alive as long as it is spoken

the art of playing a particular musical instrument, a folkloric artistic expression for example *Charango*,<sup>3</sup> *Jarana*,<sup>3</sup>

2. The *bandoneón* is a type of concertina particularly popular in Argentina and Uruguay.

3. Charango: is a small stringed instrument traditionally made with the shell of the back of an armadillo.

Jarana: is a small guitar-shaped fretted stringed instrument used in different regions in Mexico.

continues its life when the practice and life of the instrument exists in context and is appreciated and valued as an artistic expression. Since the late 1970s in Sydney there exists a number of artists who specialise in specific folkloric arts practices, such as groups like *Sonido de los Andes* a popular Sydney based Andean music group and *Papalote*. Arriving in Australia more recently, is Mexican musician Julio Cienfuegos who is a multi-instrumentalist and specialises in traditional Mexican music enriching the already diverse cultural landscape with skills, knowledge and by introducing new instruments to the country. All over Latin America, folkloric expression influenced the new song movement,<sup>4</sup> contemporary dance and theatre. Folklore should also transcend tokenistic moments and be seen as another art form that many Latin American artists working in Australia today hold this valuable cultural capital between their hands. Imagination and collaborations are two main ingredients for the survival of an art form and a practice that can easily be superseded by commercial productions.

4. During the 1960's all over Latin America and in particular in Cuba the movement of *La Nueva Canción* or New Song, emerged. Artists and intellectuals moved by an interest in social and political change began playing and incorporating music in the folkloric style of their countries.

Mexican Lino Alvarez Carrasco's work at *La Paloma Pottery*, a studio shared with partner artist Kim Deacon, has made possible new appreciations and the survival of an art form such as pottery,

an obsolete. Lino is a potter who has collaborated with numerous visual artists, including painter Garry Shead. I travelled to Hill End to interview Lino during April 2009.

The landscape, its autumn light, their home built during the gold rushes in late 1800's and Lino's studio with his imposing pots covered in Sheds' naked muses in warm colouring transported me to a space of absolute creativity. The rainy window overlooking a countryside could have been my very own Argentinean south or even Ireland. A home lit by moonlight and candles added to my imagination and my experience exceeding all expectations, I felt at home and exiled at the same time.

and the studio we travelled all over the world through Lino's artistic and personal journey.

Kim and Lino moved *La Paloma Pottery* from the inner west suburb of Newtown



neytothehistoricaltownofHill  
arBathurst.Duringtheinterview  
counts:

Jrorfiveyearsagolwantittocome  
withsomethingtoexpressmyself,

wherellive.Ihavethisabstract  
receptionofthelandscape.When  
Jaredrivingpastandyouseethat  
beautifullight,nothingisdefined.  
OriginalinterviewInEnglish;HillEnd  
ril2009)

spointingouttosomeworkin  
ess,extendedalmostthelengthof  
udiofloor,madeupofindividual  
slikeanincompletepuzzlebecause  
ereabouttochangecoloursand  
esoncetakentothekiln.Initially,

nthefloor,eachcomponent  
duallyconceivedandatthesame  
tegraltowhatwillbecomethe  
yofaninterpretation.Thiswork  
entedhiscreativeprocessand  
ictrepresentationsofthelandthat  
indedhim,thehills,thetreesand  
ek.

reekoriginoftheword  
graphytranslatesas“drawingwith  
lamborrowingthisconceptto  
atSyncreticmetaphoricallyand

literarily,hasbeenwrittenwithlight.  
Sound,writtenandvisualtestimonials  
allowedmetoshowallartists’sstories  
fromtheirownperspectiveandnot  
exposedorrepresentedas‘other’.The  
processofcompilingthephotographic  
testimonialsbecameanotherlanguage  
thatlusedtoconveytheartists’cultural  
visibilityandidentity.Eachshotwasset  
up,notintheartificialityofastilllife  
paintingbutratherwithinanarrative  
intimatelyconnectedtoheartist  
personalandworkenvironmenttaking  
intoconsiderationher/histhoughts,  
memoriesandcreativeprocesses.  
Testimonials canbered from many  
different angles of interpretations as  
Shane’s “*Mozaics*” visual images offer  
distinctive points of reference to enter  
the artists’ stories. In one piece of  
photographic paper and in many different  
shots of the same subject, complex layers  
of meaning that constitute one’s creative  
life are seen.

Collaboration, photography and  
languages became a metaphor of personal  
and community enunciations. An exercise  
of enunciation and a proposition as Probyn  
(1993:122) expressed:

This is then to speak in difference and  
to elaborate a mode of enunciation  
that transgresses the limit of

difference. It is to speak with attitude;  
an ethical and caring mode of saying,  
thinking and doing, inspired by a  
historical ontology of what and who  
we are and who we hope to become.

The objective of this research and  
exhibition represents that shift in an  
exercise of self-representation and  
reflexivity understanding my own culture  
within Australia today. Latin American  
communities speak two main languages,  
Spanish and Portuguese. We shift in  
conversations from English to “Spanglish”  
to “Portuñol” and back to English. The  
morningsounds are those coming from  
the Spanish and Portuguese radio and  
TV programs, that keep us up to date  
about what is going on across the world.  
Most will start the morning watching  
the Spanish and French news on TV and  
finish the day listening to the Italian and  
Spanish radio programs and in between  
the English language reigns. Many Latin  
American migrants were return children  
of migrant families from postwar Europe.  
Growing up in houses speaking German,  
French or Italian. The issue of “language  
other than...” is not unfamiliar.

The portrait and testimonial of poet  
Mario Licón Cabrera show the trajectory

5. Special Broadcasting Services Australia Broadcasting  
Corporation (SBS)

of an accomplished artist in more  
than one form, from puppeteering to  
photographer and writer. Mario also  
travelled in many occasions, to Hill End, in  
this poem he invites us through language  
to enter this particular landscape and its  
distinguishable light:

1. *Nunca he visto  
una luz como en ese  
crepúsculo invernal*

*Unos curísimo  
Cielo aterciopelado y  
Un largolistón  
Deluz depurooro  
Brillando más allá  
Delas inertes copas  
Delos cipreses*

2. *Lentamente las flores del ciruelo  
vuelan hacia la tierra húmeda*

*Ya la cubierta  
La higuera parece un  
Gigante cocinando los sosteniendo  
Cientos de pequeñas velas verdes  
Encendidas por el soldado fría mañana  
(...)*

The writing and reading of poetry (in  
English and Spanish) is part of the literary  
culture of Sydney. This year on one Thursday  
night in some obscure bar in the Inner

suburb of Enmore, Sydney, I sat with my friends and strangers, all eager listeners. Mario and two others performed that night, one more under the name of "Tres Tristes Tigres" (Three Sad Tigers) in reference to the novel by Juan Manuel Rivera Infante. Poets such as John Dryden and William Shakespeare also performed that night. My old friends have roamed the streets of this city in search of potential spaces for creative enunciations from bars and studios where poetry is written, shared, and performed, perspired and cried. If a space does not exist, then it is created. I write:

I share this with other important and not so important poets. For me, poetry is meditation. A conversation with your soul and the soul of others, an attempt to understand a place, to see oneself in time/space through language. Poetry is not a commodity, it's for sure. Poetry might be useful to the poet and some other poets and a few readers but not for crowds. (...) To me poetry signifies everything and nothing at the same time. It's vital for me; if I don't do it I die/dry. (...) A everyday exercise, something that is absolutely essential, poetry—not just mine—fills a huge gap

in my life. (Translated from Spanish by Mario L. Cabrera Marickville 2010)

The poet in her/his continuous journey inhabits the many languages that populate our daily migrant existence, for the Latin American English is one more language with Spanish and Portuguese informing our personal and creative life. The English language is our currency and one necessary component as we entered this society. One cannot deny the importance of the written English language, as one cannot ignore that

Americans have grown up in bilingual households and dwell between two or more languages.

*Listen! Change the shape of your eyes to see through my imperfect pronunciations, to taste the many waters my skin carries, salty and drivers sweet ancestral waters. Open your skin to let those distant sounds stir your senses. Because even when the night is quiet and the child sleeps she walks the tight rope of appearances and disappearances with acrobatic grace and offers "You" one more song.*

### Paraterminarempiezoporelprincipio- Toconcludelthenstartfromthe beginning

Syncretic was conceived as a collaborative exhibition and perhaps came from nostalgia or melancholia and a fearless impetus. In 1995 I brought back from Matanza, Cuba a hand-crafted book dedicated to Lezama Lima's *Origenes*. As a mode of introduction to the magazine *Alfredo Zaldivar*, editor at the time, I dedicated a poem, titled:

Zaldivar (1994). There arose from his text a sentiment of agitation, action, and creativity is what he perceived as a driving force common to all artists involved in this project. It carries the essence during a creative process, from conceptualisation to material realization. It is perhaps with this freedom or innocence pertaining to some "delirious hands" that creative articulations are possible, in all their representations: objects, languages, sounds and images, travelling across concrete and imaginary geographies impregnated with traces of memories and layers of meaning. No one moment will be the same, no one technology but the constant need to express through the arts, away to learn the time and place we happen to be living in.

### Entodoprincipiohayundelirio

Delirio de las manos  
Sobre el papel de estraza rasgandolas  
criaturas de la luz.  
Delirio de las manos  
Que conforman las animas silentes de las  
somas  
Delirio de las manos  
Que te cleansobre el alba.  
Delirio de las manos  
Que en sarten, desde el dibujo, o se echana  
volarsobre un cliché.  
Delirio de las manos  
Que animan en el ruedo mágico de un  
mimeógrafo.  
Delirio de las manos  
Que escribieron en las veladas nocturnas  
Sumiseriaysufes.  
Delirio de las manos  
Que deliran  
Delirio de las manos  
En las manos.  
Delirio de las manos que iluminan.  
Alfredo Zaldivar

Australia's open landscape helped me breathe easily at transition into a new stage in my life. Once again I was leaving Buenos Aires, except that this time I carried with me the heaviness of certain realisations, such as a different idea of what until then was my one and

ome'. I questioned myself and practice, my cultural contributions in a country that allowed me a place to live, another home where I could express my subjectivities. As well as questions about the role and value of art, I am immersed in first world societies where I am one. Self-questioning as well as observations about the practice of art led me to an increased desire to stand where in the puzzle of current cultural processes artists, in particular those whose artistic life began in Latin America, fit as part of a larger picture. I accept about what constitutes the "re" of this country.

then the beginning of "Syncretic: *La Pieza*": A multidisciplinary and cultural dialogue, challenging preconceived ideas of representations of Latin America to what can be perceived in Latin American identity and cultural expressions. It is also how I saw myself in the context of a Latin Americanist perspective. Moreiras (2004) defines Latin Americanism:

As the sum total of engaged representations concerning Latin America as an object of knowledge that makes no general distinctions

between the work produced in the north and the work produced in the south.

Australia does not fit in Moreiras' analysis since his reference to "North" and "South" to me is in the context of the American continent. I borrowed his sentiment and locate Latin American artistic articulation to the South of Australia as northern mentality.

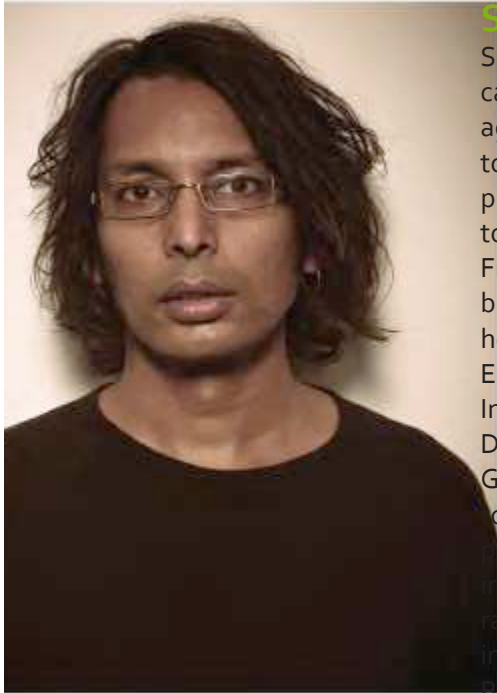
As an object and subject of knowledge, Latin American Australians are in a constant flow between the two continents and also dealing with cultural tensions on a daily basis as they produce and exchange cultural and artistic expressions. Terminology is complex and also problematic, without searching for a common denominator that can encapsulate my Latin Americanist personal inclination, a shared language and cultural heritage assumed commonalities, this can also become an impediment in relation to establishing a critical dialogue that can open up further and equal creative collaborations. I would like to see my research project and this exhibition from a Latin Americanist perspective, reflective of our practices as artists informed by our common but

distinctive heritage and at the same time observe our most inner differences. The de-centred subjects that we may have become as we move from one geography to the next is not a negation or a non-position but a desire, a challenge to the politics of representation and a shift from an exoticised object to that of a subject that through the materiality of artistic work speaks in forms and languages.

By Liliana E. Correa.  
Sydney 15 April 2010

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## Shane Rozario

Shane was born in Bombay, India and came to Australia with his family at the age of 11. From 1998 to 2001 he travelled to the UK where he had the opportunity to photograph Ben Harper's "Will to Live" tour around the UK. From then on he photographed many bands, festivals, artists and protest rallies as he continued travelling through the UK and Europe. In 1999 Shane photographed HH the Dalai Lama who opened the Tibet Peace Gardens in London, which inspired him to create and develop a photographic project for the Tibet Foundation in London, inviting international and local artists to raise awareness of the Tibetan Peoples, and their independence struggle. By late 2000 Shane and his partner Laurence moved to Sydney where he began working printing photos for a retail photography lab. He then worked in a digital reproduction company operating the Durst Lambda, producing large format Type-C photographic prints for the new and developing large format Advertising graphics industry. In 2001 Shane presented a proposal to develop a world music photographic library documenting music and dancing performances for Café Carnivale, which is now Musica Viva's World Music program.

He also photographed the live showcases for the Australian Dance Awards for Ausdance NSW.

In 2004 he began assisting advertising photographer, Ian Butterworth as well as continuing his freelance work documenting Café Carnivale. He began to photograph local musicians and artists in Sydney.

By 2006 Shane began exploring portraiture photography and created the Film Mozaic technique photographing high profile international and local musicians and artists.

In 2009 he was a finalist in the 'Projections Award' resulting in a recommendation and selection to exhibit work in the City of Sydney's Art & About Festival. This series of works saw him collaborate with Sydney Jazz writer John Shand.

Shane continues to develop his portrait series working with reputable musicians from Sydney and abroad. He frequently photographs artists touring at the Opera House, and has made a significant photographic contribution to the Australasian World Music Publication to be released in late 2010.

## Exhibitions

2009|

TAP Gallery|Group Show  
Art & About Festival, Syd|Solo Show

2008|

Kudos Gallery|Group Show  
Seymour Centre|Solo Show - semi permanent

2005|

Balmain Watch House|Group Show  
Wollongong Watch House|Group Show

2004|

Incubator Gallery|Group Show

2003|

Pier 4 The Wharf|Solo Installation

2002|

TAP Gallery|Group Show  
The KNOT Gallery|Group Show  
East Side Arts Centre|Permanent Solo Show

2001|

Tibet Himalaya Fair, Syd|Group Show

1999|

London Barbican Centre|Group Show

## Awards

2009|

The Projections (emerging photographers award)|Finalist  
Head-On Portrait Prize|Preselection Finalist  
Off The Wall, Art Sydney|Highly commended

2008|

Head On Project Portrait Prize|Pre selection Finalist



## ABIGAILLUTZEN



Abigail Lutzen was born in Montevideo, Uruguay. In 1995 Abigail began studying drawing and painting at the School of Arts and Crafts Dr. Pedro Figari, at the Universidad Uruguay del Trabajo under guidance of Profesor Pedro Rodriguez. By 1998 she was attending the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes (National College of Fine Arts), Universidad de la Republica Uruguay. In she 2001 studied under the direction of Profesor Anheló Hernandez. Profesor Hernandez, a leading figure in the School of Constructive Universalism, he was one of the successors of renowned Uruguayan artist Torres Garcia, who in 1935 published his vanguard idea in his "La Escuela del Sur" (School of the South) manifesto, in this he proposed that the map of the Americas should be inverted stating that "Our North is the South". In the years to come Abigail became actively involved in a number of community educational and professional projects, such as the case of "La Rosad los Vientos Cultural Centre" where artists gathered to produce distinctive visual arts projects. She taught at The School of Arts Universidad de la Republica, she also studied graphic design and produced educational posters, designed and painted murals and theatre sets designs for a number of theatre productions by renowned theatre directors in Montevideo. Abigail currently shares a studio in Addison Road Community Centre, Marrickville with three other Latin American artists. Abigail lives in Sydney since 2003.



### Australia

My family lived in Australia for ten years and when my mother became pregnant with me my family returned to Uruguay, so

we came back to Australia and when I was five we went back [to Uruguay] again. My first language was English I learnt Spanish in Uruguay. From Sydney I remember our house, we used to live in Croydon and from Montevideo I remember going to the corner shop and asking for things in English and

understood! When I was 28 my mother and I decided to return to Australia by ourselves. So Australia has been always present.

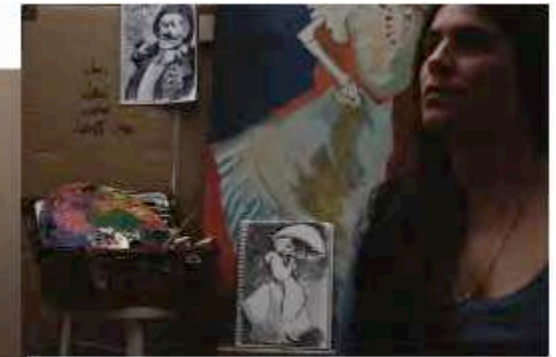
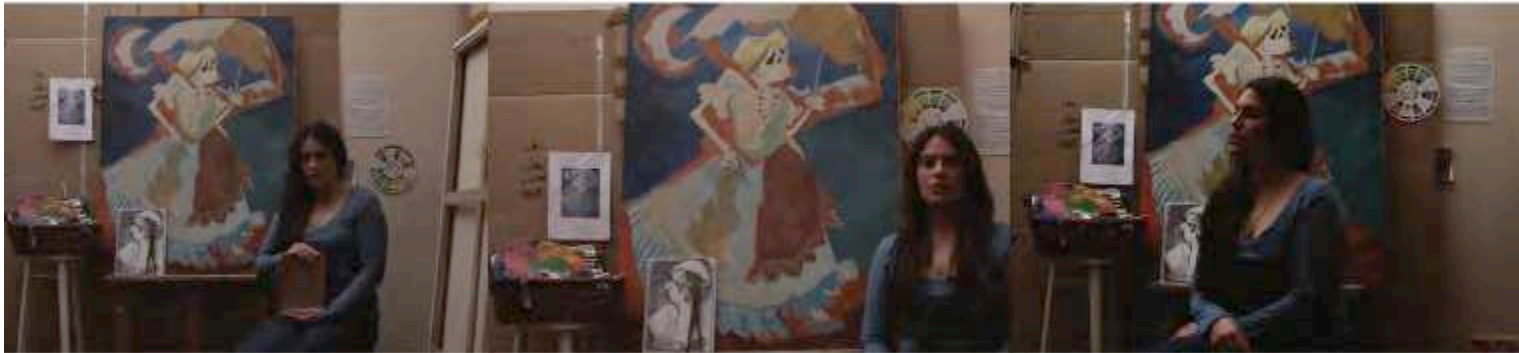
### Painting

My father was very artistic, always painting and carving leather. He also had looms and my sister was the one that followed his artistic inclinations initially. I supposed I draw all my life, until I started making craft and doing pottery making small images in ceramics and slowly began to explore sculpture, drawing, colours and forms. The artists' world is very peculiar, it is a way of life, is part of who one is, the way one sees the world and how one behaves in it. These inform our relationship to all, delineated by these parameters one gets immersed in the world of ideas, creative ideas that began to shape you inside and outside. As an artist we codify your life according to our artistic philosophy.

### Latin America

culture I find myself more in communion with Latin America, with our cultures. Coming to Australia gave me access to the diversity of four cultures. Migrating distanced me geographically but brought me closer to Latin America. Now I feel a sense of belonging that I did not have before. In Uruguay art school looks exclusively towards the West, all that is pre-invasion does not exist. Taking into consideration that the Indigenous population was exterminated and even when some things were maintained, the rituals have disappeared. My father is from German descent and my mother Italian. I have not much Charrúa blood in me except for perhaps, my grand mother. Without claiming any Indigenous ancestry, I believe that origin has to do with everything, has to do with what one believes in and the land we walked on, like when we came here and give our respect to the Aboriginals. I feel in debt for my privileges of being here and I also feel very much connected to Latin America.





CandombeandDiadelosMuertos

### Structivism

his is what I try to sustain, a coherent work. I can change the themes of my concept of what and how to art. What Torres Garci proposes is

have in the world and this will be the philosophy of the artist, how one has to be able to interpret in one's art work.

he proposes a primitive and universal language in relation to the object of study. Looking at Pre-Columbian cultures where, for example, the deity used is within the spectrum of fear and desire, utilising the "Aureo Compass", a gold object used in mathematics and geometry. The Compass allows you to work on a structure so what the thought as a mural would appear. The expression is by itself if the structure is given. The wall is a medium from which art can flow.

