



HEALING A BROKEN WORLD

THE POWER OF ART
FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA

THIS PUBLICATION COLLECTS AND DEEPENS THE THOUGHTS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS, AND SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED PERFORMANCES FOR THE VIRTUAL SUMMIT *HEALING A BROKEN WORLD* PRESENTED BY THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK IN APRIL 2021.

This publication gathers texts and essays written during 2021.

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ABOUT THE IDB

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is devoted to improving lives. Established in 1959, the IDB is a leading source of long-term financing for economic, social and institutional development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB also conducts cutting-edge research and provides policy advice, technical assistance and training to public and private sector clients throughout the region.

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SUMMARY

The pandemic has accentuated the health, economic, and social crises that many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean now face. Our communities in cities and rural areas must find ways to heal and to regroup as they set out to become the productive homes of citizens, workers, and neighbors. Art and culture have always contributed to envisioning human possibility, encouraging collective imagination, and creating pathways for change that touch every aspect of our societies, from the economic to the spiritual and from the social to the technological.

In light of the situation and the challenges and opportunities now in front of us, the Inter-American Development Bank convened a special Summit, in April 2021, that brought together cultural leaders, artists and IDB experts, to provoke and inspire useful ways to address the concerns of the post-pandemic era. This publication collects and deepens the thoughts, panel discussions, and specially commissioned performances for said virtual Summit, called *Healing a Broken World*.

Both the Summit and this publication are part of the IDB's commitment to be at the forefront of efforts to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. Vision 2025, the IDB's blueprint to spur recovery focuses on five areas of opportunity: regional integration, digitalization, support for small and medium enterprises, gender and diversity, and climate-change action. The IDB works to generate solutions that will allow our member countries to regain health and reignite economic growth in the wake of this historic crisis. Our region has suffered 1/3 of the global deaths while only accounting for roughly 8% of world's population. At the same time, 44 million people have fallen into poverty in 2020—bringing the total to 31% of the Region's population and threatening the future of an entire generation. *Healing a Broken World* is a reflection on these issues and how art and culture can provide a space for healing, coming together, collaborating, and developing solutions.

KEYWORDS

#ART

#CULTURE

#SOCIAL

TRANSFORMATION

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INDUSTRIES

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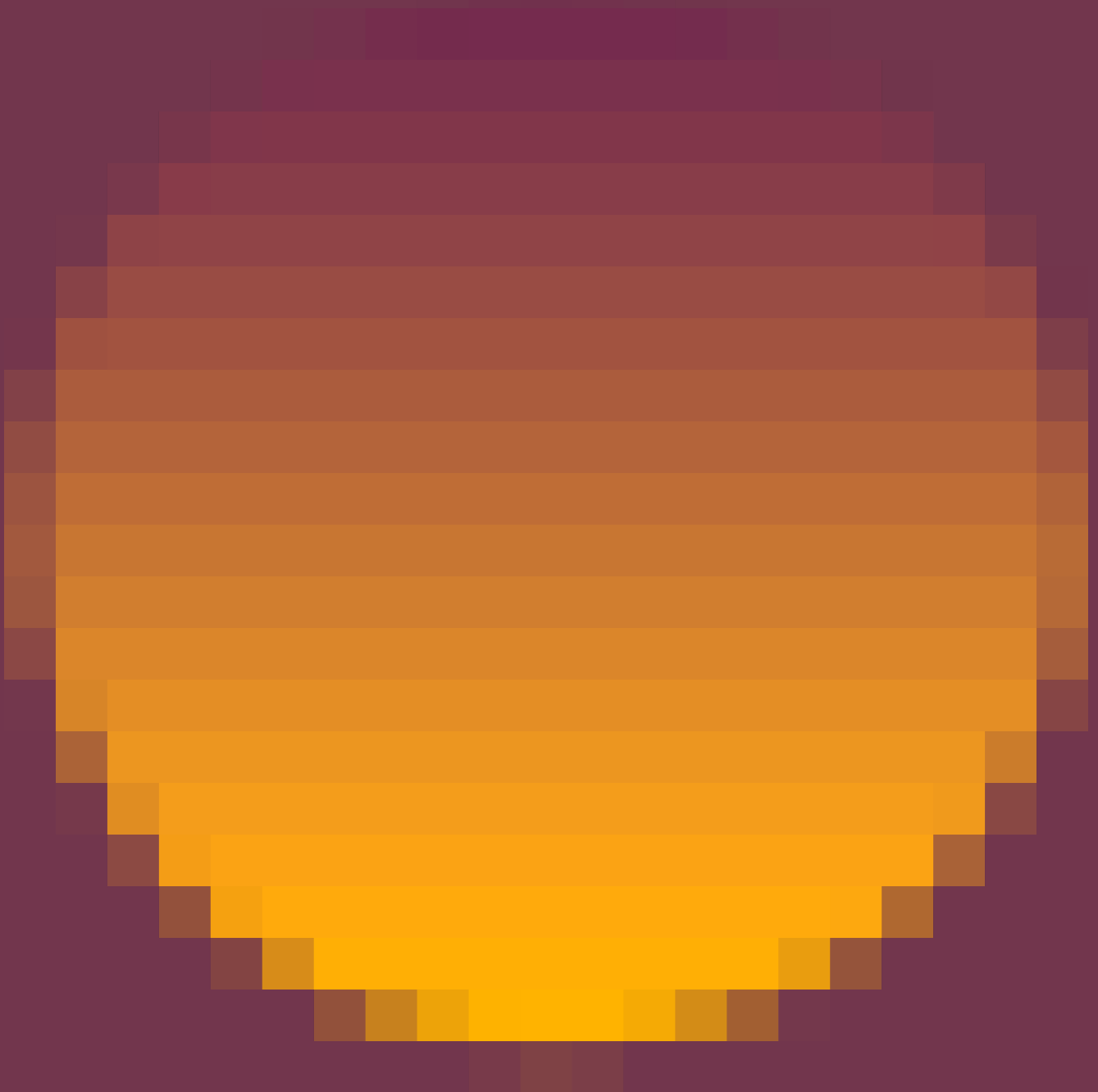
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INTRODUCTION: A MOMENT OF RADICAL RECKONING



By the time the Inter-American Development Bank convened *Healing a Broken World* in April of 2021, people everywhere had lived through multiple stages of shock, grief, and adaptation to the catastrophe unleashed by COVID-19.

As second and third waves of the pandemic swept different parts of the world, and as its crippling economic consequences came into sharper focus, it became obvious that this crisis was unlike anything humanity had faced since the Second World War.

For the authors of the essays gathered in this collection, this awareness prompted a deeper type of soul-searching. The catchphrases that had dominated public discourse during the previous year—from “flattening the curve” and “return to nature” to “the new normal”—had become empty clichés. The very idea of healing and recovery now demanded a more rigorous scrutiny. What aspects of the pre-pandemic world do we really want to restore? Whose ideas about the future should be prioritized in recovery plans? Given widespread ambivalence about prevailing economic and political models, shouldn't we use this moment to examine our fundamental assumptions about progress, equality, and sustainability? These are some of the questions that animate this rich collection of reflections, which grew out of the presentations and discussions that took place during the virtual event on April 22 and 23.

Although they offer divergent visions, the authors coincide in developing several broad themes. One is an abiding concern with the fragility and precariousness that were exposed by the pandemic. This goes beyond the omnipresent tragedy of lives lost, schools closed, careers ended, and projects indefinitely postponed. **Ernesto Ottone R., UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture, highlights the particular difficulties faced by artists and creative professionals who saw their modest incomes plummet, partly because of the insufficiency of public unemployment benefits, but also because of the absence of equitable payment models for work distributed on digital platforms.** While celebrating the democratizing aspects of technology and the explosion of

virtual collaboration during the pandemic, several authors remind us that millions of our fellow citizens still lack basic access to digital platforms and the skills necessary to navigate these virtual spaces. Amanda de la Garza, for example, points out that the pandemic has “highlighted deep inequalities and limitations which are reflected in the digital divide.” **Moreover, while the virtual realm has undoubtedly expanded access to cultural institutions for some people during these months, several authors wonder if an overreliance on digital experiences will ultimately harm our ability to both to experience art and forge a collective sense of purpose and meaning.** More fundamentally, several contributors point to the collapse of public faith in capitalism, in traditional partisan politics, and in the laws and institutions that are meant to uphold human values and protect natural resources in the face of climate change and reckless consumption. For María Belén Sáez de Ibarra, for example, this collapse demands nothing less than a “new social contract” that will guarantee an ethical balance between the needs and aspirations of homo sapiens and those of all other living species.

“WHAT ASPECTS OF THE PRE-PANDEMIC WORLD DO WE REALLY WANT TO RESTORE?”

Despite this sober reading of our current predicament, the authors share an enduring optimism about the potential for healing and renewal, and about the role that artists and culture can have as agents of transformation in this context. **Gustavo Dudamel's conviction that “communities in the creative ecosystem have the capacity to find solutions and paths to renovation... at the intersection of culture and social urgency” is echoed, in various ways, by all the contributors.** Charles Landry argues that since the arts “speak the language of the senses

and feelings,” they have a capacity to persuade and foster change that purely rational and scientific thinking does not. Steven Henry Madoff reminds us that artists are in the business of offering “irritating and instructive provocations” that enable “remapping of the accepted and the acceptable.” And Amanda de la Garza makes the case for cultural institutions as spaces for “active listening,” where all segments of society can meet not only to critique the past, but also to articulate and define a better future.

Although every contributor agrees on the need for an unsparing examination of the status quo and an embrace of new social, economic, and environmental models, not all are convinced that artists and the world of culture can lead this effort. Luis Camnitzer warns against romanticizing the role of artists in a crisis, as if they can perform superhuman acts of “emergency rescue” far beyond the capability of ordinary citizens. “The real hope is not to be found in art,” he maintains, “but rather in general education” that will enable *all* citizens to “question, evaluate and reconfigure.” Similarly, Ana María Millán asserts that “art solves nothing, but it exposes things that need solving and is capable of prompting processes that emerge from people themselves.”

In their warnings, both Camnitzer and Millán bring us back to the question of why a development institution like the IDB would seek the input of artists and creators in the first place. Development is, by definition, a slow, incremental, long-term process. **The IDB’s technical specialists know that lasting change almost never happens because of a sophisticated technical proposal, an impeccable design or even a low-interest loan. It happens because local people infuse an initiative with their personal hopes and visions, with unexpected, idiosyncratic suggestions for improvement, and with something than can only be described as “pride of ownership.” These intangible assets come from the world of culture and creativity.** They engage what Landry calls “senses and feelings.” And they are crucial to ensuring that abstract development plans can actually take root on the ground, improving lives in what Carolina Huffmann and her collaborators describe as the quotidian world of people’s daily lived experience.

As he stated in his welcoming remarks to *Healing a Broken World*, IDB President Mauricio Claver-Carone believes that to implement its institutional mission—and to ensure that the region recovers robustly and sustainably—the Bank must harness the capabilities and influence of the region’s artists and its cultural institutions. **In March, at the IDB’s annual meeting in Barranquilla, Colombia, the Bank’s board of governors expressed broad approval for Vision 2025, an agenda to advance the recovery by ramping up investment in integration and supply chains, digitalization, gender equality, small and midsize businesses and climate change.** To succeed in each of these areas, the Bank will need to the buy-in of ordinary people, along with their talent, tenacity, and imagination.

As the essays in this collection persuasively argue, artists and cultural institutions will be critical allies in bridging the gap between the technical and the quotidian, and, by extension, in getting the job done.

**“THE AUTHORS
SHARE AN
ENDURING
OPTIMISM ABOUT
THE POTENTIAL
FOR HEALING
AND RENEWAL”**

FOREWORD: ON THE WAY

Co-curator **Steven Henry Madoff**

Chair of the Masters in Curatorial Practice program,
School of Visual Arts (United States)



The title *Healing a Broken World* was originally slightly more prescriptive when I first conceived the idea, two years ago, of creating a summit that addressed the state of the world. The pandemic had not yet arrived, yet the crises of inequity, racism, and authoritarianism were increasingly filling the news cycle around the world. The pandemic only increased the sense of urgency. I thought of the title *How to Heal a Broken World*, with the notion that it might be of use to bring highly experienced and thoughtful experts together—artists, institution directors, curators, architects, thinkers about urban and rural development—to consider current conditions toward future possibilities of repair. It is hardly a new idea to say that episodes of trauma, when things break down, do not only scar us. They also give us a chance to reconceive broken things, to look afresh when things are in disarray and find rearrangements, improvements, new concepts of organization and production.

So it was, when I happened to speak with Manuela Reyes, curator at the Inter-American Development Bank, that I mentioned this idea and she graciously offered to co-curate this project with me. **And though the title became more general and perhaps a touch more grand, the remit for the Summit remained essentially concentric with this ambition to present examples within the Latin American and Caribbean community of exemplary institutional and artistic practices that expand local, national, and broadly humanistic enterprises, engaging and lifting communities, offering solace, hope, and inspiration.**

No doubt, this would appear to be utopian, even blinkered and naïve, in the face of systemic problems in a real world of infrastructural challenges, of laws, budgets, politics, prejudices, engrained procedures, and governmental, communal, and personal habits. **But of course, it is also the habit of artists and visionary cultural leaders to unseat presumptions about how to live, who to live with, the ways in which we negotiate with each other, and the ways that we would choose to be instead of the ways in which we find ourselves under current conditions.**

In fact, while my imagining of this Summit was of cultural figures speaking to others of similar cultural interests, it was the more ambitious idea of Manuela Reyes and Trinidad Zaldivar, who leads the Creativity and Culture Unit at IDB, to place cultural figures in the context of government and policy leaders so that pathways of governmental cooperation toward actual change could be entered into through meaningful discussions with real examples of cultural work done and practical propositions offered. Xavier Ruiz of the IDB worked with us to produce the Summit and engage artists and thinkers across the region.

“WHAT CAN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS DO AS LEADERS AND VISIONARIES TO HEAL AND TRANSFORM SOCIETY?”

To this end, the questions we asked the directors of several major museums in the region are indicative of this approach. For example, we queried: “What specific steps can a cultural institution take to rethink society now, including issues that are usually taken up by policy makers such as economic and social conditions, the ways in which people interact and live together, which in turn concerns issues of equitability in education, employment, and housing? What can cultural institutions do as leaders and visionaries to heal and transform society? And, in practical terms, what you have done, are doing, and plan to do?”

We also turned to renowned creative thinkers about our cities and countryside with this prompt: “When we think about cities and rural areas, everyone agrees that the pandemic has only deepened systemic crises that have long existed. These are deep crises of social inequities exacerbated by the trend of economic disparity that directly impacts the ways societies are organized and what is available to different populations within them. As well, we are all thinking about environmental issues that directly impact the redevelopment of our cities and the future of rural economies, populations, transportation, and a great deal more. Can you speak about what you consider a primary focus for you as we move through and out of the pandemic, focusing on a single issue and how it should be dealt with toward improved urban and/or rural futures in your country or in the region? The more specific you can be, the better.”

Charles Landry, for instance, has written in the past about “rethinking regulations and incentives for the 21st century, reshaping the inner life of the bureaucracy, and creating trust via new links to the civic and business world.” No doubt, even with specificity, the intention to address and reform regulatory processes and bureaucratic strongholds of legislation is perhaps a stratospheric goal. But, of course, precisely this kind of sky-high ambition is an invitation to mix practical empirical rationalism with the opportunities provided by mischief. **Mischief is one component in the arsenal of artistic practices; the undoing of the regulatory, the remapping of the accepted and the acceptable, the pretzel logic implicit in the what if of the ordinary as it is inverted and remade through the eyes of extraordinary creative minds.**

And those minds—certainly those of the artists we were fortunate enough to have share their ideas with us during the Summit and in the expanded thinking presented in this publication—are by nature critically engaged, whether scathingly or more mercifully. To say that when things become broken down, they are also opened up is to say that the critically incisive investigations and propositions of

artists, curators, and sometimes of institution directors are valuably irritating and instructive provocations. Sometimes they entirely throw aside the given order of the world; sometimes they take what is given and insert creative levers that bend that order so that the joints are freed, made flexible by the imagination for change. **We spoke in the Summit of artists as “first-responders,” as those who see crises and respond often with early and visionary restatements of the dire urgency of the situation and what might be done, what could be done, what should be done. There is no one way of seeing or proposing. Artistic works can be investigatory, documentary, grounded in fact or, conversely, madly, wildly outside the normative scope of fact.**

The Summit offered two versions of this artistic propositional intelligence: First, in the panel discussion with prominent artists from the region, in which the notion of first-response led to individual critiques and suggestions. They answered such broad prompts as this: “How and what do we *unlegislate* toward a revised form of social legislation? How can we act as cultural agents for the greater agency of our social being?” But also, to more specific considerations: “If you think about the state of education in your country and the way that it could be organized to more fully include artistic thinking, how can we think about *making* as a way of social *doing*?” There were scathing but rigorous answers in direct reply to notions of economic policy, educational reform, and technological scarcity.

The second version of artistic propositions came in the form of five commissioned artistic works that addressed the metaphorical theme of healing Manuela Reyes laid out. These commissions did indeed range from the documentary to the dreamlike, holding up mirrors to their societies, lucidly illuminating the harsh outlines of legislative inadequacy and failed social care that have become all the more obvious and ruinous during the pandemic: a time in which domestic violence toward women and the lack of proper schooling for children have brought even more scabrous impoverishment than before. Along with these factually inclined

artworks were others that were slightly more unmoored from the daily intractability of social dilemmas. These works were invested in the pure levitation of our spirits as animals among other species inhabiting a more hallucinatory world of alternative experiences of life, and that could, in return, reflect back on our heavier existences and lift them into gratitude and joy.

At the base of such expressions is the short string of existential questions made famous as the title of a painting by Paul Gauguin from 1897-1898: *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* **If the existential aspect of this echoing inquiry invokes a sense of vast generality, the societal call of these questions is one of a more pressing inquiry into the way we can live together going forward, provoked not only by the catastrophes of the pandemic but by all of the collateral failures brought into piercing focus by it.**

To ask where we come from is in essence to interrogate human nature as it has led to our contemporary situation in sight of the way our governments have organized societies even with, let us say for the moment, the best of intentions. Or more realistically, we can say that the systemic problems now calling to us for repair and improvement are the results of mixed agendas, mixed efficacy, and certainly a state of change calling to many of us to answer that question, "Where Are We Going?", if only to propose that artists and cultural institutions generally seek to accumulate a liberal flow of ideas full of curiosity, contestation, and openness in the name of the better angel of our being. These salutary cultural voices, whether reasonable and insightful or eccentric and insightful, inevitably contribute as intruders of the status quo.

The Summit's goal of shifting the plane of discussion from mere speculation to the transactional, joining culture and government policy at the same table of mutual intention, is laudable and rare. There have been few cultural figures in recent history who have stepped across that border from artistic work to the practice of politics and policy. Václav Havel comes to mind, as do Carlos Fuentes, Mario

Vargas Llosa, and Octavio Paz. But the number of artist-activists is far greater. The power of their intelligence and articulateness infiltrates all societal conversations about what we are and what we can be.

This Summit was indeed about *how* to heal the broken world. This Summit, sponsored by IDB, whose currency is currencies, whose influence on policy and development is immense, dangles the tantalizing possibility that the currency of cultural institutional thinking and even anti-institutional artistic thinking offer approaches to problem-solving that can be creatively adapted and implemented for our social betterment. **We know what needs to be done. Can and will policy-makers take advantage of the deep wealth of cultural thinking everywhere available to them?** *Healing a Broken World* offered the simplest and most challenging answer: Yes.

**“CULTURAL
INSTITUTIONAL
THINKING AND
EVEN ANTI-
INSTITUTIONAL
ARTISTIC
THINKING OFFER
APPROACHES
TO PROBLEM-
SOLVING”**

WORKING TO PLACE ARTISTS AND CULTURE PROFESSIONALS AT THE CENTER OF THE RECOVERY PROCESS

Ernesto Ottone R.

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It is a great pleasure to be part of this publication, stemming from the Summit *Healing a Broken World*, organized by the Inter-American Development Bank in April 2021, where we had the opportunity to reflect together on the challenges posed by COVID-19 to the cultural sector. It has been more than a year since the pandemic transformed our lives radically, and strongly affected our sector. That is why I would like to remember that, from the beginning, while sanitary professionals and essential health workers worked to save lives, artists have also been on the frontline. **In a moment when millions of people around the world were physically separated from one another, artists made us feel connected. They comforted and inspired us, and gave us hope in the face of great anxiety and uncertainty. They helped us keep the “us” alive, even if it was in virtuality.** But we must also admit that artists were badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The closing of cultural institutions and the cancellation of live performances implied, for many of them, losing their means of subsistence. Besides, given the atypical and frequently informal nature of labor in the creative and cultural sector, many do not have access to social protection systems, such as unemployment insurance or medical coverage.

**“64% OF
INDEPENDENT
WORKERS
SAW THEIR
INCOME FALL
BY MORE
THAN 80%”**

Together with IDB, SEGIB, OEI, and MERCOSUR, we conducted a survey of over 6,000 artists and cultural professionals in Latin America and the Caribbean, which revealed that approximately 64% of independent workers saw their income fall by more than 80%. That is why today, more

than ever, we know that artists play an important role in societies' life and evolution and that they should therefore have the opportunity to contribute to their development and to exercise their responsibilities under the same conditions as every other citizen, while preserving their creative inspiration and, of course, their freedom of speech.

