

Bodies and Spaces of *Feminicidio*: Feminist Performance Artivism in Mexico

Irina Popescu

Introduction

In January 2020, performance artist Elina Chauvet and dozens of women's rights activists painted three hundred shoes red. They put the shoes on display in Mexico City's historic square. Some of the pairs had once belonged to women who had been victims of gender-based violence in Mexico ("This artist's red shoes"). In 2009 Chauvet, a Juárez native, first installed her work, *Los Zapatos Rojos*, as a way to publicly document the murder of hundreds of women in Ciudad Juárez. These shoes portray the unnatural absence of the victims as they too were disconnected from their physical bodies in gruesome ways, most bodies disposed of in unmarked graves and often dismembered. Chauvet's installation combines performative art and feminist activism by deliberately making a political intervention within a well-traversed public space, drawing attention to the widespread violence against women in Mexico.

The first installation of *Los Zapatos Rojos* occurred on the sidewalks of Juárez, the same sidewalks where the victims were thought to have been abducted ("Profiles: Elina Chauvet".) This installation embodies what Diana Taylor would define as "artivism," a combination of art and activism where performance strategies and activist practices work together to stage a public intervention (Taylor 147-149). In combining performance with activism, Chauvet engages the spectator head on, a phenomenon Augusto Boal marked as an essential component to revolutionary theater, urging activity rather than passivity on behalf of the viewer (Boal 122). Although this installation is not theater, it is theatrical by nature, engaging in Boal's poetics of the oppressed by forcing spectators into witness positions. Furthermore, the use of public city space brings regional and global attention to the Juárez murders, sidestepping the media's lack of victim representation. As Chau-

Irina Popescu is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies at Bowdoin College. She teaches courses on gender, performance, and cultural studies in the Americas. Her research and publications explore the intersections between human rights, critical gender studies, and cultural production in the Americas.

vet's installation traveled to both Europe and the United States after 2009, it became one of the first successful political demonstrations against *feminicidio* in Latin America. While the performance, to use Boal's configuration, is not revolutionary in itself, it undoubtedly rehearses a revolution (Boal 155).

In the last four decades, feminist activists in Mexico and throughout Latin America have turned to performance—broadly understood here to incorporate elements of guerilla theater and theater of the oppressed, performance art, activist practices, and political interventions—as a means of protesting *feminicidio* while calling for recognition, reaction, and action from the spectator-public. What constitutes performance art evokes a multiplicity of debates surrounding the process of historical memory and memorialization within a given region. Performance art, as a discipline, has been broadened to include, as Richard Schechner advocated decades ago, “how performance is used in politics, medicine, religions, entertainments, and ordinary face-to-face interactions” (Bial and Brady 8). Since the 1970's, with the rise of global feminism, performance art became so linked to feminism that it becomes hard to disassociate the two in our present moment (Wark 3). Feminist performance, in Latin America in particular, has engaged within the political spectrum directly for quite some time and been “championed as an alternative way of knowing, thus potentially subverting the dominant male-oriented symbolic order of language” (Carlson 216).

Throughout Mexico, feminist activists and performance artists, such as Lorena Wolffer and the feminist collective Mujeres de Negro, have played an integral role in publicly recognizing *feminicidio*. *Feminicidio*, or femicide, is the act of killing women and girls *because* they are women and girls. This term gained regional, hemispheric, and international recognition during the mid 1990's as journalists and artists began investigating the murders of women and girls in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. For many performance artists and activists in Mexico, the use of public city spaces became an essential component for these representations. Feminist performance in Mexico constantly questions its relationship to activism by developing a relationship between art, activism, and public space in order to expose the deep-rooted structural and institutional violence inflicted upon women's physical and psychological lives.

In the early 2000's feminist performance artists in Mexico started staging public interventions as a way of shedding light on the violence against women. With these interventions, artists exposed how the violence against women in Juárez was a national epidemic and that women's lives, bodies, and minds were treated without dignity and respect on a systemic level. Often these performance interventions took up city-spaces by populating them with living bodies, a particularly effective means of directing the public's attention and forcing the passerby to interact with, recognize, and witness the human rights abuses occurring within their country. I use the term 'public' to refer to a kind of performance done before an audience (whose make-up is ever changing, especially within the city-spaces)

either within a city space or in an institutionalized space such as a museum. The public becomes involved with the victim's testimonies and can no longer turn away from gender violence. The interaction with the public vis-à-vis city space can, as Judith Butler suggests in her writing on assembly, "call into question a particular political form, especially one that calls itself democratic even as its critics question that claim" (Butler 2). The critics, in this case, are the artists themselves.

For many of these artists in Mexico, including Mónica Mayer, Maris Bustamante, and Lorena Wolffer, and collectives like *Mujeres de Negro* and *No estamos todas*, space becomes the essential component for documenting the inherent levels of structural violence against women within the country. In activating city spaces through performance, these artists and collectives began documenting the violence against women in a public, and highly visible, way. These kinds of public activist interventions take "art out of elitist circles, out of 'cultural spaces,'" allowing the viewers easy access to the "site in which symbols and identity are forged, negotiated, and contested" (Taylor and Villegas 12). These interventions deconstruct the power that Juárez held, and continues holding, over the public's understanding of violence as something happening in an elsewhere and thus easily forgotten or written off. As activism and performance in Mexico began merging during the early 2000's (a trend continuing into the present), performance interventions began documenting women as living, dignified subjects rather than mutilated bodies. One such artist, Lorena Wolffer, whose career began with her own body's visceral documentation of the Juárez murders, now uses performance interventions to encourage and enable women to form public networks of healing and solidarity.

This article explores how the radical work of women performance artists and collectives in Mexico challenge and transform the injustices that shape everyday life. It particularly looks at the work and career of Lorena Wolffer, a Mexico-city based feminist performance artist who, for over twenty years, created interventions in order to intersect political activism with performance. Furthermore, it investigates how Wolffer's particular activism and radical feminist performance create feministic performance praxis in Mexico that centers on solidarity, listening, and a collective consciousness rather than on the victimized body. These activist performance interventions, especially those staged within heavily traversed public city-spaces, also hold the power of engaging the public by turning the passive passersby into an active witness who can recognize and begin understanding violence against women as a systemic, national problem.