### A Commitment

Research is a fundamental aspect of how I work myself why? A self-questioning and auto-reflection so in this way I found the reason behind my foundations, then I start looking for materials in the history of the objects and subjects of study, I read and sometimes

myself in my art when I don't have to work as a cook in a child care centre. I feel that I have two realities and until I can drop one for the other at the moment this is how it is. In Uruguay I had the title of Visual Artist or Artworker and Painter, I was wearing the 'artists suit' full time. Here is different but I could not produce custom made work, there is a point where one does not compromise. Because my art is my way of seeing and feeling, it is what I want to do. The first person I must respect is myself. That is why I cook... but I also paint.

### Murals

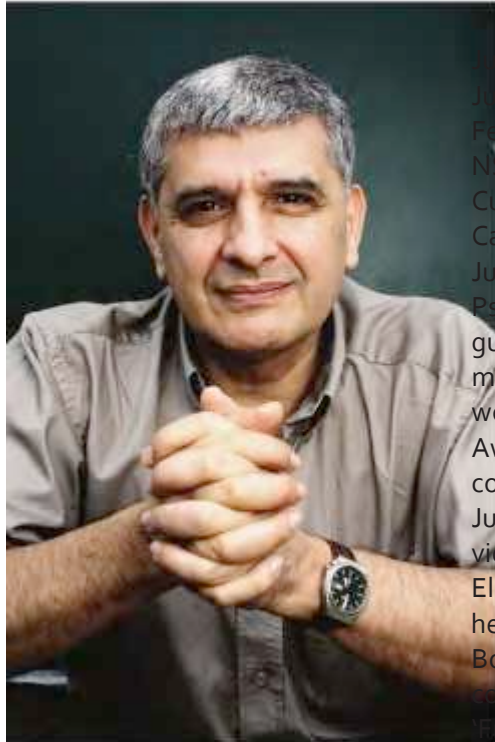
The way I approach working on murals has to do with the respect I have for the wall as an object. I learnt this early in my career, before I met Hernandez. Questions such as, where is the mural going to be placed? Inside? Outside? As an artist one has to find connecting points with those who are going to experience the mural every day. A mural is not the kind of work that if you don't want to see it you take it down, contrary to the work on canvas, with a mural one has to completely give oneself to it and be prepared to be vulnerable, exposed, it's a challenge. Even when you are using your artistic idiosyncrasies is never 100% your desire. Painting is a solitary practice, unlike theatre where you need others. So to work with others is ok, but the mural takes a lot of hours, one always needs someone to draw the line.

elements from Uruguayan Candombe and Mexican folklore, specifically in reference to the Day of the Dead. My mentor Hernandez was in exile in Mexico, through his experiences I also felt the need to explore some elements in relation to the Mexican culture. I have a very close relationship with death, very early in my life I lost important people and instead of feeling afraid I became more familiarised with this experience, so I feel that death is part of life and constantly present. I have always been fascinated by the Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos), Candombe and Carnaval and I participated in both with great satisfaction, in Australia

honour these by producing an exhibition with the idea to show a bit of this connection and points of correlation at the same time to show how we belong even though when we are all over the world, there are cultural elements that bring us together.



## JUSTODÍAZ



Justo Díaz was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Justo was the Music Director for 'Carnivale Multicultural Arts Festival' from 1999 to 2004. During this period he was also the NSW Ministry for the Arts, 'Multicultural Music Coordinator.' Currently, he is the Music Director of Musica Viva's, 'Cafe Carnivale', a program he created in 2000. Justo trained in Music and Literacy and studied Law and Psychology in Argentina. In Australia he trained in classical guitar and Jazz studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of music. With his group 'Papalote' they developed Instrumental workshops for schools, pioneering the multicultural music Awareness for schools. He is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, composer, researcher and educator. Justo has been published in Australia and Overseas. He has video-documented diverse cultural and political events in El-Salvador, Guatemala and Australia. As a music consultant he has worked on TV documentaries such as 'South of the Border,' 'Tropical Beat' 'Pilgrim Notes' and others. He has composed music for ABC National, SBS TV, and has developed 'From Salsato Tango,' a music course for the University of Sydney. Justo is an avid collector of musical instruments. He currently holds a collection of over 300 instruments, mainly from the Latin American folklore. Justo lives in Sydney since 1979.



and rather than remembering sounds, I remember smells, nature's smells, the smell of grass. When I left Argentina there was a dictatorship that killed 30,000 people and that would have probably kill me as well. I left without knowing if I was going to return.

resentment towards Argentina and what the country signified. In 1985 I returned for the first time and I found that I have missed the country without realising, and so I did not want to leave again. Since 85 I have often travelled to other Latin American countries and Europe. This is how I recharge myself and appreciate alternative ways of looking at the world.

From an early age, and thank to my mother, highly critical and she still sings. My musical influences are; from Argentina, *Anacruza*, *Astor Piazzolla*, *El Duo Salteño*, and *Cuchi Leguizamon*. Jazz also influenced me. I think what influenced me the most is how diverse our Latin American cultures are and as a consequence I have a personal motivation and interest in continue to discover that diversity. A guitarist I like today is *Juanjo Dominguez*. I have been influenced by the *Bossa Nova* movement as well, amongst those musicians *Joao Gilberto*. Brazilians took their popular music to another level without losing its roots and I see this as very important. The first musicians I collaborated with (in Australia) were *Mario Rojas* and *Jeannie Lewis*. I met them both at a party organized by *Chilean Women* in 79. Before I have met *Lachlan Hurse* and *Sue Monk* from Brisbane, they have today a group called "*Jumping Fences*".

In the past the Australian left was very active and the Latin American culture played a key role in gathering people. Today Latin Culture plays more of an entertaining role, multicultural music world. It is rare to see a group trying to develop artistically, instead groups are becoming more commercialized. Music can be critical by challenging aesthetics and forms, the way we tried to do it. This kind of art doesn't seem to have is because of its commercial elements, a bit replace today's society and when it does like the Che Guevara's image, the image lost its real significance and is only used because sell well.



ountries are going through a similar  
 ience where culture is homogenized  
 ociety creates a mass of consumers.  
 rtheless, it still exists: alternative music  
 end or promoted diversity, but it is  
 and it is easy for artists to get seduced  
 v allowed by the big machine that will  
 de financial stability.

develop my practice, I suppose that at some  
 point I will leave in search of another cultural  
 space where I can feel that I am allowed to  
 develop further my ideas without feeling  
 discriminated because of my difference, ..  
 ethnic origin, colour, cultural origin, or  
 because of the instruments I choose to  
 play. I enjoy playing traditional instruments  
 very much. A few years ago I was invited  
 to participate in a recorder festival, I saw  
 the opportunity to promote our music so I  
 decided to start composing Latin American  
 music for recorder quartets. I was lucky that  
 Orpheus Music published my work. Now  
 Orpheus has as well published my original  
 material for string quartet. This could be my  
 contribution to the Australian music.

Australia has given me the opportunity to  
 professionally develop and study. But in  
 solitude. I took Jazz courses, classic, and  
 also organized music events and taught. I  
 studied at the Conservatorium of Music and  
 at University gaining a Bachelor in Music  
 Education and a Masters in Latin American  
 Studies, I am currently completing my PhD.  
 Everything I have achieved, as they say goes,  
 has been swimming against the current, I  
 always came across someone that will say:

is very difficult. I persisted and continued  
 to make things happen. I am in many ways  
 thankful to Australia, it gave me financial  
 stability and that allowed me to do things.  
 "No, don't do it, you'll be unsuccessful" it

particular Argentina would have given me  
 these opportunities. In some ways I try to  
 pay Australia back by developing projects  
 showing the ways of other cultures.

At the time La Peña was established there  
 was no cultural centre to promote Popular  
 music. La Peña was not only a gathering  
 point for Latin Americans, many groups  
 from all over the world passed through  
 its doors. I am doing with Café Carnivale  
 something very similar.



Syncretic is showcasing a small selection from Papalote's Musical Instruments' collection that includes examples classified according to E. von Hornbostel and C. Sachs where the instruments are divided into four groups: Idiophones, Membranophones, Aerophones and Chordophones.

Papalote musical Instruments from the countries of Latin America comprised a collection of more than three hundred folkloric musical instruments acquired thanks to the initial support by The Music Board of the Australia Council for the Arts in 1984. Justo Diaz has also documented in film and audio format numerous materials, interviews and music in Australia and overseas. All folkloric instruments belonging to this collection and on display are used in contemporary and traditional performances.









## ZULEMACAPPIELLI



Zulema has worked in theatre directing and performing in Spanish and English speaking shows since her arrival to Australia. She graduated from Belgrano University in Buenos Aires and continued to develop performance skills while working for a number of different theatre directors.

Zulema's work as a director includes: *El Andador* by Roberto Galdí, *We have to do the house* by Sebastian Jenyent, *Circus of self devised*, *Witches* by Antonio Moncada, *Made in Argentina* by Kelly Fernandez Tiscornia and *A Journey through Terror* by Miriam Marquez.

Zulema also played a number of different roles for the stage including: *The Humble* by Griselada Gambaro directed by Edward Rosales, *Divine Words* by Ramon Valle Inland directed by Jose Farinas, *Women of Christ* by Michel de Ghelderode, directed by Edward Rosales, *The Ill-behaved* by Jacinto Benavente directed by Jose Farinas, *Undo the House* by Sebastian Jenyent directed by Zulema Capielli, *Yungaburra Road* by Noelle Znanazewski directed by Fiona Winning, *Witches* by Antonio Moncada directed by Zulema Capielli, *Isabel Exiled* in *Isabel* by Juan Radrigand directed by Jose Farinas, *Il Postino* by Antonio Scarmeta directed by Maria Montes de Oca, *Malinche's Fire* directed by Gail Kelly, *Fever Shakespeare Sonnets* directed by Sergio Amigo and *Latin Lovers*, devised by actors and directed by Iqbal Barkat.

Zulema's film and video credits are: *Perfect Person* directed by Guillermo Kellner, *Little Angel* by Guillermo Martin, *The Party* directed by Graciela Muro, *Circus of Life* directed by Sonja Reed, *Crystal Palace* directed by Cristina Viera, *Everybody Business* directed by Sharon Stunn, *Postridied* directed by Kati Lehtonen and *Lilian's Garden* directed by Pamela den Engelsman.



PeopleinTheatrethatwasestablishedin 1989. OvertheyearsPeopleinTheatrehavebeen producingclassicandcontemporaryplays ourLatinAmericanculturalbackground. However,wehavebeeninvolvedinEnglish speakingproductionsandwewillcontinue todoso.Thegroupalsoproducesself- devisedperformances.Weperformed .. throughoutSydney,Canberraand MelbournefromCampbelltownArtsCentre TheatreToBelvoirStreetTheatreinSurry Hills.

husbandandfirstchild,Gonzalo.Andrew andDavidmyothertwochildrenwereborn hereandmyfirstyears inAustraliaIwas dedicatedtothem.In1989Iformedthe theatregroup"PeoplesTheatre"directing andproducingworkinSpanish.In1991I startedtoworkinEnglishwiththetheatre group"RedHerrings"andfromthenonwards weincorporatedworks inEnglish toreacha wideraudience.

Mylovefortheatrebeganasachild,whenI was9yearsoldattendingchildren theatreandballetclasses.Laterasan adultIcompleteddramastudiesfromthe UniversityofBelgrano inBuenosAires.My teachersandmentorsweremanyandallleft somethingofvalueinme.

withverydifferentDirectorsthatIlearned. ItwaslaterwhenIstartedtoworkonstage thatIstobeeonastage.Directorssuchas DanielLopezinArgentinaandJoséFariñas inAustraliaaswellasSergioAmigoand IqbalBarkathavetaughtmeverydifferent theatricaltechniques.

producingatheatrepierepresentingthe realityofAustralianmigrantsandexileswith realstoriesincludingdrama,musicanddance.

erience in this country has been  
 ex for issues that all actors  
 :her cultures face. Coming from a  
 y like Argentina where migration  
 'has left us with deep idiosyncratic  
 as well as physical appearance. In  
 lia, as in Argentina the population  
 ed of ethnicities and nationalities  
 sis not represented in the  
 il mainstream of this country. Its  
 rating for an actor to arrive at an  
 on and simply be rejected  
 on his/her appearance which do  
 tch what the stereotyped dictates.

in Asian immigrant? or the son  
 asking who is Australian? The  
 migrant from England. Or the  
 ter who was born here or taken up  
 ship? I am Argentinean, born  
 rgentinean parents who has  
 an ancestry, German, Russian and  
 y, but I am Argentinean.



In Argentina ethnic appearance and accent is  
 not that important unlike in Australia where  
 just an accent is an obstacle and represents

working. To look like a European and to  
 a professional barrier that prevents you  
 have an accent have been my most difficult  
 barriers to develop my work in Australia.

overcome these barriers and continue my  
 work. I strongly believe in what Lindsay Kemp  
 once says:

"The performer must always be creative, not  
 merely interpret a gesture or a role given  
 to him/her, it must come from inside, from  
 abandoning oneself utterly to the impulse  
 or the image or the emotion as it exists in  
 the reality of the imagination. Abandon and  
 control are the twin gods of the stage".

Sergio Amigo is an Argentinean theatre  
 director who is currently based in London,  
 where he continues to work in theatre as a  
 director and teacher. At the time I met him  
 he was the only director from Argentina  
 who specialized in Shakespeare. He came to  
 Australia during 1998 and over nine months  
 dictated masterclasses at the Spanish Club  
 in Sydney. He produced the performance  
 of "Romeo and Juliet Variations and Fever  
 based on Shakespeare's lovesonnets.

took to Canberra. It was a fulfilling and very  
 important experience, since I always existed

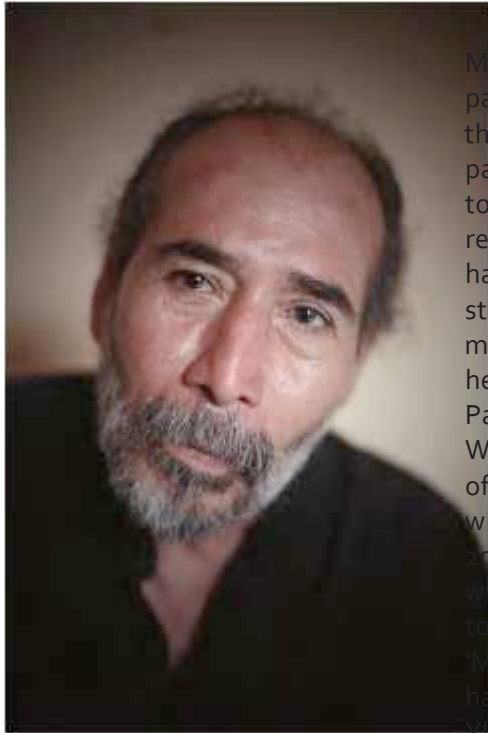
Shakespearean character was extremely  
 difficult. Thanks to Sergio's knowledge and  
 intuition we managed to develop the skills  
 that a Shakespearean character requires,  
 developing new acting skills.

Despite many difficulties I continue to  
 love the profession I cherished as a child,  
 theatre fulfills my life. I work in small  
 community events or directing and acting  
 for organizations such as the Asociación de  
 Mujeres de Habla Hispana and Encuentro  
 De Mujeres (EEMU) I also work for  
 different government departments on  
 educational shows for health, domestic  
 violence, discrimination and education.

for Sydney University.



## MARIOLICÓN

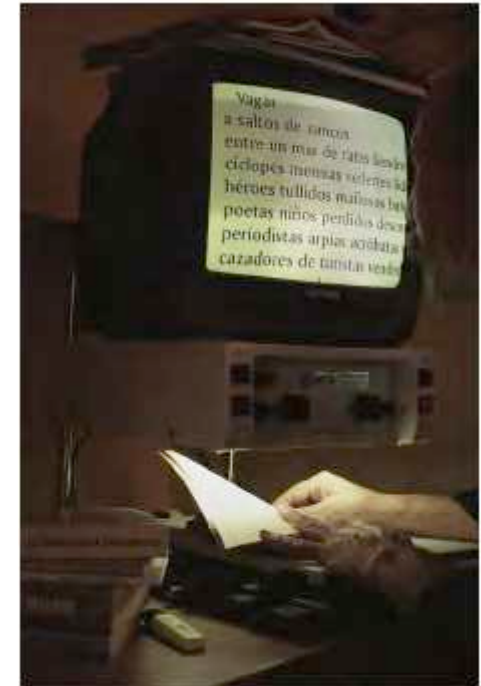


Mario Licón Cabrerá was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. He spent part of his early life (75-79) in Berkeley, CA where he attended the ASUC for photography studies. Back in Mexico he was part of various puppet groups and in 1991 he travelled to Europe with Grupo Espiral, which was invited by well renowned puppet festivals. He came to Australia in 1992 and has since lived in Sydney. Mario has published poetry, short stories and interviews for Mexican, Spanish and Australian magazines, anthologies and newspapers since 1980. In 1998 he coordinated the Tribute to Octavio Paz at the Sydney Parliament House. In 1999 he was invited to the "Poetry Week" (Semana de la Poesía) in Barcelona. In 2000 he was part of the Homage to Pablo Neruda and César Vallejo together with M. T. C. Cronin, Judith Berveridge and Peter Boyle. In 2001 and 2003 Mario attended "Horas de Junio", a crowded writers festival in Hermosillo, Mexico. In 2007 he was invited to "Poetry Without Borders" in Sydney. In 2009 he took part in 'Metaphors of Space' at the Sydney Writers Festival. He has further translated many Australian poets into Spanish. *PUXTAS* (Back & Forth), his fourth collection of poetry, was published with the support of The Australian Council for the Arts in 2007.



### Writing and Translating Poetry

My poetry is not very rich in metaphors or images. Most of the time I focus on the tone that is built up by using every-day language. My poetry is inspired by real-life experiences, by the natural elements, landscapes, family memories, childhood, desire, death, distance, time/space, solitude, longings and dreams. All these themes re-occur in my poetry and short stories. My poetry is more about me, the "I". This does not mean that I am not aware of daily historic tragedies word-wide. It is said that being bi-lingual enriches your understanding of the world, and it surely has deepened my way of writing. I would like to be able to speak at least 5 languages! 'Yuxtapos' was a book I wanted to write in a bilingual mode. Poems such as those to Jennifer, who was Australian, came to me spontaneously in English while those about the death of my parents and brother came in Spanish. The context of the poems is what dictates whether I write in English or Spanish.



*A woman with these eyes in her eyes  
and a long-long mystery on her profile.  
A woman dressed in black  
Bare-footed before the fire.  
A woman offering me her nakedness  
nearby the lake.*

*A woman spreading out her wings  
to mark where love ends  
to then fly away.*

### Malouf

Malouf has a lot to do with my arrival to Australia. I came here running away after the breakdown of a 14-year relationship with another of my two daughters. One day, many years of absence, Lino Álvarez - friend of mine - arrived in México and asked me to come with him to Australia. I am now living in Paddington with Jennifer, my wife, who sadly died in September '97. While working in the restaurant, I started to translate some Australian poets and to do some interviews with them. My first view was with filmmaker Alex Proyas and then with author David Malouf with whom

then Peter Boyle that I have developed a friendship.

### Photography

As a photographer I had a few individual and group exhibitions both in México and California. In 1976 my career as a photographer in Berkeley, California ended, because I was diagnosed with Star Guard (Macula Degeneration). Between 1971 and '73 I worked as the "official" photographer for FEUS, the radical student organization at the Universidad de Sonora. I was a founding member of "Los Azules", a counter-cultural group. Part of this group dissolved into a 'Germen' group with clear post-Situationist tendencies. The 12th of September '73, after the military coup in Chile we demonstrated with other students and workers' organizations. The day after, we found most of our names on the "blacklist" in the official newspaper "El Sonorense", so we were forced to leave town, as it was too dangerous to stay. One part of "Germen" went to México City and the other went to California.



### Absent Spaces

Since my arrival in Sydney this city has felt empty and absent to me. The suburbs I lived in appeared like ghostly spaces; Paddington, Newtown, Surry Hills and Glebe seemed apart from the main streets - completely desolated. Somehow, there is an unwritten call for discretion, which is still a mystery to me. It is not a feeling of solitude that one finds around here in Marrickville, for example, but some sort of fake discretion, distance, and absence. I found refuge in poetry, since then I have been attending book launches and poetry readings at Gleebooks. These events, my relationship with Jenny and the readings of Patrick White

helped me a lot to understand Australia in a better way.

-in particular his novel The Solid Mandala

rayshavetokeepouridentity,our  
ythislmean,buildingupyour  
eaofhomeandtryingnotto

ere. So, soon I was there too, at  
Jesús and other places reading my  
'in the open-mike sections and  
g myself known bit by bit and making  
ets friends. I started to get used to  
oaf staying here in Sydney, trying to  
e more grounded. I'd lost too many  
already anyway. At the moment I'm  
g for Dos Filos, a Mexican literary  
' that has been in the run for over  
ears. Here I am a contributor to a very  
:ante-zine, 'Mascara' literary review.