It is worth recalling the provisions of UNESCO's 1980 recommendation concerning the status of the artist, and urging the region's governments to create and maintain the material conditions that facilitate the flourishing of this creative talent by supporting policies and measures that enable them to work, create and organize themselves in a conducive and decent environment. At UNESCO, we are working to make this situation visible, and to ensure that the voice of artists is taken into account in political decisions to respond to and recover from the crisis. Among many other actions, we launched the ResiliArt movement, which has already brought together more than 1,500 cultural professionals from around the world to share their stories, express their concerns and propose more than 100 recommendations to strengthen the cultural and creative sectors, listening to them and analyzing in-depth the various emergency measures that have been designed and implemented around the world.

In October 2020, UNESCO published *Culture in Crisis*, a guide that provides an overview of the responses developed around the world to address the impact of COVID-19 on culture. We have noticed that States have centered their efforts in a variety of approaches such as direct support, compensation for artists and cultural professionals, the commissioning and purchase of artwork, skills development, and tax breaks and incentives, among many other examples. However, although many countries have taken important steps to support the cultural and creative sector, the temptation to exclude culture from recovery plans and strategies persists. This is why UNESCO is calling for the full integration of culture into national post-COVID recovery plans, through policies and measures targeting the cultural and creative sectors that will catalyze the systemic change we need in the long term.

As a result of COVID-19, we have also witnessed a massive migration of cultural content online. Although thanks to this transformation, culture has become more accessible, artists and creators are the last to benefit from the consumption of digital cultural content. Moreover, the increasing concentration of cultural content in a handful of digital platforms threatens to weaken the diversity of cultural expressions. In this regard, it is necessary to advocate for fair remuneration of artists, and for the distribution and commercial exploitation of their works. UNESCO is inviting streaming platforms to review compensation mechanisms, which in many cases have become the only source of income for these creative artists, and to join the global debate on the future of creative employment and its monetization.

In the 2021 International Year of the Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, we must protect the role of artists in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage and identity of our societies, as well as ensure that the cultural and creative industries benefit from technological change. Only through the recognition that the vigor and vitality of culture also depend on the well-being of artists as individuals and collectives can we work to heal our broken world and build, of course, a better one.

**“UNESCO IS
CALLING FOR
THE FULL
INTEGRATION
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NATIONAL
POST-COVID
RECOVERY
PLANS”**

PART I. THE POWER OF OUR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

AS ENGINES FOR REIMAGINING COMMUNITY, CREATIVITY, AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN OUR POST- PANDEMIC FUTURE

In our post-pandemic world, the impact of the virus continues. It has changed the ways we work, live, and interact with one another. And it has amplified many urgent concerns, such as food security, job security and the future of work, racial and economic equity, and the conditions of life in our cities and rural areas. Artists have always been first-responders to imagining emancipatory changes to our societies. In our efforts to tackle the societal problems that challenge us today, it makes sense to reach out to the creative industries, to artists and cultural institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean, to learn about their unique approaches to these problems. They are uniquely capable of inspiring innovative thinking about leading our communities toward greater cooperative social engagement and inclusive economic and cultural growth now and in the years ahead.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD? THE MUSEUM AS PUBLIC ARENA

Amanda de la Garza

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On March 23, 2020, the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) closed its doors due to the pandemic. After fifteen months of closure, we reopened on June 12, 2021. The questions we asked ourselves at that time are still valid: What to do? How to move forward? How to produce relevant content in the midst of a crisis? What is our role in the face of the health crisis and its social consequences? These simple questions imply a broader reflection on the museum as present and future. However, they have taken different forms throughout the pandemic. As in most museums around the world, efforts initially focused on moving all programming and operation into the digital realm. In that moment, the central questions were: how do we remain a museum without a physical space? What are the implications for our mission? And, how do we transform our relationship with the public?

These extraordinary circumstances, shared globally, have two scopes. The first is tactical—the survival of museums and their contribution in the confusing and uncertain present. The second is strategic and revolves around the question of how this experience will transform, and is transforming, our vocation.

The question about the contemporary definition of a museum is not new; this question has been present in the public discussion for at least a decade. **It is not just a matter of thinking about the historical debts that museums, as modern institutions, have in terms of equity and racial and gender justice, both within our teams and in programming—those who criticize museums are part of a broader conversation that encompasses the processes of decolonization and depatriarchalization of both institutions and public life. For museums, this implies thinking about our role in society, in the current context as well as in history.** Are we capable of digging into our history, shaking our foundations, and consequently, acting to make inequalities visible, to correct and redirect our programming and art collections policies?

In the case of the MUAC, the first schism we faced was the migration to a digital platform. We generated stable digital programming that sought to offer specific content to the museum's different audiences—new, remote, loyal, unknown—under different topics. These contents were extended to a very wide range of activities, including creative tutorials for children, interactive dynamics, podcasts that sought to dialogue with different cultural agents about the current moment and its effects, editorial recommendations, reviews of the museum's exhibition archive, a virtual room for the temporary exhibition of videos by artists from different origins and exhibition projects designed for the virtual

world. Our website and social networks have never been more alive. This was complemented with a rich academic arm with specialized distance learning courses and two international virtual meetings. The first, called “Digital Museum. Citizenship and Culture,” reflected on the relationship between digital cultural initiatives and citizenship processes, and the second, “Constellations. Contemporary Indigenous Art from the Americas,” focused on discussing the notion of contemporary indigenous art.

The museum’s digital programming posed significant challenges. One consisted of having the capacity to sustain digital programming in terms of production and validity. By this I mean the artistic or production quality of the content, as well as the challenge of understanding which issues were important to discuss within the context of the pandemic.

The proposal to “be relevant” as an institutional responsibility originates from the commitment to understanding cultural institutions as part of the social world and not as inaccessible “cathedrals,” while managing to articulate the ways in which they can contribute and be part of the public arena. Certainly, this implies a non-autarchic conception of museums and simultaneously requires “attentive listening.” In other words, it is necessary to know how to read and take the temperature of a given social sensitivity in a given context.

An example of this is the artistic project *La arena fuera del reloj. Memorial a las víctimas de COVID-19*, which the museum commissioned from artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer. This entirely digital work sought to honor the victims, while at the same time producing a space for reflection at the cruelest moment of the pandemic. Its vehicle is an interactive platform nourished by sand silhouettes, drawn by a robot, of portraits made from the photographs of the mourners of the people who sent them. This project was launched in November 2020 as a museum initiative that sought to make room for mourning and memory at a time when funerals were not allowed and health restrictions prevented people from saying goodbye to their loved ones.

The notion of “attentive listening” can be understood in terms of the jargon of network analysis, the so-called social listening. However, museums are not only a commercial brand or exclusively content producers. In this new digital dimension, we require the development of skills to inhabit the delocalized territory of the web, which is complex in its flow of consumption and information and specific in its platforms. In this sense, by “attentive listening” I mean the ability of an organization to understand its place and role in a given context, not only at a local level, but also in the articulation of a conversation that is part of international networks and different communities of interest.

This forced migration to the digital world produced many changes at various levels. **It taught us, in a very open way, the imperative need to develop tools to be able to interact with virtual communities and to produce content that is made for different modes of circulation and interaction.** However, digital audiences, unlike face-to-face audiences, are still being constituted as such, to the extent that in the past, the digital programming of museums was extremely limited. Their condition as audiences has developed under peculiar and extreme conditions, such as confinement, social distancing, working from home offices, home schooling, and the impossibility of seeing each other and converging in private and public spaces. In this sense, museums still have much work to do in terms of understanding who these new audiences are, how they differ, and how they connect with the in-person public. At the same time, in this digital maelstrom, we must also think critically about the consequences of digital production for audiences, artistic communities, and the cultural ecosystem as a whole, in artistic, institutional, and economic terms. **Thus, museums should promote good practices in digital programming that do not intensify the precariousness of the communities with which they work, such as museum educators, artists, and/or academics.**

In addition to the tactical strategies employed, a second, and perhaps less visible aspect is the way in which digital programming destabilized internal working dynamics. In the case of the MUAC, the traditional organization chart was not flexible enough to adapt to the type of content demanded by digital production in terms of both language and technical capacity. We were ultimately able to conduct a well-articulated program because the digital program's projects operated transversally, which blurred the boundaries between the areas of communication, curatorship, and public programming. To a large extent, communication ceased to be a mere dissemination arm of the museum's face-to-face activities and instead became its curatorial project. This forced the development of project-based teams consisting of members from different areas, which generated spaces for visibility, creativity, and collaboration. However, this way of working currently has the difficult challenge of managing to operate in an unstable reality—one that is not yet fully hybrid—into which museums have been thrown.

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**ART MUSEUMS
HAVE THE POWER,
IF THEY ARE ABLE TO
MAKE IT EFFECTIVE,
TO PROPOSE
VISIONS OF WHAT
ART CAN BE.”**

**AMANDA
DE LA GARZA**

Another pressing question we asked ourselves when launching digital programming was how it would be possible to fully enter into communicative and production innovation, without losing sight of our vocation and identity as a museum. It is not only about preserving a mission, but also about preserving a museum project that orients, governs, and orders the presential and digital programs. In this sense, the MUAC, as a university museum, has stood out for its critical perspective on art and for establishing transversal dialogues between academia, critical theory, and contemporary art—that is its definition as an institution, and that is what we seek to reflect in everything we do. It is simultaneously a university, public, and contemporary art museum. We conceive of the museum not only as a static exhibition space, but also as an active participant in the formation of audiences and in the discussions that are part of public life. We fully share the notion of a connected and situated museum, capable of dialoguing and understanding its socio-historical context, as well as proactively establishing collaborative relationships with different social actors and communities.

Art museums have the power, if they are able to make it effective, to propose visions of what art can be. At the same time, it is through the works of art, through what they imply in relational terms and their intrinsically open symbolic structure, that discussions and perspectives on social issues can be conveyed. However, a museum is not defined exclusively by its works of art or its curatorial program; it is also a space for social encounters. Audiences coexist in time and space by being in the museum and participating in the exhibitions in a public and collective space. This implies much more than a space for social coexistence, enjoyment, or knowledge—within its boundaries there are exchanges of opinions, attachments, and positions. **In this sense, the museum builds performative, collective, and subjective moments of discussion and debate. It does so, however, within the framework of deep historical and institutional contradictions and not under a framework of full horizontality.**

There is an enormous ambiguity in the jargon of museum and cultural management regarding the term “community.” It is sometimes translated into a notion similar to that of a recurrent public or a public in the process of loyalty, or rather, from the idea that museums make community. **At the MUAC, we work from a perspective in which the museum can be a catalyst for processes that generate long-term connections between subjects with common interests that also form nuclei with collective objectives.** In this sense, the museum’s virtual activity has shown how, under certain projects, it is possible to establish

communities of interest that operate from the virtual and delocalized, but whose activity can be transferred to the face-to-face environment and vice versa. This is precisely the logic from which the *Brillantinas* project, an Instagram account (@Brillantilas_MUAC) dedicated to gender issues from a queer perspective, operates. This space generates and shares content made in collaboration with artists, activists, writers, and illustrators. Its focus is not only on thematic dissemination, but it also seeks to establish networks of work, conversation, and solidarity.

The virtual world has represented a territory to be known and conquered, one that is full of shocks and serious difficulties. It has also made visible deep inequalities and limitations that are reflected in the digital divide. **However, in addition to generating alternatives for access to digital programming, the museum must continue working to contribute to different social objectives**, and therefore, we must insist on territorial work, a key element in a situated and contextual museum. The critique of the museum's colonial past and present alerts us to the way in which we must establish ties with different groups, actors, and communities. **The museum must seek out, steadily and patiently, long-term collaborative and mutually supportive relationships, with the understanding that creating bonds of trust takes time.**

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The MUAC has been seeking to develop various community outreach projects for a number of years. One of the most outstanding is *Tejiendo Santo Domingo*. This is a joint project between the museum and a civil association with a community center located in a popular neighborhood next to the main campus of the UNAM. We could go on at length about this project and about how much the team and the museum have learned in this process, but instead, I will highlight just one aspect—the museum should not be thought of as a beneficent institution, but neither is it a neutral one. We need to look at ourselves in order to work at the community level. Rather than “making community,” the museum can take the path—just as complex as its turn to digital—of negotiating, compromising, and connecting with organized communities. In this way, the museum can become a device, a space for mediation and visibility, and a platform for discussion.

In synthesis, I believe that the MUAC must act from a double perspective, looking inward and looking outward. On the one hand, it is necessary to establish sustained and long-term strategies focused on attracting the public and working with specific communities with the aim of generating more intense ties between the museum, the communities, and the subjects. This pertains to and operates in the

order of micropolitics, whose correlate is also to insist on the territory and the context, whether digital or spatial—that is what looking inward is all about. On the other hand, museums like the MUAC must necessarily be understood as global. This definition is directly related to their vocation, because contemporary art can only be thought of in a global horizon, of a shared language, and of the networks that are woven into the international art circuit. **At the same time, looking outward means to bear in mind that we are part of a geopolitics with common problems, that we are capable of identifying with and thinking of other people, near or far. Thinking of the museum as a political entity necessarily starts from conceiving of it as a catalyst, a central space in cultural production. The double linkage, both local and global, allows us to articulate a museum that is discursively active, present, and critical—that is the work at hand.**

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Museums have to reflect on their role in society and ways of contributing to the public arena.

Museums have the challenge to identify the sectoral issues whose discussion matters today, including the historical debts of museums in terms of equity, racial, and gender justice.

It is of the utmost importance to develop digital skills to produce content and be able to interact with virtual communities.

It is necessary to encourage good practices in digital programming that do not deepen the precariousness of the communities with which they work.

Long-term collaborative and mutually supportive relationships are fundamental for museums.

CRISIS BOOSTS CREATIVITY AT THE MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO DE BUENOS AIRES

Victoria Noorthoorn

Director, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (Argentina)



Today, in a global context marked by pandemics, grief, economic crisis, and labor fragility, among so many other situations, art is a tool for raising human awareness and transforming the world, and the artist is a powerful agent of change, capable of conceiving of and putting into practice the necessary transformations in the most diverse areas of economic and daily life. This is the conviction that governs the actions of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, a public museum founded in 1956 and that reports to the Ministry of Culture of the government of the city of Buenos Aires.

When we closed the museum's doors to the public on March 19, 2020 due to the health emergency caused by COVID-19, behind closed doors we activated an unprecedented force to reinvent ourselves at the speed of light. Quickly, on April 6, 2020, we launched our new digital program, #MuseoModernoEnCasa¹, which would go on to actively engage more than eight million people. **Through this program we set out not to resort to existing content, films, records or documents, but to think of this closure as a real opportunity to commission new content and demonstrate that in the face of an unusual crisis, a museum is a relevant institution for a society.**

We set out to tell the world what this institution does outside of its exhibition program to respond to our diverse audiences, which include the artistic and educational communities, teachers and students at home, families, people of all ages, from zero to 100, and people with conditions such as autism or disability, among others.

We aimed to create an archive of the present that would be a sensitive reflection in the midst of uncertainty in order to seek answers through art.

The situation led us to transform our way of working, and instead of continuing along the usual lines of the curatorial, exhibition, production, publications, education, communications, and events teams, we formed a new interdisciplinary group in which we defined the issues we detected as most relevant in our society as the quarantine progressed. We invited—and financed the commissions with funds we raised from private donors, outside the public budget that was drastically reduced in 2020 due to the pandemic—more than 250 artists, writers, actors, musicians and intellectuals to share their reflections; to conceive of workshops, courses, actions, and debates; to develop artistic content; and to create what we could conceptualize as a new genre of local artistic content that stimulates

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¹ More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/museo-moderno-en-casa/>

more direct communication and generates a higher degree of participation of and interaction with the most diverse audiences. **We seek to respond to the experiences of the new situation. Therefore, confinement, screens, the alteration of time, the environmental crisis, the exacerbation of racism and discrimination, the need for silence, the links between art and health and between art and community were some of the issues around which we developed more than 25 digital-content programs during this time.**²

This necessary creativity was applied to internal systems of work and content, as well as to the financial system provided by the museum. **Therefore, we took on the difficult task of increasing private funding, focusing on the value of culture as a restorative agent and to keeping the art ecosystem active, with the aim of contributing to energizing the financial circuit of which the museum is a part, especially because during seven months of total paralysis of the cultural circuit in Argentina, museums, galleries, theaters, cinemas, and concert halls, among other spaces, ceased to operate.** We managed to ensure that public money secured the jobs of the museum's 130 employees and that private money supported the artistic circuit, redirecting every peso that entered the coffers to the country's artistic community. This was the way we navigated the 2020 quarantine and its belated reopening. We also directed funds both to strengthening the museum's accessibility and to supporting the creation of new works by invited artists for the museum's common spaces and façade as well as for the public space. And then, looking ahead to 2021, we redoubled our bets and requested a budget from the government of the city of Buenos Aires for an amount equivalent to the 2019 pre-pandemic budget with the same objective of sustaining and increasing support for the participation of a greater number of artists from all over the country in the exhibitions and in-person,³ virtual, and public space actions—the three dimensions in which the museum now exists—and to achieve this through a generous selection of artists that would privilege the participation of a growing number of artists dedicated to supporting gender and race equity, freedom of expression, and any cause that tempers and discourages discord and hatred among people. Along these lines, some of the programs we developed were:

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² More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/museo-moderno-en-casa/>

³ Since we opened the museum in October 2020, we have inaugurated the following exhibits: *Nicanor Aráoz: Sueño sólido* (until July 31, 2021); *Elda Cerrato: El día maravilloso de los pueblos* (until October 15, 2021); *Ulises Mazzucca: Gimnasia espiritual* (until July 31, 2021); and *Alberto Greco: ¡Qué grande sos!* (until February 28, 2022).

1. **#SoyRacista?**, a program conceived of in collaboration with the Museo de Antropología of the Universidad Nacional of Córdoba and for which we commissioned a national survey from the consulting firm TresPuntoZero to ask ourselves how racism and xenophobia run through and constitute us in the Argentine context. This is how we asked ourselves in the curatorial text, “how does racism operate, in its multiple forms, here and now, among us and in each one of us? What does it mean in contemporary societies to be indigenous, to be white, to be black, to be a woman, to be trans? How can we recognize ourselves without simplifying the complexity of what we are?”⁴

2. **#ArteYComunidad**, a program that addressed the transformative action of collaboration and art as a tool that brings together, provides answers, and allows the communication and amplification of the needs of specific communities to the rest of society. Through this program, we seek to give visibility to the actions of artists and artists’ collectives in various areas of society (for example, mental health) and in different areas of the city (for example, the management of the *Belleza y Felicidad* collective in Villa Fiorito), and the country (for example, the Yungas residency for artists, whose editions take place every year in a different city of the country, led by the artist Raúl Flores).⁵

3. **#Basta! El arte frente a la crisis climática**, a program within the framework of which the museum’s educational department offered the teacher training program “Rehearsing Other Worlds” to think of artistic-educational experiences that encourage the construction of a sustainable and conscious environmental practice and, for example, the “Ideas to Change the World” workshop that proposed thinking, from a collective conscience, of possible futures starting with a renovation of our daily actions.⁶

4 **#PaísImaginado**, a 23-day program of daily presentations of a different artist from each of Argentina’s 23 provinces. This project entailed research, for which the museum’s curatorial team intensified its contact with the various artistic communities throughout the country.⁷

5. **#Mujeres**, a program focused on giving visibility to the 340 women artists that make up the museum’s heritage by posting 10 works per day for a month in an action that energized the dialogue with numerous Argentine artists and families of artists who participated in the museum’s actions and programs.⁸

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⁴ More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/sobre-racismos/>

⁵ More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/sentido-comun/>

⁶ More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/basta/>

⁷ More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/pais-imaginado/>

⁸ More information available on: <https://museomoderno.org/mujeres/>

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**IT WAS NECESSARY
TO EMBRACE
UNCERTAINTY
AND TO RETHINK
THE “MUSEUM
DEVICE” IN ORDER
TO TAP ITS POWER
FOR HEALING,
REPAIRING,
AND TRANSFORMING
SOCIETY.”**

**VICTORIA
NOORTHOORN**

The transversal development of our Education Department accompanied each of the more than 25 programs generated. We therefore dedicated proposals aimed at the broad diversity and the specific needs of our audiences (families, children, teachers, senior citizens, and people with autism spectrum disorders, among others).

In the area of teacher training, in the midst of the pandemic, we generated virtual meetings with more than 4,000 teachers from all over the country and developed pedagogical material for the different curricula in which art becomes a tool for the construction of knowledge and the incentive for creativity.

In relation to the program of integrated activities for people with autism spectrum disorder, which arises from the understanding that **art offers different ways to approach knowledge processes in general and collaborates in the development of the understanding of the environment**, we proudly mention the Visual Arts Distinction Award granted by the Finnish educational organization HundrED to the project and creation of a series of association cards that helped to encourage speech development, expand vocabulary, strengthen routines, and express feelings through art.

We also deepened the role of children in the projection of their own future through the creation of the first children's council in an Argentine museum. We coordinate biweekly reflection meetings to promote their participation and expression, to rethink the museum space, and to reflect on current issues, all with the aim of generating a space from which public policies can emerge to transform the environment and, in our case, the museum.