Performing the Spaces and Bodies of Juárez

Feminist performance in the Americas has relied on the body as the center of the performance, as the artist uses their own body to enact a political demonstration

in a direct and visceral manner for the public. This focus on the body has provoked many debates on whether women's bodies should be used as sites of feminist political intervention without being reappropriated into systems of violence and objectification (Wark 167). Perhaps to combat this tendency and circumnavigate this debate, more contemporary feminist performance artists rely less on demonstrating violence through their own bodies and more on fashioning performance interventions which can create solidarity between women and engage in healing practices. In fact, as Chauvet's installation demonstrates, the lack of bodily presence is just as important as the body's presence. Perhaps the rehearsal of the revolution happens more readily when women are connected together through their commonalities, which sadly still include violence, and through their ability to face suffering together and form a solidarity movement. This has never been truer today as Argentina, a formidably Catholic nation with steadfast antiabortion laws, has just legalized abortion.

In Mexico, feminist performance serves a blasting critique of gender-based sociopolitical inequalities. Instead of viewing these inequalities as mere unfortunate dilemmas of a predominately *machista* society, performance since the 1990's started casting these gender-based inequalities as human rights abuses. Performance documenting gender violence, especially feminist performance, thus became more flexible, no longer relying solely on the physical representation of a woman's body as victim, but instead drawing attention to a more widespread societal attack on woman's bodies in general.¹ Consequently this means that performance art in Mexico has started to condemn the lack of institutional and legal policies set in place to protect the lives of women.

For many feminist scholars, activists, and artists, Ciudad Juárez has become the foundation for documenting the violence against women in Mexico. The city has largely been described as a neoliberal elsewhere, a lawless border town that became a home to many *narcotraficantes*. During the 1990's under the North American Free Trade Agreement, Juárez became a central location for many factories, or *maquilas*, since companies under NAFTA were able to produce goods in Juárez and not pay taxes or tariffs. For Mexican women, these *maquilas* meant that there was a new demand on the Mexican workforce: women's labor. The *maquilas* started recruiting women from all over the country, offering them the promise of opportunities and independence that many could have never imagined. Women throughout Mexico, especially poor subaltern women, saw the *maquilas* as an opportunity to leave their homes, and gain independence while also helping out their

¹ By "woman" I mean any individual who defines themselves as a woman. There is widespread abuse of transbodies throughout the Americas, and although this article does not engage with that particular history, it is important to note, especially as many feminist groups and performance artists in Mexico and Latin America are actively engaging with, incorporating, and recognizing the violence against translives in their fight against injustice.

family members financially. The border's proximity made Juárez an ideal location for *narcotraficantes* to smuggle and distribute drugs. As more and more drug-related cartels relocated to Juárez, the city was slowly divided into turfs and violence between those turfs became more commonplace. With the influx of women into the city, many cartels based their initiation ceremonies on the brutalization of women's bodies. However, at times the violence against women had nothing to do with cartel initiation, but a way to pass the time or to stage a warning to a competing cartel.

The murders of young women in Juárez has impacted, and continues to impact, the way that violence against women is recognized and understood legally in Mexico. The predominate view of Juárez as a neoliberal and lawless space where anything goes, has made it seem as if the violence against women occurring within that space exists in a state of exception, not as a greater national phenomenon (Segato 78). This view has detrimentally affected the way that women's rights and bodies are perceived by both the Mexican government and the public. Since the crimes against women in Juárez were considered to be happening in this degenerate elsewhere, a space many considered to be riddled by unethical neoliberal tendencies, Mexican officials in charge of investigating the Juárez murders were able to determine that the violence against women was happening not within the nation, but outside the nation. It was through the "pressure from feminists," as Mercedes Olivera determines, that Mexico finally began to recognize the violence against women as a national problem (50). These so-called feminist pressures also led to a new mode of feminist performance, which combined activist strategies with performance to foster an activist practice.

Latin America, as Marcela A. Fuentes recalls while reflecting on performance traditions Mexico and Argentina, has a lot of teach us about the intersections between feminism, activism, and performance (Fuentes 2). The history of feminist mobilization in Latin America has always relied on performance as a tool for documenting injustice and sparking resistance. This mass mobilization of women in Argentina, on the streets and within artistic worlds, as mentioned earlier, is what led to the recent legalization of abortion. In Mexico, feminist activism has been tasked with portraying violence against women as systemic within Mexican institutions and law, not only as isolated events occurring between a perpetrator and a victim often in domestic settings. In the last decade, feminist activism in Mexico has started focusing more on having women physically take up space within a city, as highly visible beings who can vocalize and advocate for their own rights. This visibility is necessary for making sure that women are seen as public figures who are able to inhabit and impact public spaces.

While many laws in Mexico have been formally adopted in the last twenty years to respond to increasing levels of gender violence in the region, these laws have not shown any decrease of this violence (Saccomano 53). There is an ever-increasing need to create a space for recognizing, understanding, and historicizing

the violence against women as something systematic and ever-present within the country. One of the most radical performance artists and activists based out of Mexico City, Lorena Wolffer, has spent her entire career promoting societal awareness and recognition of *feminicidio* by using site-specific interventions to document the precarious status of gender rights in her home country.

Lorena first began her career as a painter and later as a performance artist during the mid-1990's. It did not take long for her performance work to start documenting the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez. In an interview I conducted with Lorena in December of 2018, she revealed that she initially used her own body as a means of showcasing sexual violence against women "para poder anunciar la violencia" (Wolffer interview).² That performance art, since the 1960's, consistently relies on the body of the artist to challenge regimes of power is something that Diana Taylor signals to repeatedly in her decades of work on the subject (43-45). *Artivists*, as Taylor terms them, are performance artists who combine art and activism, summoning the tools of performance in order to enact sociopolitical, cultural, and even economic changes (147-149). At the onset of her career, Wolffer's activism centered on making women's marginality within her country visible.

The focus on making women's relationship to violence in Mexico visible was perpetually reenacted within the cultural field throughout the late 1990's and the 2000's. It can certainly be argued that these performative reenactments *did* impact the legal sphere as they began shaping the public's awareness of what gender violence in Mexico was and how far outside of Juárez the terrible phenomenon invaded. In fact, had it not been for these representations of Juárez generated by artists, documentary directors, writers, and activists, the murders may have gone unnoticed, especially since the police in Juárez, many of whom were involved in the drug cartels, were keen on covering up the murders (Cambell 63). These performative reenactments empowered the public (both in Mexico and beyond) to begin recognizing violence against women as a human rights abuse. In turn, feminist performance challenged the view that women's lives were being violated only in the Juárez-elsewhere, or in a domestic setting, and instead illuminated how the status of all women's rights in Mexico was precarious. In other words, performance artists sought to make the violence against women recognized and understood as a sociopolitical phenomenon in order for political and legal changes to occur.