### Untracable

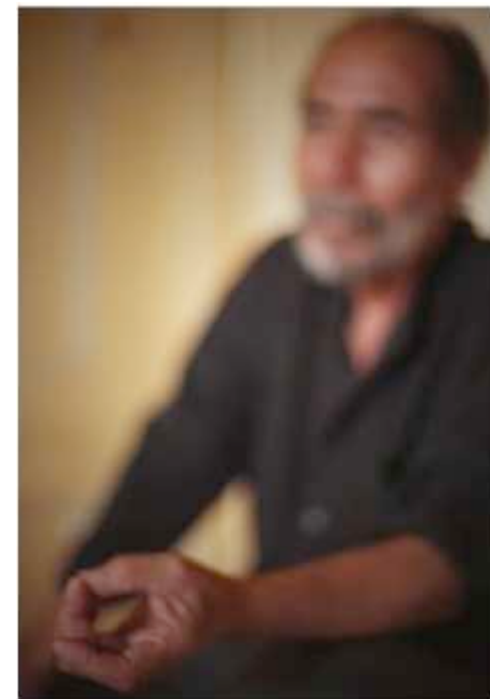
Here we are all just Latin Americans, people  
here they don't really see the difference  
between Chilenos or Guatemaltecos, it  
doesn't make any difference if I say that I  
am Mexican. Here the general concept is a  
Hispano-American identity. It is interesting  
to remember what Octavio Paz said once,  
that Mexican or Argentinean contemporary  
poetry doesn't exist as such, but rather what  
we have is Hispano-American poetry. If you  
read Octavio Paz's poetry without knowing  
that he was born in Mexico, you wouldn't be  
able to say, "ah! This is real Mexican poetry."  
So, national characteristics are very difficult  
to trace in poetry. I share certain ones with  
other Latin Americans but just to a certain  
degree since each one will have their own  
national points of views, traditions and even  
language differences. "*Cada quien carréa con  
sucruz*", "Each person carries his own cross".

### Death-Everything and Nothing

charged with sadness, but rather like a  
meditation.

so important poets. For me, poetry is a  
meditation. It is a conversation with your  
own soul and the soul of other. It is an  
attempt to understand and place oneself  
into Time and Space through language.  
Poetry is not a commodity, that's for sure.  
As a poet you're real in a chain, you belong  
to a certain tradition—in my case I feel closer  
to César Vallejo and Efraín Huerta than to  
Octavio Paz or Pablo Neruda. To me poetry  
signifies everything and nothing at the same  
time. It's vital for me; if I don't do it I will  
die/dry. Poetry doesn't leave you alone, it  
goes away and keeps coming back and if it  
doesn't come, you try to summon it all the  
time. A every day exercise, something that  
is absolutely essential, poetry—not just mine

-fills a huge gap in my life.







## MARÍA FERNANDA CARDOSO



María Fernanda Cardoso is a contemporary artist, born in Colombia, currently living in Sydney, Australia. Graduating from Yale University with a Masters degree in Sculpture and Installation in 1990, she is well known for her unconventional use of materials and the use of animals as inspiration.

Cardoso exhibits widely in major museums and galleries in the US, Latin America, Australia and Europe. In 2003 she had a major solo show "Zoomorphia" at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art, and a mid-career survey at BLLA, the leading contemporary art museum in Bogota, Colombia. In 2000, the Museum of Modern Art in New York commissioned her to make a major installation for their millennium show, "Modern Starts". Here she installed 36,000 plastic lilies in a 125 foot long wall—which subsequently toured to the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, Miami Art Museum, and the Walker Art Center. In 2003 she represented Colombia at the Venice Biennale, exhibiting a large installation of starfish woven together into a submarine landscape titled Woven Water. Other projects include shows at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, PS1, the San Francisco Exploratorium, the Centre Georges Pompidou, Fundacion La Caixa in Barcelona, the DAROS Foundation in Zurich and the Centro Reina Sofía in Madrid.

Her most recent project, the Cardoso Flea Circus, was recently acquired by the Tate Gallery in London as part of its permanent collection. The Circus has been widely exhibited at festivals and museums around the world, and was performed at the Sydney Opera House as part of the Sydney Festival 2000, where it was a smash hit. Other collections include the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Miami Art Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Daros Collection, BLLA and Mambo Collections in Bogota, National Art Gallery, Canberra and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, among others. Cardoso has been a visiting artist and professor at the California Institute for the Arts in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Art Institute and the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota. GRANT PIRRIE Gallery and ARCONE Gallery represent her in Sydney and Melbourne. Cardoso has been a recipient of an Australia Council New Work Grant in 2009 and in 2002, a First Prize in the Gold Coast Art Gallery Jupiter's Art Award in 2003. First Prize at the Bogota Biennale in 1990, tuition Scholarship from Yale University in 1989-1990, and a Colombian Government Scholarship to study abroad from 1987-1989. In 2003 Cardoso represented Colombia at the 52th Venice Biennale.



During my first years in Australia I did not want to exhibit there, only overseas as I thought my international career would die when I moved here. But it didn't die so I can now show here and overseas as well. My first art teacher at university was perhaps who most influenced me and my peers, because as we were studying the 20th-century art vanguard traditions, in their spirit we were challenged to try to always make artworks that break with the past and create new things. It forced us to be as creative as we could be. Becoming a parent takes a bit of a toll in your career but it is quite an interesting challenge. Women artists always compete in a disadvantage but art itself does not have gender.

My first impression of this country was that there was a lot of beautiful natural beauty and the species that exist there are quite interesting and different, which in part of what informs my work. I don't think Australians have any expectations, they don't mind where you come from, that I am from somewhere else I don't think they have any prejudices. I liked the people in the art community they are open-minded, relaxed, cultured, and warm people. Collaborations are good but the artist's work is lonely.

genitalia of invertebrates and making artworks about it. All the work I am currently doing has to do with the possibility of reproduction and fertility. With the biological fact that one can reproduce. It's

to reproduce and survive. My method of working is being extensive research on the subject matter, a lot of minutia, a lot of detail, a lot of research. The flea circus that was so successful took 6 years of work.



ected to insects and animals. Artists  
 have the freedom to use any  
 material they want. Sometimes context  
 is important, sometimes you have  
 no context to the place where you are so  
 you create a dialogue that engages  
 the space you are in. But you can also  
 create your own thing. Depends  
 on where you are in your work. Sometimes you  
 feel the need to address the context,  
 sometimes not. I don't like to be specialised

in your knowledge base in order to be

alive.  
 needed human being and to have a

otherwise feel weird. In Colombia I feel like  
 I'm like a fish out of water, so it's a relief to go  
 to a fish in the water while here I always feel  
 at home, where I can breathe, where I can  
 move and be completely comfortable with  
 the environment and myself.

After twenty-five years of working non-stop  
 things change "mucho agua hasa debajo  
 el Puente" but your passion, I guess stays the  
 same. Having a sense of being a successful  
 artist is a complex thing you want an  
 audience, recognition, status and money.  
 It's all of them together. But is mostly about  
 people loving what you do what matters.

that is my visible being more than just my  
 body. If I want to exist I need to make my  
 art and to show it, to know and to manifest  
 who I am. In order to exist I need to make  
 things I cannot exist without my artwork.  
 Well, that is how I exist in relationship to  
 others-through my work.

## EJANDRACANALES

Andra is a performance artist and independent filmmaker. Based in Sydney since 1998, she has undertaken studies in film and video production and worked in several roles for independent films.

Andra has directed documentaries screened nationally and internationally including IDFA International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam and Sydney Festival. She was nominated for the IFA Award and the CRCDendy Award and ATOM award for best audio documentary.

In 2016 she took part in the 5SUR5 residency in Miami where she directed the short documentary "Locer".

Andra thought at the University of Western Sydney, Australia; Currently teaching documentary at the Sydney School and SPROUT media program for kids.

Andra is a recipient of a scholarship to complete a course of Creative Arts at University of Western Sydney where she is developing a multi-platform documentary project Solid\_Liquid\_Gas\_H2O supported by the Australian Film Commission and an Potter Cultural Trust.



### Solid\_Liquid\_Gas...H2O

There is no element in this world like water. The way our contemporary societies understand water is of critical importance to understand the future of humanity.

This video is a poetic meditation on the contemporary crisis between humanity and its quest for water. It follows an narrative structure based on water as a natural occurring element that exists in different states: Solid, Liquid, Gas...H2O.

Water changes all the time. It changes in stage, in shape and in color. Humanity's understanding of water has also changed throughout history and across nations. Water is not just the most precious commodity we face, scarcity of it is a complex spiritual element.

Thousands of cultures over thousands of years. It takes a primordial role in most myths of creation.

The narrative of the video is divided into three parts according to the cycle of water as it travels from solid through liquid into gas, ending with H2O as an epilogue. The aesthetic construction of the film is inspired by this transformation.  
[www.solidliquidgash2o.net.au](http://www.solidliquidgash2o.net.au)



### ASilenceFullofThings

Director: Alejandra Canales  
ASilencefulofThings is a short and stylised documentary that travelled in a woman's sensorial memories of political torture.

Director Statement

"mediaeval ones should have no body; to be modern one should have no soul." Oscar Wilde.

"To be Greek one should have no clothes; to be a torturer is a constant political practice used historically to undermine the "enemy", the "Other".

The issue of torture in the current political climate where it seems to exist as a justification to torture in certain cases.

"When documentary boundaries grow permeable, there is the possibility of looking again, with new questions in mind."

Here is when ASilenceFullofThings gave me a possibility to touch on such a topic from a new perspective, the memory of the senses.

The smell that takes you right back to places that many people don't want to go.

## ULOALBERTON

,Paulolefta7-yearcareerasacommercialairline inBraziltobecomeafilmmaker.Hecompleteda ificateinFilmatNYU,QueerFilmStudiesatWITS ersityinJohannesburgandaMasterofArtsdegree eAustralianFilm,TelevisionandRadioSchool (RS)specializingindocumentarydirecting;andis engagedinafulltimeDoctorateofCreativeArts ramattheUniversityofWesternSydney(2009- )

idcastcreditsincludethe10-minutesGoingToThe s(SBS);thehalf-hoursGiveMeABreak(SBS)and igOn(SBS)andonehour'sSwappingLives(SBS) DrumsofMaranhão(TVCultura–Brazil).Awards deBestPhotographyforWaterandI;FilmAustra- ecialcommendationandATOMBest-multimedia rdforMijnMan;andBestDocoandBestEditingat ternAustralianScreenAwards2004forGoingTo Dogs.

o8,apartfromworkingonMyFather,MyMaster, tatedcommunityworkshops;coordinatedpost uctionforaTVseriesatCAAMAandworkedas inicalDirectorforafeatureddocumentarybyJane rcalled"TeaWithMadameClos".



### GoingtotheDogs

Director:PauloAlberton

BestDocumentary-WesternAustralianScreenAwards

2004

BestEditing-WesternAustralianScreenAwards2004

GoingtoTheDogsisahighlystylised,halfanimated parodydocumentarythatusesdogsasmetaphorsto examinemulticulturalismandimmigrationpoliciesin Australia.

ThefilmisnarratedbytheBrazilianDirectorwho observestheeverydaylifeofbothmulticulturaldogs andpeopleoftheexclusivesuburbofCottesloe,in WesternAustralia.Hishumorousdescriptionsofthese Australianculturalpracticesleadtothere-creation ofapopularlocalevent:adoggyChristmasparty, organisedbycharacterMrs.PingBond,aChinese migrant.Atthepartythecomparisonbetween "multiculturaldogs"andtheasylumseekersof ChristmasIslandDetentionCentreisunavoidable.

Awards

BestDocumentary-WesternAustralianScreenAwards

BestEditing-WesternAustralianScreenAwards- WASA2004

-WASA2004

## ALTERROJAS

Walter is a graduate in music from the Centro Nacional Artes de El Salvador and the war pushed him into the first to Mexico, he studied at La Escuela Nacional Músic de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and when he came to Sydney entered the Conservatorium of Music to finish his Bachelor of Music. Walter arrived in Sydney with his son in 1989.

From 1995 to 2005 Walter worked as an Independent Director and Producer of a weekly Latin American cultural magazine, on Channel 31 UHF, Community Television Sydney. He has also worked as a freelance sound editor-operator for various shorts films and documentaries around Australia and overseas.

Since 2005 he has been tutoring in computing, digital media and video productions, training various community groups and youth organizations as well as teaching in schools in South Western Sydney. By 2009 Walter Rojas had collected innumerable film footage of the Latin American community political rallies, poetry readings, music, dance, theatre performances and Festivals. Founding member of Audio Visual and Digital Media Academy "Raul Rivas" in San Salvador, El Salvador. Walter works as a freelance filmmaker and producer.

From Syncretic: *En Una Pieza* exhibition Walter filmed and produced Lino Alvarez Carrasco's interview: "From the Mosilloto Hill End".



## RLOSARANGO

is a Colombian born sound Engineer. Graduated from the Australian Institute of Music with a Bachelor of Music majoring in Audio Technology. Graduated with distinction from the SAE College. Extensive experience as a sound Engineer, Sound Designer and Recording Engineer.

Currently works at the Sydney Opera House, Australia. Working on large-scale productions for different theatre companies. Work includes symphonies, operas, music concerts, theatre, cabaret, musicals, and corporate events on any of the 7 theatres or spaces available.

Credits include: F.O.H for Luminous Festival. Assistant Engineer for Spanish Flamenco Show Sara Baras, Assistant Eng. For Roberta Flack, Mariza, Belafonte, Mathew Herbert, Human Nature, The White Stripes Tribute. Crew for AIR, Le Grande Cirque, Star Opening, James Morrison, various International productions at "The Studio" and with Opera Australia, many more.

In this project, all Soundscapes and interviews were recorded at this Studio, which is being used for Sound Design, Post Production and Commercial Audio editing and recording.

He lives and works in Sydney since 2000.







¡Ella es como una convivencia con  
Siempre he tratado trabajar con  
go, con un pintor Samuel, tenemos  
un punto de vista, trabajamos al  
día que no estamos mirando la cara  
día y pelean por el color o si esta  
o si bien o vamos a tener que dejarnos  
nos un mes. Entonces he trabajado  
a sola. Por supuesto siempre necesito  
bien que te estes sosteniendo el hilito  
o el hilo para hacer la línea o por lo  
podes ararlo. Encambio el cuadro es como  
o puedes proteger o cambiar de idea.  
o es como que uno se entrega, estas  
en te expuesto, el mural es todo un  
o. Lo tienes que pensar todo el tiempo  
o es una cosa que va a ser tuya.  
o de donde estes es un mural interior  
o casa o es un mural en una calle  
o tu tienes que llegar a buscar puntos

o stas muchas cosas expuestas a que no es  
o que la gente quiere tener dentro de  
o 30 o 40% tuyo. Entonces me pasas a  
o partes y el obrero plástico aunque  
o característica son tus características, los  
o a los van adaptando, puedes hacer  
o talmente fluorescente o totalmente  
o tiene que ver con lo que uno siente.  
o yo a pintar un submarino amarillo  
o no es parte de mí. Una vez con sus  
o a todos los lados.

### **origen del Cacique Charrúa Vaimaca**

o recuperamos los restos de Vaimaca  
o bien fue el último cacique Charrúa

o que había en Uruguay y fue llevado a Francia  
o con otros cuatro Guyumusa, una Charrúa  
o embarazada, su hijo nació en Francia y  
o ando por allí. Un día de las anécdotas que  
o Vaimaca es llamado por el Rey de Francia

o en ninguna manera—metido en un calabozo—  
o a que es el lovens y el Vaimaca dice que de  
o en Uruguay que el también es Rey que quiere  
o verlo que lo venga a ver a él. Los Franceses  
o tenían expuesto a él que le tode Vaimaca  
o en un museo y nosotros por años pidiendo  
o de recuperar los restos hasta que sucede.  
o Paradójicamente Rivera es de los próceres  
o nuestros que manda a matar a los últimos  
o Charrúas. Los restos de Vaimaca los ponen  
o en el cementerio Central en el mismo panteón  
o que Rivera. Establece la delegación de los  
o Blandengues, que es el cuerpo de honor de  
o la milicia que forma Artigas para pelear con  
o los Charrúas. El entierro era por invitación

o el costado, los descendientes de Charrúas  
o y los que no tenían invitación pasaban por  
o estaban de hecho de frente de la calle  
o con sus incienso esperando que se fueran  
o todos para hacerles el entierro. Resulto que  
o al final cuando todos quedaron solo el cofre  
o con toda la delegación de los Blandengues

o era impresionante y ahí claro, lo recuerdo  
o y entraron los descendientes de Charrúas,  
o horas, no se podía parar a dormir, era la  
o primera vez en mi vida, a los 28 años, que  
o pude ver una ceremonia Charrúa en mi propia  
o tierra, fue la única vez que yo me encontré un  
o poco como con la raíz.

### **Uruguay y Méjico**

o Tratando de recuperar acá un poco de  
o sentimiento de la cultura Latinoamericana,  
o comencé a desarrollar una muestra utilizando  
o elementos del Candombe Uruguayo y del  
o folklore Mexicano en relación al Día de  
o Muertos. Mi maestro Hernández ha pasado  
o su exilio político en México, me venía  
o acercando mucho a esa cuestión Mexicana  
o por Hernández, primerome gusta la estética  
o de Hernández, aunque su expresión  
o muy diferente a la de Torres García, igual  
o muy estructurada el produce como una  
o fusión. La paleta de Hernández es muy  
o recostada hacia la de Tamayo, de ahí viene  
o un poco esa cuestión de el matiz en tonado,  
o respetando a Torres y respetando un poco

o Hansido mis influencias, cuando entro a  
o a Hernández y me gusta lo personal. Estas  
o estudios como Hernández siempre exige

o que me muestre más lo que es la cultura  
o precolombina en México. Cuando vengo  
o acá me pasa que encuentro esa necesidad  
o de hablar de nuestras celebraciones  
o importantes. Tengo una relación muy  
o cercana con la muerte de siempre nunca  
o le tuve miedo, mi mejor amigo muere y este  
o cuando recién tenía cumplidos los 18 y nos  
o fuimos con mis amigos a tocarle los tambores  
o al cementerio, al lado del tubular clarofue  
o el shock de todo el mundo en el cementerio  
o nosotros mandando a tocar el candombe

o recurrencia que empiezan a caer como una  
o y fumando así bien de fiesta y después la  
o vida que empiezan a morir y en vez de estar

o asustada con el tema empiezo a sentirme  
o como más familiar como una cosa que está  
o ahí. Tengo cosas que me enamoran  
o siempre de la que participo con una  
o felicidad en romey acá lo he chomuchado  
o menos, el candombe y la celebración por  
o la muerte. Entonces pensé por qué juntar  
o esas cosas y de alguna forma rendirle  
o homenaje no solo como se suele hacer  
o musicalmente al carnaval lo que tiene que  
o ver con las figuras principales del carnaval  
o con esta estética Mexicana. Y me pedía  
o encontrar qué tienen en común, el  
o candombe es una cuestión que viene de  
o los esclavos Africanos que llegaron a Sur  
o y a Montevideo, que vienen con toda su religión

o referencia a los que pasaron, a los que no  
o están. El llamado de los tambores es llamado

o dos mundos, el llamado de los tambores  
o a los espíritus, conviven en el candombe los  
o otros que el llamado de los espíritus y  
o de los sabios. El Gramillero, es el médico  
o brujo, La Mama Vieja es la madre tierra, que  
o es la que protege. La muerte como parte  
o de la vida. Hasta los materiales con los que  
o se trabaja el día de Muertos en Uruguay se  
o trabaja el Carnaval de ese modo. El papel  
o macho los muñecos de cartón, la música,  
o los trajes, todo tiene que ver. Un poco juntar  
o esas cosas y mostrar que pertenecemos,  
o tenemos esa cuestión que aunque estamos  
o de parramados tenemos muchas cosas que  
o nos une.

## IRIADEJUSTODÍAZ

### manerasdeverelmundo

PerthaprinicipiosdeFebrerodel  
squesonidosmeacuerdodeolores,  
erdodeloloralanaturaleza,del  
asto.VeniallegandodeEuropayen  
nososentianlosolores,esoelso  
acuerdo.LlegueaSydneymucho  
despuéscomopartedeunagira,  
namemoriaymuyvagadeSydney

Septiembreyeseañoovolvíyapara  
desvolviafinesdeeseaño,creo

me.CuandomerudeArgentina  
insabersivolvía,mefuiconuna  
uraquemató30,000personasyque  
metnemehubieramatadoami  
én.Yonoqueriavolvernuncamas,  
muyresentidoconArgentinaycon  
lpaissignificaba.Enel85volvípor  
avezyaconunademocraciayme  
reunpaisquehabiaextrañadomucho  
erloynomequeriair.Desdeel85  
horael2008hevueltomuchasveces

uanmaneramerecargalaspilas,  
elosestoyvolviendotodoslosaños  
cuentaquemeda laposibilidadde  
hayotrasmanerasdeverelmundo,  
enosoloheidoaArgentinaheido

deverelmundoymelorecuerda  
yaheidoaBrazilyquehaymuchas  
manerasdeverelmundo.Entoncesen  
jociaciónconlasotrasmanerasdever  
doesqueunoserefrezca.