On the other hand, the pandemic triggered a series of actions defined within the proximity. First, through the program of actions in the public space called "KM1," the museum deepened its actions in the neighborhood, working in collaboration with artists, merchants, schools, and social organizations operating in the area. Second, we deepened the federal link with the provinces through the recent creation of the Red Argentina de Museos y Espacios de Arte, founded by the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, the Fundación Proa, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires, at the beginning of the pandemic. The synergy generated made it possible to develop a common protocol for the safe operation of museums during the pandemic that was presented to state authorities to generate joint actions that led to the reopening of museum doors and to outlining

a program for future collaboration to strengthen the operation of the country's museums of all disciplines. Third, the museum continued its actions in the international sphere, most recently through its participation in the Executive Committee of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art, from which it promotes the exchange of knowledge, fosters good practices, defends codes and ethics of governance of the world's museums, and collaborates in the development of the topics that govern each of its annual conferences.⁹

We kept in mind at all times that it was necessary to embrace uncertainty and to rethink the “museum device” in order to tap its power for healing, repairing, and transforming society. **Healing because, as the World Health Organization¹⁰ has made explicit, contact with art is beneficial to the physical and mental health of all people, regardless of their age. Reparation because art offers refuge and invites reflection, pause, and distance in the face of a present imbued with death and pain and offers the possibility of re-analyzing history. Transformation because each artist who participates in the museum is an agent of change who can positively influence the functioning of our society and our economy.** For the same reason, art and museums should be valued today more than ever; artists generate alternative designs for life in society, for education, architecture, urban planning, modes of production, circulation, and communication, all of which is only possible thanks to the development of their imaginations, the fundamental engine of human development in all areas of life.

At the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires we are convinced that if artists were finally valued to their full potential and placed in strategic advisory positions for governments and companies, the capacity to repair and save our species and the environment would be monumental, and the possibilities for thinking about the future of life in society, infinite.

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⁹ The CIMAM 2021 Annual Conference took place between the 5th and the 7th of November in Lodz and Gdansk, Poland.

¹⁰ More information available on: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/arts-and-health>

IN BRIEF...

It is necessary to value artists, giving them a relevant role in response planning to urgent situations, in order to improve the potential of governments in terms of prevention and reparation.

Art is a means of awareness, transformation, knowledge, and understanding of the environment.

Artists are agents of change who can positively influence the recovery of our society and our economy.

Art shelters and invites reflection on the present and the past, taking distance and adopting valuable perspectives.

THE *SELVA* COSMOPOLÍTICA PROGRAM OF THE MUSEO DE ARTE, UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA

María Belén Sáez de Ibarra

Director of Cultural Heritage, Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Colombia)



How can we heal a broken world? The question is powerful and essential. Implicit in it is the very possibility of life itself—life is the infinite dynamic of forces that persist in acting interconnectedly. It is a network of connections and assemblages that happen together in ceaseless processes of relating to the environment of a thinking that is always open to being affected in order to respond to a constellation of actors that cannot be anticipated.

A new way of thinking that reconnects with life will lead us to a new social contract with the natural world, which includes a new status of the human social body that is integrated into the assemblages where life incessantly persists in a vast network of intelligences, of cognitive beings, much more than humans, **at the heart of an ethics to think and act affirming life and that includes other ways of knowing and conceiving of and imagining possible worlds in the midst of the humanitarian and environmental crises at the planetary level.**

In the field of geophysical and geopolitical forces, local struggles for territorial rights and the preservation of nature have a global climatic impact and become global struggles for universal rights, and what is at stake is nothing less than the dynamics of the terrestrial system.

Now, as time is running out, we must act quickly and agree upon new terms for a new social contract, “a natural contract,” a contract with life, which we have subjected to violent warfare throughout history. A peace treaty with life that allows for a profound change in our consciousness and a metamorphosis in which humanity reflects the sacred, reflects a time conceived by a semiotic wisdom of life. A time of very long term. As Michel Serres says in his simple and profound

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Those who once lived outdoors under the climate of rain and wind, whose habits formed lasting cultures out of local experiences, the peasants and sailors have long since ceased to have a say, if indeed they ever had one. We are the ones who hold it, administrators, journalists, and scientists, all short-term men with cutting edge specialties who are partly responsible for global climate change for having invented or propagated powerful, effective, beneficial, and harmful means and instruments of intervention, incapable of finding reasonable solutions since we are immersed in the short time of our powers and prisoners in our narrow apartments. If there is a material, technical, and industrial pollution that exposes the climate to conceivable risks in the sense of rain and wind, there is also a second, invisible one that endangers the time that passes and goes by, cultural pollution that we have inflicted on long thoughts, those guardians of the Earth, of men and of things themselves. Without fighting against the second, we will fail in the fight against the first.¹¹

¹¹ SERRES, Michel (2004). *El contrato natural*. Valencia: Pre-Textos, p. 57.

Today, the cultural disconnect with life is evident everywhere. But it was not always so. Precisely as Serres puts it, “Those who lived outdoors under the climate of rain and wind,” the original inhabitants, the indigenous peoples, the peasants all over the planet lived in a world where the land, the climate, the water, the plants, the animals, and the stars had voices, thoughts, knowledge, and will. Listening to all living things was a well-established practice among communities. **Complex communication developed through mutual dialogue in which magical languages emulated the voices of life to respond, recognize, and name them through an imaginary journey through territories—an endless oratory to appease even disastrous forces and curses or invoke the power to heal.**

We tend to think that these forms have atrophied or disappeared, but the ancient voices still resonate in territories around the world. It is not just a human knowledge, but, rather—and more strongly—a knowledge manifested in all living things that speaks to remind us, to teach us and share the long-term thoughts of this wisdom, with its joy and its pain. This is the sense of time that Serres speaks of. Furthermore, these languages of respect and recovery are embodied everywhere in the living world—if only they were heard... They sing in a complex code of consciousness and cognition. A thought, therefore, does not exist as a dichotomy separating humans from the living beings around us, but as a reciprocity, an ecosystem in which we think and know through—and with—all other living entities in an infinite cosmos, a complexity of levels and strata, a chain of diverse forms, beings, and substances, multiple dimensions and parallel times, evil and kind, taking place within a notion of life in transit, endlessly transforming and mutating. This continuum of other intelligence is an agent that modifies and intervenes in our existing materiality as well as in the formless essence of life. Science now recognizes that forests and other ecosystems have consciousnesses that communicate in a network, that they are cognitive and historical entities that function as an “expanded brain.” It is a form of consciousness that occurs in interwoven communication with its environment, which is a whole. The old dichotomy between nature and human, typical of modern times, is in crisis. **We must learn from these original communities and their form of consciousness that is not dichotomous, but rather integrated (and happy) in the joy of infinite existence, which is sacred.** It is a force that perseveres for the love of itself in an infinite substance that is connected by the same essence—the genome itself present in all the beings that compose it.

A CURATORIAL PROGRAM: SELVA COSMOPOLÍTICA

The *Selva Cosmopolítica* program began in 2012 with the exhibition *El Camino Corto*, continued in 2014 with *Selva Cosmopolítica*, in 2016 with *El Origen de la Noche*, and in 2018 with *Conjuro de Ríos*. Our next project, scheduled for 2022, has been in preparation for nearly four years and is the *Forest Mind* exhibition, which brings together Ursula Biemann's recent collaborative projects in the Amazon.

Institutional support is crucial for this mandate to become a reality. Art museums and cultural institutions need to establish transdisciplinary projects with teams for collaborative work in order to convincingly present what has been done to indigenous lands and peoples and to determine the ways in which creative practices can reinvent the world and produce a metamorphosis that is the inverse of the catastrophic one, if that is what we wish to do.

The modern division between hard sciences and technologies on the one hand, and the human sciences (philosophy, history, law, economics, and all the disciplines associated with them) on the other, has largely generated the crisis we are experiencing today. **It is essential to generate transdisciplinary teams that teach us to conceive of the world as a planetary network aware of its historical moment.** A world that also involves all beings as cognitive forces. Uncultured wise men or ignorant cultured ones would never separately reconcile a new ethic of life needed by the historical moment we are going through.

That is why we propose a curatorial program that integrates different knowledges. We are obliged to inscribe the sciences as a whole for a reflection from the perspective of art, a vision of an ecosystemic knowledge like that of our people who live under the open sky.

The program also needs a vision with a scope that goes beyond the immediate work, because it needs to integrate the teams into processes of extended research to formulate works and reflections over the years. Thus, the artists who work with us develop projects that require time. Moreover, their participation is not reduced to a single project or a single work, but rather their work can evolve in processes that continuously add to their understanding and advance in complexity. As the processes unfold, we will be able to have bodies of work that contribute to propose the complexity of these issues. The artists are therefore part of a team; they are not visitors, but become part of an organism, with all the people and associations that they contribute.

Nor can we as curatorial project leaders expect artists to do the work alone. **Our institutions must dedicate long-term funding strategies for the crucial work of conducting the required research and field studies, documenting and establishing archives, underwriting artists' commissions, and mounting these projects of dreams, nightmares, and memories.** None of this will have a lasting impact without long-term partnerships for the ongoing exchange of information, advice, and learning with other institutions and actors involved in ecological policy, natural sciences, environmental studies, human rights, cultural studies, economics, and law, among many others. In other words, an ecology of knowledge whose scope conforms to a cosmopolitical defense in the rootedness and wisdom of communities of living beings in danger of extinction.

As curators working with artists, we must pay greater attention in order to subvert exploitation by governments and corporations by expressing an ethic of care through the intuitive and even dreamlike language of artistic practices that also speak to the rational needs of an endangered planet. As art historian T. J. Demos puts it:

I am convinced that art, given its long history of experimentation, imaginative invention, and radical thinking, can play a fundamental transformative role. In its most ambitious and vast sense, art holds the promise of making real precisely these kinds of creative, philosophical, and perceptual shifts, contributing unprecedented ways of ourselves and our relationship to the world beyond the destructive traditions of the colonization of nature.¹²

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Of course, the results of this artistic and curatorial work must be as diverse as the team that has achieved them. Such results are not only expressed in exhibitions, but in a broad and flexible program that encompasses commissions, publications, projects available online, and even applications that employ games as a medium for cosmopolitical reflections and actions leading to a revision of the planetary vision, toward a radically altered globality. Such a diversity of expressions will engage a diversity of viewers who approach these issues from different perspectives and with different ages (perhaps people who rarely visit museums and cultural institutions) and propel them toward the understanding of the problem and the higher goal of activist participation in the search of its solutions. **Art in itself is not activism or, at least, it is not *solely* activism, although it can approach it; it can push us forward, and this, from the curatorial perspective that I inhabit, is an act of agency in search of life itself and its preservation.**

¹² DEMOS, T. J. (2020). *Descolonizar la naturaleza: Arte contemporáneo y políticas de la ecología*. España: Ediciones Akal, p. 24.

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**A NEW WAY
OF THINKING
THAT RECONNECTS
WITH LIFE
WILL LEAD US
TO A NEW
SOCIAL CONTRACT
WITH THE
NATURAL WORLD.”**

**MARÍA BELÉN
SÁEZ DE IBARRA**

FOREST MIND BY URSULA BIEMANN

Set in the Amazonian forests of Colombia, this video commissioned by the program brings together diverse streams of knowledge about plant intelligence, human-plant relationships, and the role of *seeing* and *observing* in the creation of videos as a vital part of the creation of the world. Drawing on scientific and shamanic perspectives of relating to the world, this new video assumes a biocentric worldview in search of nature's intelligence. With modern science adopting a predominantly mechanistic view of the living world and indigenous peoples experiencing an animate natural territory imbued with a spiritual dimension, these distinct cosmologies were long considered vastly incompatible. But there are links between science and shamanic traditions that have gone unnoticed, no doubt due to the fragmentation of western knowledge. On the question of whether or not nature is endowed with consciousness, a number of new developments in science and among indigenous communities are sending signals of rapprochement. The video navigates and mediates these mental landscapes and places them in the forests of southern Colombia, where both stories have been intertwined for over 200 years.

In accordance with Ursula Biemann's research and reflections, theoretical physicist and futurist Michio Kaku¹³ defines consciousness as the capacity to create a model of oneself in relation to the environment, to other organisms, and to time. Most information processing in humans occurs at the unconscious level; consciousness is only the tip of the iceberg. **All organisms have some kind of unconscious level of information processing, and this capacity in plants turns out to be much higher than expected. Feeling is the first level of consciousness.** Plants can calculate up to 20 different chemical and physical parameters, including humidity, light, temperature, magnetic field, pathogens, heavy metals, electric field, vibration, sonic sensitivity, and gravity. Plants may not have neurons, but their cells use similar signaling systems, so they have the ability to compete and make decisions as complex as those that take place within a brain. Brain neurotransmitters and plant messenger molecules evolved from the same evolutionary precursor. Plants do not need a brain because they are a hyperconnected, decentralized system. They are vast neural networks the size of ecosystems. Plant signals tend to be large and complicated, such as protein or RNA¹⁴ transcripts that can handle large amounts of information and allow great complexity for plant communication.

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¹³ KAKU, Michio. (2014). *El futuro de nuestra mente: El reto científico para entender, mejorar, y fortalecer nuestra mente*. Barcelona: Debate.

¹⁴ Acronym for "ribonucleic acid."

Plants learn, memorize, and maintain information for 40 days (in contrast to insects, which are limited to 48 hours). They have foresight and are able to adapt to particular environmental conditions, taking into account the factor of time. In recent years, a series of scientific publications has revealed the remarkable ability of entire forest ecologies to generate and transmit information in networks for collective response, suggesting complex social organization. All of these amazing cognitive discoveries imply that intelligence and consciousness in nature are real biological phenomena that can be studied in science. However, going a step further and attributing purposes or goals to nature contradicts the central method of science. The understanding of plant-human communication has yet to fully break through the fortified walls of academia. There is speculation about the potential to be found in this intriguing field of plant-human relationship, placing interspecies communication at the center of this project.

DEVENIR UNIVERSIDAD BY URSULA BIEMANN

Initiated by Swiss artist Ursula Biemann and commissioned by the Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, *Devenir Universidad* (2019–2022) is the global art and communication project that accompanies the overall project involving the research, generation of knowledge, design, and production of educational programs that will lead to the university. *Devenir Universidad* is an online platform that brings together the audiovisual materials as well as the cartographic and architectural designs generated by all of the consortium's partners for the development of the educational project. The website that went online in early 2021 is a working tool that creates transparency in the process and will function as a resource center for the future university. To reach indigenous users, it is first and foremost designed to be used through a mobile application. Thanks to the online platform and a networked system of shared learning, students (and indeed the entire community) can enjoy connecting with a larger international community.

One of the main objectives is to collect and reassemble the ancient knowledge and commemorative fragments of a community that has been dispersed by the armed conflict that has ravaged southern Colombia. The transmission of knowledge to the next generation has been interrupted. There is a gap of 30 years or more, and the Inga are at risk of losing their vast knowledge of the local biodiversity. The protection of epistemic diversity is fundamental to the preservation of

millennia. Fifteen years ago, the Inga people initiated an important process of re-articulation, re-connecting to older traditions, retaking their indigenous names, and remembering their cosmology of deep connection with the Earth and the land with all of its species, ecosystems, medicines, spirits, and resources.

Devenir Universidad supports qualitative research by co-producing a series of interviews with the oldest Inga knowledge bearers. Conducted by Inga education team leaders Flora Marcas and Waira Jacanamijoy, who have already initiated the process in audio format in Caquetá, the video interviews will be conducted more systematically throughout the territory while maintaining a site-specific focus. The field research will be prepared and directed by Ursula Biemann and Iván Vargas and accompanied by Swiss-Colombian filmmaker Richard Décaillet with experience in indigenous historical and cultural productions. **Advocating the idea that there are multiple ways of knowing and relating to territories, the videos will constitute a living archive of indigenous voices expressing their historical memories, cultural narratives, and methods of knowledge production in and through the territory, which will be an invaluable visual and sound collection of learning materials.**

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IN BRIEF...

Need for new ways of thinking and relating to the natural world in order to face humanitarian and environmental crises.

Communication and dialogue are fundamental to face challenges, empowering them through the existence of transdisciplinary teams, which should include artists.

We have the opportunity to learn from native communities, for example, non-dichotomous forms of understanding and consciousness.

It is very important to develop a long-term institutional vision, which should exceed the implementation and achievement of the benefits of immediate work.

PART II. WHAT WILL OUR BUILT WORLD BE LIKE?

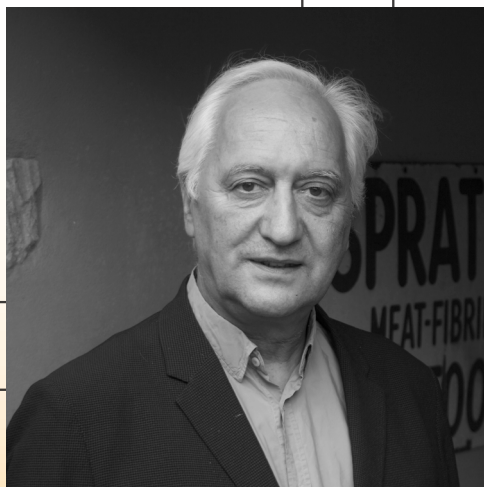
ENVISIONING OUR CITIES AND RURAL AREAS IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

Crucial to our thinking about a future that adapts to our revised ways of working and living in the post-pandemic era are labor and technological infrastructures that simultaneously challenge us and bring opportunities for new ways of working. This infrastructure offers new means of working remotely and increasing automation, along with possibilities for remote learning and retraining for new industries. At the same time, technology requires us to update traditional forms of labor and social interaction. The built environment, transportation, domestic architectural planning, city centers, and exurban living are all areas that require rethinking. What will the future of our cities and rural areas in the Latin American and Caribbean regions look like? What new practices can be leveraged for this future of what can be called “distant nearness”?

YES, THE ARTS CAN HELP HEAL THE WORLD

Charles Landry

Creative City speaker, author, and innovator (United Kingdom)



2020 was a year of radical reckoning. It was a time to think afresh. Crises like the pandemic provoke a dramatic reordering of priorities, as well as deep reflection and rethinking. The pandemic wake-up call triggered a dawning of humility as our collective hubris was humbled and old certainties crumbled. The COVID-19 pandemic creates both clarity and confusion as in the eye of the storm it is difficult to see “where next” and how to get there. There seems to be no blueprint for how to move forward.

Some think of the old normal as our desirable and exotic destination, but older urgencies remain, such as climate collapse and how to calibrate a balance between collaboration and the competition necessary to innovate and avoid atrophy.

COVID-19 focuses us on what really matters: the common good and public interest. It reminds us that “civilization is a thin film of order around the chaos of events.”¹⁵ **Most agree we are in the midst of a systemic crisis and that, given how materially expansive, socially divisive and environmentally hostile our economic order and way of life is, a business-as-usual approach will not work.**

This pandemic created a health, economic, social, and—crucially—psychological crisis. It is on-going and has yet to fully unfold, but it is clear that the psychological crisis will be seared into our deeper consciousness. It reminds us what we have lost, but it also lets us glimpse a gateway to possible futures as for a short moment we saw the skies clear and we could breathe again. Being denied physical closeness reminded us that we are social creatures who need collective experiences—witness the virtual choirs or people singing on balconies. In any crisis there are opportunities in the challenges.

The large-scale transformations necessary are in fact a cultural project as we reconsider how people and places think, how to plan and act. They concern values, worldviews, attitudes and hearts, minds, skills and behavioral changes.

What drives transformation and systemic change as effectively as urgency? Typically, crisis is the most powerful catalyst. Disruptive technologies are another. Paradigm shift is a concept to be used sparingly, yet the digital turn and its capacity to simulate and virtualize experience is one. This accelerated what was already happening. We

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¹⁵ Tom Burke in a conversation.

are all Zooming. It has changed our sense of space, place and time. The volume, velocity and variety of instantly available data streams combined with the ‘anytime, anyplace, anywhere’ phenomenon changes how we perceive, experience and interact with the world. **Our culture is digital, and it is the digital that shapes our culture. The digital is now like the air we breathe and the electricity that flows. This all requires cultural adjustment.**

At times a global mood takes hold and spreads like a meme when its time has come, such as the acceptance of the “15-minute city” idea, which focuses on the city of proximity and a return to the local. Ecological thinking is embedded in this concept. Richly innovative places need to ride a paradox and be both intensely local and intensely global. **Cities need to connect internally and externally to foster accessibility, interaction and exchange.** There is a need for “local buzz and global pipelines.”¹⁶

Transformations stem too from new concepts that act as a gathering cry and then guide thinking, strategies and actions. Think here of sustainability, feminism, co-creation, diversity, resilience or thinking culturally. Reframing has potential when waste is seen as a resource and focuses our minds on how a circular economy might operate. Or consider how dramatically knife crime is reduced when it is defined less as a crime and more as a disease or mental health problem. Mission-oriented framing can be a forceful way to create a common goal and a gathering cry. This is the moonshot idea.

Culture reveals who we are because it highlights our distinctiveness, our identity and, in relation to place, our sense of belonging. So, the cultural perspective is a powerful and insightful lens through which to look at the world. It helps explain what drives us, and our motivations, and why our economic and social life is what it is. As we explore culture opportunities and resources, as well as potential obstacles and challenges, emerge and become apparent. Creativity in turn shapes what we can become.