Throughout the 1990's most of the studies on femicide focused on "intimate partner femicide," implying that femicide was relegated to the private sphere (Russell 18). In order to combat this tendency, Diana Russell promoted a new term, "intimate femicide," which accounts for the crimes against women perpetrated by those individuals other than their partners (18). Like Russell, many

² Trans: In order to announce the violence. (All translations are my own.)

writers, artists, and activists in Mexico, during the late 1990's and throughout the 2000's, began unearthing a deeply intricate system of structural violence used against women in both physical and psychological ways. In 2001, the film *Señorita Extraviada*, created by Lourdes Portillo, was the first to document the horrific crimes in Juárez, gaining international attention to the murders. A year following Portillo's documentary, Wolffer herself developed a performance entitled *Mientras Dormíamos (el caso de Juárez)* which she performed throughout Mexico for over two years, as well as in New York, Paris, and Finland. In her performance, Wolffer produces a visible articulation of the violence against women in her home country. After spending months reading detailed police reports from Juárez, she creates *Mientras Dormíamos* which shows the artist on stage marking the wounds of the victims on her own bare body with a dark marker. Best-selling novels such as the 2005 *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders* by Alicia Gaspar de Alba and, outside of México, *2666* by Chilean author Roberto Bolaño also provided increased visibility for the Juárez victims. Furthermore, scholars such as Rita Laura Segato, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso, and Esther Chávez Cano (to name a few) not only risked their lives in their attempt to document the murders, but also encouraged the activity of many activist movements and collectives within Mexico. Journalists Diana Washington Valdez and Sergio González have each bravely, at the risk of their own lives, contributed detailed investigations of the murders. Finally, in 2009, Chauvet's *Los Zapatos Rojos* gained international acclaim through its site-specific documentation of the Juárez murders. That same year, a dramatic shift in legal policies defining the parameters of gender violence within the country unfolded with the Campo Algodonero case.

In July 2009 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights began trying the Campo Algodonero case, whose later sentencing in November of that same year declared the state responsible for the violation of rights of women and girls in Juárez. For the first time, *feminicidio* was situated as a legal category in Mexico, a legal precedent currently underway throughout most Latin American countries (Fregoso 3). In fact, this was the first time that the term "femicide" was used in an international court, and was defined "as reference to the systematic violation of the women's right to live due to gender" (De Paula 6). The decade of cultural work, by the aforementioned artists, writers, and activists, led to this momentous case. The case ended with a condemnation of the Mexican state for not fulfilling its "duty to investigate and to ensure the rights to life, personal integrity, and personal freedom" of the three victims the case concentrated upon: Claudia Ivette González, Laura Berenice Ramos Monárrez and Esmeralda Herrera Monreal (De Paula 6). This was the first time that discussions of gender violence intersected with laws and policies within the country. In other words, this was the first time gender violence was taken seriously within a legal context and defined as a human rights abuse.

The rights to life, personal integrity, and personal freedom are those which most performance interventions representing Juárez center on. These include Wolffer's work in *Mientras Dormíamos* and *Evidencias*. In *Evidencias*, which ran between 2010 and 2016 throughout Mexico, ordinary household objects were displayed in giant glass boxes, similar to what a museum would use to display rare and fragile items. Each object was accompanied by one testimony, given by a victim who then inscribes her own narrative of violence within the object. *Evidencias* demonstrates how readily the domestic operates within the sociopolitical realm, contaminating it. Viewers could look at something as quotidian as a water cup, which, when placed in tense contrast against the backdrop of the often-jarring testimony accompanying that cup, destabilized the very foundation of private domesticity. The testimonies, similar to the label given to a piece of art found in a museum, forcibly remove the viewer from the domestic sphere by repositioning them within a sociopolitical sphere where violence against women permeates. Viewing the violence against women as systemic impacts the way that advocacy is understood and practiced. *Evidencias* is a perfect example of artivism, as these objects generate increased visibility, not only for the Juárez murders, but also for the general status of women within Mexico as second-class citizens. The viewers, hopefully, leave *Evidencias* with an understanding and recognition that violence against women does not only occur in the elsewhere- the testimonies, after all, have nothing to do with Juárez, even if they evoke it as a space of violence. These testimonies were gathered from anonymous women throughout Mexico, each detailing their experiences with domestic and also public forms of institutional violence. In attesting to this violence publicly, the performance installation enabled these testimonies to enter into historical memory and discourse, where otherwise they would be left out.

Evidencias, however, also reenacts a kind of memorialization ritual, an almost funeral for victims who would otherwise never be able to tell their story of violence. Jack Santino suggests that such commemorative performative works draw attention to the victim vis-à-vis the public in order to "try to mobilize action toward a social problem" (Bial and Brady 129). More importantly, women's stories are documented and read, some aloud, some silently, by the public, forcing the viewer, or public, to become an active witness, rather than a passive observer, to the violence against women. *Evidencias* becomes what Santino calls a "spontaneous shrine," a way to personalize political issues and commemorate the lives of lost victims by disrupting our own ability to look at everyday objects (Bial and Brady 134). The everyday becomes a political statement in itself especially as these objects, much like Chauvet's red shoes, are active reminders of the absent bodies of the victimized women they belong to.

In 2006, the Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia (General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence) was passed in Mexico. This law defines the "derechos humanos de las mujeres" by suggesting

that the rights of women exist outside of current human rights discourses in Mexico (Article 2). The passing of this law was seen as an attempt to remedy the increase of *feminicidio* in Juárez throughout the 2000s, especially as the border town allowed for new conversations to surface about other less visible instances of gender violence occurring incessantly, both domestically and publicly, throughout the country (Toledo). Although the significance of these legal milestones cannot be disputed, the passing of the Campo Algodonero sentencing demonstrated to what extent the Mexican government continued doing nothing to prevent the extreme violence against women from occurring post-2009. Additionally, investigations on the murders of the victims were not renewed, something the court also demanded of the state (Hernández, 84-85).