## DiversidadCultural

Mimamádesdemuychicosnoshizo  
escucharbuenamúsica,mimamáesmuy  
critica,todabíacantamimamá.Gente  
quemehainfluenciadoporejemploa  
nivelArgentino,sonlagentedelgrupo  
Anacruz,AztorPiazzola,eldúoSalteño  
yelCuchiLeguizamónenelareaFolklorica,  
tambiénmehainfluenciadogentede  
Jazz,hetenidomuchosmaestrosque  
tambiénmehainfluenciado.Creoque  
loquemásmeinfluenciaesladiversidad  
culturalquetenemosenAmericaLatina  
yuninteresbastantepersonalendescubrir  
esoymcreoquesovamasallaquetoda  
lagentequehenombrado.Unguitarista  
quemegustamuchoenestemomento  
esJuanjoDomimgoytambiénmeinfluyó  
bastanteelmovimientodelaBossaNova  
entreellosJoaoGilberto.Perodeunamanera  
secundaria-noesqueyoestetratandode  
imitarlos.Mepareciomuyimportanteloque  
hicieronlosBrazilerosconsumímusicapopular

sinperderlaraizcultural.Losdosprimeros  
ycomolallevaronounivelantroestadio  
músicosconquienescolaboréfuéromario  
RojasyJennyLewis,alosdoslosconocíen  
unafiestadelasmujerschilenasenel79

conlosotrosdosqueconocidespuésfueron  
LocklanParty,SueMonktheBrisbaneque  
tienenungrupoqueesllama"Jumping  
Fences"conlosqueenprimermomentose  
produjounintercambioanivelintelectual

intercambiosanivelmusicales.  
ydespuésalolargodeltiémpollegaronlos

## ElPapeldeLaCultura

EnelpasadolaizquierdaAustraliaaestaba  
bastanteactivaentonceslaculturaLatina  
cumplióunpapeldeaglutinamiento,nosolo  
degenteLatinoamericanasinótambién  
delmovimientoFolkqueestabacercano

culturaLatinacumpleunamerafunciónde  
nuestraproblemática.Hoyendiala  
entretención,yonveoqueestecumpliendo  
ningúnotropapel,estásiendounartículo  
decorativoenéstemundomulticulturalde  
hoyendia.Sobretodoenloqueconciene

busqueeldesarrollarelaspectoestetico  
de lamúsicaesmuyraroqueungrupo  
de música comercial.Aparteselepermitieser  
contestatariomientrasnocambienada,  
lasartesvisualespuedensercontestatarias,  
unartista puede hacerlaobraquequiera  
porqueenrealidadnocriticanada—esta  
criticandounaestéticaperonocriticanada  
porquenoestácriticandounsistemapolitico

puede hacer música muy contestataria a  
nivel económico,venlamúsicatambiense  
de arte estetico,de forma,peroenel sentido  
delousabamosnosotros,queeraanivel  
delostextosaniveldelapoesía,esearte  
casinotienecabidaysilatieneescuando  
lasociedaddeconsumoleveunelemento  
comercial,asicomoescomerciallaimagen  
delCheGuebara,entoncesseutilizaalgún  
elementocontestatarioporqueseovaa  
vender.

## ElSistema

Elartistaacáparapoderexpresarse tiene  
quetenerunmicrofonoadelante,tieneque  
teneraudienciaygeneralmenteestotodo  
controlado,loqueelartistapuedahaceres  
muydifícil,unartistaquetengaunmensaje  
totalmentehonesto,transparente-nose  
sitendriacabidaenestasociedadeneste  
momento.Creoqueennuestropaisesse  
estapasandoporunasituaciónsimilar,es  
unaculturaqueestahomogenizandoe  
mundoparacrearunamasadeconsumidores

trabajoalternativoquesonlasmusicasque  
se hacen en la defeniza del pluralismo de  
ladiversidadperoesmínimoyesmuyfácil  
quelosartistascaiganenlaseguridadyde  
algunamaneraterminenencajandoenla  
granmaquinaria.

**Seguirhaciendounaformadecontribuir**  
Sigohaciendocosasysigodesarrollandome  
supongoqueenalgúnmomentomeire

quemepermitedesarrollarmisideas  
controladohuscandounespaciocultural  
estéticas,shidiscriminaciónpororigen  
étnico,pormicolor,miorigencultural,  
porlosinstrumentosquetoco-yaquea  
mimiegustanmuchosinstrumentos  
tradicionales-parecequenohubiera  
muchointeresacáentodoloqueeseso.  
Meinvitaronaparticiparenunfestivalde  
flautadulceyvilaoportunidaddepromover  
nuestramúsicaayempeceaescribirpara  
flautadulcemusicaLatinoamericana-bajo,  
tenor,altoysoprano.Tuvelasuerteque

us Music me publicarados libros y se  
icercamiento a la música impresa y  
oportunidad de describir algunas de  
iciones y ahora Orpheus Music me  
ndolaposibilidad de hacer lo mismo  
n materiales escritos para cuarteto de  
is. Es ahí donde contribuí a la  
Australia.

## Italia

pacio, Australia me había dola  
idad de desarrollarme, pero de  
ollarme en soledad y estudiar en  
d, aquí hice cursos de Jazz, de música  
, organice y enseñé mucho, también,  
nservatorio, a la Universidad y  
na Licenciatura en Educación  
l, una Maestría en Estudios Latino  
canos y actualmente estoy terminando  
torado. Todo lo he hecho contra la  
ite, siempre encuentras un elemento que  
e: "No, no lo hagas que no te va a ir  
e muy difícil..." De todas maneras yo  
e hacer cosas de ir contra la corriente.  
e se puntó de vista, le estoy agradecido

nica que me ha permitido hacer  
alia, me había dado una estabilidad  
larme lo hubieran dado y de alguna  
ale he tratado de pagar a Australia  
lo proyectos que le den al país la  
idad de ver que existen otros mundos,  
lturas.

## Espacios Culturales

Habrí espacios como fue La Peña, que  
la abrimos porque acá no había nada, no  
había un centro cultural que promoviera  
la Música Popular y La Peña no era solo  
Latino Americana, por ella pasaron grupos  
de todo el mundo y de todos los niveles.  
Es lo mismo que estoy haciendo con Café  
Carnivale ahora, estoy tratando de que la  
gentes de cuenta de que la diversidad no es  
una mala palabra, que el Multiculturalismo  
no es una mala palabra y que los inmigrantes  
no somos malos o terroristas. Tendría que  
decir que cuando quise quedarme el oficial  
de inmigraciones le dijo a la persona con la  
que yo estaba viviendo que tuviera cuidado  
porque "los inmigrantes se emborrachaban,  
les pegaban a sus mujeres y se casaban con  
ellos solo por la residencia". Estos le dijo el  
oficial de inmigraciones a mi futura esposa.  
Creo que es un ejemplo de muestra  
la actitud con la que uno está luchando  
cos tan tamente en este país. Treinta años  
más tarde ha cambiado muchísimo, pero  
todavía hay gente así y uno encuentra  
es agente en todos los espacios laborales,  
siempre uno se encuentra con ese oficial de  
inmigraciones que interfiere con lo que uno  
está haciendo.

## HISTORIA DE ZULEMACAPPELLI

Llegué a Australia en el año 1978 con mi  
marido y mi hijo Gonzalo.  
Tuve dos hijos más en Australia, Andrew

completamente a ellos. En 1989 formé  
y David y los primeros años los dediqué  
al grupo de teatro "Gente en Teatro"  
dedicándome solo al idioma español. En 1991  
empecé a trabajar en inglés con el grupo de  
teatro "Red Herrings" de ahí en más a pesar  
de no dejarme el teatro en español, mis trabajos  
fueron muchos más en inglés dado que  
podía llegar a una audiencia mayor.

Mi amor por el teatro empezó desde muy  
chica, a los 5 años, concursos de teatro  
infantil y ballet. Después de mayor completé  
estudios de drama en la Universidad de  
Belgrano. Mis maestros fueron muchos y  
todos dejaron algo en mí, pero fue después  
cuando empecé a trabajar en teatro donde  
conseguí lograr la técnica que requerida para vivir  
una vida prestada en el escenario. Directores  
como Daniel López en Argentina, José  
Fariñas, Sergio Amigo, Iqbal Barkat, fueron  
con los cuales pude aprender las técnicas  
requeridas para diferentes formas de teatro.  
Hacemos mucho tiempo que me da vueltas la  
idea de montar una obra que represente la  
verdadera historia de la emigración y el exilio  
de las personas en este país. Historias reales  
montadas en un marco que abarque drama,  
música y danza.

En 1998 Sergio Amigo viajó a Sydney para  
enseñar específicamente Shakespeare  
ya que era una necesidad de los actores  
hispanos en este país que no tuvieron la  
oportunidad de poder aprender la técnica de  
las obras de Shakespeare. Trabajé en Sydney  
dando clases en las dependencias del Club  
Español durante meses. Produciendo  
la obra "Variaciones sobre Romeo y  
Julietta" y "Fever" basada en los sonetos  
de Shakespeare que fue presentada en  
Sydney y Canberra. Fue una experiencia  
muy nutritiva e importante ya que siempre  
existió el mito de que la técnica que se requiría  
era muy difícil para poder desarrollar un  
personaje de una obra de Shakespeare. Con  
su conocimiento y supercepción, los actores  
pudieron lograr controlar las formas que el  
teatro de Shakespeare requiere y así lograr  
conocer una técnica diferente que no habían  
tenido la oportunidad de desarrollar. Sergio  
Amigo es actor, director y profesor de teatro,  
actualmente vive y trabaja en Londres donde  
sigue dirigiendo y enseñando teatro. En  
Argentina es la única persona que se dedicó  
especialmente a Shakespeare.

Mi experiencia en este país ha sido  
complicada debido a diferentes factores que  
afectan a actores provenientes de distintos  
países.

Tanto en Argentina como en Australia  
la población es una mezcla de razas y  
nacionalidades donde la emigración ha

una marca muy profunda y se a en la crisis como en la apariencia, lo cual no presentado en los medios artísticos. Durante para un actor presentarse a una óny que simplemente se lo rechace en la apariencia del personaje que dios tiene en mente. Es como si nos preguntáramos ¿Quiénes australino? ¿El hijo migrante asiático? ¿Un migrante de guerra? ¿O el que hayan nacido o sacado a la fuerza en este país. Yo soy argentina, argentino y con ancestros alemanes, franceses, pero netamente argentina. Entiendo la importancia de la apariencia étnica en la importancia que tiene en este mundo solo el talento o el talento que derriba a la profesión. Parece europea

las condiciones que he tenido para lograr un agente es una de las más grandes dificultades en este país. A pesar de estas dificultades sigo amando esta profesión que alimenté desde niña y que me da vida a este colmada, aunque haciendo algo muy pequeño para mi comunidad montando shows en lugares como Asociación de Mujeres de Habla Española, Encuentro De Mujeres (EEMU), y dando diferentes departamentos de teatro como shows sobre salud, violencia doméstica, discriminación y educación. Me enseñando en escuelas, centros comunitarios y en la Universidad de Sydney.

## HISTORIA DE MARIOLICÓN

*Llevo una mujer en mí.  
Una mujer con el mareo en sus ojos*

*Una mujer vestida negra  
y un prolongado misterio en su perfil.  
Una mujer ofreciéndose desnuda  
Junto a llago.  
Llevo una mujer en mí.  
Una mujer desplegada en sus alas  
Para indicar hasta donde el amor llega  
para luego volar.*

### Australia

Este poema tiene mucho que ver con mi llegada a Australia. Llegué a Sídney “huyendo” de la ruptura de una relación de más de 14 años con la madre de mis dos hijas. Un día, después de muchos años de ausencia, Lino Álvarez –un viejo amigo mío- llegó

al trabajo como su “assistant” en su taller de cerámica en La Palma, en Newtown.

Tres meses después que Lino dejó México yo ya estaba aquí, en Camden Street, mezclando en enormes cantidades de barro, tallando y pintando gigantescas vasijas. Pero mi papel como asistente de Álvarez no duró mucho: después de año y medio los problemas laborales surgieron, abandoné La Palma para siempre. Después de esto trabajé durante cinco años como cocinero

en un restaurante mexicano en Bondi Junction. En el kitchen-hands en Fiesta Cantina, un

con Jennifer, mi esposa, quien tristemente murió en septiembre del '97. Mientras trabajé en el restaurante empecé a traducir algunos poemas australianos y hacer algunas entrevistas. Mi primera entrevista fue con el cineasta Alex Proyas, luego siguió el escritor David Malouf con quien he mantenido una relación afectiva. Antes de llegar a Sídney no sabían nada de la poesía australiana, así que, muy recién llegado, busqué, en una librería de viejo en King Street, una antología. En diciembre del '93 en Gleebooks escuché a Les Murray, uno de los poetas australianos más reconocidos, él fue el primero con quien platicué. Desde entonces he conocido a otros poetas: Peter Boyle, Dorothy Porter, Judith Beveridge, J.S. Harry, Robert Adamson etc. Pero es con Peter Boyle con quien tengo una relación más cercana. Peter traduce poemas hispanoamericanos al inglés y se guido nos ayudamos en este que acer.

### Artes Plásticas y Marionetas

Siempre he tenido interés hacia las Artes. El primer libro que leí siendo muy joven fue La Divina Comedia de Dante, ilustrada por Gustave Doré. En ese tiempo me atraían más las ilustraciones que el texto mismo. Era obvio entonces que cierta inclinación hacia el dibujo y el grabado. En 1969 me inscribí en la Academia San Carlo en la ciudad de México. En ese entonces eran muchos los pintores que tenían cierta influencia en mí, pero particularmente José Luis Cuevas and Guadalupe Posada, tal vez los pintores

mexicanos más reconocidos, (junto con Frida Kahlo, Tamayo y Toledo) fueran del país. Sin embargo era la fotografía donde -por más de una década- me sentía “como pez en el agua”. Luego, desde el principio de los ochentas, escribí poesía y se volvió mi vocación central, mientras que los títeres, el teatro y la artesanía en piel constituían mi modo de vivir. Mireya Cueto –una especie de leyenda en el teatro de muñecos mexicanos- vino a verme en un Performance recitando poesía Nahuatl en español, bailando y tocando flautas y tambores aztecos. Le gustó mucho que yo me invitara a trabajar en uno de sus más grandes proyectos basado en el Génesis azteca: “La leyenda de los Soles” que se realizó en títeres de sombra. Así fue como ingresé al Grupo Espiral, uno de los más importantes grupos en México al final de los ochentas

en todo el país y partes de España, Francia e Italia, este ha sido uno de los momentos más intensos en mi vida hasta la fecha.

### Teatro

Cuando llegué a Sídney me encontré con que era imposible seguir con los títeres. Para empezar no había ningún grupo de títeres profesional. Esta fue mi primera frustración. Luego alguien me puso en contacto con un títere Aborigen, le propuse trabajar con él pero rechazó la idea diciéndome que sólo ellos trabajaban con sus títeres. Un poco después conocí a Micheline,

erdel Medio Este, elladirijáun  
:tocon niños refugiados de Timor  
e, en Bankstown. Ellame invitó, no  
itiriterosino para que entrenará

Fernando, un impresionante actor y  
reñador. Disfrutamos en esta  
enciaporque cosas así nos suceden muy  
o. También trabajé en otro proyecto  
con refugiados sudamericanos,  
'ors'. Después de muchos meses de  
'os problemáticos pusimos la obra en  
:formance Space' por sólo dos fines  
ana. Aparte de contadas alegrías,  
oyecto fue un verdadero desastre!  
ctor-escritor-actor principal" quiso  
idarnos, amí yo otro actor porque  
os—de acuerdo con él—lo estábamos  
ando" de un amaneramiento "really  
.."Entonces decidí distanciarme del  
corun momento.

### graphy

otógrafo fue a algunas exhibiciones  
uales y colectivas en México y en  
nia. Mi "carrera" como fotógrafo  
ó en Berkeley. En 1978 un especilista  
gnosticó Start Gard (degeneración  
ar). Un día, mientras revelaba unas  
en el cuarto oscuro vi un gran punto  
:obre el papel. Saqué el lente del  
dory lo limpié, repetí esta acción  
reces—pero el punto negro seguía  
re el papel. Estaba en mis ojos.  
gra digital no existía en aquel

entonces, o yo no tenía noticia de ello, así  
que era imposible para mí seguir con la  
fotografía. Entre '71 y '73 fui el fotógrafo  
"oficial" de la FEUS, la organización  
estudiantil radical de la Universidad de  
Sonora. En ese tiempo también fui miembro  
fundador de "Los Azules", un grupo contra-  
cultural que impugnaba el uso legal de  
las drogas, la libertad de expresión y justicia  
social. Parte de este grupo se disolvió en  
'Germen' grupo con una clara postura post-  
situacionista, publicamos algunos números  
de un revista mimeografiada que tenía  
el nombre del grupo. El 12 de septiembre  
del '73, después del golpe militar en Chile  
marchamos—junto con otras organizaciones  
obrero-campesinas—y demostramos nuestro  
repudio por Pinochet y nuestra solidaridad  
con Allende y el pueblo chileno. Fue una  
manifestación larguísima y triste. Al día  
siguiente encontramos muchos de nuestros  
nombres en la lista negra de "El Sonorense",  
el periódico oficialista de aquellos días.  
Forzados a irnos de Hermosillo, una parte  
de "Germen" partió a la ciudad de México, la  
otra parte optó por San Diego, California.

### Activismo

En 1974 ya en San Diego, tratamos de  
conectar con otros grupos de tendencias  
más o menos similares. Organizamos un  
grupo de estudios en UCSD con Herbert  
Marcuse. Este grupo no llegó muy lejos  
pero Herbert devino un amigo más o menos  
cercano y nos apoyó a económicamente

junto con Jean Franco y Joseph Somers.  
Participamos en muchas acciones conjuntas  
con grupos como The Red House, Left  
Bank, The North Star, Open Road—todos  
estos grupos tenían algunas ideas similares  
pero otras iban al extremo de las nuestras.  
En junio del '76 me trasladé a Berkeley  
porque hay apasaban mucho más cosas  
que en San Diego. Al final de ese año  
llegaron los "Germes" que estaban en  
México DF. Después de ciertas penurias y  
tropiezos económicos llegamos a formar  
un grupo junto con amigos de Grecia,  
Argelia, Alemania, Francia, Italia y de E. U.  
La mayoría de estas gentes tenía interés en  
La Internacional Situacionista. Empezamos  
una revista titulada irónicamente "What's  
left", cuestionando qué es y qué queda de la  
Izquierda. Pero este grupo no duró mucho,  
el nivel de las discusiones era muy desigual,  
muy protagónico, sin embargo, los que  
permanecemos "vivos" seguimos siendo  
amigos hoy en día. Así que, después de todo  
estome aparté—casi completamente—de  
cuestiones políticas y decidí centrarme más  
en actividades culturales y en misceláneas  
personales, ya que estoy...

### Escribiendo y Traduciendo Poesía

Mi poesía es muy rica en metáforas  
e imágenes. Más de las veces se concentra  
en el tono, que es nutre usando un lenguaje  
cotidiano—algo así como lo que H. M.  
Enzénberger define como Poesía Directa  
—, aunque a veces "invento" mis propias

palabras y me doy a los experimentos.  
Mi poesía está inspirada por hechos  
reales, por los elementos naturales,  
paisajes, memorias, el deseo, la muerte, la  
distancia, soledades, añoranzas y sueños.  
Todos estos son temas recurrentes en mi  
poesía y mis relatos. Mi poesía es acerca  
de mí, el Yo. Esto no significa que no esté al  
tanto de los horrores, terrores y desastres  
políticos y naturales. Las diarias tragedias  
históricas, globalmente hablando: lo que  
sucede en Iraq, Iran, Israel, Palestina,  
Afganistán, México, Australia, deja una  
profunda marca en mi conciencia. El  
ser bilingüe enriquece, amplía mi escritura.  
Me gustaría ser capaz de hablar por lo menos  
cinco idiomas yuxtase fue un libro que lo pensé  
escribir de un modo bilingüe. Poemas como  
esos dedicados a mi llorada Jennifer que era  
australiana, me "llegaban" naturalmente en  
inglés, mientras que es sobre la muerte de  
mi padre y mi hermano, venían en español.  
Esto tiene que ver con lo que el poema en  
cuestión trataba, el asunto del poema, el  
contexto del poema es lo que "dicta" si lo  
escribo en español o en inglés. Escribirlo  
mí mismo es lo único que me interesa. Creo  
que leo más de lo que escribo; y también  
dedico mucho tiempo a la traducción. Como  
traductor uno trata no sólo de decifrar el  
texto, uno además necesita encontrar el  
ritmo, el tono preciso en el idioma nuestro,  
así como también alejarse lo más posible de  
una traducción literal. Hay una cierta libertad

—no en un nivel accidental, sino en una

apoética que nos permite hacer ciertos cosas al poema, cambios en la forma pero que el poema quiere decir. Nunca lo que el poeta no está diciéndonos, esto, pero hay cosas... Traducir con quien uno está en contacto o a quien uno conoce bien facilitaba bastante la poesía de Peter Boyle, por ejemplo, el "de traducir porque puedo tardar directamente sobre el significado de una línea, una frase en particular.

### Los Ausentes

que llegué a Sídney siento esta vacía, ausente. Los suburbios en los que he vivido se me presentan como magóricos espacios; Paddington, Wynn, Surry Hills and Glebe parecían

estamentos desolados. De alguna manera, en las calles principales había ya que una mala o mala o mal disfrazados, discretos, invisibles, y esto es, a fecha, un misterio para mí. No es un sentimiento de soledad lo que uno percibe desde el borde de Marrickville, por ejemplo, o un común acuerdo de discreción, o la ausencia. Patrick White, en una novela 'The Solid Mandala' dice: "...Espíritu, es lo que hace falta".

enciende México, aquí no se ve gente en las casas, pareciera que todos se esconden detrás de sus puertas cerradas y las cerradas/como relucientes

tapas de agua... "como canta Kenneth Slessore en uno de sus poemas. Mis primeras impresiones acerca de Sydney, Melbourne, Wollongong, Bathurst, y otros lugares que he visitado - fueronde que esta era en gran medida, una sociedad "cerrada". Antes de venir aquí viví por muchos años en la ciudad de México, esto es, viviendo entre 20 millones de gente más que en Sydney. Yo crecí dentro de una cultura donde la gente por las noches se sienta en los porches

de las banquetas. Todo se está fuera. Si uno quiere aplacar, mientras los niños juegan en el camino hacia que en Marrickville, las calles están completamente vacías, y no podemos llamar esto "soledad" porque la gente se está dentro de sus casas - uno puede ver, sentir que están allí, la mayor parte del tiempo en un profundo y oscuro silencio. Llegué aquí un día frío y brillante amanecer de octubre. En el camino de la aerpuerto a Newtown íbamos escuchando a la gran banda aborigen Yothu Yindi su hit internacional 'Treaty', su tremendo ritmo, sus armonías me impactaron. Más tarde, cuando salía a caminar por King Street, empezé a notar ese vacío. Era el final del '92, año de una enorme crisis económica, todo estaba a la venta y se sentía como si fuera el caos de Australia. Caminé al rededor de lo que ahora es Broadway Shopping Centre y todos esos gigantescos edificios estaban abandonados, en ruinas. Cleveland Street estaba desierta, polvosa, sepulcral. Yo no sabía qué hacer, dónde meterme, pero al mismo tiempo no

querían pensar en el regreso a México. Encontré refugio en la poesía. Estome aliviado nomcu hoy desde entonces acudo a las presentaciones de libros y lecturas de poesía casitodas las semanas en Gleebooks. Estos actos, mi relación con Jenny y las lecturas de Patrick White - en particular su novela 'The Solid Mandala', me ayudaron mucho para "entender" Australia de una mejor manera.