One wonders how, concretely, culture—understood in the narrow sense of the arts—can help people navigate a world where the *Zeitgeist*¹⁷ is one of anxiety, with individuals increasingly operating in echo chambers expressing an often doom-laden view of the world. **But culture and creativity can address the faultlines, battlegrounds, paradoxes,**

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¹⁶ BATHELT, Harald; MALMBERG, Anders; y MASKELL, Peter (2002). *Clusters and Knowledge: Local Buzz and Global Pipelines and the Process*. Copenhagen: Druid, p. 43.

¹⁷ German word meaning “Spirit of the age.”

drivers of change and strategic dilemmas that confront our varying societies and cultures.

Faultlines are processes of change that are so profound, intractable and contentious that they shape our entire worldview. They determine our landscape of thinking and our decisions across multiple dimensions, and they can be global in scope, affecting our broadest purposes and ends. They can also create insoluble problems and permanent ideological battlefields. And even if these do eventually resolve themselves it can take a long time—perhaps 50 years, 100 years or more. But time is not on our side as we address the climate crisis.

Considering the climate crisis the three most important faultlines are the battles between environmental ethics and an economic rationality that threatens life on earth; between faith-based and secular worldviews with the former potentially enabling religious fundamentalism while the latter attempts to focus on fact and evidence when many embrace an alternative reality where facts do not count; and the threat to social cohesion with increasing income inequality and a growing population—now nearing eight billion people—that forces us to live with challenging levels of diversity exacerbated by geographical mobility. This affects a mass of downstream decisions. Discussions and policy debates around faultlines often become battlegrounds because the nature of the debate is intense and contested.

These are core issues where arts projects and programs and cultural institutions can play an important role because culture, the arts and their embedded creativity can help promote a more open-minded community that is more resilient and adaptable by shifting the dangerous dynamic we are living through.

Culture has the potential to both foster opportunity and address problematic issues, whether in dialogue between cultures, around ethnic conflicts, or when allowing individuals to discover their talents, gain confidence, become motivated, change their mindset, involve themselves in their community or viscerally feel the need to act to heal our divide with nature.

But what exactly is it about the process and act of singing, writing, dancing, acting, performing music, sculpting, painting, designing or drawing that is so special? It is that participating in the arts arguably harnesses the imaginary realm to a degree that other disciplines such as sports or much of science, which are more rule-bound and precise, do not. The distinction between the arts and writing a computer program, engineering or sports is that the latter are ends in themselves, they do not change the way you perceive society; they tend to teach you something specific.

“

**CULTURE REVEALS
WHO WE ARE
BECAUSE IT
HIGHLIGHTS OUR
DISTINCTIVENESS,
OUR IDENTITY
AND, IN RELATION
TO PLACE,
OUR SENSE
OF BELONGING.”**

**CHARLES
LANDRY**

This process of imagining has the benefit of forcing us to reflect, to develop original thought, to confront challenges and, crucially, to imagine that Planet B, which is where we need to get to. **Turning imagination into reality or something concrete is a creative act. Reinventing a society or nursing it through a green transition is a creative act where involvement with the arts can help.**

Engagement with the arts combines both stretching oneself and focusing; feeling the senses and expressing emotion. **Art can broaden horizons and convey meaning with immediacy as well as depth; it can facilitate immediate and profound communication; symbolize complex ideas and emotions or encapsulate previously scattered thoughts; anchor identity and enhance communal bonds or conversely stun and shock for social, moral, or thought-provoking ends.** Art can criticize or create joy, entertain, be beautiful and even soothe the soul and promote popular morale. More broadly, expression through the arts is a way of passing ideas and concepts on to later generations in a (somewhat) universal language.

The best art works at a number of levels simultaneously. **Art, and especially the making of art rather than just its consumption, triggers activity in the mind and agitates it (and even the body), arousing the senses.** It is not a linear process, but while it happens associations and seemingly random intuitions and connections come forth. It is more unstructured, less step-by-step than scientific or technological procedures are, it looks more for intuition, it is freer flowing, resonating at a deeper level. Art can lift one to a higher plane, beyond the day-to-day, to what many call the spiritual experience.

Humans are largely driven by their sensory and emotional landscape in spite of centuries of developing scientific knowledge and logical, analytical, abstract and technical thought. We are not rational in a scientific sense, but we are a-rational rather than irrational. This is why all cultures develop the arts. **The arts speak the language of the senses and feelings, and have immense power and knowledge that the “scientifically” minded should understand and harness to help them achieve their aims.** Participating in or consuming arts helps interpret reality and can provide leadership and vision.

The “out of the box,” lateral thinking and use of imagination inherent to the arts is perhaps the most valuable thing they can offer other disciplines such as planning or engineering, or to the business community or social services.

The arts, of course, inhabit or take place in a space, and space matters as never before, especially, given the pandemic, public space. Primarily, with their aesthetic focus the arts draw attention to quality, and beauty. They challenge us to ask: Is this beautiful? This should affect how urban design and architecture evolve. Second, the arts challenge us to ask questions about ourselves as a place. This should lead us to ask: What kind of place do we want to be—more ecologically aware, for example—and how can we become that? **Arts programs can challenge decision-makers by undertaking uncomfortable projects that force leaders to debate and take a stand.** For example, arts project about or with migrants might challenge our prejudices. Arts projects can empower people who have previously not expressed their views, so artists working with communities can tap into individual and community opinions. For example, a community play devised with a local group can potentially tell us much more than a typical political process. Finally, arts projects can simply create enjoyment. A useful question to ask is: What is the problem and can a cultural approach help? Can the arts help?

Much of art is accessible in museums or cultural institutions, in galleries, theatres, performance venues or bookshops. These spaces and instances are mediators of dialogue and in cities they contribute to creating destinations, visitor attractions and to help foster a community's image as well as generating an economic impact.

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For people to contribute to society's evolution it is best when we feel whole and have agency, and it is crucial to consider the power the arts can have in this. Carol Ryff¹⁸ summarizes this well in six priorities that help develop psychological resilience. They are: how people are making use of their personal talents and potential (personal growth); the depth of connection they have in ties with significant others (positive relationships); whether they view themselves to be living in accordance with their own personal convictions, in essence being themselves (autonomy); how well they are managing their life situations (environmental mastery); the extent to which people feel their lives have meaning, purpose, and direction (purpose in life); and the knowledge and acceptance they have of themselves, including awareness of personal limitations (self-acceptance).

¹⁸ More information available on: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/theory-knowledge/201405/six-dimensions-psychological-well-being> and <http://midus.wisc.edu/findings/pdfs/830.pdf>

People who feel whole are more likely to want to be part of a narrative of cultural transformation where with their agency they can become shapers, makers and co-creators of their evolving cities, regions and countries. **Ultimately it is storytelling we need, a story where we can all see the part we can play and where we act. And who are the best storytellers? Artists.**

IN BRIEF...

Maintaining the status quo is no longer viable. The health crisis revealed other crises that have long been on the back burner.

Cities must be connected internally and externally to foster accessibility, interaction, and exchange.

Culture, arts, and creativity play a key role in promoting community empowerment, resilience, adaptability, and open-mindedness.

Art is a vehicle for immediate, profound, symbolic, and synthetic communication.

Artists can and should make decision-makers uncomfortable, forcing them to debate and take positions.

THE CITY OF CARE

Tatiana Bilbao

Architect, Tatiana Bilbao Estudio (Mexico)



*“The house of our time does not yet exist,
however, the transformation of the way of life demands its realization.”*
Mies Van Der Rohe, Die Form No. 7, June 1931

The most creative thing we can do: reinvent the notion of “house.”¹⁹

Everyone agrees that the pandemic has only deepened systemic crises that have long existed. But I believe that today, unlike at any other point in at least the last 150 years, houses have become crucial to our understanding of the world. The house has become a framework for daily life, but further a signifier for economic and social values and consumption.

The 20th century movement of populations from rural areas to urban ones has not diminished, and similarly, the demand for housing solutions has not decreased. **In the early months of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought issues of homelessness and a lack of adequate housing into sharp focus as governments uniformly mandated people to stay at home, regardless of living conditions.**²⁰ Many people face challenges of adequate housing, overcrowding, access to resources, or even safe home environments. The global pandemic has accelerated the issues surrounding housing²¹. We have the opportunity to rethink the metrics of evaluation for a house, or even its definition. At its root, we often wish to believe that the house is a place of shelter, and of safety. The housing reality is that some do not have a place to shelter, especially from the virus, others have a shelter but it is not a place that protects them, and then for the privileged few that have a house where they can shelter and be protected.

The issue of housing exposes the most extreme urgencies of our contemporary way of life and social interaction. Developments in the 20th century profoundly impacted the way we live, but most importantly, the way we relate physically to the world and to each other. Technological developments during the industrial revolutions shifted priorities and changed perceptions of time and labor. The incessant quest for equality and democracy defined social, economic and political systems. Standardization and mechanization were used as means to achieve it.

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¹⁹ Parts of this text will be published in the forthcoming book, *Informality and the City - Theories, Actions, Interventions* (Springer Publishing,) as the essay 'Room by Room; An Exploration of the House'.

²⁰ ELLIS, Emma Grey (2021). "The Lasting Impact of Covid-19 on Homelessness in the US." *Wired*, Conde Nast, 20 Jan 2021. Disponible en: www.wired.com/story/covid-19-homelessness-future/

²¹ *Ibid.*

The 20th century shaped the house we live in today and, with it, the city that we inhabit, the social relationships that we build, and even our most fantastical dreams. But, in reality, the house has arguably constrained our life to the point of limiting our existence: “If we look to the differences that today exist within the house that we wish, the one that is favorable to the planet and the one that we pay for and clean every day, those are due to the fact that the modern house has its origin within frictions: the house as the place of rest, as if labor could be separated from life and domestic labor would disappear, the house as private property within everyone’s reach, as if considering the house merchandise, not determined for market logics making it unreachable to the majority, and the house as a sanctuary for the nuclear family as if no other convivial ways would exist and private and public would be two separate fractions.”²²

The notion of “house” is the result of a system built upon enormous frictions, as our entire system relies on modes of production. Today, to exist we are forced to produce, and paradoxically, to produce we need to exist. We live in an infinite cycle of exploitation necessary for the system to perpetuate itself. Individuals are dehumanized, as they become indistinguishable units that are forced to not only partake but sustain the prevailing way of life, standards that rely on discrimination. **This is a system that relies on the fact that paid labor is produced outside the home and that the supportive labor necessary for the production outside the house is unpaid. With this condition, we have formalized to the extreme the dependence of binaries, binaries that have made our lives during this pandemic impossible.**

Private vs. public, individual vs. collective, private vs. institution, house vs. public space, productivity vs. existence. As the pandemic erases boundaries of paid and unpaid labor within the house, more frictions emerge. This condition is not only defining our social relationships and the way we behave, but also our relationship with the planet we inhabit. The house of today has rendered habitual all those important rituals on which our existence depends. We have mechanized the way we live.

Eating is no longer an act of care and nurturing, rather it is a habit to fulfill a basic need. Sleeping has become a basic step for overproduction, necessary for the system to survive, and no longer has a relationship with the cycle of life. Bathing has become a standardized way of thinking of cleanliness and to be ready to produce. When did we forget about the importance of the ritual of cleaning our body? When did we

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²² CANALES, Fernanda (2021). *Mi Casa tu Ciudad: Privacidad en un mundo compartido*. Barcelona: Puente Editores, p. 7.

stopped understanding the purity of the act? And of it being done with others, as a social act that allows us to connect with the notion of care to the other?

Ivan Illich said that “the major threat to health in the world is modern medicine”²³, and today this is what architecture is doing to the existence of humans.

One of the origins of the typical home layout is in Henry Roberts’ *Model Houses for Families*, displayed at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851.²⁴ This apartment proposal formalized an evolution of the privatized family home into room-based functions. Bedrooms were divided by familial role and gender, alongside a kitchen, bathroom, and scullery. The division of spaces enforced a way of living based on gendered power dynamics, unpaid domestic labor, and prescriptive visions of the nuclear family.

The western home continued to develop through the 19th and 20th centuries. **The house was used as a commodity to promote capitalist economic development that was reliant on the home as the site for uncompensated reproductive labor such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. Reproductive labor was the infrastructure to support paid male labor.** It was a symbol for achievement, sold as a basic necessity. The relationship between house and economic structure was taken further in the 1950s as post-war production focused on commodities such as washing machines and toasters. The cost of maintaining a house increased, ensuring further reliance on jobs, but so did the labor to maintain the private house, increasing the time spent inside the home as caretakers.

The rigid patriarchal house type is clearest seen in the houses of Levittown.²⁵ Here, the highly individualized house became the pitch roofed ideal. The vision of the ideal house is important to understand as it also influenced policy decisions on how to address a global housing crisis.²⁶ For decades, international and local agencies have identified a lack of housing, especially for disenfranchised populations, and pursued grand solutions. In 1989, Martha Rosler erected a Spectacolor screen

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²³ Heard by Richard Smith, editor of the British Medical journal and claimed in *Review of limits to medicine. Medical nemesis: the expropriation of health* [this is an abridged version of the review that appears in this issue on p. 928].

²⁴ AURELI, Pier Vittorio & Giudici, Maria Shéhérazade (2016). “Familiar Horror: Toward a Critique of Domestic Space.” *Log* (38), p. 125.

²⁵ HAYDEN, Dolores (2002). *Redesigning the American Dream: the Future of Housing, Work, and Family Life*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, p. 25.

²⁶ A portion of this paper was previously published in our article entitled *Living Together* published in *The Plan Magazine*, October 2020.

with the words “Housing is a Human Right” blinking in orange in Times Square. This sign was part of a Public Art Fund series called *Messages to the Public*, which also included Anne Turyn’s message: “What if everyone had a home.” In that same year, Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Emscher Park, a program that explored and showcased revitalization and development strategies for the region’s shifting post-industrial landscape, was held in the Ruhr region of Germany. It included an investigation of architectural and urbanistic ideas for new forms of housing. A conference to find solutions for the pressing issue of housing was not unusual, this was the third edition of the IBA—the previous versions were held in 1957 and 1979—and each addressed different political, economic and social challenges.²⁷

In Mexico, a dignified and enjoyable place to live is a constitutional right. While it is not the case everywhere, in many countries the right to a living space has become a law that, precisely, defines what that space is. However, in many cases, that dignified, enjoyable and affordable space is defined by quantitative rather than qualitative aspects. A house, a unit, and an apartment are defined by minimums (e.g., minimum square footage, minimum amount of light, minimum ventilation) and a conventional composition of spaces (e.g., two bedrooms, one bathroom, one living area, a kitchen). In some cases, for example in France, the law goes as far as to define the bed’s location in relation to a door or a window. These seemingly objective laws, which are drafted to ensure a safe and healthy living space, reinforce conventional standards and discriminative domestic environments.

As we know, we are far from achieving a solution to the question of housing. In the present global condition, the majority of the population does not have what is described in the codes as a “decent place to live,” let alone, an enjoyable one. **A new definition of house, that unravels all the challenges and frictions is, unquestionably, both urgent and difficult. To start with, I suggest we think about the physical dimension before moving on to the more philosophical one. Challenging the notion of physical definition allows not only for alternative modes of social arrangements but also to rethink the notion of the space, the body, and its rituals.** A place that allows us to revitalize our existence is, undoubtedly, a place that has care at its core. And when this happens, new modes of relationships between spaces need to emerge.

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²⁷ “History.” IBA, 12 Nov. 2020. Retrieved from: www.internationale-bauausstellungen.de/en/iba-history/.

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**THE HOUSE OF TODAY
HAS RENDERED
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**TATIANA
BILBAO**

Can we imagine a house without a kitchen, the place that represents the most tension of all? We do all need to eat, but do we all need to cook? Furthermore, can we cook in a 2 meters by 0.50 centimeters piece of furniture? What can we cook there? Can we cook what we learn from grandma? Can we perpetuate culture, history, and narrative in a space like that? We do all need to sleep. But we don't all need a bed. In the rooms of today, there is literally not much room for anything else. Hammocks can't hang in a room defined by the minimum. Why do we all need a bed? We all need to clean our bodies, but do we all need dark boxes of 2.50 x 1.80 meters? Where do we braid our girls? How do we intimately connect to others in a place like that? Homes are morphing into the same shapes and sizes globally, quietly erasing personal and cultural histories. A mother cannot choose how she cares for her child and where, nor a son to their parent: complex relationships that bend standardized families are discouraged by spaces and opportunities for care are eliminated.

The digitalization of our world has started to erase boundaries on many levels, allowing us to imagine new possibilities to erase the binaries in which our society exists. **The moment we can each describe our own place of existence we will unequivocally determine a new series of spaces that will blur the boundaries of individualism vs. collectivism.**

A third or fourth space of existence might emerge, a common one, that could allow us to take care of ourselves, erasing the binary of the relationship of care in the contemporary city. The relationship of home vs. childcare, home vs. hospital, home vs. office. What if the house acknowledges not only the notion of the labor of care, but is also the best place to take care of us, the first and most important school, our favorite place to work, and the best hospital? The pandemic forced us to consider our houses in this way. But isn't this what a house should have always been?

Spaces that enable social exchanges by ritualizing the act of care will emerge. Collective kitchens, grand communal living rooms, spaces for multigenerational exchanges, children and the elderly being incorporated into the ritual of care, will then establish the role of the institution, and certainly open the door to erasing discrimination. **The house that can be a platform for each of us to determine our own existence is what we need to add to those 20th century quests of equality and democracy, by accepting our diversity. This is the biggest challenge of the 21st century.**

IN BRIEF...

Traditionally, the “house” is the space where unpaid (feminine) work takes place, while paid (masculine) work occurs outside it.

A new definition of “house” is urgent and difficult, but necessary to design alternative modes of social organization.

It is necessary to rethink the notions of space, and of the body and its rituals.

The house must become a space of self-determination, which will strengthen values such as equality, democracy, and diversity.

INHABITING EVERYDAY CULTURE: EVERYDAY CULTURE AS A PILLAR FOR DECISION- MAKING

**Urbanismo Vivo - Carolina Huffmann, Cecilia Ciancio,
Analía Hanono, and Matias Lastra**



We find ourselves in a historical moment that confronts us with immense challenges at both the personal and community levels. It is a moment that turns out to be a great prism to observe the crisis of our cities and life in them. Cities are a reflection and result of the cultural construction of the people who inhabit them. A culture that has been traveling throughout history and that is manifested in the day-to-day. There is an intrinsic relationship between the inhabited space and the people, the everyday culture, where both layers are dynamically intertwined.

Through Urbanismo Vivo, a team of urban planners, we seek to strengthen the link between people and the city from a local and human point of view. That is, we inquire about the daily culture of each place and its community. This conference and the panel on built environments in which we are participating understand the places we inhabit, both urban and rural, by the way in which we inhabit them. That is why, in order to improve these places, it will be necessary to work *with* people as the only way to integrate and improve everyday life. So, what do we mean by everyday life? And why is it so important?

Everyday life is defined by daily life, by habits, and this is directly linked to living. Habit is defined as “any behavior that is learned (it is not innate, and we are not born with any habit) through repetition, that is performed habitually and automatically essentially without thinking about it. It is a basic element of human learning.”²⁸ We learn physically, connecting with the real world through the senses. It is from this contact that cognitive knowledge develops and, therefore, the way we understand our world. **The consolidation of our habits is absolutely conditioned and shaped by exposure to spaces, places, people, and the environment we inhabit. Living beings shape their behavior according to the environment: family, friends, education, work, neighborhood, among others.** Subsequently, the habit of the everyday is created in life in society; it is what links that which is necessary for life with that which is daily or habitual.

It is from this consolidation that people can identify and begin to define themselves. The relationship with this complex formative system creates the identity that shapes us and that we can then understand and identify with the surrounding community. **By identifying oneself within the repeated habitus of one’s own culture, persons can identify with the community to which they belong, appropriate the culture they inhabit and the collective of which they are part of.** It is this

**HEALING
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²⁸ KABATO, Iñaki (2018). *Qué es el hábito*. Madrid: Blog Centro de Psicología PsicoAdapta. Retrieved June 20, 2021, from: <https://www.psicoadapta.es/blog/que-es-el-habito/>.

community that finally builds and inhabits the public spaces of our environment and marks and constitutes the cities.

Where do we belong, what do we belong to, and with whom do we belong? These are questions that seek answers in the collective to define us and that we find reflected in the expression of our daily life. This leads us to state a fundamental premise—everyday culture is the one that has the answers, because it reflects how we are linked, how we are and where we are as a community. This everyday culture is in our DNA, our collective identity, our sense of belonging, our routine, and our habits; there are the starting point and the product of our creation, of our actions.