Instead, what the sentencing provoked was a new way to represent and memorialize the crimes in Juárez. An official memory monument to the Campo Algodonero was erected in 2011 to commemorate eight victims. The monument allowed the victims and their families to reclaim public space. Furthermore, by memorializing the victims, they gained access to a historical archive, a place within the nation's national memory. This kind of public memory monument, as Rosa Linda-Fregoso writes, has the potential transform the city of Juárez into a site of "alternative truth-telling and memory" ("For the Women"). Much like Wolffer's *Mientras Dormíamos*, where she uses her own bare body as a monument to the pain and wounds inflicted on the victims, the Campo Algodonero monument places *feminicidio* on a public agenda by allowing the victims access to visibility and to national memory. Like *Evidencias*, which in mimicking the museum setting also makes a public claim on who has the right to be remembered and historicized, the Campo Algodonero monument stakes a public claim on memory. This recapturing public spaces for women, and often by women, and the gendering of these spaces, has led to an increased level of visibility on victim narratives throughout Mexico. Furthermore, the crimes perpetrated on their bodies, the perpetrators of those crimes, and the legal-political state apparatuses subjecting women to increased levels of structural and physical violence are exposed for the public in ways that showcase that the violence against women occurs far beyond the domestic realm.

Listening as an Activist Practice: Wolffer's *Estados de Excepción* and the Formulation of Dignity

Radical feminist performance, spurred by the global women's movements in the 1960's, concentrated on raising public consciousness and a higher level of visibility for often ignored social and political injustices (Carlson 211-212). By radical feminist performance in the context of gender violence, I mean performances which directly engage with networks of activism and human rights discourse to both make visible the often-invisible plight of victimized women, and to document systemic and institutional abuses women face. Visibility through performance,

however, often comes with a tax. Can these artists make the horrific crimes against women visible without reifying women's bodies? Can performance document the atrocities perpetuated on the body while still permitting the subject access to dignity? The concept of dignity, after all, frames all discourses on human rights, so how do artists and performers dignify their subjects through performances that often showcase the body in pain? These are just some of the questions that Wolffer herself engages with in her later work and that many activists are working through today.

Recently, Wolffer's work stages political interventions by positioning women's agency front and center, within highly traversed areas of major cities in Mexico and beyond. Her work undergoes a dramatic shift after working with the Juárez murders, transitioning from a reliance on her own body to mark violence to a focus on how solidarity and healing practices can foster a community. Instead of documenting the tormented body, Wolffer's more recent work documents the dignified body; a body that is healing, a body that is strong, a body finding strength in community. Instead of connecting a woman's body to a stark representation of physical pain, as was corporeally evidenced in *Mientras Dormíamos* and textually evidenced in *Evidencias*, Wolffer's more recent performance interventions question those connections. This line of questioning also reconsiders the connections between performance, bodies, and ethics.

It is important to acknowledge that Wolffer is a white Mexican artist working through an elite art form. What this means is that not everyone has access to her art and not all individuals are represented by her art. This is also true for many of the feminist collectives throughout Latin America who have not quite incorporated indigenous feminists within their circles. Wolffer herself is aware of this and believes that her own social location does not limit the potential of her art, especially in Mexico City, where most of her interventions take place. In fact, quite often in her activism boundaries of class, race, and ethnicity, are crossed and her performance interventions do help document violence against women within many multiple ethnic and sociopolitical contexts. Furthermore, Wolffer's recent work hardly strives to speak for the other. In fact, in centering on acts of solidarity and listening, her recent performance interventions enable women's voices to gain traction on their own, without the forceful intervention and framing of the artist herself. Lastly, in centering on healing and solidarity, her work resists the fetishization that victimized women's bodies, and especially subaltern bodies, are often subjected to within the artistic and literary worlds.

Embodying violence by presenting the audience with a shocking map of the crimes against women was the goal, if one may call it that, of *Mientras Dormíamos*. The now dominant view, made so by Julia Monárrez Fragoso, is that the victims of Ciudad Juárez are sexually fetishized commodities that were "produced, distributed, consumed, and thrown out" (60). This view captures the version of neoliberal personhood circulating in most recent studies on *feminicidio*. Furthermore,

this view conflicts with the performance interventions of Wolffer and others as it begs the following question: is there an inherent danger of using the body to document *feminicidio* since, in doing this, a vicious cycle of commodifying the body gets reproduced within the art itself? What *are* the ethical parameters surrounding performance as related to the documentation of *feminicidio* and gender violence?

The embodiment of pain at the site of the female body seeks to express and document pain outside of language. Pain, as Elaine Scarry recalls, is beyond language and as such resists objectification through language (Scarry 4). Yet, when a female performer uses their own body to document pain and suffering inflicted on the bodies of others, a kind of objectification does occur. As Scarry warns, “often, a state of consciousness other than pain will, if deprived of its object, begin to approach the neighborhood of physical pain; conversely, when physical pain is transformed into an objectified state, it (or at least some of its aversiveness) is eliminated. A great deal, then, is at stake...” (Scarry 5). The on-going and lengthy relationship between pain and the female body requires revision especially in the world of performance where women push their own bodies often to extremes in order to gain audience recognition. We need to start questioning what the goal of such representation is. If it is simply to shock the spectator, perhaps we need a better way of reframing shock into action, into community. Is there another way for women to gain recognition and for the violence against women to be documented that avoids this kind of painful female embodiment?

Right after *Mientras Dormíamos*, Wolffer witnessed a change in her own perception of violence against women and how best to document that violence. “Tuve este momento de cambio” she says, “cuando empecé y pude empezar a reconocer que las violencias de género no eran violencias que se pudieron ubicar sólo en la Ciudad Juárez” (Wolffer interview).³ In realizing that the systematic violence against women was occurring not only within Juárez, but throughout Mexico, Latin America, and the world, her artistic practices shifted. Viewing the violence against women as systemic, and not site-specific, affects the way we understand the need for advocating for women’s rights and, more specifically, for institutional and public recognition of those rights. This, as Melissa Wright exposes, is quite the paradox. In writing on the Mujeres de Negro of Northern Mexico, a group of women activists giving rise to the Ni Una Más campaign, Wright states the following:

The paradox is this: In taking their protests to the public sphere and exercising their democratic rights as Mexican citizens, the participants of Mujeres de Negro are publicly declaring the right of women to exist in the public sphere both as citizens and as people who deserve to be free from violence and fear. Yet as they take to the streets, they are vulnerable to attacks