### Hogar

Durante esos años que viví en Berkeley, no sentía añoranza algunapormipais. En el primer lugar porque California perteneció

parte de un grupo de artistas/activistas a México en el pasado, y porque yo estaba - casi - completamente solo, de ahí que el choque cultural. Pero de alguna manera me fui acostumbrando, unose adaptando a las circunstancias, unose vaintegrando día a día, esto no quiere decir que uno le permite a la sociedad turno que nos asimile. Siempre tenemos que mantener nuestro arraigo, como Serrat canta: "...mi casa y mi guitarra llevo en mí/... adonde quiera que vaya..." y Konstantino Cavafis, el gran poeta griego dice: "adonde quiera que vayas/siempre eres el mismo..." Con esto quiero decir: cimentando nuestra idea de casa en el Espacio/Tiempo y tratandode no ser un "extranjero" de tiempo completo, uno puede prácticamente vivir en cualquier lado. Así que, pronto yo estaba ahí también,

en Gleebooks y otros lugares leyendo mis poemas en "open-mic sections", y haciéndome conocer poco a poco y haciendo nuevos amigos poetas. Cuando dejé México yo estaba escribiendo para revistas periódicas importantes y contribuyendo para varias revistas culturales. Durante los primeros años aquí enviaba mis colaboraciones por correo - en ese tiempo no tenía acceso a internet. En '99 regresé a México y buscar mis contactos se encontré que muchos de ellos ya no estaban ahí. Uno se habían ido del país

re-establecerme como escritor. Me fui acostumbrando a la vida que quedaba aquí en Sídney. Ya había perdido tantas cosas. En ese momento todavía colaboro con "Dos Filo", una revista mexicana que lleva ya más de 30 años en la escena. Aquí contribuyo con una zine muy importante, "Máscara literary review", la editora, Michelle Cahill nació en Kenia y tiene un enorme interés en conocer y publicar poetas y escritores de otras latitudes. Michelle ha implementado muchos proyectos, entre ellos Poetry without Borders, Metaphors of Space, proyectos en los cuales he participado. Sin rastros

El año pasado fui invitado a leer mi poesía en Don Bank, North Sydney, y la periodista que estaba cubriendo el evento me pidió que llevara mi sombrero de mariachi para la sesión de fotos. Le respondí que yo era un poeta mexicano pero no mariachi. Me

el tequila y muchas canciones rancheras, pero eso es otra historia. Dejaré de ser mexicano, nisi quiera con una fusión sanguínea, pero no despliego de nacional ni usos o sombreros de , prefiero usar sombreros panameños, como los latinoamericanos, sea aquí o en la diferencia entre los guatemaltecos, no importa y yo que soy mexicano. Aúna sí, si me preguntadón denací, siempre estaré en Chihuahua. Sin embargo, los conceptos generales que todos somos americanos. Es interesante recordar a Octavio Paz dijo una vez: que la poesía no por ánea argentina o mexicana sino como tales, pero sí tenemos una historia latinoamericana. Este fue un reto que muchos no aceptaron. Si uno quisiera de Paz insaber que él nació como acosería escapáz de afirmar: "ah! verdadera poesía mexicana." Las características nacionales son muy difíciles de rean en la poesía. Por otro lado, aquí no tienen sus propias experiencias. Yo diría que algunas con otros sudamericanos no lo hastacierto grado, porque cada uno de sus propios puntos de vista, y uno y hasta diferencias lingüísticas. ¿quién acarréasupropiacruz."

de cuentas, este "aislamiento", "este "estar lejos de casa" que yo, que yo "sufro" aquí en Australia,

se vuelve fuente de inspiración. Y opasé del 2001 al 2003 en México y no escribí en la forma que lo hago aquí. No hice casi nada en esos dos años a parte de participar de veces en un masivo festival de escritores. Cuando regresé, sentí que estaba volviendo

mi escritura. La "soledad" aquí me permite concentrarme en mi trabajo, porque soy muy dado—aúnsiendo una persona introvertida

amigos haciéndome nada que hablar y beber. En Tepoztlán me levantaba y me iba directo a la plaza, porque ahí no hay cantinas, entonces compraba un traguito y lo tomaba en la plaza y ahí te juntas con tus viejos amigos. Entonces me dícua que lo estaba haciendo o era recargar las baterías para cuando regresara aquí seguir escribiendo sobre esa experiencia de estar "entre dos aguas", entre "el silencio y el ruido" Nove o mi trabajo como sobrecargado de nostalgias y tristezas with, más bien como una meditación. Por ejemplo con la muerte de mis familiares, mi esposa, mis amigos, no es abor dar una sustancia de tristeza, más bien lo que la muerte te hace sentir y más que nada una meditación sobre el vacío absoluto que nos deja la muerte. La muerte nos deja un sentimiento de odio, de frustración, porque no puedes hacer nada para detenerla.

### Apoyo

En México, trabajando como titiritero, íbamos a poblaciones extremadamente pobres. Era muy deprimente aceptar que

tú estaba siendo bien pagado por llevar tu espectáculo a esos lugares donde veías las ratas pasando entre los pies de los niños. En México, el consejo nacional para las artes, en ese tiempo, era muy indulgente con artistas independientes y promotores culturales. Aquí puedes ver—hasta cierto grado—la misma situación: algunos escritores

de dinero para sus proyectos mientras que los artistas no apoyados con grandes sumas todavía hay muchas comunidades aborígenes que carecen de escuelas y viviendas apropiadas. Un dramático contraste social, político y cultural. Aquí no tiene que hacer algo extra para apoyar tu trabajo artístico. Es mucho más difícil para los sudamericanos obtener becas del Australia Council for the Arts que para los Australianos, ellos obtienen los apoyos más sustanciosos y más seguidos. Creo que nosotros tenemos que crear nuestros propios recursos, pero esto es difícil porque la "Latino-Culture" está más enfocada en demostrar sus habilidades para bailar Salsa que otra cosa. La literatura, el teatro, el cine, la música experimental no les interesa, no "toca" a la mayoría de los latinoamericanos en este país. Para ellos el arte es nada más un pasatiempo, esto se debería discutir en los talleres de arte comunitario, sobre todo con gente joven.

### Todo y Nada

No sé realmente qué es la poesía, y comparto esta opinión con otros poetas, importantes y no importantes. Para mí la

poesía es una meditación. Una conversación con tu alma y la de otros poetas. Un intento por entender y situarse uno mismo en el Espacio/Tiempo a través del lenguaje. La poesía no es una comodidad, es de estar claro. La poesía puede ser "útil" para el poeta

para las grandes mayorías. Como poeta eres uno más de una gran cadena, perteneces a cierta tradición—en mí caso me siento más cercano a César Vallejo y Efraín Huerta, que

poesía significativa y nada al mismo tiempo. Es vital para mí, como vivo, muero, me seco. La poesía a veces se aleja, pero vuelve, note abandoné por completo, y si no regresa trata de invocarla. Es un ejercicio cotidiano, algo que es absolutamente esencial, la poesía

en mi vida.  
—nosólo la mía—llena un espacio muy grande

*Aquella lacrimosa arabia  
Aquella lacrimosa arabia  
Que vertió sobre ti  
Lanoche última de nuestro duelo  
Donde, en querencia de mi bullada  
anatomía  
Quedo aquella arabia  
Porque a hora los trenes pasan  
Contudibujomas fresco*

## RIADEMARÍA FERNANDA OSO

Fernanda Cardoso es una artista poraneanacida en Colombia que actualmente vive en Sydney Australia. Se formó en la Universidad de Yale al completar una maestría en escultura e instalación de arte en 1990. Ella es muy conocida por sus obras de materiales poco convencionales y su inspiración en la naturaleza. Cardoso ha trabajado extensamente en los principales museos y galerías de Estados Unidos, como la Tate, la Latina, Australia y Europa. En 2003 ganó el premio "Zoomorphia" en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Sydney y una muestra colectiva en BLLA, el museo de arte contemporáneo de Bogotá, Colombia. También ha trabajado en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York, le encargó hacer una extensión artística para el show del milenio "Starts" donde instaló 36.000 piezas de plástico en una pared de 125 pies de alto, la que posteriormente fue exhibida en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de San Francisco, el Museo de Arte de Miami

en Colombia en la Bienal de Arte de Bogotá y en la Bienal de Arte de Walker. En el 2002 participó en una instalación artística de estrellas de mar entrelazadas en un paisaje marítimo titulado "Water". Otros proyectos incluyen instalaciones artísticas en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo en Nueva York, PS1, San Francisco Exploratorium, el Centro

Georges Pompidou, la Fundación La Caixa en Barcelona, la Fundación DAROS en Zurich y el Centro Reina Sofía en Madrid. Su proyecto más conocido, El Circo de Pulgas de Cardoso fue adquirido recientemente por la galería Tate de Londres como parte de su colección permanente. El Circo fue exhibido en festivales y museos alrededor del mundo y se presentó en La Casadela Opera en Sydney para el festival de Sydney 2000 donde fue un gran éxito. Sus obras están incluidas en colecciones del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de San Diego, Museo de Arte de Miami, Museo de Arte Moderno de San Francisco, Colección Daros, BLLA y colección Mambo en Bogotá, La Galería Nacional de Arte de Canberra y el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Sydney, entre otros. Cardoso ha sido artista y profesora invitada en el Instituto de Arte de Los Angeles, California, el Instituto de Arte de San Francisco y la Universidad de los Andes en Bogotá. La Galería Grant Pirri y la Galería Arc Onel la representa en Sydney y Melbourne. Cardoso ha recibido una beca del Australian Council New York en 2009 y 2002, el 1º Premio Galería de Arte de Gold Coast, Jupiter's Art Award en 2003. 1º Premio de la Bienal de Bogotá en 1990. En 1989 y 1990 recibió una beca del gobierno colombiano para estudiar en la Universidad de Yale. En el 2003 Cardoso representó a Colombia en la 52ª Bienal de Venecia.

Durante mis primeros años en Australia no quise exhibir aquí, sólo en el extranjero ya que pensé que mi carrera internacional terminaría cuando me mudé aquí pero no terminó pero ahora puedo exhibir aquí y en el exterior. Mi primer profesor de arte en la universidad fue quizás quién mayor influencia tuvo en mi compañía y en mí ya que a él le estudié la traducción de vanguardia del siglo XX en su espíritu estaba un desafío de siempre tratar de crear piezas de arte que rompieran con el pasado

creativos como pudieramos. Ser madre pone una presión en una carrera pero el desafío es bastante interesante. Las mujeres artistas siempre compiten en desventaja pero el arte en sí no tiene género.

Mi primer impresión de este país fue que había mucha belleza natural y que las especies que existen aquí son muy interesantes y distintas, lo que en parte influye en mi trabajo. No creo que los australianos tengan expectativas, no les interesa donde vienen, que soy de otro lugar. No creo que tengan prejuicios. Me gusta la gente de la comunidad artística que no es demasiado ampliamente relajados y amenos. Las colaboraciones son buenas pero el trabajo del artista es solitario.

Actualmente estoy cursando un Doctorado investigando los genes de los vertebrados y creando piezas de arte al

respecto. Todo mi trabajo actual se relaciona con la posibilidad de reproducción y fertilidad en un gran tema sobre la evolución, la presión por reproducir. Mi método de trabajo es de intensa investigación en el tema de pequeños detalles mucha investigación El Circo de Pulgas que tuvo tanto éxito lo llevé 6 años de trabajo.

Me interesa cómo la gente se conecta con los insectos y otros animales, los artistas tendían a tener la libertad de elegir cualquier material que ellos desearan para producir sus obras. A veces el contexto es muy importante y hay que conectarse con el lugar donde uno vive. Pero también se puede ignorar y hacer lo de uno, depende en punto de la carrera uno está. A veces existe la necesidad de referirse al contexto, otras veces no. No creo que las especializaciones sean mejores, es preferible ser multidisciplinaria ya que amplía el conocimiento para ser un ser balanceado y tener una vida más rica.

Tengo que viajar a Colombia cada dos años sin que me sienta en el agua mientras que aquí siempre me siento como pez fuera del agua, así que es un alivio estar allí, donde puedo respirar, me puedo mover y estar completamente cómodo en el medio ambiente y conmigo misma.

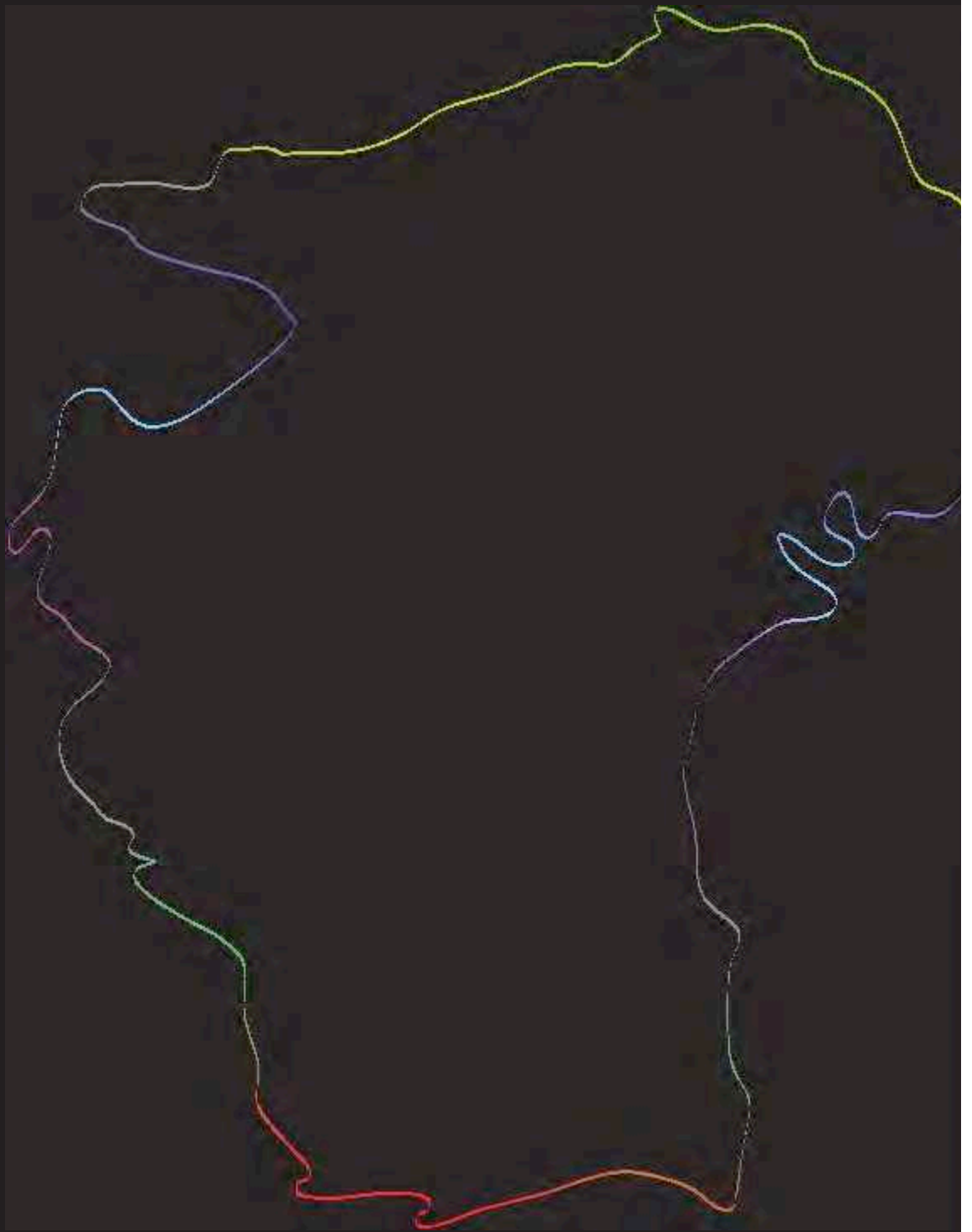


és de 25 años de trabajar sin descanso,  
ascambian, mucha agua ha pasado  
por el puente, pero la pasión  
sigue igual. La sensación de ser  
exitosa es compleja, una quiere  
audiencia, reconocimiento, estatus

o que el agente amelo que haces lo  
todo junto pero principalmete  
ante.

Je existo a través de mis obras de  
es mis visible más allá que solo  
yo. Si quiero existir necesito crear y  
armar arte para conocerme a mí misma

osas, no puedo existir sin mis piezas  
estar quien soy. Para existir necesito  
Así como existo en relaciones  
, a través de mi trabajo.



## ***La Geología De Una Historia – The Geology Of A Story***

*I used the term geología-geology in a metaphorical sense, as to reveal aspects of events that affected our passing through the Australian culture. How these encounters allow the possibility to change perceptions of self and others. These are processes that re-shape us and inevitably alter our 'in between' ever changing cultural topography.*

In 2009 I approached Walter Rojas, Sydney based Salvadorian born film-maker to collaborate in "Syncretic: En Una Pieza". A public exhibition held at the Institute Cervantes Sydney during the month of June 2010. The exhibition showcased the work and stories from a number of Sydney based Latin American artists, including Carrasco's story. I met Walter in the early 1990's and since then we collaborated in a number of different projects. "Potter Lino Alvarez Carrasco: From Hermosillo to Hill End" DVD was filmed and edited by Walter Rojas. The University of Western Sydney through my candidature and the Centre for Cultural research provided the funds and equipment to support this aspect of my research project.

My first contact with Lino Alvarez Carrasco was in early 1990's when one night a friend took me to his old studio on Candem St Newtown. Where I met also other Mexican artists visiting the country. Perhaps my decision to interview a potter was not arbitrary but an emotional as well as intellectual decision. Prompted by the same impulse that made me dig my hands in cold clay as a strategy to learn English through pottery lessons a few years earlier, at Randwick TAFE in Sydney. As an incentive my friend Norma Disher gave me one of Lino's pots titled: "Sunset". This contact point of reference to his work facilitated our conversations many years later when I presented him with my proposal to film and interview him at his studio in Hill End. Those points of initial contact and re-occurrences allowed me to establish a conversation with familiarity and links that were emotional rather than an interest driven purely by an intellectual project. This pre-interview phase established a connection through a trustworthy link and positive recollections. Part of my decision to use film rather than photography to record Lino's testimonial rested in the fact that he appears as an artist who carries the resonance of his cultural heritage through his work and nevertheless him and his work are culturally immersed in the Australian mainstream. With his studio located outside the Metropole recognised as an artist whose work can be found in the commercial, industrial or artistic fields.

Lino and his partner, Kim Deacon, an accomplished actress and musician decided by the end of 1999 to relocate *La Paloma* Pottery from Newtown, an inner-suburb of Sydney to the

Central West town of Hill End. This was the chosen site of a number of renowned Australian artists from the early 19th century generation of painters such as Donald Friend and Russell Drysdald, Margaret Olley, Jean Bellette, Paul Haefliger, David Strachan and Jeffrey Smart. It is not difficult to imagine how they felt coming back from their European experiences as they immersed themselves in the sharp and clear light, colours and textures of Hill End and Sofala. As a potter Lino was in his element with materials at hand immersed in the historical, cultural and aesthetically charged Hill End.

### ***El Agua Bendita de Sofala-Sofala's sacred water***

A short trip to Bathurst turned out into a series of unexpected car troubles and a 4 hours journey into 10 anxious hours. Approaching Hill End via Sofala, 78 km from Bathurst without mobile phone access and having used our last bottles of water to cool the engine down. As we waited on the deserted road shoulder admiring the Australian countryside, drinking maté<sup>1</sup> while sharing our personal stories of being stranded in other 'banquinas' (shoulders) of the world, a young couple in a four-wheel drive arrives to ask if we were Ok. They drove back to Sofala to send the water tank truck to our rescue. No questions asked about what were we drinking. Thinking about that moment I imagined not quite a common view for the locals: two Latino looking individuals seating on top of a purple car's trunk sucking from a metal straw.

Some time later with rain beginning to fall again the blue water tank truck from Sofala arrives; blessed water that would take us to Hill End. Under a persistent autumn rain and in pitched dark we safely entered the town: the only fluorescent lights illuminated the pub, the post office and the petrol station -the pub was open and we got vague directions that took us away from the main road back into the night, only to realise that we were not going to recognised Kim and Lino's house easily. As we drove around looking for signs we came across the only cottage illuminated by candlelight: This has to be the one! Driving into the property we saw *La Paloma* Pottery sign and Lino's figure cut against an open door. Dinner, Amparo Ochoa's singing in the background and good wine took us through our stories' of migration to this country and the purpose of our eventful visit. The little 1800's window offered an autumn landscape that could have easily been the Argentinean Patagonia or Ireland except that this was Australian Hill End.