Working with everyday culture does not mean that the existing culture must be reproduced in a linear and concrete manner. The cultures of communities may exhibit different designs, some of which contain forms of exclusion and structural inequalities, as is paradigmatically the case with macho cultures. **We live in societies designed from an androcentric perspective, which privileges production and paid work and turns its back on the domestic, reproductive, or unpaid sphere, in accordance with a logic governed by the sexual division of labor. We are confident that through awareness and struggle, these structural inequalities can be challenged as a path to transformation, inclusion, and integration of the diversity of people and needs that inhabit the whole.**

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If our habits shape our way of being in the world and our way of inhabiting it, what are the consequences of transforming our spaces, how do we transform them, for whom, and with whom? When we work within a territory, we are working with people, with their cultural reality, their own patterns and mechanisms. That is why—in order to work responsibly—it is essential not to simply take these references as valid but also to take special care not to reproduce patterns of exclusion. **Who is missing, who is not being part of the construction process? Such questions will be revealing in order to understand who is not present when it comes to making decisions about the transformation of common spaces.**

The concept of everyday life should represent those who construct the everyday life of a place. We must ensure the presence of as many people as possible, a key element to having a good (and complete) understanding of the dynamics at play. In addition, it is important to work on including an everyday culture that, as a foundational basis,

integrates the entire territory, working toward making diversities visible and giving space to those who are most vulnerable. This is why our approach consists of working from these principles for the transformation of physical spaces with the objective of improving people's daily lives. With the examples described below, we seek to highlight experiences where everyday culture was and is an essential part of the development of the project.

In the case of the **barrio de San Telmo**, the oldest neighborhood in the city of Buenos Aires, we worked in the area known as “under the 25 de Mayo Highway” that crossed Defensa Street, a deteriorated urban space that “divided” the neighborhood in two. We carried out a participatory project that sought to revitalize the under-highway area to bring better conditions of safety, recreation, and connectivity to the neighborhood. The objectives of this project were (i) to create a friendlier pedestrian experience and, at the same time, generate permanence by offering a new public space; (ii) to improve the continuity and vitality of the walking route from Plaza Dorrego to Parque Lezama, two iconic places in the neighborhood, for those who live, work, and visit the area as tourists; (iii) to link two areas of the neighborhood, located on opposite sides of the highway; (iv) and to promote local culture, reflecting the identity and social heritage of San Telmo through the creation of a cultural agenda specific to the neighborhood and the daily stories of its inhabitants.

The participatory process consisted of a series of meetings, both digital and face-to-face, in which neighbors and merchants were able to express their wishes, concerns, worries, and proposals for intervention, through instances of dialogue, reflection, games, and drawing. We also proposed an initiative to share perspectives and stories of those who live in San Telmo and present them into visual format through “Microhistories.” The images illustrate that San Telmo that is invisible at first glance, that lives in the imagination and memory of those who reside there. In them, you can recognize everyday characters, learn secret stories, link the present and the past by highlighting the oral tradition and the intangible cultural heritage of this place.

Throughout the process, we saw children working and living on the street, but we could not include them in the digital participatory space, so we decided to create a play area in the place where these children worked every day. We joyfully observed that, even if only for a few minutes, when they walked by, they stopped working and played in the street. It changed their day, if only for a brief moment. This is what

the possibility of creating new spaces in cities brings, the ability to transform the daily life of each person.²⁹

The **Kintsugi Urbano** project in Mexico City focused on recovering an alley next to a school. This passageway, which was used daily by children in particular, was run down, in poor condition, and dirty. The project consisted of a day of activation and integral recovery of the space. Among the proposals, the physical intervention had a playful spirit that invited people to walk through the alley with various drawings of footprints, phrases, and games that sought to transform the daily way of circulating and achieve an active appropriation of this space.³⁰

The **Jane's Walk Buenos Aires Walking Festival** is a cultural project that we have organized annually since 2012 and that turns the city into a space for dialogue and exchange of views about the city for a weekend. This is a project in which culture and the intangible heritage of those who live in the city become the focus of conversation. We walk together not to take anything for granted, but as an opportunity to resist, learn, connect, and make visible that which happens in our cities every day. The festival is, above all, a medium that makes us question the way we live together. It proposes using a familiar tool, but in a disruptive way—we walk to transform our perception, our ideas and, therefore, our environment. We walk to share stories about neighborhoods, to find new narratives, to discover aspects of communities, to meet, and to get to know each other. We walk because the rhythm and pauses invite us to reflect from a human and friendly position, looking for diversity in the group to think about everything we have in common.³¹

Finally, and in reference to the region, the **“Volver a la Calle” Ideathon and Incubator** was a project that included the citizen urbanism movement, which is growing more and more in our Latin American region. Ciudades Comunes, an organization of which Urbanismo Vivo is a member, held a call for projects and then an incubation process for the six winning ideas, a space that offered a transdisciplinary experience for the activation of civic innovation projects from the practice of co-design and in a context of co-learning.³²

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²⁹ More information available on: <https://urbanismovivo.com.ar/enlace-defensa/>

³⁰ More information available on: <https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/909982/kintsugi-urbano-un-proyecto-de-transformacion-urbana-en-mexico>

³¹ More information available on: festivaldecaminatas.com.ar

³² More information available on: ciudadescomunes.org/incubadora/2020

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**CITIES ARE A
REFLECTION
AND RESULT
OF THE CULTURAL
CONSTRUCTION
OF THE PEOPLE
WHO INHABIT
THEM.”**

**URBANISMO
VIVO**

As a final reflection, we would like to open a question about the place of everyday culture in the co-construction of cities when it comes to decision-making. From our professional practice, we seek the answer in working *with* the people, by integrating them into the entire process—before, during, and after. We propose understanding co-construction with the people who inhabit the spaces as a constant and daily element, and not as something extraordinary. We want to be emphatic—what is reflected in the daily inhabiting of spaces is everyday life. **Therefore, creating inclusive and integrating spaces requires, precisely, work that is also inclusive and integrating.** If we are going to open spaces, let us truly open them, including and providing other possibilities for participation. We propose transforming spaces in order to understand what other situations can coexist there, what other people who were hidden or made invisible (because they had not been included in the participatory process to ask them the corresponding questions) can begin to enjoy that environment.

We understand that this is a complex challenge and that overcoming it requires a great deal of coordination among those of us involved in the processes of making a city. To this end, it is key that we focus on opening the doors of our institutions so that people and communities can access and participate, thereby fostering the creation of a daily, accessible, and permeable link. **In short, the answer lies in recognizing everyday culture as the axis for decision making.**

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IN BRIEF...

Cities reflect the cultural construction of the people who live in them.

By repeating habits of their own culture, people identify with the communities to which they belong and appropriate the culture they inhabit.

It is necessary to critically analyze the logics of domination that are reproduced in daily habits and that reproduce systemic inequalities.

Inclusion and integration must be present at all levels (especially institutional) as tools to challenge systemic inequities.

PART III. THE POWER OF ARTISTS AS FIRST-RESPONDERS TOWARD HEALING AND RENEWAL IN TIMES OF CRISIS TRANSFORMATION

Artists have always played the powerful role in society as “first-responders” in times of crisis, as visionaries who help us to see ways to heal, rethink, and restore ourselves. Artists have long addressed traumas of our torn social fabric, of personal and societal violence, not only by making our hopes visible, but also by providing insights into ways to engage socially, politically, and spiritually that offer creative processes and model new approaches. The following are the reflections of some of the regions’ most innovative and respected artists, whose works and voices are shining examples of creative problem-solving, of critique and renovation, as culture intersects with social urgency and renewal.

LOOK AT WOUNDS, THINK, HEAL

Voluspa Jarpa

Artist and researcher (Chile)



Non-productive, non-extractive, non-efficient, non-colonial, non-progress, non-development, non-profit.

To stop and take care of oneself.

To be amazed by vulnerability, to see and hear how everything cracks. A system that shows how it does not provide enough to take care of people, to take care of subsistence, and to take care of the ecosystem.

I think about the origin of this imbalance and look back to my own research. From 2000 to 2016 I worked researching, reporting, and subsequently creating a Latin American cartography built from secret US intelligence files on the region called Latin America. This research-creation led me to formulate a work that I called, ironically, *Nuestra Pequeña Región de por Aquí* (2016). In it, and in the works that preceded it and made it possible, I configured the dimension of a geopolitical plot of the Cold War for 60 years. I began with my country, Chile, and the information contained in those archives led me to other countries of the Southern Cone of the South American subcontinent and, later, to research the history of Central America and Mexico.

Information and design of a dystopian policy revealed thanks to redacted documents censored to block the information but that nevertheless (and for the same reason) illustrate the size and extent of infringed, systematized and normalized damage, where the people as well as their territories and ecosystems appear affected by these policies.

To understand *Nuestra Pequeña Región de por Aquí*, I continued my research, focusing on the Southern Cone. The plans became repetitive, the ways to carry them out became evident, and the objectives became transparent: to implement an extractivist economy that would facilitate the intervention in raw materials, supported by cheap labor.

In the curious secret language of the archives, that which is publicly argued to be modern ideology, is revealed in secret to be money: pain, death, extermination, torture, coups d'état for and to extract cheap raw materials with cheap labor. To build the condition of Latin American contempt.

This is how the Latin American *wound* was configured, systematized for six decades and inflicted by our American peers. My work was about understanding it, giving body to that information, delimiting the wound, making it an exercise of aesthetic-ethical communication and narrating

it to the new generations in order to incorporate it into future memories. I realized that I had to occupy that place because I was a woman. I understood that men would not do it because they were the festering part of the wound.

Nuestra Pequeña Región de por Acá is also the story of the submission of power and male leadership in our Latin American countries, their humiliation and defeat, if this story is seen through a prism of power.

Corruption, lies, secrets, death... and money.

That's what these archives are about. **For me, art has always had the function of configuring and showing the wound, because—despite the canon—it is still a space where freedom can be exercised.**

At the beginning of the pandemic, I received an invitation to talk via videoconference with a young Brazilian curator, Tiago de Abreu Pinto, to discuss my work. The only thing my body felt at the time was extreme exhaustion. During the months of demonstrations, there were brawls, looting, and demonstrations, and complaints were filed for human rights violations. Before that, in 2018, there was the feminist uprising of young women. Young people clearly did not like the world we had built for them. There was a feeling, widespread in Chilean society, of an economic “sacrifice zone.”

In the conversation with Tiago de Abreu, we talked about this context and about what seemed at the time to be the diffuse beginning of something strange that was, apparently, a pandemic. **The silence of the quarantine and the curfew were undoubtedly the exact reverse of the uprising and confrontation that had taken place in the streets, and also of the creative energy, anonymous and collective, that had been expressed with much vital intensity.**

So, we asked ourselves the question of what to do with that creative energy. The question of whether it had a meaning or a place. The question of whether art would serve such a context. That was the starting point of the open-air project. We decided to contact artists and invite them to make gestures, actions, or works—physical or digital—that were a reflection of the moment they were living. To reflect on questions such as what is the dialogue that is enunciated from the precarious place of quarantine, of art in quarantine, of the world that is beginning to crack? What are the questions that are formulated from that place without rules, without a past, without a future, inhabited from a concrete present?

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**ART AS A STRATEGY
FOR UNDERSTANDING
THE PRESENT
AND RESPONSIBLY
BUILDING THE HOPE
THAT THE FUTURE
IMPLIES.”**

**VOLUSPA
JARPA**

In this way, the project was configured as an instance to question the space of the artistic object and artistic action in the present moment. And so began this completely open, collective, non-hierarchical and non-institutional co-creative exercise, which was gradually became a kind of archive of the way in which they felt and thought about the moment and others.

The project *al aire, libre/ao ar, livre* consisted of three ephemeral collective and diluted exhibitions in Chilean, Brazilian, and Mexican territory, carried out during the confinement³³ of the quarantine imposed by COVID-19 from the places of confinement of the almost 300 participating artists and collectives.

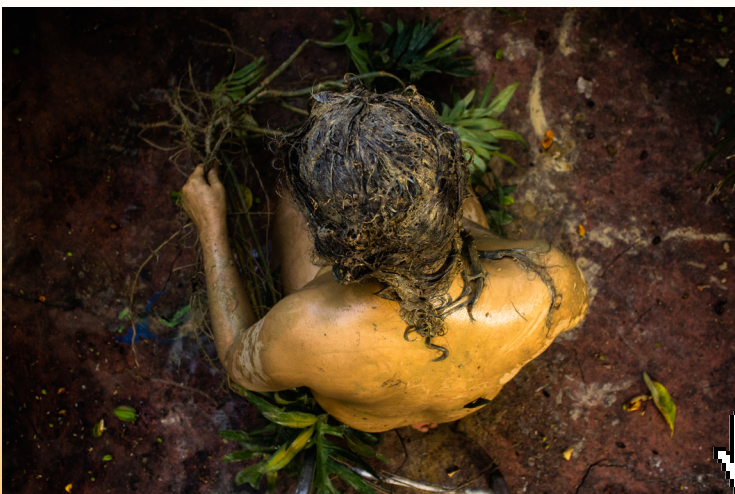
In Chile, this artistic call, in communal dialogue, brought nearly 80 artists and collectives together in different cities and localities. Each of them took on the absurd task of making a work/action, defining a simultaneous quarantine exhibition site for two specific days and then sending the records.

We extended the same invitation in Brazil two months later, and almost 150 artists and collectives responded to it, dispersed throughout the Brazilian geography, facing the conditions of the pandemic, without quarantine, without care, and within a delirious official narrative.

Two months later, we carried out the same action in Mexico, where nearly 80 artists and collectives simultaneously responded to the invitation, in a country that was already seeing the wear and tear of the first six months of the pandemic.

We then continued inviting more artists to collaborate, and we held round table meetings. Furthermore, filmmaker Felipe Ríos also joined us to work with the archival material of the works and, in this way, configuring and bringing together works that had been done in a completely dispersed way:

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Meu quintal na Amazônia é o quintal do mundo (2020), Duda Santana.

³³ During the months of May, August, and September 2020.

What brought us together? What made us seek each other out? What made us work virtually, configuring a collective organization where there was no vestige of institutionality, money, certainty, and commercialized sense? How did this project become a gravitational field of attraction that configured a collective body of more than 300 artists inserted into a precarious world to see what the world we are in at this moment is like?

Isolation, care, violence, and precariousness.

When we asked Tiago de Abreu and the artists who participated what *al aire, libre* was about, some answered: it was about containing ourselves (healing ourselves?) or taking care of ourselves through actions such as facilitating:

1. **Co-creation of the world:** based on empathy, responding to the call of the Other.
2. **The collective power that manifests itself through affection:** understanding the time of the Other, producing collectivity, hospitality, and solidarity.
3. **Freedom:** not obeying that which is pre-established; understanding this moment as a zero moment that is also longed for and imagined; not telling the other what is right to do, and making oneself available to the other.
4. **The action of sowing:** equipping oneself with new tools for a new world, for a new art, generating a new ethic. Re-founding.
5. **To resist:** showing the forms of resistance, generating history of and for resistance, understanding it as an immunological response. Art as a strategy for understanding the present and responsibly building the hope that the future implies.

IN BRIEF...

The pandemic made it possible to create networks of collaboration and dialogue among artists, strengthening the role they should play in times of crisis.

The social protests in the region revealed, before the health crisis, the collapse of structures that are no longer accepted by the new generations.

The economic and social model that exists in much of Latin America is based on the logic of domination. It is the dominated people, such as women, who must delimit the contours of the Latin American *wound*, because only by understanding it can it be healed.

The healing process requires creativity, collectivity, freedom, transformation, and resistance. Art can play a strategic role in understanding the challenges of the present and in laying the foundations for the construction of hope for the future.

COLLECTIVE ACTS ARE BOTH IMAGINED AND REAL

Christopher Cozier

Artist and co-director, Alice Yard (Trinidad and Tobago)



Like everyone else I am here, locked up—or locked in—, deep in the ongoing pandemic-driven series of curfews, lockdowns, and states of emergency. The Trinidad and Tobago government felt cornered, and proactively closed the borders, immediately introducing social restrictions. Astonishingly, most of us complied with them. Everything felt so unstable and precarious. The news from abroad looked grim. I remember thinking about the 1950s movie “On the Beach,” with people singing “Waltzing Matilda.”

However, here, in the Caribbean, we have always had to adapt and respond on our own: collectively and through improvisation. We have had to invent ways of coping with the effects of lingering colonial entanglements and natural disasters. The “Plantationocene”³⁴ some call it. We are haunted over time by genocides of bodies and dreams, sudden or prolonged and in slow motion. Hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, rising water levels, hostile economic shifts, embargoes, foreign invasions, etc. This region keeps us constantly alert, busy, and agile.

The Caribbean was initially an industrial labor camp for Europe. The road to egalitarian civil society has been long, and for many of the islands, the prospect of real sovereignty has been the shortest period of our recorded history, remaining precarious, fraught and unresolved. **So, one could say that, rather than being “developing” countries, ours are “recovering” ones. As a population, we have always been poised and responding, and the burden of our construction and reconstruction often falls on our creative side: our artists.** The real binary in our shrewd history is between expediency and creativity.

Our political class remains disproportionately concerned with balancing the books from the resources of the traditional economic structures, that they do not usually own or fully control, but for which they compete to access and distribute around electoral cycles. The repeated promise is that, if they can balance them and regulate their behavior, then everything will be alright. But a country’s Treasury is not what builds its society; it is, primarily, the creative imagination.

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A BROKEN
WORLD

³⁴ The “Plantationocene” was defined by Donna Haraway (2015) as “the devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labor and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labor.” Available in HARAWAY, D. (2015). Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin. *Environmental Humanities*, 6 (1), 159-165.

To many, the Caribbean is just a romantic colonial ruin, a place of partying and escape that was once part of history, an abandoned site of the early engine of global capitalism. Now it remains unseen in political terms. Only Cuba registers nostalgically with its ideologically regulated populations in a late 20th century Cold War binary or through Haiti's stolen revolution which still faces social and economic sieges and racial contempt, for example.

Otherwise, we are small countries, and not in the business of invading or bombing anywhere. Short of natural and man-made disasters, we will not make—or make it into—the news. Bay after bay, decaying forts sit next to all-inclusive resorts. The ravaged mangroves are no longer able to provide shelter or cope with the next hurricane, the shifting coastlines and slowly rising tide.

So, perhaps we can do interesting things to become meaningful on a global level or just to ourselves. **Empathy and caring for each other regardless of race, gender, or sexuality are qualities that we arrived at through living under oppressive circumstances, arriving as property, indentured laborers or as subjects of various kingdoms, and also through syncretism and the adapting of religious practices that we brought across the Atlantic with us.** From the indigenous populations, we could inherit a less exploitative and violent relationship to the environment and all life within it. We could abandon all received and imported colonial laws which narrow the way we understand or define the self and citizen. Cable stations with divisive messages come at us as fast as guns and ammunition. We still see the nation and the region as a series of economic engines or factories and the population as subjects to regulate and herd: we still use languages like units of labor or consumption.

We can still try to protect or rejuvenate what is left, the damaged land and the sea, and all fellow creatures within, that have been abused and exploited over hundreds of years. We could become a safety zone for ways of being and becoming, and we could simply stop violating each other's rights. The individual and collective imagination are our most solid and abundant resource, that we starve or drive into exile at home and abroad. We need another reading of progress. We simply have to stop being complicit in the self-destructive transactional reading of ourselves and of our space.

To me, what defines the Caribbean is collectivity: associating, gathering, and sharing as a form of resistance, a response to the historical conditions of conscripted industrial labor and extractive territorialism, in which we are expected to create profit for others elsewhere. To me, the Caribbean is a sanctuary of the human imagination. **Whenever and wherever we find ourselves gathering, we are making and conjuring up “home:” a space to collectively imagine and to defy all the old laws and state machinery that still exist to control dark, human bodies.** As the pandemic intensified, we were being asked to give up just about everything we have fought for (i.e., our freedom, the possibility of gathering in public spaces, etc.) to “be responsible” and to survive what feels like a species attack. It remains a confusing moment. Accordingly, I decided not to have a plan. Experts and professionals are supposed to know what they are doing, to have a fixed set of tools or the appropriate knowledge with which to respond. But in this crisis, much of that knowledge has become useless. However, there was another form of knowledge here, often unrecognized, which allows for moments of gathering, for no “good” reason other than to just *be* or to *play* (“good” meaning to create capital for others elsewhere).

ABOUT ACTION IN THE YARD³⁵ (2021)

Even though I was approached as an individual artist to participate in the exhibit *On the Way to Healing*, in this lockdown it did not make sense to respond on my own. Everyone around me was already in dialogue on social media, responding and trying to find their way. **For me, becoming an instigator of actions, and, therefore, questioning the role of sole producer, felt even more urgent.** So, I reached out to a group of artists who were already in dialogue with each other, and with Alice Yard³⁶: Amir Denzel Hall, a young academic with an interest in visual arts and researching black queer performativity; Robert Young, an established clothing designer, and activist who also leads an improvisational carnival band called Vulgar Fraction; Suelyn Choo, an emerging artist who experiments with performance and masking, live and mostly through social media; Luis Vasquez La Roche, an artist whose work has shifted to performance, looking at his experiences growing up between Venezuela, the United States and Trinidad; and Elechi Todd, an artist who paints, but also experiments with video.

³⁵ Video performance presented by Christopher Cozier in collaboration with Amir Denzel Hall, Robert Young, Suelyn Choo, and Luis Vasquez La Roche (Trinidad and Tobago) for the art exhibit *On the Way to Healing* of IDB's Summit *Healing a Broken World*.