³ Trans: I had this moment of change when I started recognizing that gender violence was not a violence that could be located only within Juárez.

that they are ‘public women’ in a discursive context in which that label continues to be used effectively to dismiss and devalue women for ‘prostituting’ themselves by venturing beyond the domestic sphere, that traditional form of female purity and obligation. (314)

Wolffer’s recent work centers upon generating “public women” who can dominate public spaces in ways that value and reaffirm their identities and bodies while also creating a space for healing. Dominating the public space in creative ways by gendering it enables an active participation of women that in turn promotes the voicing of their rights. Since most feminist performance work in Mexico began in response to Juárez, the specificity of Juárez, where socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic factors have contributed to the formulation of women’s bodies as dispensable, greatly affected the way that performance has been able to represent the violence against women within Mexico. Upon inception, most performance work, including Wolffer’s, tended to center on the victim’s body, which meant that fetishization was an essential component of representing the violence against women. In moving beyond Juárez, Wolffer slowly abandons the reliance on the body as the principal vehicle for representation.

Several years after her work on Juárez, Wolffer began working with women in *refugios* (safe havens for victims of sexual abuse) throughout Mexico. During this work, she listened to their stories as survivors of abuse. These stories began affecting the way she approached her own performance work, from the staging of that work to the work’s intention. *Refugios* for women in Mexico were created during the 1990’s right around the time when the Juárez murders were occurring. They were established to combat the “ausencia de marcos legales, institucionales y de política pública adecuados para hacer frente al grave problema de la violencia contra las mujeres en [México]” (“Diagnostico” 5)⁴. These secretly located sites also provided women with a space to heal as individuals and as a community (Escobar 5). By listening and being proximate to these women, Wolffer shifts the way she approaches performance. In speaking about this experience, she notes that the first time she went to a *refugio* she had prepared a questionnaire, a list of specific questions to ask the women there. “Al minuto dos,” she says, “me di cuenta que no servía de nada...lo único que importaban eran sus charlas” (Wolffer interview)⁵. Listening and being listened to are two methods that Wolffer employs throughout her more recent work. Together, these two methods create the foundation for healing and solidarity while also enabling women’s voices and stories, and not only their mutilated bodies, to emerge. Furthermore, these two methods allow for performance to intersect with empathy. Although performance enables

⁴ Trans: the absence of proper legal, institutional, and public frameworks address the grave problem of violence against women in Mexico.

⁵ Trans: By minute two, I realized that it [my questionnaire] wasn’t useful for anything... Their stories were the only thing that mattered.

the viewer to witness, experience, and theorize complex relationships that individuals have with systems of power, it is important to remember that the artist must *resist* speaking for the other or using art as a means of defining another's experience (Taylor, 6). The artist too must listen.

The legal apparatus and its connection to the neglect of basic human rights is taken up quite explicitly as *Estados de Excepción* uses Article 29 of the Mexican Constitution to construct new space for women to inhabit. Article 29 states the following:

En los casos de invasión, perturbación grave de la paz pública, o de cualquier otro que ponga a la sociedad en grave peligro o conflicto, solamente el Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, con la aprobación del Congreso de la Unión o de la Comisión Permanente cuando aquel no estuviere reunido, podrá restringir o suspender en todo el país o en lugar determinado el ejercicio de los derechos y las garantías que fuesen obstáculo para hacer frente, rápida y fácilmente a la situación.⁶

For three years Lorena employed the concept of the state of exception to create *performative states of exception* throughout Mexico City, Guadalajara, Querétaro, and later London, and Kabul. This “no-man’s land between public law and political fact,” as Giorgio Agamben writes, “between the juridical order and life,” alludes to Juárez (1-2). What potential does this ambiguous zone have? Only a state of exception can inhabit this lawless space, demonstrating how a city functions by no longer functioning and how human rights are held as a privilege and not a given. For Wolffer, the metaphoric configuration of a state of exception alludes to Juárez as a space, however, instead of relying on a violated body to inhabit that space, the artist now makes women visible as living, voice-filled, space-inhabiting, dignified bodies.

Making women visible within a male-dominated city-space was central to *Estados de Excepción*. Tables were set up in the middle of well-traversed areas of the

⁶ Trans: In case of invasion, serious breach of the peace or any other event which may place society in severe danger or conflict, only the President of the Republic can suspend, throughout the country or in a certain region, those constitutional rights and guarantees which may constitute obstacles for the State to face the situation easily and rapidly as required by the emergency. For this purpose, the President must obtain the Congress of the Union's approval, or in the recess, the Permanent Committee's approval. Such suspension of constitutional rights and guarantees shall be temporary through general provisions, never can a suspension be applied on a single person. If suspension of constitutional rights and guarantees is requested within the period when the Congress is working, it shall grant the necessary authorizations for the President to cope with the situation. However, if suspension is requested during the Congress recess, the Congress will be convened immediately so it can agree about the authorizations required.

aforementioned cities and beautifully lined with bright tablecloths, plates, and all the fixings of a delicious meal. Wolffer would simply go up to women she saw passing by on the street and ask if they would like to have a free meal. All of the restaurants involved were those dedicated to protecting the rights of women, as were the institutions providing the rest of the materials needed. Even the awareness of the existence of these restaurants and institutions begins to build an informal solidarity network working to protect women's rights. When the tables were finally filled, there was no agenda to the conversation. The artist was not seeking to connect the women through the violence perpetrated on them or through their common experience as second-class citizens. Conversations were free ranging and organic as the installations goal was not to represent violated bodies, but life, community, and voices. Lorena noted that oftentimes women from different socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and even gender backgrounds would find themselves sharing a table and having conversations they most likely would never have had with one another (Wolffer interview).

For instance, she remembers when an outwardly reserved religious woman sitting next to a lesbian couple began asking the couple how they met, after which the three conversed back and forth for the duration of the meal. All of this happened "desde una mirada de respeto" (Wolffer interview).⁷ Also, the installation took over public space and made that space, at least for that moment of dining together, feel safe and welcoming for women to have such discussions and to listen to one another. In other words, it changed the configuration of space within the city for a moment in time. Clearly, given the sociopolitical context within Mexico at the time, and currently, women's feeling of safety is hardly assumed or easy to come by. However, *Estados* at least temporarily permits women with the right to appear, to exist, and to be seen within the city-space. Furthermore, these women are seen through a lens of leisure, community, and communication: eating together while speaking in a public space. As Butler astutely remarks while reflecting on Hannah Arendt's conceptualization of the body, "concreted bodily actions-gathering, gesturing, standing still [are all] of the component parts of 'assembly' that are not quickly assimilated to verbal speech [but] can dignify principles of freedom and equality" (Butler 48). Women within a patriarchal society are often deprived of these very things as they are kept away from such spaces and condemned to silence. Wolffer develops a feminist performance praxis through *Estados* which allows women to contest the patriarchal structures underlying who gets to inhabit city-spaces, who has the power to assemble, and who has the right to be seen in public. Simply by being seen in a highly visible public space, these women begin to contest the gendered norms within Mexican society.