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<sup>1</sup>Maté: is a tea like beverage that can be drink by sipping from the mate cup using a metal straw and filter.

Prior to our arrival I have had several phone conversations with Lino about my project, connections with other Mexican artists living in Sydney and Australians' perception of Latin American art within the Australian context. We also talked about the importance of showcasing what is considered outside popular entertainment and commercial. He mentioned his contribution to shift perceptions about the art of 'pottery' not to be seen only for its functionality but also as an artistic expression. Having initiated and taking part in organising collaborations at *La Paloma* by inviting other artists, potters, painters, sculptures to work at his studio and exhibit together. During our third telephone conversation we set up the weekend of our meeting and prior to our arrival I sent him the following questions:

Tell me about Sonora, what was like to live in that part of the world?

- Can you describe your first impressions of Sydney? Did you arrive in Sydney or another city? Smells...what did it look or felt like to you then?
- How much do you think it is indispensable for an artist to return home from time to time?
- How important for the kind of artwork and pottery work you do is the environment and the geographical location to develop your work?
- What makes Hill End your home and your studio?
- H. E. have a rich Australian European legacy that makes this particular part of Australia quite special in many ways but is not hard to imagine that the Indigenous influences and legacy of the people that lived here before European settlement where at unison with the landscape and the land-not as observers and portrayers of beauty but as intrinsic part of the land.
- Do you think the fact that a potter immerses him/herself in the mud in the earth to be able to produce a piece of work makes the artists closer or more connected somehow with the environment and its history-ancestry?
- A potter uses all essential elements in life (fire, earth, water) how is that different for you in contrast with a painter or a writer for example.
- What is your personal process when you work on one of your pieces?
- What types of pottery do you make?
- How do you describe the pottery you make?
- How or what do you call yourself?
- What assumptions do you think people make about you and your work?

- You have collaborated with a number of renowned artists, can you tell me about these experiences?
- What is a good pot for you and when does a pot become an artistic object rather than a functional one.
- How important is for you to continue your practice in Australia?
- What or who is a major influence in your life as an artists?
- Do you think Australians know little about the Latin American cultures and the things we do?
- Was it difficult for you to gained recognition as an artist-potter?
- Does Australia have a particular way of making pottery?

The interview was set up at his studio beginning filming at 9.00 am Walter on camera and myself seating directly across the table, in front of Lino. I asked Walter to film the interview as if he was taking a portrait shot. My intention was to recreate a live, talking portrait of Lino's testimonial and in this way corresponding with the rest of the artists' testimonials that I included in the exhibition. We had two breaks and continued until 7.00pm when we stop to cook dinner. During this time I made very little interjections or comments and only refer to the proposed questions when Lino asked me to.

As an eager storyteller our conversation flew naturally but not without consequences. These are associated with what I have observed in a number of Spanish speakers, an idiosyncratic characteristic that leads the listener through a labyrinth of possible stories. With a narration that moves from past to present and reflecting about what could have been different; all shades of one central story. Our ways and styles of narrations are rich in images, humour, and tragic events, enriched with metaphor, historical facts and fantasy. Lino took us through his unique labyrinth, a journey from Sonora to Hill End with all the stops in between. This is how we ended up with a rich narration. Text full of details that was going to be difficult to make visually interesting and hours dedicated to editing. The visual story and the narration had to be then presented as options to the viewer and divided in those main stages of Lino's life: 1. Alchemy: In My Mother's Kitchen. 2.US-Europa. 3. Australia 1982. 4. Hill End. 5. Photos. To arrive to this decision Walter and I have to seat through all the recorded material. Paying attention to repetitions, particular historical and cultural events, such as the student's uprising, "Los Azules" and geographical locations and corroboration of names such as the "*Escuela de Artes Plásticas*" or "The Chicano Cultural Centre". I made a time code to make

notes about aspects I consider of second or less relevance to maintain a coherent story, took notes and search to corroborate events, locations, names and years. Coincidentally I have also invited Mexican poet Mario Licón Cabrera, Lino's interview was film before I interview Mario. A week later as I begin my conversations with Mario for the purpose of the exhibition he also mentioned *Los Azules* and the *Chicano Cultural Centre*. I then realised that Mario and Lino had been friends in the past and had taken distance from each other. But this coincidence gave both stories an unintended corroboration about facts, times and political events. After my first annotations I would send this to Walter and over a meeting discuss the best moments for editing, look for things I missed out during my firsts annotations and I would make decisions about how best to divide his story, where the natural transitions were located in the text as to maintain fluidity in the narration even when was divided in chapters, as well as what titles they should carried. Images and music was also decided during these meetings. Once all decisions were taken Walter produced the final cut of the DVD.

The interview was conducted in English, a decision taken in part for budget and practical reasons, for example time invested in subtitling and translations. Also a choice about presenting a story narrated in English with a Mexican accent and Spanish infiltrating the conversation in unexpected moments. As a speaker of English as an additional language I have observed that during the early years while learning a language, in casual conversations in ones' own language, the second language filters through newly acquired vocabulary. As we grow accustomed to the daily use of the new language and after many years of interactions in both languages, it is our original language that makes interferences, sometimes with words that sound familiar in one's original language. At the same time one might shift completely from one language to another in the middle of a story, unaware of such change. This happened while filming when in an unexpected manner Lino shifted from English to Spanish. It was not until Walter realised this already a few minutes into one of his stories that we decided to stop and restart from the point where languages where exchanged. Towards the end of Lino's interview while talking about his latest artistic work, " Hill End Impressions" he switched from English to Spanish. I asked Walter to include this footage to make emphasis on how migrants are constantly dealing with bilingualism and cultural translations. On the other hand recording his narration in a not so pristine English also made reference to the presence of other cultures in this country. Being bilingual allows you certain naivety in the use of a second language. Somehow there is a freedom that one cannot have with one's own language.

Before Lino settled in Australia he travelled all over the world and in order to tell us about his experience as an artist in Hill End, he had to take us back to a common point of departure. His family structure, his closeness to his mother and his mother's kitchen where he learnt about the magic and chemistry of mixing colours and textures. Events that prompted him to leave Sonora and as the story unfolds we journeyed across Europe and from the North to the South of Sydney, recollections of events that formed him as a young artist. Once in Hill End the story shifts again and is not one of agitation, transformations, travelling in search of something or somewhere but we arrive at Hill End with a mature artist who have had several successful exhibitions and collaborated with renowned Australian artists and who had found ways to continue his practice. The story now is about an artist's continue explorations with forms, colours, textures, materials, design as way of reflecting and in conversation with the landscape he is part of. Holding one of his pieces 'a work in progress' about Hill End's landscape impressions Lino makes one final comment: "*Es lo que es-* This is what it is-What you see is what you get". Or is it?

**Lino Alvarez Carrasco: ceramic artist | decorative | design artist**

### **Biographical Information**

Lino Alvarez Carrasco was born in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico on 8 January 1954 and in 1974 graduated from the *Escuela de Artes Plásticas* at the University of Sonora. This was followed by two years working in ceramics at the Contemporary Craft Centre, University of Southern California, San Diego and from 1976-78 he worked as a production potter in the United States. After living in Spain and the Middle East from 1978 he moved to Australia in 1981, working at Blackfriars and Florenz Potteries, Sydney. In 1983 he established the *La Paloma* Pottery, Newtown, Sydney. He soon become known for large scale custom work, working closely with architects, interior designers, landscape architects and private clients, designing ceramic works to fit site specific areas-a new strategy in Australian deign, with works gracing buildings such as The Lodge, Canberra and Darling Harbour, Sydney. His works have also been purchase by The Australian National Gallery, Canberra and many private collectors.

Collaborations have loomed large in his repertoire, having worked with such artists as Aboriginal artist Thancoupie and more recently, such iconic artists as John Olsen and Garry Shead. Lino Alvarez Carrasco now lives and works from a studio in historic Hill End, NSW.



## SECTION B: WOMEN-ARTS-POLITICS

### **Introduction**

The following section is dedicated to examining the relationship between artistic practice, art/activism and cultural research. I have reflected about this relationship in the academic article entitled: "Artistic Practice as Methodology for Cultural Research" submitted for publication to the *Visual Methodologies* journal. As a creative writer I submitted to the multidisciplinary journal *Portal* a bricolage piece entitled: "*Los sentidos de la noche - Night's Senses*". As part of my artistic practice and work with Sydney Action for Juárez I have directed the documentary play "*Mujeres de Arena - Women of Sand*", written by Mexican dramaturge Humberto Robles, for SBS radio Spanish program. My work with Sydney Action for Juárez also includes curating and coordinating fund-raising concerts and performance nights, as well as coordinating the production of two DVDs by film-maker Mandy King and Fabio Cavadini. All photographic and DVD documentation can be access through:

[Latinamericanatsforum.ning.com](http://Latinamericanatsforum.ning.com).

As a migrant woman artist and educator who utilises creative methodologies for education and artistic purposes I see both these aspects, the academic and artist-activist work, as directly interconnected.

## **Artistic Practice as Methodology for Cultural Research**

Liliana E. Correa, Doctorate of Cultural Research Candidate

University of Western Sydney, Centre for Cultural Research

### **Introduction**

In recent years there has been a move to recognise research conducted by artist-researchers as a valid method of enquiry, in particular within the humanities. This paper is a reflection on how creative methodologies reveal valuable knowledges from various cultural perspectives. It demonstrates how artistic practice used in cultural research has the further value of producing artistic outcomes impacting on our cultural environment by, for example, shifting perceptions about culture. It creates new visions and facilitates community participation and collaborations across disciplines and institutions. Artistic practice as methodology for cultural research allows the artist-researcher to contribute to multi-method research with a primary focus on practice and process. The product of the research is then represented in symbolic form, not bound by one single mode of expression or dominant language. This in turn permits translation across institutions and communities.

### **New Knowledge**

In Australia scholars such as Barbara Bolt (2004) and Paul Carter (2007), amongst others, have developed research within the framework of 'studio-led' or 'practice-based' research. Furthering this idea, the concept of 'Performative Research' appears as a potential new research paradigm that includes the explorations of pedagogical and creative characteristics of creative research methodologies. As argued by Denzin (2003, p. 18) these practice-based disciplines create "oppositional utopian spaces, discourses, and experiences within our public institutions" as well as connecting the world of ideas and theories to the realm of practice from the perspective of the artist whose unique articulations are critiques and meditations on culture and society. Thus artistic practice as methodology for cultural research is a transformative practice connecting academic institutions with lived culture outside the institution through the artist-researcher's work. I have experienced the effectiveness of creative collaborations while working across communities and sectors, and witnessed how non-hierarchical processes incite creative thinking that leads to mutual understanding. Collaborations create dynamic and socially inclusive spaces of learning and reflection. Barret (2007,p.2) asserts that "The innovative and critical potential of practice-base research lies in its capacity to generate personally situated knowledge and new ways of modelling and

externalising such knowledge while at the same time, revealing philosophical, social and cultural contexts for the critical intervention and application of knowledge outcomes” . In this way creative methodologies bridge what is still seen as a gap between practice -based enquiry and other more conventional forms of research. Through a creative method I was able to facilitate a space where the collective and the individual met, while capturing the complexities of the resulting interactions in a manner that was not dominated solely by one language or mode of expression.

The creative methodologies I used produced conceptual and theoretical understandings about how Latin American artists in Australia learn about their new cultural environment, how the social and cultural are constantly negotiated, and about issues that impact on practice that are not always related to language barriers. It also showed how the mainstream Australian culture perceived Latin Americans as belonging to one homogeneous culture. My research produced a body of artistic work integrated in an exhibition, *Syncretic: En Una Pieza*, which included a performance night and also talks on Latin American music and culture.

### **Artistic Collaborations**

Artistic collaborations and cultural productions play a number of different roles for individual practitioners, for academic researchers, and for society at large. They create new collective cultural references and facilitate transitions between social and cultural contexts. Reflecting on my own process while working on *Syncretic: En Una Pieza*, I have observed it exists in an indispensable relationship between objects, materials and the physicality we engage in with other artists. They are components in a dialogic relationship where thinking, reflecting and doing occur in one moment and imagination is sparked in the next.

At the same time the creative process opens up a space where new understandings of theoretical frameworks and reflexion arises. This is the artists' Praxis. This reflexive practice of thinking while doing is where research findings emerge and changes begin to take effect. It is also the space where new possibilities for potential collaborations arises.

An aspect of my research involved interviewing artists working in different art genres who migrated to Australia from Latin America between the early 1970s and early 2000. Interviews were audio recorded, one was filmed, and photography incorporated at this stage of the research. This process is in accord with traditional research methods where data can

be collected through surveys or recorded interviews. Traditional researcher and artist-researchers may use the same research tools, but where the difference rests is in how both are idiosyncratically different. Artistic collaborations broaden possibilities in unexpected ways. The relational dynamics that are created through such collaboration contribute to building a sort of artist's kinship network - a family. Artistic practices facilitate cultural affiliations through practitioners' capacity to bring across and share skills that facilitate cross-cultural understandings creating new dialogues. This characteristic is an asset that artist-researchers contribute to cultural research. As Carter (2005, p.5) asserts cultural affiliations are a way to imagine renewed spaces for creative conversations between cultures, "It is a technique for making sense of gaps, interruptions and unpredictable crossovers. And the refinement of such techniques has a political utility: it gives the other voices and stories of migration a creative role in the weaving, and reweaving, of the federal text " .

Art practices can operate as a valid method of enquiry at multiple levels of engagement that include creative collaborations and interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practices. Hence creative methodologies for cultural enquiry can facilitate levels of engagement offering distinctive perspectives that can reveal knowledges within specific social and cultural contexts. It became evident that the skills and research tools used in creative research are not different from those needed in other social research enquiry. The difference then rests in, for example, how projects can be more open ended, the symbolic manner in which they are reported, and the artist-researcher's relational capacity. 'This in turn enables a reading and interrogation of our cultural environments producing knowledge that is not dislocated from culture, and culture that is not detached from everyday life but an ongoing plural (...)' (Ang, p. 477).

Perceiving culture as dynamic allows for creative interventions to take place by challenging established power relationships through creating awareness and offering alternative readings to preconceived notions about how diverse cultures interact in Australia.

## Exhibition as Research Collaboration



**Syncretic "En Una Pieza"**

Research and Curated by Liliana E. Correa  
New photographic works by Shane Rozario

**Exhibition Opening**  
Sat 1st May 6.00pm - 8.00pm

at  
**The Instituto Cervantes, CHIPPENDALE**  
22-24 City Road Chippendale NSW 2008 Sydney  
<http://sydney.cervantes.es>

**"Syncretic: En Una Pieza"**

Liliana E. Correa has researched and documented the creative professional achievements of 5 Latin American, Sydney based artists. Photographer Shane Rozario's portraits of these 5 artists reflect the fragments of their story using a unique technique developed over three years.

This exhibition will show a private collection of musical instruments from Latin America, including talks tracing the history of Latin American music on Tuesday 11 May & Tuesday 18 May @ 6.30pm.

For more information please contact: Liliana E. Correa: 0450 376 672 or Shane Rozario: 0492905510

SECCA Sydney Ethnic Cultural Collaboration Agency  
Instituto Cervantes  
University of Western Australia

This exhibition is a multi-cultural research project in collaboration with the cultural collaboration and dialogue between artists, academics and communities.

Exhibition as research collaboration arose from a combination of factors including practitioners' solidarity. Rather than starting from a central question it began from a strong desire to reconnect our bits and pieces of cultural expression within the larger matrix of the Australian cultural landscape. I concur with Carter (2007, p.21) who asserts, "The need to draw together what has been scattered apart originates not in the will, but in the realm of eros; it is the frustrated desire of connection that inspires the recreative act." Thus, imagination and desire are both integral components of creativity and Carter's assertion strongly resonates in relation to my research project and in particular with the exhibition as research mode.

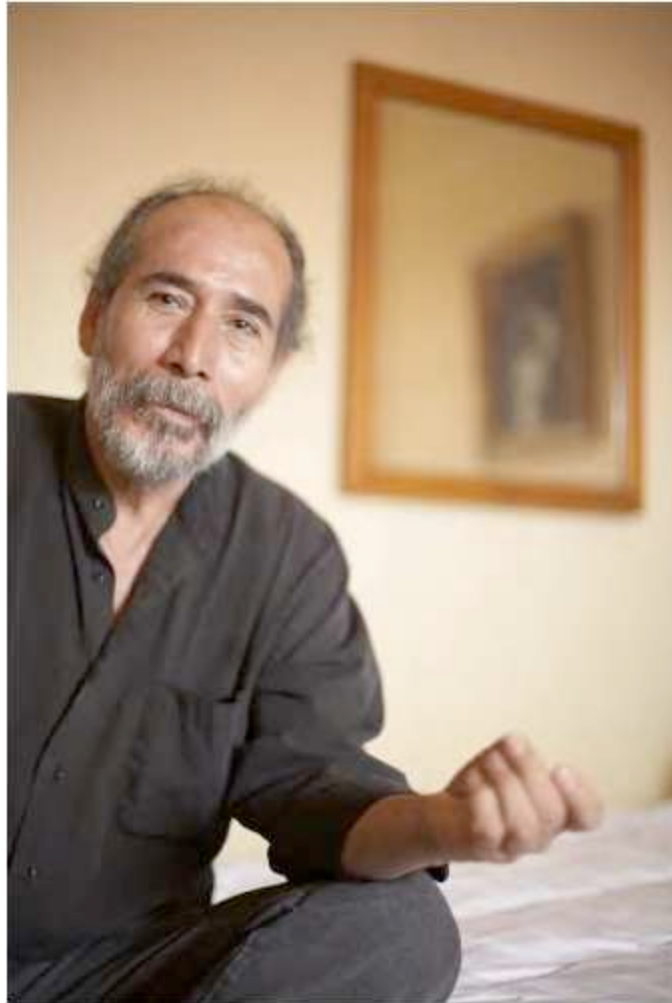
Representing one body of work, the exhibition allowed the viewer to notice what is absent as well as the diversity of stimulus surrounding the exhibited and performative works. The exhibition became a dynamic space for exploration. In this way, "Syncretic: En Una Pieza" is not a fixed temporality but a process that does not finish when the work is pulled down from the walls. Thus, the exhibition symbolises what the modes of artistic expression allowed me to do - establish the grounds for further research while at the same time capturing precise

moments of creativity. Cultural relevance and visibility as themes linked to the politics of cultural representation provided the impetus to conceptualise the artistic component of my research in the form of a public exhibition. The curatorial process is an intense activity that engages emotional and intellectual abilities. This is particularly so when participating artists and their work are perceived by the mainstream culture as belonging to one homogeneous culture and at the same time conceptualised as separate from the mainstream. This process, from the beginning stages to the moment when the artwork is selected and incorporated into the exhibition space, becomes one of translating culture by deconstructing engrained ideas about "Other". This stage of the research process involving creativity and imagination is in some form a moment of transposition in the theatrical sense – transposing the artists' lives to the exhibition context while maintaining a personal aesthetic. Inhabiting the artists' spaces through the interviewing process and compiling, editing and selecting images in preparation for the exhibition allows a space for reflection and a detail look into the individuals' lives, artistic careers, migration experiences and intimate working environments where the artwork is produced. What is then represented or translated for the wider audience is an acknowledgement of diversity and complexities as members of a heterogeneous community nevertheless connected through the experience of cultural dislocation and a desire to continue artistic practices that claim a space of visibility within the Australian cultural context. Collaborations establish solidarity and new relations that become integrated within a kinship of practitioners, creating the genealogy of one's work and life. The exhibition as a creative collaboration and as performative research provided a space where different strands of my research materialised.

### **Image as methodology**

A methodology that was culturally appropriate, familiar to the artists, and consistent with my own practice was needed to research Latin American artistic practices in Sydney. At the same time it was necessary to recover some of the community's cultural memory while observing artists in their creative environments. Film, photographic and audio testimonials are widely used methods of documentation and research. In my project these mediums also offered the possibility of producing an artistic outcome. As I am not a photographer I invited Shane Rozario, an Indian born photographer, to collaborate in my research project. I knew about his work for *Café Carnivale* and the world music scene. This opened up new possibilities and made me reflect on my whole project's original concept. He shared with me the following artists statement written for his Identity Study: "In 2006 I found my technique for shooting

portraiture using 10 frames on one strip of film consecutively to create the big picture. This concept of inter-connection has led me to further explore the relationship of visual clues within my photography that have consequently sculpted my identity" (Rozario, 2010). I realised that his approach captured the core theme of *Syncretic: En Una Pieza*. I could see how Thomas' (2005, p. 3) notion of the image holding various signifying roles, not only a symbolic representation, was evident in Rozario's approach to photography. As we carefully negotiated each shooting session we both agreed that our image construction should highlight the artists' work rather than the artists' ethnicities or countries of origin. With this in mind we set up the photography to contextualise the artists in their creative spaces, and chose full frontal images with artists looking directly at the viewer to create maximum engagement and a sort of symbolic equality. This constructed symbolic equality is what is called 'point of view', and it becomes a semiotic resource. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, pp. 135-153). Rozario and I conceived all images as 'demand pictures' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). This modality of the image that demands the viewers' attention is not only mediated by a technical convention but also by the viewer's affective response. (Jewitt & Oyama 200, pp.151-153)



**Mario Licón Cabrera image by Shane Rozario**

One of my favourite images that Rozario produced for the exhibition relates to the portraits of writer Mario Licón Cabrera. His portrait is a clear example how photography can assist the research process both as a tool for gathering information and as a resource with multiple possibilities. Photography allowed me (paraphrasing Barthes, 1980) 'to appropriate' Cabrera's image and present it to viewers not as a representation but a presentation of an artists' life, inciting them to construct a new subject that is no longer signifying *other* but is somehow universal. The focus is on Cabrera's expressive hands. The image is blurry and requires the viewer to try to focus to understand it. Through reading his story, the viewer learns that Cabrera is legally blind. Subsequently, the images of Cabrera become powerful and confronting as the blurriness of the image becomes a symbolic resource. I had asked Rozario to shoot a blurred image intentionally, not only as a representation of Cabrera's



condition but also as metaphor for society's myopia in relation to the multiple forms of cultural expressions and languages that exist in this country.