³⁶ Alice Yard is an open space for conversations about sharing, collaboration, and experimentation that I co-manage in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

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**TO ME,
THE CARIBBEAN
IS A SANCTUARY
OF THE HUMAN
IMAGINATION.”**

**CHRISTOPHER
COZIER**

I had been following their experiments on social media, as we could not meet easily. What would they do if I invited them to discuss and collaborate on this project? I have always been interested in performance art, in its documentation and its “afterlife.” Especially so now, as social media is a daily platform for actions in the virtual world, where identities are constantly being invented and stories are being told. And this is where the conversation began.

First, we exchanged notes online. **Thoughts and suggestions began to flow between us. We reflected about the notions of “home,” “play,” “rest,” “trust,” “right of assembly,” “affinities,” amongst others.** From that, we proposed several phrases that would become central ideas for our work. For instance:

Home: it is continuously being made or accomplished, improvised, always permeable and never static or fixed: it is not a place but a space existing across and beyond boundaries; conjured and made real through the acts of assembly. Home as counter-narrative to territory: conjured space, a sanctuary, temporal and permeable or porous, permissive. It is conditional—places of becoming—, proposing the transformation of the industrial ruin into a human space. Home is not a fixed site or place but a moment of assembly, a space—spanning economic and geographical territories—, sites of production. This conjured collective is not passive and home is not just a place.

Rest: Is not stillness but purposeful action and play. Learning to trust is learning to rest. We were not brought here to rest... we have to fight for that too.

Play: Play is work and rest takes work. Improvisational collective actions are experiments to search for new ways of understanding.

Right of assembly: Something that we fought for; play spaces outside and apart from the social structures of industrial labor and consumption. Legitimate assembly was only for labor that was used to create capital for other.

Affinities: Are discovered across the diaspora, unveiling perceptions that were always there. Common understandings across and between territories.

Healing: It is an ongoing process. Maybe we should admit that there is no credible past civil ideal to restore?

Celebration of each other: We are here, we have survived, we were successful in restoration, we boldly articulate our presence and our right to participate. We articulate or narrate ourselves to survive.

First-responders: People who continue to dream and to imagine are undertaking an act of resistance not just in the immediate crisis, but also from that very first tragic beach landing and claiming of territory. We all seemed to be thinking along similar lines and were willing to participate. Derived from their ongoing investigations, individually and collectively, a sequence of improvisational actions unfolded.

We proposed individual and permitted collective actions, such as walking into “bush,” submitting to water, and trusting each other in the improvisational moment of gathering. **We thought of locations in the city associated with social transformation and cultural innovation. We thought of the ground beneath our feet being always unstable because of what we continue to do to the land and the sea around us.**

The invitation suggested that the project would be viewed online on home computer screens and, since we could not assemble comfortably, I asked Elechi Todd to edit the collection of professional and mobile phone recordings of these independently produced actions. I noticed he was already collaborating with Amir and Suelyn. Later, I included a video collaboration that I had recently completed at Alice Yard with two other artists: Shaun Rambaran and Catherine Jankowski. I also offered a replica of a red front-step associated with colonial barrack and chattel housing, from a previous project of mine called “Home/Portal.” At first, it was an assembly of actions that appeared fragmented. However, Todd, as editor, in responding to what the sequences and imagery said to him, configured a symbolic historical narrative of arriving and departing, to and from water or the ocean. The feeling of exploring a new and unfamiliar landscape, requiring a new awareness, like an astronaut’s, also took shape. The repetitive rigor of work in and on the land came across as an exhausting mechanical and redundant gesture of industrial agricultural labor in an artificial community without belonging, ownership, and due reward, implying violence to the self and the land.

This was a process of learning. Tidal rhythms, like inhaling and exhaling, arriving and departing, our relation as dark bodies to land and ocean, the interchangeability of solidity and fluidity, trauma and celebration, told stories that continue to shape life in the Global South.

IN BRIEF...

The Caribbean is a territory that, rather than being in development, is in permanent recovery.

Possibly for the same reason, it is a fertile region for imagination, creativity, and an inexhaustible capacity for adaptation.

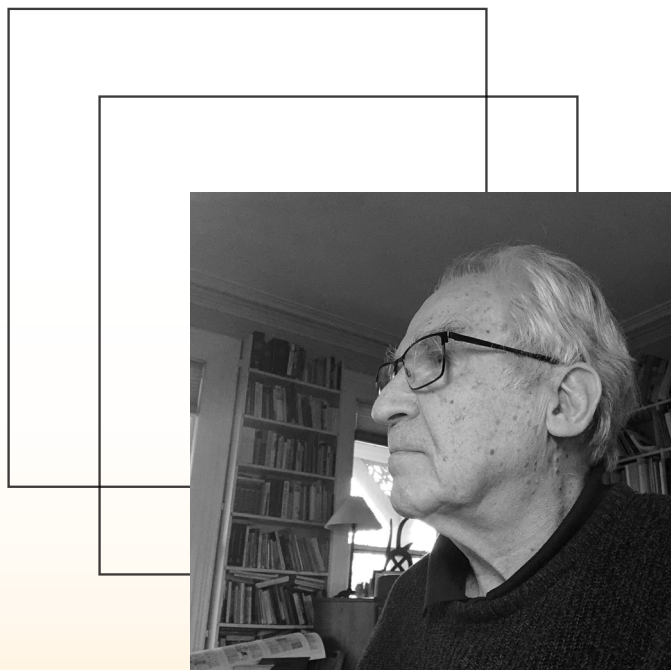
Its characteristics make the Caribbean a space for the collective creation of skills and aptitudes that, in the face of crises, make it possible to rethink structures whose fragility was not necessarily evident.

It makes no sense to respond individually to collective crises. Both ideas and their execution must be collective if they are to truly contribute to the healing of a wounded world.

HOW DO YOU HEAL A BROKEN WORLD?

Luis Camnitzer

Artist and curator (Uruguay)



The COVID-19 pandemic allows us an “outside look” at what we call “normality” or, at least, the idealized version of that which continues to govern our behavior. With their doors closed, museums show us what they have in their inaccessible spaces. Resorting to their “normality,” they say to us “look what you could see if there were no pandemic” and expect to reopen their doors as if nothing had happened. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies try to maintain ownership of their patents as if they had been legalized during “normal times.” They say “look at the billions of dollars we are making,” while the virus continues to spread around the world. 70% of the vaccines have gone to the 10 richest countries and 0.2% to the poorest countries that have to rely on philanthropy. It can be said that both museums and pharmaceutical companies are acting without perceiving that their “normalities” created the situation we are in.

The fragmentation of knowledge and an education dedicated to satisfying the profit of the job market allow us to declare technology and vaccines as the heroes of the moment. Art, on the other hand, did not give us much more than a new formalism—fragments produced in different spaces that are spun into a danced or theatrical unity. In the face of this, it is very difficult to deny the relative value of technology and hard disciplines. The need to reaffirm and strengthen the STEM³⁷ curricula and not “waste money” on the humanities has thus been proven. **But this ignores the fact that reducing knowledge to practical applications destroys holistic education and eliminates artistic knowledge as well as ethical and creative knowledge.** It is only the use of the old “normality” in times of crisis that allows the vaccine to be the hero while its inequitable distribution is criminal.

Art as the production of tangible objects is not the same as art as cultural agency and as a means of confronting and developing cognitive problems. In its conventional usage, the word “art” is still associated with the manufacture of tangible objects that have no practical use; and the pandemic presents us with problems of space and circulation for this type of production. How many paintings can be accumulated in a room? What do you do if the gallery cannot open to show them? **Given this reality, I want us to discuss art as an instrument of cognition. Cognition is flexible and applies to everything, whereas objects are not flexible; at most, they evoke.** Moreover, just as nicely decorated band-aids do not cure cancer, I doubt that object art will heal a broken world.

³⁷ Acronym for “science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.”

Almost seven decades ago, when I studied art in an academic school, the profession of artist was very well defined. The accent was still on *making*. Moreover, artists were trained in a manner similar to that of Olympic runners—they had to learn to concentrate on the task, perfect the technique, and, in the end, beat all opponents. The the seed of today's neoliberalism was already there, disguised as a romanticized artisanal training. Art was produced for consumption. Those who excelled in the field were not “achievers” but “talented,” “special,” and “eccentric.” We did not perceive that the “eccentric” part was only accepted because it occurred in the limited space of leisure.

This protected the artist from attacks against the average citizen who dared to utter equivalent expressions. **The artist was another kind of citizen, one who—like the court jester—was allowed to speak truths, and it worked as long as the result could be called and seen as art.** Authoritarian control was in the use of the word “art” and its permanence within the space of leisure. These definitions, both within and beyond the tangible, allowed art to be marked as an autonomous activity.

A decade later, Joseph Beuys—perhaps unconsciously—inverted the socializing process by defining society as a sculptural material on which the artist would exercise his omniscient power. But, although Beuys proclaimed (as we do) that everyone can be an artist, he stood within an individualistic and egocentric paradigm, creating projects that were ephemeral in terms of his cultural agency. And, to the extent that any tangible art was produced, it was absorbed into hegemonic collectionism. In a sick and frustrating way, the fate of all anti-art always ends up being art, and what we do as rebel artists signals our defeat.

Today the divide between artists and citizens, even outside of tangibility, continues. We focus so much on concrete results—tangible or not—that we fail to see that it has to do with knowledge and ownership of leisure. As artists, we try to generate new meanings. We seek to touch the mystery, the unknown. We aspire to a change of perspective. On the leisure side, it is not only a bit of time, it also functions as a space that is not ours, but granted.

Art tends to be defined as the production of useless objects, and with this, it begins to function in the space of leisure and not in that of everyday life. This uselessness gave it a certain independence, since it allowed speculation and discovery without having to respect practical application. But, at the same time, it also led to degeneration.

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**LUIS
CAMNITZER**

By separating itself from everyday life, art became part of the leisure of those who possessed it or who could afford to have access to it.

Artistic production became an integral part of the financial flow, with the utility of investment replacing the true function of art. Thus, the artist has to choose between looking for a salaried job or betting on the possible economic value of the useless things he tries to sell. None of this serves to heal wounds.

Speculation, imagination, and discovery are cognitive functions without the limitations imposed by applicability or useful purpose. Leisure time is the place to exercise them and, therefore, to develop creativity.

The importance of this leads us to analyze what leisure is, and how its conception and control in capitalist and neoliberal society deforms and limits education to the detriment of creative knowledge. It may seem absurd to compare museums with pharmaceutical companies, but both are symptoms of the same education that defines our normality and that is defined by it. It is a normality based on ownership and, within it, non-monetized leisure is considered a privilege and a luxury, or a gift and a waste.

To answer “how can we heal a broken world?,” the artist here would be a kind of emergency rescuer, able to face a crisis, perhaps even better than other specialists. There is in this a mythical image of the artist. He is attributed abilities that surpass those of the citizen, although without solid arguments. **If art were at least well understood as a task of knowledge, perhaps it would serve to help prevent the crisis, but not to heal its effects.**

The awareness of a possible intangibility that would annul this separation generated rebellions. In my school in Uruguay, we talked utopically and naively about not producing tangible art before all the people shared the possibility of doing so. Implicitly, this meant working on social revolution and only then trying to access the art market. As aspiring artists, we were doing politics and acting as average citizens, but protected by art.

The ownership of time and its use are highly regimented. Holidays are granted as a reward or as time for honing skills for more work. The reduction of working time while maintaining the same remuneration was an arduous conquest of labor. The recent trend of redefining the employee as a micro-entrepreneur apparently leaves leisure in the hands of the worker, but without the conditions to use it. While there are mandatory vacations, no government guarantees and funds leisure

time for creative activities. Instead, it seeks to affirm consumption and use that time to generate more money. The “orange economy,” a trendy phrase and policy in Latin America, focuses on this. A neoliberal idea promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank, it was built on the “creative economy” developed a decade earlier. Non-productive time is redefined there as “cultural consumption time” which, therefore, generates productivity for the cultural and creative industries.

Today, more than ever, for many people, unemployment and leisure have become sadly synonymous. For those who are still employed, it is a time used to maintain or look for a second job to survive. On the opposite side is the leisure of a privileged minority who can use it for whatever they want. **This means that leisure can only be understood as linked to the issues of knowledge and privilege. As artists, we either enjoy that privilege or we survive because of it.** Today, one of the crises of art is that the structure that supports and finances us is collapsing. This affects what we can contribute to knowledge and confronts us with the question of how, then, we can really heal wounds.

What about art today? Most artists continue to work within old boundaries, sometimes trying to overcome them. We can believe that “normality” is temporarily suspended, but we cannot accept that it may have disappeared. Meanwhile, art for consumption has been transferred to computer screens. As long as museums do not review their identity and their politics, they will have lost their relevance. In 2017, in the United States, when museums and galleries were operating normally, only 24% of the population claimed to have visited one during that year. There are still no statistics on how many people view museum and gallery exhibitions online, but it should be taken into account that, in 2020, 20% of the inhabitants of the United States did not have internet. Worldwide, the percentage of people with internet access hovers around 40%, and 92% of people have access through mobile devices, which are useless for art contemplation. Even if art could heal wounds, they would be those of a privileged minority.

2020 is a new year zero from which, from now on, the virus will have a pedagogical function. We are between the BV and the AV eras (before and after the virus), armed and directed by a “professor COVID,” who did not become a messiah. We learn that wounds are not only expressed in confinement, illness, hidden smiles, and separation or loss of loved ones. They are also acutely expressed in the limits imposed by intellectual property and authorship, with access rights controlled and limited by the good will of corporate interests and private philanthropy.

The virus will surely go away for a while, but it will inevitably return, marking a future to which we will have to become accustomed. Confinement, for those who can afford it, increases alienation. Corresponding art can easily become a refuge for self-pity and self-therapy. Perhaps it will heal one's own wounds, but forgetting its social and collective usefulness. **One of the missions in this new era is to rescue and elaborate the notion of *the collective*. Perhaps it is more important to recognize that at this time, art is also wounded.**

The real hope is not in art but in general education. It lies in educating ourselves to question, evaluate and reconfigure, and then, iteratively, in restarting by questioning, evaluating, and reconfiguring. In other words, it is not about sharing art objects, but about the ways of thinking and feeling that come from art. **This new era demands a new kind of formalization and a new system of education. Whether we make art or not, no matter the specialization, ultimately, we are all knowledge workers.** We contribute in different degrees, but knowledge is a collective, non-competitive, public domain task armed with the mission to improve society and, therefore, it is integrated with ethics.

Perhaps paradoxically, it is the utility of things that affirms us in the fragmentation of knowledge. Uselessness, when defined as lack of application, allows us to look at utility from the outside. It allows us to put it in context and understand it better, if only for a moment. It is here that we leave instrumentalization and enter into philosophy, both verbal and visual, as a means for speculation. It is an open-ended form of speculation—so open-ended that it allows us to deal with both order and disorder.

STEM education, presented as a servant of a collective utility, excludes the impossible and limits our ability to imagine. It is the culmination of a fragmented education, a micro-education that emphasizes applicability and is therefore useful only to serve certain particular interests. It presents itself as curing the pandemic after having created it. It is obvious that we cannot deny the need and importance of the vaccine. But we can underscore the absences in a functionalist education. The impossible as part of an investigation is what allows us to evaluate the possible. The possible is based on something that is already built and tends to prevent us from continuing to build. The step between the impossible and the possible is one of negotiation. It consists of identifying the obstacles that prevent implementation. The identification of these obstacles is not limited to whether something “can be done” or “cannot be done.” It also includes a “why can't it be done,” a “who

prevents it from being done” and a “who is served by it not being done.” This means that every cognitive act is simultaneously and inseparably a creative, ethical, and political act. The applicable only allows us to “be” if we are also aware of the richness of the inapplicable that surrounds it. The applicable can often deal with wounds. The inapplicable can strengthen us to deal with the causes.

I doubt that art as we know it can do much. **Without understanding that we have to share creativity and not consumption, with a real education within a humanistic context, we will continue to live with the “normality” of broken worlds until the worlds end.**

IN BRIEF...

The role of artists in a crisis should not be idealized, nor should their role be confused with that of an “emergency rescuer.”

Education is fundamental to develop critical thinking and to be able to question, evaluate and reconfigure.

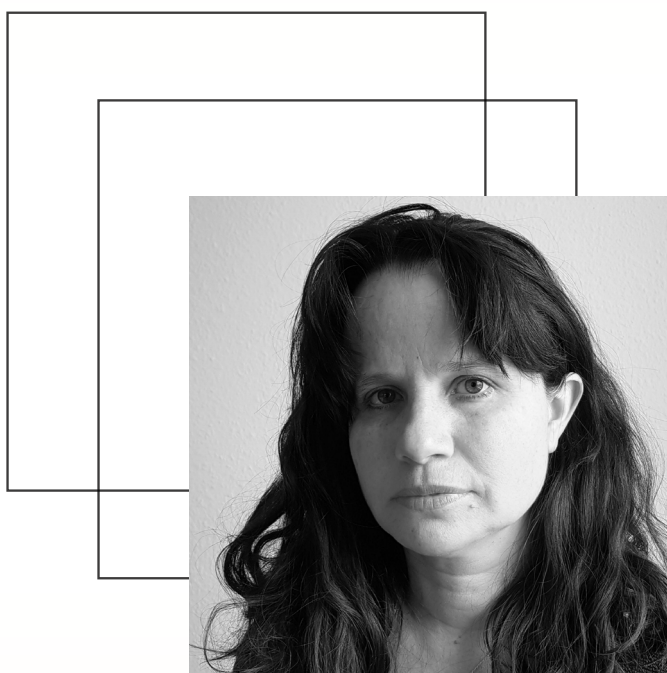
Mere access to digital platforms should not be confused with effective participation in public life.

Leisure time should not be a privilege, since it is in those moments when speculation, imagination, and discovery can be exercised and, therefore, creativity can be developed.

DÉJÀ VU

Ana María Millán

Visual artist and freelance curator (Colombia)



When Steven Henry Madoff, who was the moderator of the panel in which I presented this text, asked me to make a diagnosis of the current context in Colombia from my perspective as a female artist, I thought of many things in relation to the pandemic and the relocation situations that we have experienced, such as sensory limitations, not being able to say goodbye to our lost loved ones, the installation of field hospitals, the questionable management of the health crisis and the lack of empathy in the face of these issues. But, above all, I thought about how the political climate left by the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 was conducive to the escalation of totalitarianism in Europe.

The point of origin of my reflection is a story from years ago, told and repeated many times, although it is more relevant today than ever. As my colleague Wilson Diaz explains: “In the midst of the desperate and urgent need to expand the limitations and clarify the causes of the frustration and failure that could be felt in the early 1990s, the questions and gestures in the void of a generation emerging from the economic collapse following the era of excess and waste of the 1980s resonate in the memory. In our country, the 1990s were also the time of the resurgence of the Do It Yourself movement, with economic recession included, with the isolation from our most powerful neighbor in the midst of a war that redefined, at least for us, the scope of that word. There was also public corruption, which is usual in our history, accompanied by the lack of compassion and bad intentions that have characterized our governing classes.”

In the late 1990s, as students and professors of the Departmental School of Fine Arts in the city of Cali, we formed Helena Producciones with the aim of giving continuity to an event that had originated thanks to the artists Juan Mejía and Wilson Díaz: the Cali Performance Festival, whose first version was held in an old billiard hall in the city. **But, above all, it emerged as a platform for dialogue and action for a generation of artists framed within the aforementioned conditions of precariousness and lack of hope.** The Cali Performance Festival consisted of a series of conferences and a day of performances. The second version of the festival was held at the Sports Coliseum of the Santa Librada public school in Cali, followed by the third and fourth Festival, whose performance days were held at the Museo La Tertulia, which lent us its facilities.

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THEMSELVES.”**

**ANA MARÍA
MILLÁN**

That is when this history begins to weave more relationships with the present. During the first decade of the 2000s, we were invited to be part of an initiative called Cultural Industries of Cali. The invitation did not work out, however, and we were promptly uninvited because our event, our initiative and our questions did not generate box office. This story is still relevant. It is what is happening with neoliberal economies such as the orange economy since, when the state is released from its responsibility for culture, art is threatened and cultural actors are vulnerable. Because, just like any other group, artists are a sector that is not only being made vulnerable by the pandemic, but also by current cultural policies.

It was because of these reflections on artistic practice that, in parallel with the Cali Performance Festival, the Mobile School of Knowledge and Social Practice was founded as “...the development of research and pedagogical practice activities conducted by Helena Producciones in various projects in the central and western region of the country since 1998. These projects have been carried out in the midst of practice with the community and in structures external to formal systems of artistic and traditional education. The Mobile School of Knowledge and Social Practice arises from these experiences that have allowed closer approaches to the cultural, environmental, political, historical, social, and economic realities of the communities than contact through predetermined systems of cultural exchange.” The School is based on questions posed by various deschooling theories, such as: What can you teach? What do you want to learn? These kinds of exchanges have also been implemented at the Ivan Illich School in Beta-Local, Puerto Rico, and at the Garage School in Bogota.