This visibility however, as Wright previously alluded to, also showcases how women often struggle to exist in the public sphere (Wright 314). The public

⁷ Trans: From a respectful view/stance.

sphere requires such reconfigurations of who belongs, who can speak, who can take up space. This is what Wolffer's performance intervention permits and makes evident. The acts of listening and fashioning a feminist collective through the sharing of food, time, space, and conversation, become essential to the intervention. Are listening and conversation enough to shift the material realities of these women and create a more equitable society in Mexico? No. But we must start somewhere. Wolffer's work embodies the alternative ways of knowing that Marvin Carlson believes can subvert the "dominant male-oriented symbolic order of language," while also engaging in a very public model of activism predicated on empathy (216). Since performative activism develops within busy city spaces, its presence disturbs the natural flow of the city. Furthermore, in relying on these populated spaces, *Estados*, and many other of Wolffer's activist interventions, establish a collective consciousness which unites against structures of violence. *Estados de Excepción* demands the public to question who has the *right* to the city, who has the *right* to take up space. As David Harvey recalls, "the right to the city is...a collective rather than individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization" (4). "The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities," he continues to write, is one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights" (4). In creating a space to provide living bodies with the right to the city, a feminist collectivity also slowly forms.

The only thing the women were asked to do (if they wanted) was to write something on the paper doilies underneath their plates. These so-called-testimonies were mainly notes of thanks and appreciation for the meal. These notes deconstruct the very idea of victim testimony by enabling the women to refuse their status as victims, focusing on their enjoyment instead. The primary focus for the notes was that of joy. Joy at being fed and heard, the joy of taking up space, and the joy of listening. For instance, one woman writes "[me] sentí bien relajada, contenta, comida estuvo muy rica porque en mi vida no comía tan rico y gracias por invitarnos en esta comida de convivencia" (*Estados de Excepción*).⁸ Perhaps this confession also illuminates class disparity, one perhaps not evident from the vibrant conversations taking place at the table, suggesting that the installation is engaging in sociopolitical and socioeconomic work, creating lines of solidarity between classes by generating what Wolffer refers to as "el estado de bien estar," or the state of well-being. However, more significantly, the woman who wrote this note focuses on how the performance installation made her *feel*: relaxed, happy and full. These feelings of fullness and presence are ones which actively combat the demonstrations of absence and voided identities and bodies that are part of

⁸ Trans: "I felt very relaxed, happy, the food was very good because I'd never in my life eaten so well and thanks for inviting us to this harmonious meal"

performance pieces, including Wolffer's from an earlier time. The process of documenting such violence is altered by Wolffer in her feminist praxis as this particular activist intervention disturbs the structures of violence that even performance art can fall hostage to when representing women. This is not to suggest that visceral bodily performances are not important or do not have meaningful interactions with the public. They most certainly do. This is only to suggest that women should also take up space as fulfilled, happy, and ultimately present bodies and minds.

This intervention, unlike the concept of invisible theater, where actors are planted within public spaces incognito in order to provoke responses from passerbys, has no actors. The women gathered around the table are not performers. They are everyday pedestrians who willingly take time off to gather together and hear one another. Their conversations are not staged and the focus is not on how passerbys react but rather on what happens between the women at the table. No active documentation of *feminicidio* occurs yet, public space is dramatically gendered as the developing sense of solidarity and community is fostered by the act of listening. In return, this enables women to use public space in order to establish a collective consciousness grounded upon differences and similarities. This visible collectivity is what Wolffer strives for in her *artivismo* as she continues creating installations which take over overpopulated city-spaces in order to publicly document the violence against women and the ever-present institutional inequalities. However, beyond visibility, she incorporates the act of listening as a foundation upon which this documentation can occur. Listening, in effect, becomes an activist practice that is often not discussed and, unfortunately, taken for granted. This version of listening enables a subject to access their own physical and psychological dignity without requiring an active recording of their pain and suffering. There is no editing or revising of the women's stories and conversations. This listening is listening for listening's sake. The conversations and the practice of listening do fashion a collective consciousness which can in turn disturb the structures of violence, as we have seen throughout Latin America in the last few years with the rise of the *Ni una menos* feminist collective and movement. Women in Mexico and throughout Latin America, now more than ever, have taken over the streets to demand their legal rights, often in a performative fashion as we witnessed with Chile's *Las Tesis* collective who staged a massive flash mob dance and song last year called "Un violador en tu camino" (A rapist in your path) in order to loudly denounce the violence against women in Chile.

Estados de Excepción also demonstrates how performance art promotes women's dignity, by enabling the women gathered to exist as whole subjects, with voices which have the ability to exchange thoughts and ideas, and the power to listen to one another. Although performance relies on living bodies in order to "implicate the real," in the case of *Estados*, the gathering bodies hold no alternative agendas, aside from sharing a meal and a conversation (Phelan, 148). Yet, they

“implicate the real” in a powerful way: through their unadulterated physical presence. In fact, the “estado de bien estar” generated by the visible space they take up, is often perceived as threatening to the public. Wolffer mentions that very often male passerbys demonstrate aggressive signs of discomfort, some even loudly voicing that discomfort to the artist herself (Wolffer interview). “Lo que está pasando,” she reflects, “es que estamos quitando su espacio público...puedes ver como, en las miradas, están tratando de descifrar lo que está pasando y por qué les está molestando” (Wolffer interview).⁹ Some, she notes, have angrily approached her to ask what she is doing about the violence constantly perpetrated against men in Mexico. “Lo que les quiero decir,” she remarks, “es que a los hombres en México no los matan por su género” (Wolffer interview).¹⁰

Why does this anger surface in the first place? Isn't it unusual for such anger to surface during such a peaceful and non-threatening performance intervention? After all, it is just a bunch of women gathered around a table. So why the anger? It is the very subtleness of the performance, the idea that women are merely gathering to share a meal together, that makes it so evocative and, perhaps, so dangerous. This subtleness demonstrates that women in Mexico (and beyond) still need to take up these spaces in active ways, to come together, to have these conversations. Women need to gain more visibility as active, living bodies, and not only as dead, brutalized victims. They also need to start listening to each other's stories so that they can know they are not alone and that there is indeed strength in numbers.