The Cabrera visual narrative and portraiture are examples of how photography can be incorporated into a creative research project. Prompting the viewer to shift and reconfigure meaning by using various signifying elements including the point of view of the creators of the images. Numerous elements are employed in the compositional structure of an image. For example, Jewitt's (2001, p.138) analysis of images established that the use of frontal angles is connected to hegemonic norms of masculinity. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), framing to the left can be read as belonging and 'given' while the position of text on the right hand side of an image represents the 'new'. All of these are elements to be taken into consideration as one begins to form the concept not only of the aesthetics of the image but also its impact on the viewer.

The links that I draw from this creative experience and actual research can be interpreted as potential new projects. Creative experiences allow research to occur in the context of cross-cultural, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practices. Offering also the opportunity for observations over long periods of time. Unlike conventional research seeking to measure, prove and justify a problematic, creative research is a reflexive conversation that is facilitated by artists and conveyed through artwork. In turn, this work is a critical reflexion on a particular issue or theme located in a particular historical time. The research in action is to me a creative process in itself. In my research Shane's portraits, together with interviews revealing the artists' experience of migration, arts practices, and language, are the representations of my research findings. The artwork itself does not hold a fixed temporality but the research is located within a context that pertains to a particular social and cultural time and geographical location.

## **In Conclusion**

Creative methodologies not only produce conceptual and theoretical understandings about themes and subjects but also a body of artistic material work. In my particular research, the outcomes include a collection of portraits, visual narratives, video documentation, an exhibition, and a catalogue. The use of testimonials as research methodology allowed me to document a number of artists' stories in an artistic form that was then presented (along with their work) in a manner that did not place the artists as 'other' but as belonging to the culture to which they are contributing. The testimonials, rich in linguistic, visual and cultural

elements, show how different cultures communicate. The creative research methodology also opened up understandings about arts practice as a process of making sense of place and of its relationship to memory and belonging. The research revealed the role that arts practice plays in creating a kinship or a type of social and cultural genealogy that offers both sustenance and further creative possibilities. Through the curatorial and interview processes, I observed how organisations and government structures play a fundamental role in the construction of certain boundaries that limit individual artistic expression. The artists' narratives give us hints on how they conceptualised and produced art outside their culture of origin. Their histories provide an insight into how art practice acts as a mediator between cultures as creative collaborations can - over time- facilitate interpretations of the new environment and of new cultures. At a more personal level, the multiple ways in which the artists conceptualised, experienced, produced and communicated through their work allowed me reflect on my own creative processes, creative moments and collaborations. Creative collaborations are never static. They are in constant arousal. They are thoughts that sparkle - always searching for new possibilities. An initial collaboration is perhaps the starting line of the drawing, the first sentence of a poem, the opening frame of an image, or the combination of notes that will deliver a new creative expression.

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### ***Los Sentidos de la Noche – Night's Senses***

In 1994 I travelled to Cuba to spend time with *Teatro de Los Elementos*, a small theatre company dedicated to community and educational development projects. I met its director, José Oriol Gonzales, while negotiating his participation in the first Australian International Popular Theatre Exchange. I was involved in this project as interpreter, facilitator and performer. Consequently I spent 9 months in Habana, Cumanayagua, Matanzas and the Escambray mountain house of renowned Theatre Company *El Escambray* studying and living with the company. Cuba in 1994 was only beginning to open up to international tourism, *balseros* brought international media attention to the island, the gay community was still very much clandestine, and thanks to the infamous comment at the time: “*Tenemos las putas mas educadas del continente Americano*”, prostitutes in Cuba were known as the most educated in the American continent. Diplomats and those with limited US dollars were able to buy in *Diplotiendas*. As a legacy of *El Bloqueo* – the USA Embargo – there were very limited resources to maintain the city. Everywhere after sunset was dark and even when part of the city may appear stark in time, there was no sense of stagnation. Rather this complex and fascinating Habana in 94 resembled to me a beautiful *mulata*, alive, experienced in many forms of love and histories. Cuba and its contradictions impacted on me deeply. I felt at home, secure with all my senses awakened. I used to walk from *EL Vedado to Habana Vieja*, sometimes waiting for the sunrise by *El Malecón*, only to get to the nearest bread shop – *panadería* – to get spare pieces of the morning's first bread. Walking in the dark, lost many times through parks, corners and once splendid avenues. I wrote these two poems titled “*Habana del 94*” reflecting on my time in Cuba. The third poem I wrote in response to a recurrent question many people ask when I participate in activist actions to raise awareness about the situation of women in Mexico, Ciudad Juárez. Drawings and poster design “*Ellas*” are by Abigail Lutzen. Image composition for the third poem is by Tjanara Jali Talbot.



A Postcard: *La rosa de los vientos me cuenta que cuatro son los sentidos*  
*Al Norte: La ceguera es blanca y al desierto lo iluminan huesos en cruz.*  
*Al Sur: Un Ginko Bilova pinta en amarillo los domingos de infancia.*  
*Al Este: El sol danza en intrincadas caricias.*  
*Al Oeste: Un banco de hospicio absurdo y sucio espera.*

*Cyclon, Agosto-Habana 1994*

*Los sentidos de la noche tienen rumbo y poemas salvadores.*  
*Mi sentido Sur me lleva donde la tierra se viste roja y húmeda,*  
*Bañada en olores y colores litoraleños bendita Yamanya*  
*los catapulta del centro hacia la vida y con alas de mujer*  
*vuela sobre agridulces sueños intercontinentales.*  
*Hilando mantas de historias inconclusas que guardan*  
*el secreto de tus manos y la memoria de la luna en tu vientre*  
*mientras desesperados dedos en lágrimas dibujaban mapas*  
*para buscarte en el vacío del insomnio.*

**Not because I am Mexican**



Image by Tjanara Jali Talbot, 2010

Not because I walk  
A trembling line  
Between my portal door  
And the maquila  
But because  
I am Woman-SOY MUJER  
Not because the rage  
Strangle sobs in my heart  
And a cry transformed  
In futile words  
Scape through  
Clenching teeth  
Breath of breaths  
But because  
I am Woman-SOY MUJER



"Ellas" by Abigail Lutzen 2010

Not because I can talk  
The talk dressed the dress  
Wear the hats  
Multiple diverse hats  
Multiple diverse talks  
But Because  
I am Woman-SOY MUJER  
A body. A name. A shape  
Feet tracking pain  
They also trace my name  
While her breath names me.  
*Suspiro o Auyido*  
*Loba o Diosa*  
*Lenguaje ausente*  
*Rescatado en una silaba,*  
*La que me califica y me nombra.*



1. Habana del 94



2.

I walked in dark, pitch black all senses awaken

*Caminarte Ciudad*, carefully, ever slowly slide

Shifted my feet on the pavement.

I knew the holes and cracks

*The in-between* spaces

Where memories from the night before

Have drawn maps from *El Vedado*

To *La Habana Vieja*,

Esta ciudad me camina desde adentro

She walks me enveloped in summer smells,

The lover, the dyke, the poofter

in Plaza Mayor

Behind Marti's statue  
Eros is a revolutionary affair.  
Smile is pulling my dress to attention  
*Y una media luna con ojos de infancia*  
*Me llama: A boly! A boly!*  
A lloy? I wondered? *No a boligrafo-* A pen.  
*Vieja quebrada y bella*  
*Habana* walked my senses insideout  
*Cantando tus arrugas* I shed a skin  
To resurrect at dawn.  
*Bailaste de norte a sur mis sentidos*  
And love made me  
*Desde un balsero malecón de madrugada*  
*Hasta saquanes de calladas Iglesias.*

## **2. Habana del 94**



*Caminarte ciudad  
Dolor-Olor que descompone  
Pútridos aromas Habaneros  
Matutinos Vespertinos  
Lo diplocompuesto descompuesto  
Sobre la agrietada cara  
De esta vieja sabia y desauciada  
Reina Puta Ciudad.  
La canción del balsero canta:  
'Del Otro Lado'...'Del Otro Lado'  
'Allá'...Alla Ellos!*

*Jadeantes húmedos portales*

*Y te camino y te huelo y te duelo.*

*Diplomacia, diplotienda*

*Diplomatica mirada*

*Diplo visto y si te he visto...*

*No me acuerdo.*

*Cruzo la noche O la noche me cruza?*

*La media luna noche me trastoca e ilumina*

*mi regrezo al Vedado*

*Sobre el milagroso claro-oscuro*

*De tus rumbos.*

*Liliana E. Correa, June 2011*

## SECTION C: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

### **Introduction**

This section looks at the development of the *Latinamerica en Australia* online community of practice as an expression of critical border work in multicultural Australia. Through this site I aim to create a space for open and critical dialogue between practitioners and the broader Australian community and in this way raise the cultural visibility of Latin American-Australian artists. This section includes the academic article entitled: "Latin America en (in) Australia: *On Line and Off Centre*" presented at the 2011 Imagining Latin American conference at the University of Western Sydney and submitted for publication to the *Visual Methods* online Journal, UK.

The creation of the Latin America en Australia website was based on the following underpinning concepts:

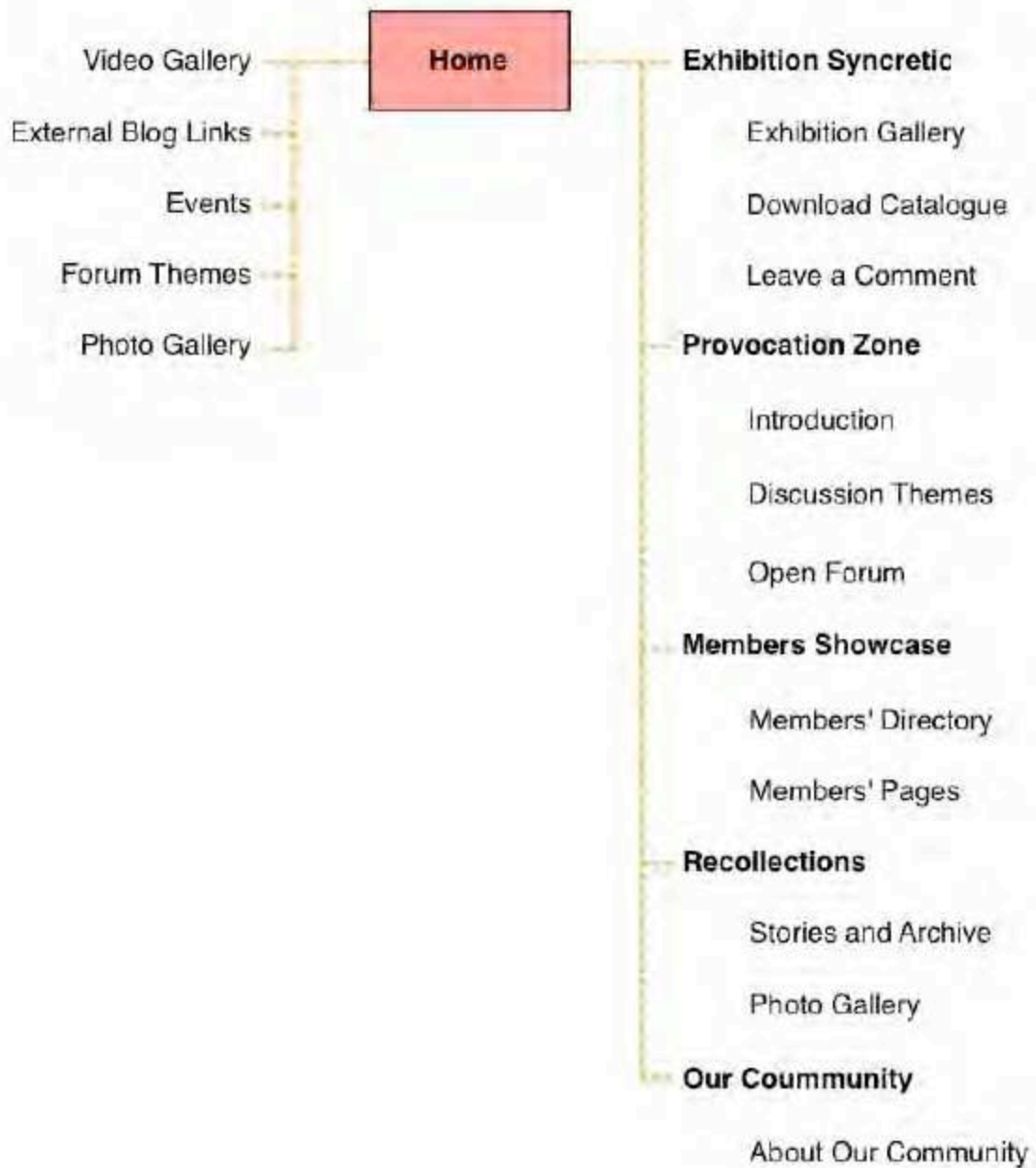
- Community of Practice
- Cyber-Borderwork
- Critical Thinking and Dialogue
- Cultural Memory and Visibility

The site can be access through the following address:

<http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com>

The following graphic shows the site architecture and its distinctive features:

## Latin America en Australia Website Architecture



*This diagram represents the structure of the Latin America en Australia website and can be used as an aid to navigating the site.*

## **Latinamerica en (in) Australia: Arts-Politics-Culture On Line and Off Centre**

**Liliana E. Correa**

### **Abstract**

*The Latinamerica in Australia website, set up on a social network platform as an online community of practice, is a digital zone of contact for artists, academics and community members interested in the relationship between Australian and Latin American arts and culture. This site facilitates communication, exchange and collaboration through its multi-modal functionality. The cultural specificity that the term 'Latin American' carries, used to name this site, references geographical places of origin, languages and histories. It also references the imagined national community that individually or collectively one associates with, while at the same time being constructed around the idea of a space – a zone – that is fluid and with no fixed temporality, capable of operating at different levels of culture and society. In this paper I discuss how, by creating this site, I have utilised a technology-mediated platform as an emerging form that allows the deconstruction of hegemonic forms of knowledge as well as contributing to a continuous re-imagining of what it signifies to be a Latin American within the rapidly changing cultural diversity of contemporary Australia.*

### **Latinamerica en Australia: Rumbos Colaterales Sur-Sureste**

In 2009 I was granted a Doctorate of Cultural Research scholarship from the University of Western Sydney to research Latin American arts practices in Sydney. As part of the research process, and based on ideas behind social media and visual technologies, I set up the website *Latinamerica en Australia: Rumbos Colaterales Sur-Sureste* (<http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com>) using a social networking platform as a vehicle for developing an online community of practice. The site can be used to present new work by Latin American artists and to archive the best of this work, past and present. It also contributes to further our understandings as artists, art-activists, academics and researchers interested in the field of arts and cultural studies.

The site is designed to enable the development of a community of practice. It moves away from utilising web technologies simply as a channel for disseminating information and considers the constructed space as a living social environment. As argued by Geert Lovink

(2005, p.11) “What defines the Internet is its social architecture. It’s the living environment that counts, the live interaction, not just the storage and retrieval procedure.” Within this environment members can challenge preconceived ideas of culture and identity, their own and others, and, by so doing, move towards a decolonialisation of thinking by “opening a new perspective of a geopolitical order of knowledge production” (Mignolo, p 69). By making visible other ways of doing, as well as discussing other ways of practising and communicating, the *Latinamerica en Australia* can span communities, academic institutions and cultural organisations. By offering artists a space for reflection, conversation and exchange at the intersection between multiple cultures and practices, it creates possibilities for unexpected encounters, the reassessment of one’s own work, and the sharing of skills and learning.

Zygmunt Bauman (2000, p.117), in his book *Liquid Modernity* argued:

Space is irrelevant. In the software universe of light-speed travel, space may be traversed, literally, in ‘no time’; the difference between ‘far away’ and ‘down here’ is cancelled. Space no more sets limits to action and its effects, and counts, little, or does not count at all.

And yet, particularly for exiled and migrant communities, the experience of a space that can signify “home” or “community” is still relevant, even within the context of a liquid modernity. As members of transient communities, this limitless space is constantly reconfigured by new signifying references where one can feel contained, surrounded by one’s own cultural references and languages and providing sustenance by delineating a territory that allows a sense of belonging without having to negate or explain oneself in translation to others. It is in this “software universe” where technology facilitates the construction of new environments for experimentation that cultural creatives, both individually and collectively, can build concrete cultural and linguistic references while establishing affiliations with similar others.

In 1995 Clayton M. Christensen introduced the concept of disruptive technologies, also known as disruptive innovations, as a concept in business studies used to analyse unexpected market behaviour arising from new technologies. (Christensen, 1995). One of the characteristics that Christensen noticed is that an innovation that is disruptive frequently enables the sharing of information and is accessible to users regardless of skills or money. Today the impact of disruptive innovations is discussed across sectors due to the enormous implications of constantly developing easier ways of communication and engagement with



distributed technology accessible to larger numbers of people. According to Christensen, Baumann, Ruggles and Sudttler (2006), disruptive innovations have a subset characteristic that they call “catalytic innovations”, with the potential to trigger unanticipated social and cultural change. This is of particular importance for communities with limited resources and infrastructure and for those working in education, health and the arts in general because such technologies can facilitate a sharing of intellectual resources from positions of knowledge that are not dominated by a single institution or line of thought, and link sectors, groups and organisations that are not centrally located in one geographical or institutional space. Through the use of certain digital tools, communities and individuals can gain support and connection by communicating with peers and others in similar contexts and similar languages. Disruptive innovations with their subset characteristics can offer the means to facilitate a dynamic dialogue contributing to a deeper understanding about the complexities of our experiences as artists and migrants and our relationships as citizens of both the Latin American and Australian continents.

### **What's in a Name?**

The term “Latin America” is layered with complex and often contradictory meanings. To build a community of practice under this name is problematic at many levels. For some to self-name our origin as Latin America, in particular when migrating to a new country, resonates with a progressive political consciousness that holds values such as self-determination and social justice regardless of where in the world one happens to be living. If, as Benedict Anderson, (2006, p.7) suggested, communities are defined “by the way they are imagined”, then the imagined Latin America of my generation – politically active on the left from the 1970s and after the fall of the last dictatorial regime in my country, Argentina – holds collaboration and dialogue as intrinsic values. The Latin America of this generation is, in my view, a place that fits Anderson’s conception of fraternal, deep and horizontal comradeship. But at the same time the term Latin America carries other historical and cultural meanings. As Walter Mignolo, (2005, p.2) states:

“America”, then, was never a continent waiting to be discovered. Rather, “America” as we know it was an invention forged in the process of European colonial history and the consolidation and expansion of the Western world view and institutions.

It is a term, according to Kristen Negro (2000, p.10), that:

Usually homogenizes (sic) numerous nations, many of which are artificial creations, carved out by the colonizers (sic) according to political or geographical, rather than cultural criteria.

The idea of Latin America as a colonialist invention poses many questions when thinking about Latin American identity in Australia. Uncritically claiming this name in exile could be seen as reproducing a colonialist concept. Is it possible to reclaim the term by redefining it to acknowledge and respect our intrinsic cultural and political differences?

In Sydney alone there exists a number of community-based and government funded organisations that gather under this name. To cite just a few examples: The Latin American Social Forum, an alliance of community groups and left minority Australian parties (based in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra); The Latin American Foundation, a mainstream cultural organisation fostering cultural exchanges between Latin America and Australia; *La Casa Latino Americana*-Sydney a community-based and collective run organisation; and the Sydney Latin American Film Festival, a cultural organisation promoting films supporting emerging local and Latin American film-makers. Some questions reoccur as one begins to think about the contradictions inherent in these diverse applications of the name as an identity referencing the whole Latin American continent. For example, who self-defines as Latin American in Australia today? How does this notion differ when we migrate? What assumptions does it imply about the political and cultural complexities of the continent? What does the term mean to Australians of other cultural backgrounds?

One would agree that these organisations, in spite of their very different objectives and driven by different motives, contribute to an ongoing translation of the idea of Latin America present in Australia as well as how Latin America is perceived from abroad. But the degree to which they challenge or reinforce Australian stereotypical preconceptions about Latin America is much more open to debate. I believe that in order to do this, one has to critically question one's own practices and cultural positioning through continual reflection on what it means to claim the name of Latin American and how, as artists, we can reclaim this name by redefining it as an emergent identity in the context of the Australian multiculturalism. It was against this background that I decided to name the site *Latinamerica en Australia*. It is a complex and contradictory term, but it is also a reminder of our capacity to transcend cultural and economic colonialism, exile or migration.