Art does not solve anything, but it shines a light on things to be solved and is capable of initiating processes that come from the people themselves. The Helena Producciones text about the School states that “In 2007, in the Pacific region, the Ministry of Culture’s Research Laboratories for Creation in the Arts programs joined with Helena Producciones’ Mobile School of Knowledge and Social Practice in a proposal called Creation Research Laboratory for the South Pacific: Cauca, Valle and Nariño. The proposal is designed, managed and produced in the nascent structure of the School. In 2008 the Mobile School of Knowledge worked with three communities with diverse cultural and historical identifications in the department of Cauca: Capellanías, a former seat of an Afro-descendant community; Caquiona, an indigenous reservation;

Mercaderes, a mestizo community of colonial tradition. For 2009, the Mobile School of Knowledge worked on a project based on the need to generate spaces in Puerto Tejada (Cauca) for historical dialogue through resources such as oral narration, drawing, video, text production and research. The project was initially formulated to support the Machete Fencing School of Puerto Tejada; however, it did not focus solely on fencing, but also on other aspects. During the process, the Monteoscuro 1897 group was founded as a collective for research and historical discussion. In 2010, Helena Producciones held a symposium in the city of Popayán that asked what an artist lives on in Colombia.” Today, 10 years after that symposium, reviewing the archive of Helena Producciones—which is freely available on the Internet—my diagnosis of the present in Colombia, from my perspective as a woman artist, is that we are living the same story we did a decade or two ago. What was thought to be resolved never was and has come to the surface.

In that sense, education and creativity must respond to the needs of the sector in relation to student and social movements, raising discussions around its own history and the historical debt in general.

How can a country establish clear cultural policies if the lessons of history are questioned and, in many instances, have been abolished? Without historical reflection, we will continue repeating history over and over again, as we are doing now.

And today, we artists in Colombia are concerned that a potential tax reform in the country will affect the Film Law (or Law 814), for example, which has been fundamental for extensive film production in recent years in the country. **Art cannot solve anything, but it can put cards on the table, because art not only produces information and entertainment, as neoliberal policies claim, but also builds heritage, memory, worlds, and long-term relationships. Technique must put itself at the service of this discussion or, otherwise, it will not have solid pillars or columns to support itself and will continue to repeat, without resolving, history.** In this context, I have developed a role-playing project, where historical problems are brought to a current place and are spoken by fictitious characters that allow, in a given physical and temporal space—as is the game—to think, for a moment, about narratives. Bringing old problems through fictional characters that allow imagination as a tool and possibility, but at the same time verifying that reality is still the same, that the problems have not yet been resolved and that the historical debt is still in force.

To conclude, I quote my friend, artist and partner in Helena Producciones, Claudia Patricia Sarria-Macías: “first let’s try to build a house where we can all fit, and then we will see how to adapt it.” And, above all, let’s talk about territory in a country where agrarian reform has not yet taken place and is more urgent than ever, because the problem continues to be one of land.

IN BRIEF...

The precariousness evidenced by the pandemic is a reminder of the fragility of some social and economic structures.

Art, like crises, can reveal dynamics that need to be changed.

Artists are subject to precariousness and material limitations.

Art can help us understand our past and our current situation, and it can be a tool to plan our future.

ON THE WAY TO HEALING

Exhibition curated by

Manuela Reyes

Senior Associate and curator, Inter-American
Development Bank

Steven Henry Madoff

Chair of the Masters in Curatorial Practice program,
School of Visual Arts (United States)



Five leading artists and creative collectives in Latin America and the Caribbean were specially commissioned to produce new works to be premiered online during the *Healing a Broken World* Summit held on April 22 and 23, 2021. These five works follow the metaphor that the Summit's curators devised in relation to the overall theme of healing a broken world—the pandemic era we are all experiencing profoundly as we look toward beneficial changes that countries and the cultural producers within them can make in response to our altered world.

Artists have the special gift of highlighting and imaginatively addressing society's most challenging issues, and the works premiered at the Summit—which range metaphorically from cleaning a wound to removing the bandage once the wound is healed—powerfully visualize some of these issues. In a sense, they perform acts of healing through both symbolic and explicit articulations of the problems we continue facing and the possibilities of creative solutions.



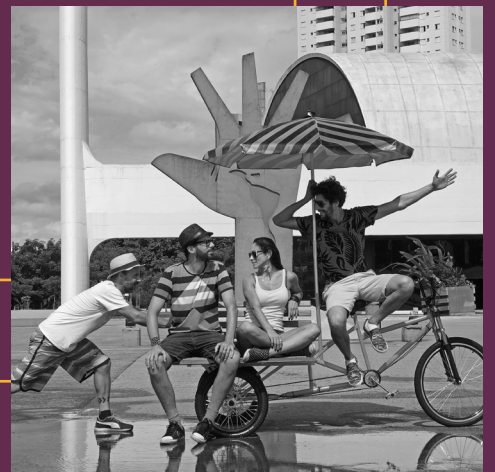
Virtual exhibition of *Healing a Broken World* at IDB's Cultural Center in Washington, DC. Click on the image to take the virtual tour.

STEP #1 _

MAKE SURE
YOU HAVE
CLEANSED
THE WOUND
COMPLETELY

BIJARI

Brazil



Cura, 2021 (*Healing*, 2021)

Video performance



In the video *Cura*, the Brazilian creative collective Bijari performs an urban intervention in which abandoned cars on the streets and deserted lots of São Paulo are transformed into micro-gardens, where nature thrives. The video is the latest in a series of performances that began in 2007, capturing these maverick acts of renewal, leaves sprouting from rusting metallic bodies, and the routines of city days upended with these sudden detours into green moments of relief. The work is a mirage of another possible city, of rethinking what our cities might recover to become better places to live. The project underpins urban issues such as the need to reimagine urban ecology—flows, resources, territories, histories, and rhythms—and the speculative dynamics of sprawling urban growth.

Cura is a direct comment on how urban morphology was configured, based on the technological imperative of exclusive, individual, and unfortunately polluting means of transportation. The impact extends beyond urban design and transportation infrastructure—the carbon footprint of heavy construction and the dependence on internal combustion engines and their rippling effects as they embed themselves not only in our cityscapes, but in the health of our bodies and communities. *Healing* performs the action of cleaning a wound of the city. The car as a paradigm of urbanism conceals the very idea of nature, while it instills ideas of economic hierarchies and veers away from a sense of common health and shared wealth that are precisely what nature offers each and all of us. Bijari believes that the upheaval of the current crisis gives us the chance to reinvent what “urban” can and must mean. The surprise of the green car symbolizes this need to rethink and re-educate, to depressurize, to slow down, and finally, to heal.

HEALING
A BROKEN
WORLD

STEP #2 _

MAKE SURE
THE WOUND
IS PROPERLY
SEALED

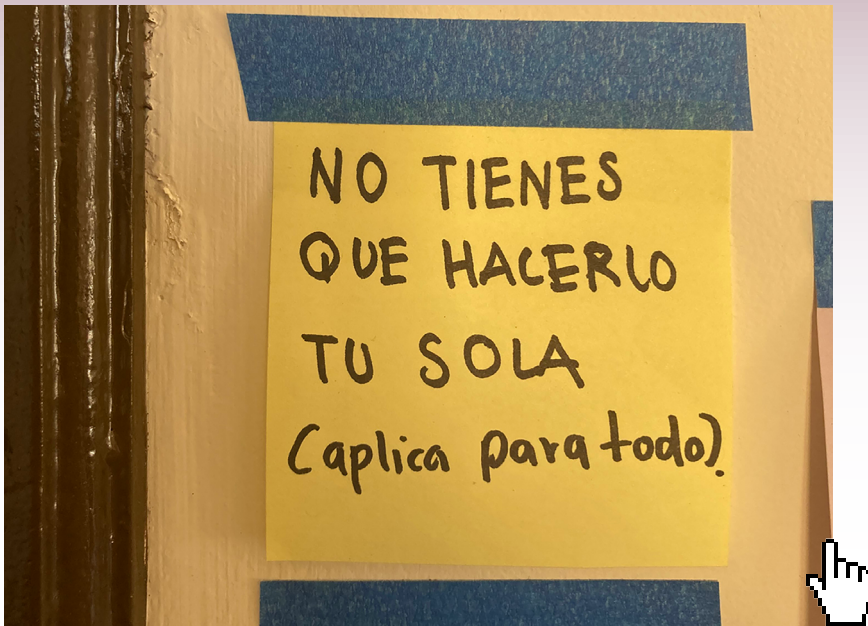
LORENA WOLFFER

Mexico



Almanac of Daily Repair, 2021

Video intervention



Almanac of Daily Repair, by Mexican artist Lorena Wolffer, presents the record of people's responses to the "Pact for the Other Pandemic." The pact calls for all members of the public to commit themselves to the ethical task of eradicating all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination within their communities and larger societies. It reflects on the fact that if violence against women was already a worldwide "pandemic" before 2020, its impact and scope has only magnified during the last year. International agencies around the globe have reported on the differentiated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's lives. In addition to demanding that states fulfill their obligation to safeguard women's lives and rights, *Almanac of Daily Repair* proposes a radical cultural transformation to stop reproducing all forms of gender-based violence within our immediate realms: in our own daily actions and those enacted by members of our communities.

Wolffer's powerful work is a metaphor for sealing and protecting the wound from further exposure to the infection of violence, creating a call to action to support and defend women through building cooperative and sustainably equitable communities. The metaphor of oxygen-rich red blood cells arriving to build new tissue that creates a type of scaffolding refers to the repair process Wolffer aims to address by encouraging this cultural metamorphosis at a micropolitical level. Being a participatory work, signatories of the pact are asked to document the changes they put in effect through photographs and videos uploaded on social media with the mentioning of #AlmanacOfDailyRepair and #AlmanaqueDeReparaciónDiaria.

STEP #3 _

REDRESS THE WOUND AGAINST OLD INFECTIONS

MARÍA JOSÉ MACHADO

Ecuador



La silla vacía, 2021 (*The Empty Chair*, 2021)

Action video



HEALING
A BROKEN
WORLD

*"If we can't even afford water,
how are we going to afford a computer?"*

—Anonymous mother, Guayaquil

María José Machado's action, *La silla vacía*, offers a visual poetry activated by the use of an empty chair. The chair is a tool for participation as a symbolic response to the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador—a tool for *listening* to the specific problems within our communities, of *seating* ourselves on top of these problems, so to speak, to think productively about equally specific ways to solve them through actions that lead to actual legislative change. During the video, the artist performs a tour of the facades of various educational buildings—kindergartens, schools, and universities—spaces dedicated to pedagogy as they are observed in their current calamitous state, many of them closed for a year already due to the global pandemic. During the tour, the voices of children, teenagers, and young adults are heard in response to a single question: How will art help us overcome the pandemic?

La silla vacía is a reflection on how digitization and scarce technological resources in education and public health systems have generated catastrophic results. Machado creates a sense of hope, believing that this lost generation can recuperate through play and learning, improvisation and adaptation, as well as by exploring ideas to improve education and consequently every life and every community. The explicit symbolism of carrying the load, of moving with this chair as a *mochila* (backpack), and of what it means in the context of a *minga* (a collective process aiming towards one goal), proffers that sense of care implicit in the education we must offer in cities, in the countryside, as well as through the expressive means of cultural creations to heal and rebuild our societies.

Machado believes that this vista of hope neither begins nor ends with a vaccine, for it must first lie in the capacity for empathy, caring for the social body ruined by inequity. *La silla vacía* refers to the step of redressing the wound, not leaving things in a state of partial work. Vigilance to ensure that our methods and attention are complete, that we follow through, is what the artist performs in this journey from one educational site of potential to the next—both art and education joined as cathartic spaces for learning as healing, for not only visions of transformation but realizations of policy.

STEP #4 _

REST AT HOME

CHRISTOPHER COZIER

in collaboration with **Amir Denzel Hall, Robert Young, Suelyn Choo** and **Luis Vasquez La Roche**
(Trinidad and Tobago)



Action in the Yard, 2021

Video performance



The artist Christopher Cozier, working in Trinidad, has invited four fellow local artists to improvise a series of unique actions, each in their own style, that address the particular histories of their Caribbean sense of burden and belonging, of what Cozier calls “the perpetual process of healing and transforming that is endemic to his culture.” The work takes the idea of assembly as the tutelary spirit for this multipart collective performance that is itself an assemblage of viewpoints and personal narratives not so much spoken as voiced through idiosyncratic acts of expression, taking into account social conditions of labor, the troubling legacies of bodies and the concept of property, and the powers of negotiation and adaptation that go beyond the moment of the current pandemic to redress the wounds of past and present, striking out toward the territory of the future

These actions live in a symbolic register of determination, the grit of present realities, and the complexities of what home and recuperation mean as embodied in improvisational sequences of walking into the “bush,” submitting to water, and moments of gathering that exemplify trust. Along with Cozier, artists Hall, Young, Choo, and Vasquez La Roche explore heritage, gender, sexuality, spirituality, the weight of colonialism, and the liberation of black bodies. To “rest at home” becomes in this collective work an inquiry into a space beyond a specific place that is always in a condition of inquiry, innovation, renovation, and the ongoing work of repair.

STEP #5 _

REMOVE
THE BANDAGE
ONCE
THE WOUND
IS HEALED

NICOLE L'HUILLIER & PATRICIA DOMÍNGUEZ

Chile



Leche holográfica, 2021 (*Holographic Milk*, 2021)

Video animation and sound art



The artists Nicole L’Huillier and Patricia Domínguez have joined forces to create *Leche holográfica* (*Holographic Milk*), a meditative *rogativa* or plea, a harmonic incitation composed of many elements that helps us to imagine futures based on self-sustaining production rather than extraction, as well as a communion of sounds and images that flow in the sweetness of the *Leche holográfica* and the *Gran Madre*’s nurturing songs. We received her *chorro* of information—a vibration of sonic wisdom that inspires us and carries us forward as we navigate these turbulent times.

The *Leche holográfica* nurtures the *porvenir* with the data of the future. We drink it, we swim in it, we live in it, accessing our cosmic past through it. We have forgotten this, but we carry all the information we need to move forward within us. We now have to learn how to activate it. Spirituality and the quantum realm do not regard distances. As an effort to remember, the artists invite you to dive with them into a shapeshifting quantum trip of connection from the quartz and silicon that conform our bones, the center of the Earth, and the chips of our electronic devices in order to call for what is common to us. We become many as we listen and travel through different symbolic and physical registers and learn through multiple temporalities of planetary fractals in alliance with the digital kingdom.

AFTERWORD: FRAMING A FUTURE OF CHANGE THROUGH CULTURE

Gustavo Dudamel

Music & Artistic Director, Los Angeles Philharmonic
Music Director, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra
of Venezuela & Paris Opera
Co-Chair, Dudamel Foundation
(Venezuela / United States)



We know that art and culture have always been a space of inspiration and well-being for our communities, and particularly so during the pandemic. In this sense, the Inter-American Development Bank's *Healing a Broken World* Summit, held in April 2021, came at just the right time. I firmly believe that it is in moments like these that we need to come together as a society. **For this reason, I joined the efforts of the IDB that, in turn, joined forces with an alliance of cultural institutions from the Americas, to highlight the role of art, culture, artists, and creatives in the region's recovery.** This recovery, which urgently needs to be economic, must also be one of social healing. Society as a whole has been deeply battered, and culture, arts, and identity can help in the healing, at such a historical moment. Now is the time when we need to sit down as a global community to propose solutions for our shared future.

We must reflect on how art and culture offer a space to promote collective imagination, transform lives and change the world, which is precisely what drives all my work as an artist and as a human being. Art and culture connect and inspire us, especially in these challenging times. Now is the time to unite and heal our societies, and the transformative power of culture can help us shape a better future for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the *Healing a Broken World* Summit was an important contribution to this discussion.

Culture is a force capable of generating profound social change in a region with great creative potential such as Latin America and the Caribbean. Throughout my artistic career, I have sought to facilitate access to the arts for people in communities without access to them. I'm a fierce advocate of music education and social development through art. As a kid, I became part of the National Network of Youth and Children's Orchestras and Choirs of Venezuela (El Sistema), an extraordinary program of artistic and musical training started in 1975 by Maestro José Antonio Abreu. Inspired by El Sistema, and together with Los Angeles Philharmonic and its community allies, we

started YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles) in 2007, a project that benefits over 1,300 musicians by offering instruments, musical training, academic support, and leadership training. Also, inspired by the musical experiences and mentors of my childhood, in 2021 I created the Dudamel Foundation, a non-profit organization that aims to promote access to music as a human right and catalyst for learning, integration, and social change. Over the years, the Dudamel Foundation has set out to provide tools and opportunities for young people to shape their creative futures through various programs. **I firmly believe in the power of art and music to transform lives, inspire and change the world.** Through my presence on the podium, and my tireless support of arts education, I have introduced classical music to new audiences around the world and helped provide access to the arts to countless people and communities without access to them.

“CULTURE IS A FORCE CAPABLE OF GENERATING PROFOUND SOCIAL CHANGE IN A REGION WITH GREAT CREATIVE POTENTIAL SUCH AS LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.”

The communities of the creative ecosystem have the capacity to find solutions and ways of renewal through art and creativity, at the crossroads between culture and social urgency. Arts play an essential role in the creation of a more just and peaceful society. Music teaches attention and discipline, mutual respect, a spirit of collaboration, and the kind of values that make us better citizens of the world. The visionary attitude of artists, musicians, and creative people is central

to help us find ways to heal, re-shape and recover as a society. Artists and creatives have the power not only to visualize our hopes but to propose alternatives and creative processes that generate new approaches.

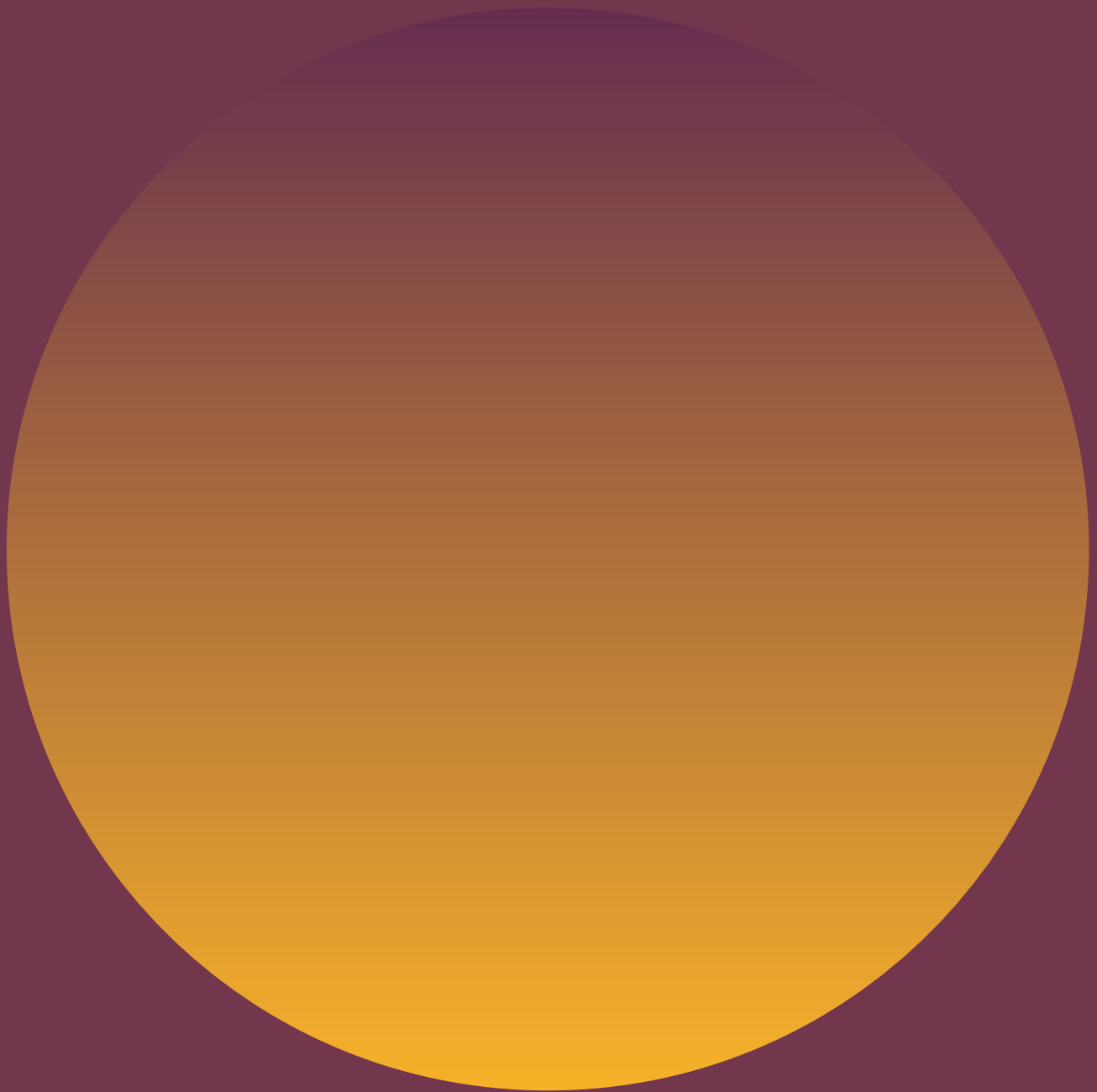
During this pandemic, more than ever, we have seen the immense value of culture: it has accompanied and inspired us during this time. Both artists and cultural institutions, even with their doors closed, have accompanied people, creating spaces to connect during the tough quarantines. While I was quarantined in Los Angeles, I promoted several programs. One of them was “At Home with Gustavo,” a new radio show I did from my house. I have devoted even more time and energy to my mission of bringing music to young people from all over the world. For me, and I imagine for many other people as well, music, the arts, and culture in general, have been what brings people together, even when we are separated. Right now, it may be more important than ever to find ways to connect and find comfort and inspiration.