Conclusion

The increasing levels of violence against women and lack of legal attention in Ciudad Juárez during the late 90's and early 2000's illuminates how women's rights have become a state of exception within the general human rights frameworks in Mexico. There is still a dire global need to recognize, understand, and legal persecute *feminicidio* as a human rights atrocity, and not a simply domestic crime or, worse yet, as a crime happening in a neoliberal elsewhere. The testimonies provided by the families of the victims of Juárez transform into “physical [histories] of pain” enabling pain to, once again, become “part of the social construction of gender” (Fragoso, 59). The problematic connections between women's subjectivity and bodily pain have become yet another state of exception in the world of representation and cultural production. If women can only gain access to history and memory through their ability to feel pain, the implication is that pain, and the

⁹ Trans: What is happening is that we are taking away their public space...you can see how, in their gazes, they are trying to figure out what is happening and why it is bothering them.

¹⁰ Trans: What I want to tell them is that men in Mexico are not killed because they are men.

violence that pain begets, is simply the most integral part of a woman's experience. This is dangerous. Through its connections with activism and its public display of sociopolitical inequality, radical feminist performance promotes a new understanding of what constitutes gender violence and how to best document that violence.

Wolffer's great contribution to activism and the development of a radical feminist performance in *Estados de Excepción* is to make the inferior status of women in Mexico highly visible. It creates this visibility by privileging solidarity, community, and the simple act of listening as a powerful non-economic transaction within a neoliberal space determined to commodify all in its path. Furthermore, the women gathering are not drawn together as victims and thus resist being confined to the intimate, private realm. Instead, they are subjects gathering together peacefully, sharing stories in a public space, undeniably visible. Healing through listening, gathering together to share a meal, and speaking, all combine to forge a practice of radical activism that *Estados de Excepción* unravels, and one that many of unaware pedestrians are forced to witness and recognize. The engagement between the performance and the public is not reactive nor is it startling, as many performances which rely heavily on the body of the performers can be. These more startling performances, though effective in their own right, risk being discredited by the unwilling passerby as vulgar or irrelevant. This is not to say that bodily performances are not relevant and important, only to suggest that the subtlety of *Estados de Excepción* can still be quite disturbing to the public. *Estados de Excepción* records how necessary the recapturing of public spaces by women still is in Mexico. Such interventions are necessary to make women visible and to forge a collective within public spaces as a means of recording women's subjectivity.

In her theoretic structuring of the Juárez victims as sexual commodities, Fragozo battles against the government's inclination to forget the victims while also complicating the relationship between pain and the victim's body. Furthermore, she demonstrates the dangers promoting the commonly held belief that the violence perpetuated on the women's bodies is commonplace and inevitable due to their socioeconomic, ethnic, racial, and migrant status. The victims, she writes, "symbolize the women's low human value as less than women-as sexually fetishized commodities" (57). That women are often seen as objects is nothing new. However, the levels of fetishized objectification Fragozo speaks of makes it so that even a woman's relationship to pain and abuse is annulled. Consistently coded as the "dead women of Juárez" by media and government officials, the victims are simply defined through their status as dead, and not through the sociopolitical, racial, and economic reasons which caused their death in the first place (Fragoso 60). In erasing the concrete reasons behind their murders, the victims are forced even beyond the low-human category- into a non-human category. This category, in turn, prevents these women from gaining access to the discourse of human

rights altogether. After all, how does one talk about human rights in the absence of humans? How do non-humans get access to memory? To history?

Would something like a truth commission for *feminicidios*, both in Juárez and throughout Mexico, be instrumental in driving the levels of violence down? For the victims and families of *feminicidio*, engendering any form of justice, recognition, and even public awareness has been riddled with difficulties in part due to what Alicia Schmidt Camacho terms “denationalized subjectivity” (256). Women, and especially poor subaltern women, have less access to concrete versions of subjectivity and citizenship rights, and this lack of access is true for women throughout the country. Although popular women’s movements took over Mexico during the 1980’s, expanding women’s political participation, women’s interests continue to remain marginal when it comes to formal political structures, such as courts for instance (Camacho 263). In fact, women continue to be relegated to the domestic spheres and perceived as private actors within that sphere, and this is especially true for less economically stable and subaltern women. This may be why the Juárez victims have become symbols for the precarious state of women within Mexico as a whole. It is therefore pertinent for the artistic world to make sure that women gain access to public spaces in dignified ways.

Radical feminist performance art on *feminicidio* and gender violence, especially the work actively occupying public spaces within the city, has developed and continues developing a process of memorialization for the structural and physical violence against women not acknowledged by the state. To echo Boal, perhaps performance is not revolutionary in itself, however it is a rehearsal for the revolution (155). Public performance can greatly impact the way in which society interacts with, recognizes, and understands *feminicidio*, which is dramatically on the rise in Mexico. At times, these works engage in memorialization by incorporating the victim’s trauma, while also providing a direct critique of the history of patriarchal violence. However, recently, radical feminist activism in Mexico and throughout Latin America has focused less on the status of victimhood as demonstrated vis-à-vis the woman’s body. As women’s bodies gather and make themselves visible within a public space, “they are exercising a right to appear, to exercise freedom, and they are demanding a livable life” (Butler 26). As the work of Lorena Wolffer demonstrates, feminist activism seeks to create spaces for women within the city where empathy, recognition, and, by extension, healing, can occur. Listening and the formation of a collective consciousness for and by women create the “estado de bien estar” that Wolffer deems essential for her own feminist performance praxis.