### **Arts-Politics-Culture**

Artistic expressions by Latin Americans in Australia from the early 1980's to late 1990's were clearly marked and influenced by political and historical events in Latin America. For example, the emergence in early 1980's of *La Peña*, a cultural project in Newtown, Sydney, and the associated music group *Papalote*, are clear examples of the political and cultural commitment those involved in both groups had at the time. Justo Dias (2011, p.99) asserts: "Although *La Peña's* primary aim was the promotion of Latin American music and culture, the cultural and political background of the members, audiences and musicians shifted the focus to music, politics and solidarity work". Unfortunately *La Peña* had no successors. Since its demise there have been attempts to create similar cultural and artistic projects such as the Multicultural Arts Alliance and the Multicultural Theatre Alliance with Latin American artists actively involved in both organisations. These initiatives, however, lacked adequate resources and failed to create an ongoing focus for cultural and artistic development.

Reflecting on my personal experience as a new migrant in the early 1980's, my initial encounters with the Sydney Latin American community were through the connections I established by participating in different activities and concerts at *La Peña*. Here, in collaboration with other newly arrived artists, I was involved in setting up a performance group, Caminos-Pathways. We ran theatre workshops and performed the self-devised play *Mothers*, based on the stories from the mothers of the disappeared from Argentina, and a puppet show with cultural and political content relevant to the children of the exiled. As young migrant artists we brought with us different ways of practising and performing that were very much informed by the activism in which we had been involved in our countries of origin. When we first met to discuss how to incorporate theatre in a cultural space that was very much dominated by musicians, we all agreed that it had to be a political theatre offering something very different to what Latin American audiences in Australia experienced at the time. We wanted to move away from presenting work with a focus on entertainment or nostalgia and introduce the concept of contemporary political and educational theatre. An article published in one of the Spanish language newspapers in Sydney at the time concluded: "Culture is for everyone and as we are fundamentally removed from our original roots, we should all support and protect this kind of cultural expressions." (See image 1.)



IMAGE 1: Newspaper article from El Español en Australia

Personally this was the moment I began to think about how, as migrants, we can carry a particular cultural identity into a new cultural setting. I realised that it is the interplay between our personal histories and those of the practitioners and audiences we encounter that impacts on the way we choose to present ourselves as Latin American or not. I bring to this encounter a self-defined Latin American identity, and this is as much constructed by those around me as it is by my choice to position myself in or out of it. In my experience artistic expression contributes to this construction, altering or sustaining certain perceptions about culture by, for example, perpetuating a narrow and simplistic view about other cultures. In the production *Caminos-Pathways* characters depicting a group of mothers demanding justice of the then Argentine dictator were represented as strong, vocal and politically active women of different ages and backgrounds. (See image 2.) In this way theatre was used not only to inform and stimulate the audiences' critical awareness but also to break down ideas about the participation of women in political life and their typical role in a patriarchal society such as Argentina.



**IMAGE 2: “Las Madres y el dictador”**

Entering the space of the Sydney Latin American diaspora through the doors of *La Peña*, I was able to see clearly the continent of my origin in its diversity and complexities as well as gain an understanding of its myriad distinctive cultures. I encountered stories of very different migration and exile experiences and of multiple political perspectives. Before I left Argentina I had limited contact with other Latin Americans. As a young university student and activist my connection was through literature. This is an observation common amongst other migrants who came to Australia during the 1970's and 1980's. Australia unexpectedly

became a point of reunion, of rediscovery. My experience at *La Peña* showed me the importance of collaboration and of multidisciplinary work.

Amongst the many cultural exchanges and collaborations that Latin American migrant artists had, one that was very significant personally was a collaboration between Indigenous Australians and Latin Americans artists. By the early 1990s there was a growing awareness in Australia of indigenous people's struggles around the world, including in Latin America. This was in part informed by 500 years of colonisation in the Americas, a new focus on the Australian indigenous political context (Mabo case and Native Title 1992-3), and heightened international attention to indigenous rights. This realisation that Australian indigenous issues are part of a wider international struggle brought with it a greater awareness in some Australian communities of the diversity of cultures in Latin America and an interest in Latin Americans in Australia. The indigenous issue in our countries entered the discussion not as past historical events but as living histories, and I believe this was also the case in Australia. In 1993 I collaborated with Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative co-curating "Wiyana/Perisferia" a satellite exhibition of the 9th Biennale of Sydney.



**IMAGE 3: Catalogue cover**

**IMAGE 4: Catalogue front page**

This exhibition presented work by Sydney based Latin American artists and Aboriginal artists responding to the theme of invasion and colonisation of the Americas and Australia. It

represented to Australian audiences a very different Latin America to the one most were accustomed to imagine. Both projects, the *La Peña* theatre project and the Boomalli exhibition, are personal examples of how artistic practice and collaborations contribute to the construction of a contemporary Latin America presence in the Australian culture. As a community we can reflect and build on past experiences. This will help to transform our practices by becoming more culturally present, not just in a tokenistic manner at multicultural days and festivals or through ever-changing fashions and fads. A deeper understanding of our complexities can come, for example, by positioning our practices away from dominant restrictive discourses that construct fixed homogeneous identities. The embodied experience of the artists' practices can facilitate a translation from one culture to another and in the process break down the cultural stereotypes. But to simply express our subjectivities does not address issues of cultural visibility and relevance.

It is evident that Latin Americans, particularly in Sydney, hold a strong presence through a diversity of cultural, commercial, educational and artistic activities. This is in spite of Latin American Australians constituting only 0.43% of the total Australian population of 22,681,075 (ABS, August 2011). In a sense the issue of cultural visibility has more to do with the kind of cultural relevance and visibility we want to have as artists. That is, what kind of Latin American Australian identity are we seeking to build? As practitioners and cultural brokers we also need to understand subjectivity as a complex relationship between experience and language. Jan Scott (1991, p. 792) argues that "subjects are constituted discursively and experience is a discursive event, but neither it is confined to a fixed order of meaning. Since discourse is by definition shared, experience is collective as well as individual." The artists' work also produces a narrative that, inscribed in the context of a new culture, can also reference the collective experience. When I walk into a cultural event by members of the Latin American community, my senses tell me that I am in a space that not only references my culture but my personal story as part of a shared experience of migration. This resonates with Scott's observation that: "it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experiences" (p.793). In this way articulating my story, for example in creative ways, not only produces my personal history but at the same time links it to the collective. I would like to think that in the process of sharing our personal stories we contribute as a community of artists to the creation of a collective subject that allows us to move towards more critical thinking about creativity and culture. Understanding subjectivity in the manner Scott proposes, as a discursive phenomenon where the complex interaction

and interplay with others produces subjects, can help us move away from fixed ideas about culture to constructing a history that also produces a sense of collective agency. What we experience today with greater mobility and connectivity through new information and communication technologies in the context of globalisation, has an impact on how Australians conceptualise what Latin America signifies, in and outside of Australia. This also promotes a reconsideration of what it means for artists today to think of themselves as Latin American Australians and how Latin American arts are exhibited to wider, culturally diverse Australian audiences.

### **Cultural Visibility**

Practice is the artist's main social tool used in what becomes an ongoing process of translation and struggle for cultural visibility. For the migrant artist, her practice is directly linked to the politics of cultural visibility, relevance and representation. These were recurrent themes in conversations I held with different artists from the Latin American community in Sydney. For example, in 2009 I interviewed installation artist Maria Fernanda Cardozo. When discussing issues of artistic relevance and visibility, Maria observed:

*Creo que existo a través de mis obras de arte, ese es mi ser visible mas allá que sólo mi cuerpo. Si quiero existir necesito crear y mostrar mi arte para conocerme a mí misma y manifestar quien soy. Para existir necesito hacer cosas, no puedo existir sin mis piezas de arte, Así es como existo en relación a los demás, a través de mi trabajo. Mayo 2009*

I believe that I exist through my artwork, which is my visible being more than just my body. If I want to exist I need to make my art and to show it, to get to know myself and manifest whom I am. In order to exist I need to make things. I cannot exist without my artwork. Well that is how I exist in relationship to others, through my work. (My translation)

To develop a successful career as an artist is difficult under any circumstances, but particularly for migrant artists who arrived with already established careers overseas. The issues they face are very different to locally born artists, but not less complex. The impossibility of showing and developing one's work represents the negation not only of an aspect of one's career but also of the self and the self in relation to others.

The issue of visibility and cultural relevance goes beyond learning a different language or understanding how the Australian cultural bureaucracy works. Different issues impact on the



artist's career depending on what artistic genre is practised and where the artist is located geographically. Cardozo, for example, who exhibited at the prestigious Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney during her first year in the country, is an exception. Complex relationships and dynamics have to be negotiated as well as very specific language skills learnt. This includes, for example, obtaining funding support and access to gallery spaces or stages. Some artists would inevitably bring to their new context rich cultural assets in the form of recognised professional skills, language proficiency, contacts, and extended family members already settled in the country. Others, despite their professional artistic achievements in their countries of origin, find themselves lacking these essential resources and thus struggle to continue developing their careers in Australia.

Cultural visibility, particularly for migrant artists, is mediated by an ongoing re-adaptation of the artists' ways of practising and producing work. The beginning of the new millennium and later economic and transient migration saw a shift towards artistic productions with an emphasis on entertainment. Usually this visibility is constructed within the commercial mainstream and is based on generalised notions of culture. Audiences are built by skilfully packaging a familiar and thus commercially safe product rather than through innovation and the exploration of diversity and difference. A tension then arises between the artist's unique creative vision and the need to sustain a particular practice while surviving in the new culture.

It has proven very difficult, for example, for artists who specialise in Latin American folklore to find spaces and support that allows them to continue developing their practices. Folkloric forms – that is, traditions in dance and music that are passed on from one generation to the next – are, in Argentina, taught as a subject in the primary school curriculum and considered a living artistic cultural expression. Here in Australia, however, I have noticed that Latin American folklore is perceived as removed from contemporary culture as a genre that belongs to the past of particular ethnic groups and definitely not commercially viable. In my view artists should be able to make a living within the integrity of their creative practice, not dependent on fads and tokenism.

This is a real limitation that restricts the possibility for “The borderland work of culture to have encounters with ‘newness’ that is not part of a continuum of past and present but as a renewed past, re-figuring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present.” Bhabha (1994,p.10).

In recent years a new generation of artists has migrated to Australia presenting work not previously experienced by audiences here. This is the case, for example, with the recently formed Cumbia Muffin, a thirteen-piece band that fuses traditional rhythms with jazz and is a collaboration between Australian and Latin American musicians.



**IMAGE 5: Cumbia Muffin**

Cumbia Muffin shared the stage at Café Carnivale's Friday night concert in August 2011 with *Chirimeos*, a Colombian folkloric band. These groups collaborate usually by sharing musicians and instruments. It is not uncommon to see such a blurred demarcation between contemporary and folkloric performances on Latin American stages and for artists with a strong traditional background to move from one space to another without conflict.



**IMAGE 6:** *Chirimeos*

In order to reinvent themselves in the new culture and to continue their artistic practices, Latin American artists are, in my experience, constantly innovating. Members of these bands represent a new generation of Latin American artists impacting on the arts and cultural scene in Sydney. The photograph above shows *Chirimeos*, a recently formed Cumbia dance and music group based in Sydney, performing a traditional folkloric dance with traditional instruments. On that night several generations of Colombian and Australian-born musicians with exemplary percussive skills shared the stage. It is especially difficult for artists practising folkloric music and dance to find performing spaces in Sydney outside specific yearly events such as multicultural festivals. This is why collaborations such as those mentioned above are so important for developing audiences and offering the possibility of wider exposure not only at folkloric specific events but as artistic expressions as valid and alive as any other.

### **Living in Border Zones**

Latin American artists practising outside our countries of origin in interaction and conversation with a diversity of cultures in Australia are constantly coming in and out of border zones. The *Latinamerica en Australia* community of practice is one possible response to these constant crossings and a consequence of inhabiting border zones. Gloria Anzaldúa

(1995) in the introduction to *Borderlands/La Frontera* states:

Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edged each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.

Anzaldúa's work awoke for me an awareness of the world defined as a space formed by our own histories, locations and transitions. Having experienced moving in and out of borders in my engagement with diverse communities through cultural and educational work, I have noticed that this idea of "borderlands" also exists in Australia, even when there are no clearly defined geographical borders demarcating cultural or physical territories.

To live in border zones produces a particular way of thinking and appreciating the world. A distinctive view can emerge from these spaces of interaction, but it does not necessarily follow that all artists engage critically through their practice. The majority of artists in my experience need to commoditise their work to suit local demands and this in turn allows them to sustain their art practice and feed their families. Musicians, theatre practitioners and painters accommodate their practices to consumers in and outside the Latin American community. The challenge then is to be able to facilitate a shift towards what Mignolo (2000) calls "critical border thinking" – a way of thinking and critique that does not fix our identities in discussions about centres and periphery but rather incites us to speak from within and outside of borders, critically examining our positions as producers of culture and allowing a space where other forms of thinking can emerge.

Mignolo (2000, p. 85) asserts that thinking from dichotomous concepts rather than ordering the world in dichotomies is the key configuration of border thinking. "Border thinking", he says, " ...is, logically, a dichotomous locus of enunciation and, historically, is located at the borders (interiors or exteriors) of the modern/colonial world system." The *Latinamerica en Australia* community of practice aims to facilitate a discussion that critically analyses how Latin American cultural creatives can contribute to the formation of a "new cultural creative conscience" that is located in dialogue with Australians of diverse cultural backgrounds and not positioned in or outside culture. In this way the *Latinamerica en Australia* online community of practice is a space for discussion and also for a wider exposure of the multiple ways Latin American artists practice in Australia.

### **Cyber Borderwork: On Line and Off Centre**

New web-based technologies make it possible to expand connections and dissolve the cultural and linguistic demarcations that delineate the so call “contact zones”. These zones are places where cultures not only “(...) meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Mary Louis Pratt 1991, p. 1), but where individuals and communities also meet for collective action in response to local and international concerns. In many cases these actions are led by artistic expressions, as, for example, through art activism, or by engaging in collaborations across multicultural communities and with mainstream culture. The resulting comings and goings make cultural borders porous and flexible and constantly reconfigures them.

Notwithstanding the transformative power of these interactions, artists whose practice is culturally specific still find themselves in a context of on-going cultural and linguistic translation. It is in what Bhabha (1990) calls the “third space” where the product of “translation between cultures” can generate “borderline affects and identifications enabling other positions to emerge” (p.211).

The *Latinamerica en Australia* community of practice sits, then, within the context of Bhabha’s notion of the third space. It is a project born out of a need to translate from one culture to another and from the multiple perspectives that our rich and complex practices reveal as we move across borders of many kinds – gender, cultural, ideological, spiritual, religious, and geographical. Commenting on the emergence of border writing as a new body of literature, Gentzeler (2008, p143) suggests “that translation is more than a trope; rather, it is a critical daily process engaging all forms of communication and thought by those whose lives depend upon crossing borders”. Addressing this issue, the site’s multi-modal functionality can link the individual to the collective, mediating this daily process of translation. Rather than bringing across something that is already here, the *Latinamerica en Australia* site unveils what is hidden and out of sight. In response to the issues of cultural visibility and the perils of inhabiting a space of ongoing translation, I set up the foundations for a digital habitat to emerge. As defined by Wegner (2009, p.38), a digital habitat is “first and foremost an experience of place embedded in technology.” As a digital habitat where changing dynamics are constantly defining relationships between the created space and its members, this platform enables dialogue between artists and mainstream culture and consequently raises the community's cultural visibility.

The *Latinamerica en Australia* project is based on four underpinning concepts: community of

practice, critical borderwork, critical thinking and dialogue, and cultural memory and visibility. Communities of practice are formed when people who share a concern or passion for something they do come together to exchange ideas about how to do it better and to share their ideas and learnings (Wenger, White and Smith, 2009). The origin and primary use of this concept has been in learning theory. Cognitive anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger coined the term while studying apprenticeship as a learning model. The *Latinamerica en Australia* site enables the development of such a community of practice by offering a number of distinctive integration tools that can enhance a member's page by making it aesthetically more appealing and more accessible to others. In this environment elements such as facebook integration, wiki platforms, language options, RSS platforms, and others can be applied for each members' page, expanding its potential for further promotion and easier communication. An example of how to personalise a member's page can be seen in painter Abigail Lutzen's page: <http://latinamericanartsforum.ning.com/profile/AbigailLutzen>. As a visual artist she is using the site as an exhibition and promotional space. For other artists the use of this technology is not as readily accessible or easy to learn. Here members with more skills can support others through direct practical advice. This is another important feature of the site since it does not just reproduce and pass on information already available on line, but offers the possibility of exchanging learning and skills. This learning exchange can be online or face-to-face depending on the members' location, availability and access to resources. As the site's convener and curator I am in dialogue with those members who feel the need for me to act as a facilitator of particular aspects of their page. This is an ongoing process. In this manner the site is not only an outcome of a project as part of my doctoral work, but a space that can be constantly redefined according to members' needs, desires and aspirations.

A second characteristic of the site is based on the aim of developing critical dialogue and thinking. Critical border work is the space of "another thinking" that can account for other sensibilities and ways of looking at the world. Engaging in an on-going critical conversation with other Australian cultures can enable *Latinamerican en Australia* members to contribute, as a community, to new knowledge production. If the task of borderwork, as Hodge and O'Carroll (2006) state, "is to do justice to a complex multiplicity of borders, balancing the continual needs for difference and connection" (p. 5), the *Latinamerica en Australia* community of practice can also be understood as an expression of critical borderwork in multicultural Australia. I see critical reflexion not only as self-critique but a way to engage in conversations with others sharing interests and desires to continue developing contemporary

cultural practice in Australia.

The site allows an interconnection that transcends boundaries with the potential of becoming a space for a re-signification of hegemonic forms of knowledge. It highlights our Latin American cultural visibility and cultural relevance through the dissemination of our work from a decentred space in cross-disciplinary manner. Benedict Anderson (2006) demonstrated that the birth of the novel and the newspaper in eighteenth century Europe “produced the technical means for representing the kind of imagined community that is the nation.” The rise of the Internet and associated personal communication devices in our time is a disruptive innovation that unsettles established cultural relationships by enabling engagement across geographical and cultural borders and facilitating new imaginings of community. The emergence of multiple modes of instantaneous communication via the World Wide Web and mobile devices has enabled multiple cultural interventions within a decentred space. As a result one can choose to dissent by not aligning with hegemonic forms of knowledge production or patriarchal norms in artistic practice.

The *Latinamerica en Australia* on-line community of practice seeks to explore issues of cultural visibility and relevance by providing a venue for on-going inquiry and experimentation. By facilitating the recovery of some of our shared past artistic expressions and developing cultural and visual markers and references as a way of building and sustaining this community of practice, the site can become a historical archive and a place of collective memory. Here is also the space where personal experience can become a point of departure to trigger conversation about our ways of learning, interpreting the world through artistic representations, and distinctive ways of negotiating cultural and artistic practices and visibility. Communities of practice embedded in digital habitats can become a repository of our cultural memory. The *Latinamerica en Australia* online community of practice can become a vehicle for historicising our collective experiences. Creating the *Latinamerica en Australia* website as a community of practice has allowed me to reflect on issues of cultural visibility, cultural identity and the relevance of Latin American arts practices in relation to the diversity of Australian cultures. It also opens up the possibility of an ongoing exploration of the themes associated with my main research, in particular, the critique of borderwork as a potential theoretical framework from which decolonial thinking can emerge as a way of contributing to a deeper understanding of our identity as Latin American Australian artists.

## **Concluding Comments**

The *Latinamerica en Australia* website and its associated community of practice is a cultural expression within the context of the Australian multicultural. It operates at different levels of culture and society with no fixed temporality. Contributing to a re-imagining of a Latin American identity in Australia and building around the notion of shared knowledge, the site's multiple modal functionality allows for different interventions to take place. In this way it challenges pre-conceived ideas about culture and hegemonic forms of knowledge. It is a digital habitat constructed as a community of practice and a response to inhabiting border zones. As a community of practice the site moves away from fixed ideas about culturally specific identities and incites discussions on issues affecting Latin American artists working in Australia. It offers the possibility to engage in a wider dialogue with fellow practitioners from diverse cultural traditions and with the broader community, and encourages new forms of collaboration.

This online and off centre platform carries the symbolism of a port, with arrivals and departures, transitions and movements of ideas representative of migrant communities. As a living and dynamic space it holds the potential for the continuous renewal of information sharing and the exchange of experiences and histories that can lead to the production of new knowledge. As a digital contact zone and living social environment that can take advantage of new networking technologies, the site innovates culture and facilitates cultural translations by showing diversity in action through the different artistic expressions represented in the site, while raising the cultural visibility of its members. In this way the *Latinamerica en Australia* website fits within Bhabha's concept of "third space", enabling multiple positions to emerge in a dialogical relationship between its members, mainstream culture, and the other cultural traditions present in contemporary Australia. Its connectivity does not just reproduce information but also allows engagement across sectors and practices, thus promoting critical dialogue. It can develop as the space where Latin American Australians historicise their experiences and facilitate a movement away from fixed identities and stereotypes. By reflecting on current practices and building on past experiences, the site can contribute to the construction of a Latin American Australian identity. Drawing from personal experiences I have shown how Latin American artists living in Australia have developed and adapted artistic practices to contribute to the construction of a Latin American presence within the diversity of Australian cultures. And, based on current literature, I have discussed how the *Latinamerica en Australia* website can be located within the context of a decolonial



critique and as an expression of borderwork. I see the site as a 'process' rather than a final piece of work; an emergent living community of practice engaged in an ongoing conversation with other Australian cultures, facilitating cultural translations and showcasing work that may otherwise be lost or ignored.

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