“WE NEED TO LISTEN TO OUR REGION’S CREATIVE PEOPLE, VOICE CULTURE AND ARTS IN THE PRESENT RECOVERY, AFTER THE HISTORICAL TRAUMA THAT OUR REGION AND THE WORLD HAVE GONE THROUGH.”

Culture must be part of the post-pandemic recovery. As stated by Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, “the upcoming recovery will determine who we will be in the years to come. Culture cannot be forgotten in national plans, because there will be no economic recovery without culture.”⁴¹ **Indeed, art and culture cannot be forgotten in this stage of recovery. Given a crisis, artists are usually the first responders. They imagine visionary changes for society and help in the healing of our communities.** That is what we have seen throughout the present historical pandemic. The vision of artists may inspire innovative ways to channel our communities into greater levels of collaborative social participation, and of inclusive economic and cultural growth, from now on. Such moments of crisis are also moments of opportunity, of collective re-imagining. We need to listen to our region’s creative people, voice culture and arts in the present recovery, after the historical trauma that our region and the world have gone through. It is the moment to repair, heal, and inspire our communities. I want to invite you to keep on inspiring us and to re-imagine together a future that is more just, inclusive, and peaceful, through the power of art and culture.

⁴¹ More information available on: <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-funds-initiatives-boost-creative-industries-and-urges-decision-makers-include-culture>

CONCLUSION AND PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION



The designers of the *Healing a Broken World* Summit set out to energize the development process in Latin American and the Caribbean by bringing together professional communities that rarely interact: artists, curators and leaders of cultural institutions on the hand, government officials and development experts on the other. The goal, in Steven Henry Madoff's words, was to enable new "pathways of governmental cooperation toward actual change" by placing cultural figures in the context of elected officials and public policy specialists who—in popular perception—are the ones responsible for "fixing" things such as unemployment, crime or pollution.

The reality, of course, is that governments alone are rarely capable of bringing about the transformations that our societies aspire to—certainly not in the four to-six-year timeframes imposed by democratic election cycles. Systemic or structural change is the product of infinitely complex interactions of ideas, institutions, social movements, natural disasters, individual leaders, geopolitics, technological breakthroughs and popular culture. Perhaps because of their awareness of this reality, the authors of these essays resist the temptation to offer traditional "policy recommendations" and to suggest, for example, how governments should reduce the cost of attending a university or lower carbon emissions in public transportation.

Instead, they offer multiple insights into the process of achieving change, along with suggestions for new paradigms or approaches that should guide the search for consensus in the post-pandemic world. **Most of these suggestions are grounded in a passionate critique of the past, and a rejection of traditions that perpetuated racial, cultural, gender or class-based prejudices.**

Without attempting to summarize the rich range of ideas in these essays, we see four principles for action that are relevant to almost any area of public policy.

1. Use culture as a vehicle to listen and understand.

A recurring theme in the social protest movements that have rocked Latin American and Caribbean countries in recent years has been the disconnection between government leaders and the frustrations articulated by ordinary people. **In their essays, María Belén Sáez de Ibarra, Amanda de la Garza and Victoria Noorthoorn all touch on the urgency of reinventing cultural institutions in order to create spaces where all segments of society can meet, learn, dialogue and express their aspirations and concerns.** For de la Garza, museums have a duty to contribute to the public arena on issues that go far beyond art itself. She claims that this requires a sort of "active listening" that "can read and take the temperature of a particular social sensibility in a specific context." When institutions experiment with new approaches to such active listening, they can "catalyze processes that generate long-term bonds among individuals with common interests." For Noorthoorn, director of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, active listening meant commissioning all new content from artists during the pandemic, instead of continuing to exhibit materials from the museums' collections and archives.

Such insights are clearly applicable to the practice of development—particularly in infrastructure projects that impact local communities in multiple ways. Traditional "community consultations" for such projects would undoubtedly be more effective if they borrowed or adapted some of the vibrant outreach and engagement practices described by these museum directors.

"WE SHOULD ALL ENDEAVOR TO FOSTER THE RECOVERY OF OUR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS AS PART OF THE WIDER RENEWAL THAT OUR COMMUNITIES OUR CLAMORING FOR."

2. Empower critical thinking and strategic participation by citizens.

A second principle for action proposes arming citizens with the tools they need to effectively examine contemporary reality and participate in the construction of collective goals. In his essay, Luis Camnitzer calls for ensuring that all citizens can perform the acts of “speculation, imagination and discovery” that will be fundamental to renewing our societies and economies. He warns against reserving this role exclusively for artists, cultural institutions or other elites, and states that mere access to digital platforms and the internet should not be confused effective participation in public life. **The only solution is to strengthen and transform education so that everyone acquires the cognitive and analytical skills necessary to collectively improve society.**

In this respect, Camnitzer’s essay echoes long-standing calls to reform the region’s education systems and to reinforce the teaching of disciplines such as history, literature and philosophy that are the basis of critical thinking. **His ideas are also complementary of the movement to improve democracy through digital platforms that enable citizens to directly interact with legislators and scrutinize the use of public funds—a key deterrent of corruption.**

3. Balance human aspirations with the needs of nature.

Citing the consequences of the climate crisis, widespread environmental degradation and the rapacious exploitation of natural resources, several authors recommend a complete reframing of the concept of sustainability. **Instead of the anthropocentric conception in which the natural world exists primarily to benefit human development, they propose one where the rights of all living creatures are given comparable weight to those of *homo sapiens*.** As María Belén Sáez de Ibarra puts it, “...we must hurry to define new terms for a new social contract, ‘a natural contract,’ a contract with life.” Such a contract must involve new ways of assigning value to natural resources and an explicit accounting for how today’s decisions will affect future generations of people, plants and animals.

4. Aim for long-term impact.

Charles Landry writes that culture and creativity can help to address the deepest faultlines that divide our societies, divisions that are “so profound, intractable and contentious” that they can “take a long time—perhaps 50 years, 100 years or more” to be resolved. Several other contributors also express a sense of humility about the span of time needed to bring about truly lasting transformations. In a culture of instant gratification, viral hits, and ephemeral digital fads, it can be difficult to gain support for any undertaking that will take a generation or more to bear fruit. And yet in the world of development, there are few so-called “quick wins.” Cleaning and restoring an urban river, modernizing a judicial system, decarbonizing an energy sector—all require decades of sustained attention and commitment.

María Belén Sáez de Ibarra argues that artists have the ability to connect people’s past and present with their hopes for tomorrow, and to engage our imaginations so that we feel invested in our future selves. That is why the IDB, as a development bank, sees the cultural and creative sectors as essential allies in every aspect of its work. By investing in these sectors, policymakers are ensuring that their societies will have the intellectual and emotional capacity to undertake the hard work of listening, consensus building, critical thinking and long-term goalsetting.

No matter where we live or work, and regardless of our political and ideological inclinations, we should all embrace the principles proposed in these essays. And we should all endeavor to foster the recovery of our cultural and creative sectors as part of the wider renewal that our communities our clamoring for. There is no better way to join the technical and the quotidian, and no faster means to heal our broken world.

**ABOUT
THE AUTHORS,
ARTISTS,
AND
COLLECTIVES**

BIJARI

Bijari is a collective formed by architects, artists, designers, and video-makers that develops projects at the cross section of art and tactical urbanism, aided by a diverse range of media such as sculpture, video, and urban intervention. Based in São Paulo, the group is interested in how the narratives of power are constantly shaping and reshaping the built environment and its imagery, while also confronting the so-called suburban cultures. The public art projects that result from their research seek to create friction between the realities produced by the art discourses and everyday practices that shape new political and poetical territories. Bijari has exhibited in venues such as the Havana Biennial (2003); Collective Creativity, Kassel (2005); Estrecho Dudoso–Teor/ética, Costa Rica (2006); MDE11, Medellín (2011); The Creative Time Summit (2012); *Talking to Action*, USA (2017); and the Centre Régional de la Photographie, France (2019).

TATIANA BILBAO

Tatiana Bilbao started her studio in 2004 with the aim of integrating social values, collaboration, and sensitive design approaches to architectural work. The firm's work is informed by research, allowing it to design for diverse circumstances and scenarios of reconstruction or crisis. Prior to opening her office, Bilbao was an advisor at the Ministry of Development and Housing of the Government of the Federal District of Mexico City. During this period, she was part of the General Development Directorate of the Advisory Council for Urban Development in the City. Her accolades include the Kunstpreis Berlin (2012), Emerging Voice from the Architecture League of New York (2010), the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture Prize from the LOCUS Foundation (2014), as well as the Impact Award 2017 Honorees from Architizer A+ Awards, the Tau Sigma Delta Gold Medal (2020), and the Marcus Prize Award (2019).

LUIS CAMNITZER

Luis Camnitzer is a Uruguayan artist who moved to the United States in 1964. Prior to that, he studied sculpture and architecture at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, Universidad de la República, Montevideo, and sculpture and engraving at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich. A two-time recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship (1961 and 1982), he is an Emeritus Professor at the State University of New York. Camnitzer was also curator of Emerging Art at the Drawing Center, New York (1999–2006), and pedagogical curator at the 6th Mercosur Biennial, Porto Alegre (2007). He represented Uruguay at the Venice Biennale (1988), and showed his work at the Whitney Biennial, New York (2000) and Documenta XI, Kassel (2002). He has also written several books, including *Didáctica de la liberación: arte conceptualista latinoamericano* and *Arte, Estado y no he estado*, both of which received Uruguay's National Literature Award for Art Essays (2010 and 2014). His work can be found in over 40 international museums.

CHRISTOPHER COZIER

Christopher Cozier is an artist who lives and works in Trinidad and Tobago, and is the co-director of Alice Yard. He was awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2004) and is a Prince Claus Award laureate (2013). Whether through his notebook drawings or installations derived from recorded staged actions, Cozier investigates how Caribbean historical and current experiences can inform his understandings of the wider contemporary world. His work has been shown at the 5th and 7th Havana Biennials; *Infinite Island*, Brooklyn Museum (2007); *Afro Modern: Journeys through the Black Atlantic*, TATE Liverpool (2010); *Entanglements*, Broad Museum, Michigan (2015); *Relational Undercurrents*, Museum of Latin American Art, L.A. (2017); and *The Sea is History*, Historisk Museum, Oslo (2019). Cozier also participated in the public program of the 10th Berlin Biennial (2018) and exhibited in the 14th Sharjah Biennial (2019).

PATRICIA DOMÍNGUEZ

Bringing together experimental research on ethnobotany, healing practices, and the corporatization of well-being, the work of Patricia Domínguez focuses on how neoliberalism perpetuates colonial practices of extraction and exploitation. Recent solo exhibitions include *Madre Drone*, CentroCentro, Madrid (2020); *Cosmic Tears*, Yeh Art Gallery, New York (2020); *Green Irises*, Gasworks, London (2019); and *Llanto Cósmico*, Twin Gallery, Madrid (2018). She participated in the Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2021), and Transmediale, Berlin (2021). She holds an MA in Studio Art from Hunter College, New York, and a certificate in Botanical Art Illustration from the New York Botanical Garden. In 2021, she received the SIMETRÍA prize to participate in a residency at CERN, Switzerland. Her writings have appeared in *Health* (2020) from MIT Press, among others. She is currently director of the ethnobotanical platform, Studio Vegetalista.

AMANDA DE LA GARZA

Curator and art historian, Amanda de la Garza is the general director of Visual Arts and of the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Her career has been focused on contemporary art and archival exhibitions, specifically on the intersections between contemporary art, literature, dance, and documentary photography. She has curated solo shows of artists such as Harun Farocki, Hito Steyerl, Vicente Rojo, Jeremy Deller, Isaac Julien, and Jonas Mekas, among others. Also, she has developed an independent curatorial practice in Mexico and abroad, co-curating the 17th Photography Biennial of Centro de la Imagen and the exhibition *Lecturas de un territorio fracturado*, the first overview of Museo Amparo's contemporary art collection. She has published essays, interviews, and reviews in catalogs, books, and journals.

GUSTAVO DUDAMEL

Gustavo Dudamel is a Venezuelan musician, composer and conductor, who is the music director of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, of the Opéra National de Paris and, since 2009, of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which, under his direction, has secured its place as one of the leading orchestras in the world. Dudamel's talent is widely recognized and he is one of the most decorated conductors of his generation. Among his many honors, he has received Spain's 2020 Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts, the Americas Society Cultural Achievement Award in 2016, and was inducted into l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres as a Chevalier in Paris in 2009. Additionally, Dudamel was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in 2009. His extensive, multiple-Grammy Award-winning discography includes 57 releases, including recent Deutsche Grammophon LA Phil recordings of the complete Charles Ives symphonies and Andrew Norman's *Sustain* (both of which won the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance).

VOLUSPA JARPA

Voluspa Jarpa's work involves extensive research and art pieces that delve into the nature of the archive, memory, and the cultural and symbolic notion of social trauma. Her most important solo exhibitions include *En nuestra pequeña región de por acá*, Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2016), and *L'effet Charcot*, La Maison de l'Amérique Latine, Paris (2010), among others. She has also participated in international group exhibitions such as *Altered Views*, Chilean Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennale (2019); *Proregress*, 12th Shanghai Biennale (2018); *Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold War*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017–2018); and the 31st São Paulo Biennial (2014), among others. In 2020, she received the Julius Baer Art Prize for Latin American Female Artists.

CHARLES LANDRY

Charles Landry is a widely acclaimed speaker, author, and innovator who has worked with cities in over 60 countries to help them make the most of their potential. An international authority on using imagination in creating complex and self-sustaining urban change, he attempts to shift how we harness possibilities and resources in reinventing our cities. He is also globally renowned for his "creative city" concept and for his book *The Art of City Making*, which was recently voted the second-best book on cities ever written. His most recent publications include *The Civic City in a Nomadic World* and *The Creative Bureaucracy and Its Radical Common Sense*. His other writings cover a range of topics such as measuring urban creativity, digitized cities, the sensory experience, and the psychology and interculturalism of cities.

NICOLE L'HUILLIER

Nicole L'Huillier is a Chilean transdisciplinary artist, currently based in Boston. Through sounds, vibrations, resonances, and multiple transductions, her work explores more-than-human performativity, from microscopic to cosmic scales; rituals of membranal and resonant architectures; as well as vibrations and sounds as construction materials for spaces, collectivity, identity, and agency. She works at the intersection of music, art, architecture, science, fiction, and technology to explore the pluriverse and alien imaginaries into which we are woven. Nicole is currently a PhD candidate and research assistant at MIT Media Lab, Opera of the Future group. She also holds an MA in Media Arts and Sciences from MIT. In 2020 she was awarded first place for the MIT Harold and Arlene Schnitzer Prize in the Visual Arts, as well as a DAAD fellowship. She was the recipient of the SIMETRIA prize in 2019.

MARÍA JOSÉ MACHADO

María José Machado has a master in Theory and Philosophy of Art and a BA in Visual Arts specializing in Applied Arts. She is an artist, manager, professor, and cultural producer. As an artist, she focuses on action, performance, and installation art. She has participated in several exhibitions such as the DEFORMES Performance Biennial, Chile (2016); the first Interdicta Performance Festival of Bolivia (2018); and the International Cuenca Biennial, Ecuador (2018), where she was named artist of the year. She was also the recipient of the CIFO Grants & Commissions Program Award (2018), which culminated with an exhibition at El Museo del Barrio in New York. Machado's work has been shown in Colombia, Bolivia, USA, Mexico, France, Chile, Argentina, and Spain. Currently, her artistic practice examines the idea of art as a social function, while as a cultural manager she is interested in the research and application of a creative circular economy.

STEVEN HENRY MADOFF

The founding chair of the masters in Curatorial Practice program at the School of Visual Arts in New York, Steven Henry Madoff previously served as senior critic at Yale University's School of Art. He lectures internationally on subjects such as the history of interdisciplinary art, contemporary art, and art pedagogy. He has curated exhibitions internationally over the last 30 years in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. His art criticism, journalism, and theoretical texts have been translated into many languages. Madoff's most recent book is *What About Activism?* (editor) from Sternberg Press. His previous book, *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* from MIT Press, is considered a classic in the field. He holds a PhD in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University.

ANA MARÍA MILLÁN

Ana María Millán's work addresses the politics of animation and fiction in relation to digital cultures and subcultures, violence, gender, and political propaganda. She has developed techniques based on traditional role-playing games to create similar dynamics that result in films and animations. She explores topics such as amateur culture, pop culture, sound territories, and technology, incorporating the possibility of errors in rehearsals. Her work has been shown at the 13th Gwangju Biennale (2021); Art Encounters Biennial, Timișoara (2019); *Ana María Millán, A Solo Exhibition*, Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam (2017); *Immortality for All*, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin (2016); *Frío en Colombia*, Archivo General de la Nación, Bogotá (2015); *Auto-Kino! presented by Phil Collins*, Temporäre Kunsthalle, Berlin (2009); and *I Still Believe in Miracles—Part I and II*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2005).

VICTORIA NOORTHOORN

Since 2013, Victoria Noorthoorn has directed the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, a public museum funded by the Buenos Aires Ministry of Culture. Previously, she was project coordinator of MoMA's International Program (1998–2001), assistant curator at The Drawing Center in New York (1999–2001), and curator at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2002–2004). During her tenure leading the Museo de Arte Moderno, she has been in charge of a transformation process that includes the expansion of the museum—doubling the number of exhibition galleries in 2018—the presentation of 74 national and international shows, and the publication of 84 bilingual books. In addition, the museum's educational project has gained strength and now provides training to over 7,000 public and private school teachers every year. In April 2020, during lockdown, the museum launched its digital program #MuseoModernoAtHome that has actively involved more than eight million people so far.

ERNESTO OTTONE R.

Ernesto Ottone R. is the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO. Prior to this position, Ottone served as Chile's first Minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage from 2015 to 2018. As Minister of Culture, he created a Department of First Peoples, a Migrants Unit and strengthened copyright laws and heritage protections. During this time, he also chaired the Regional Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (2016–2017). From 2011 to 2015, he served as director-general of the Artistic and Cultural Extension Center of the University of Chile, which manages the National Symphony Orchestra of Chile, the Chilean National Ballet, the Chile Symphony Choir and the Vocal Camerata. From 2001 to 2010, he was executive director at the Matucana 100 Cultural Center in Santiago. Ottone holds a master's degree in Management of Cultural Institutions and Policies from the University of Paris IX Dauphine and a BA in theatre from the University of Chile.

MANUELA REYES

Senior associate and curator of the Inter-American Development Bank's Creativity and Culture Unit, Manuela Reyes organizes and curates exhibitions and cultural projects geared towards the IDB's objectives. During her career at the Bank, she has contributed with research, conceptualization, and execution of creative projects about contemporary art in Latin America and the Caribbean. She holds an MA in Curatorial Practice from the School of Visual Arts in New York and a BA in Visual Arts from Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia. She previously worked at The Museum of Modern Art in New York and at the art advisory firm Sokoloff + Associates. As a visual artist, she has exhibited her works in sixteen individual and group shows in different museums and galleries.

MARÍA BELÉN SÁEZ DE IBARRA

María Belén Sáez de Ibarra is a curator, editor, and cultural manager. She studied Law at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá and holds a master's in Environmental and International Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. Following her work with the Colombian Ministry of Culture, where she was an Arts and Heritage advisor, she has been in charge of the Cultural Heritage Direction at Universidad Nacional since 2007. Through a transdisciplinary approach, she has dedicated this public program to artistic commissions and producing large-scale experimental projects. She is a member of the Arts Advisory Board for the Cultural Division of Colombia's Banco de la República, and Fragmentos, Espacio de Arte y Memoria. She was co-curator at the Shanghai Biennale (2018–2019) and has curated exhibitions, musical and theatre productions, monumental works, and peace and mourning actions in an effort to contribute to cultural activism for peace in Colombia and the implementation of the peace agreement.

URBANISMO VIVO - CAROLINA HUFFMANN, CECILIA CIANCIO, ANALÍA HANONO, AND MATIAS LASTRA

Urbanismo Vivo is a team that seeks, through its projects, the connection between citizens and the place where they live, promoting a more friendly, active and humanized city. It works in the territory with three main axes. Innovation: a way of designing processes from a creative point of view, with the objective of creating livable cities. Diversity: the integration of views from the territory. Exchange: collaborative and networked work, both locally and internationally, as an engine of major transformation processes.

LORENA WOLFFER

For over 25 years, the work produced by artist and cultural activist Lorena Wolffer has been an ongoing platform for enunciation and resistance at the intersection between art, activism, and feminism. While her own work addresses issues related to the cultural fabrication of gender and advocates the rights, agency, and voices of women and non-normative individuals, she has also produced, facilitated, and curated dozens of projects with numerous artists in platforms such as museums, public spaces, and television. From the creation of radical cultural interventions with various communities to pioneering pedagogical models for the collective development of situated knowledge, these projects are produced within an inventive arena that underlines the pertinence of experimental languages and displaces the border between so-called high and low cultures. Her work—a stage for the voices, representations, and narratives of others—articulates cultural practices based on respect and equality. She has presented her work widely in Mexico and internationally.