Bibliography

- [*Estados de Excepción*]. http://www.lorenawolffer.net/01obra/37excepcion/excepcion_frames.html. Accessed 7 November 2018.
- [*Evidencias*]
http://www.lorenawolffer.net/01obra/37excepcion/excepcion_frames.html. Accessed 10 October 2018.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Alvarez, Sonia E. *Women's Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship*. Rutgers University Press, 2010.
- Bajaras, Joshua. "This artist's red shoes stand in for all the women lost to violence." *PBS News Hour*, 10 Mar 2020. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/this-artists-red-shoes-stand-in-for-all-the-women-lost-to-violence>
- Bial, Henry and Sara Brady, editors. *The Performance Studies Reader*. Routledge: New York, 2016.
- Boal, Augusto. Trans. Charles A, and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group: New York, 1985.
- Butler, Judith. *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2015.
- Camacho, Alicia Schmidt. "Ciudadana X: Gender Violence and the Denationalization of Women's Rights in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico." *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2005, pp. 255–92.
- Campbell, Howard. "Narco-Propaganda in the Mexican 'Drug War': An Anthropological Perspective." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2014, pp. 60–77. JSTOR.
- Cardenas, Sonia. *Human Rights in Latin America: A Politics of Terror and Hope*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Carlson, Marvin. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. Second edition, Routledge, 2003.
- Cmdpdh-Feminicidio-e-Impunidad-En-Mexico-Un-Contexto-de-Violencia-Estructural-y-Generalizada.Pdf*. <http://cmdpdh.org/publicaciones-pdf/cmdpdh-feminicidio-e-impunidad-en-mexico-un-contexto-de-violencia-estructural-y-generalizada.pdf>. Accessed 29 Apr. 2019.
- de Paula, Dandara Oliveira. "Human Rights and Violence Against Women: Campo Algodonero Case." *Estudos Feministas*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2018, pp. 1–9. JSTOR.
- Diagnostico-Sobre-Los-Refugios-En-Mexico-Fundar.Pdf*. <http://red-nacionalderefugios.org.mx/pdf/Diagnostico-sobre-los-refugios-en-mexico-fundar.pdf>. Accessed 21 Feb. 2019.
- Duncan, Nancy, editor. *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. Routledge, 1996.
- Eisenhammer, Stephen. "Bare Life in Ciudad Juárez: Violence in a Space of Exclusion." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2014, pp. 99–109. JSTOR.
- "En 25 años van 1,775 feminicidios en Ciudad Juárez." *El Heraldo de México*, 15 Feb. 2018, <https://heraldodemexico.com.mx/estados/en-25-anos-van-1775-feminicidios-en-ciudad-juarez/>.

- Fletcher, Laurel E., et al. "Context, Timing and the Dynamics of Transitional Justice: A Historical Perspective." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2009, pp. 163–220. JSTOR.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda, "For the Women of Ciudad Juárez." *The Feminist Wire*, 3 Dec. 2012, <https://thefeministwire.com/2012/12/for-the-women-of-ciudad-juarez/>. Accessed November 2018.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda, and Cynthia L. Bejarano, editors. *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas*. Duke University Press, 2010.
- Fuentes, Marcela. *Performance Constellations: Networks of Protest and Activism in Latin America*. University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 2019.
- Gilbert, Pablo. *Human Dignity and Human Rights*. First edition, Oxford University Press, 2018.
- González de la Rocha, Mercedes. *The Resources of Poverty: Women and Survival in a Mexican City*. Blackwell, 1994.
- Harris, Richard J., et al. "The Interaction of Country of Origin, Acculturation, and Gender Role Ideology on Wife Abuse." *Social Science Quarterly*, vol. 86, no. 2, 2005, pp. 463–83. JSTOR.
- Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Paperback edition, Verso, 2013.
- Hernández, Alfredo Limas. "(In)Seguridad Humana, Violencia Femicida, Democracia y Capital: Del Desarrollo y La Democracia Frente a La Violación de Los Derechos de Las Mujeres y Niñas Juárez, México, 2008–2013." *Regiones e Cohesión / Regiones y Cohesión / Régions et Cohésion*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2014, pp. 75–89. JSTOR.
- Justia México: Constitución Política de Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos > TÍTULO PRIMERO > CAPÍTULO I :: Ley de México*. <https://mexico.justia.com/federales/constitucion-politica-de-los-estados-unidos-mexicanos/titulo-primero/capitulo-i/#articulo-29>. Accessed 7 February 2019.
- Lambright, Anne, and Elisabeth Guerrero. *Unfolding the City: Women Write the City in Latin America*. University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia*. http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LGAMVLV_130418.pdf. Accessed 7 January 2018.
- Livingston, Jessica. "Murder in Juárez: Gender, Sexual Violence, and the Global Assembly Line." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2004, pp. 59–76.
- Maier, Elizabeth, and Nathalie Lebon, editors. *Women's Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship*. Rutgers University Press; El Colegio de la Frontera Norte A.C, 2010.
- Marino, Katherine M. *Feminism for the Americas: The Making of an International Human Rights Movement*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2019.
- Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place, and Gender*. University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- Morris, Barbara. "Profiles: Elina Chauvet." *Artillery*. 29 April 2013. <https://www.artillerymag.com/elina-chauvet/>

- Phelan, Peggy. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. Routledge, 1993.
- Russell, Diana E. H., and Roberta A. Harmes, editors. *Femicide in Global Perspective*. Teachers College Press, 2001.
- Saccomano, Celeste. "El Femicidio En América Latina: ¿vacío Legal o Déficit Del Estado de Derecho? / Femicide in Latin America: Legal Vacuum or Deficit in the Rule of Law?" *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, no. 117, 2017, pp. 51–78. JSTOR.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Skaar, Elin, et al., editors. *Transitional Justice in Latin America: The Uneven Road from Impunity towards Accountability*. Routledge, 2016.
- Suárez, Karina. "México alcanza un récord histórico en femicidio contra menores en 2018." *El País*, 8 Mar. 2019. *elpais.com*, https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/03/05/mexico/1551807618_628300.html.
- Taylor, Diana. *Performance*. Duke University Press, 2016.
- Toledo, Cecilia. "Retos y aportaciones de la Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia." *Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación*, 15 Aug. 2016, <https://fundar.org.mx/retos-y-aportaciones-de-la-ley-general-de-acceso-de-las-mujeres-a-una-vida-libre-de-violencia/>.
- Unfolding the City: Women Write the City in Latin America*. NED-New edition, University of Minnesota Press, 2007. JSTOR, *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctts90n>.
- Wark, Jayne. *Radical Gestures: Feminism and Performance Art in North America*. McGill; Queen's University Press: London, 2006.
- Wolffer, L. Interviews with author of article through Skype. December 2018.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike International 4.0 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>; or, (b) send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 2nd Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA