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Frames of Control: Gonzalo Díaz's History of 1980s Chile

I.

Created during the twilight of the dictatorship, Gonzalo Díaz's installation piece *Banco/Marco de pruebas [Testing Bench/Frame]* (*BMP*) reflects Díaz's perception of the legacy of 1980s Chile. Begun in 1986 and completed in 1989, *BMP* was first exhibited in the Galería de Arte Actual in Santiago. After this show the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery purchased this piece, including it in the fall 1989 exhibition of Latin American art in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center; this exhibition closed in 2001.¹ Díaz's installation piece consists of: a central structure (work bench, two boxes of balusters, and two paintings) that today carries the title of the entire installation; one multimedia piece titled *Catálogo*²; and three multimedia triptychs titled *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*, *Diamela Eltit, la degollada*, and *Zulema Morandé, la escritora* [Figures 1-5].³ In *BMP* Díaz analyzes and deconstructs the 1980s in Chile as a history of control and resistance. The first sections of this paper demonstrate how Díaz addresses institutions of control; the final sections examine how Díaz addresses resistance to this control. As a historical record, this piece is emblematic of the late 1980s as a breaking point after years of repression. My hypothesis is that Díaz constructs *BMP* as a site where control and resistance are in constant tension in order to establish a counter-history of 1980s Chile.

II.

Díaz established himself as a renegade within the Chilean art scene due to his experimental artistic practices. According to Justo Pastor Mellado, "in the present moment of Chilean plastic [art] Gonzalo Díaz is one of the key figures in the repositioning of painting."⁴ A groundbreaking moment was *Historia Sentimental de la Pintura Chilena* (1982). This piece marked "the revitalizing instance [...] an instance of

reactivation, of the re-energization of a pictorial Chilean experience functioning with new critical stimulations.”⁵ Thus, Díaz as an artist was someone whose artistic practices were defined by questioning the authority of the canon. Díaz extended this experimentation into testing the limits of the canvas and surrounding frames. Beginning with *BMP* Díaz’s

Concern with framing and its function in creating limits was to be central to his work [...] the measure of construction and analysis that Gonzalo Díaz brings to each installation requires these to overflow their limits, just as a picture needs the part outside-of-the-picture for its own determination.⁶

In *BMP*, several elements are beyond the frame: the scythe in front of *Catálogo*, the headless horses on each frame’s edge of the triptych panels, and the central structure. Díaz’s experimentation with the limits of the frame also extends to part of *BMP*’s title: Marco de pruebas [Testing Frame]. The title of the piece was affixed to the transparent partition enclosing the installation [Figure 6]. *Banco de pruebas* appeared in all capital letters; the “B” and “N” from Banco were crossed out and an “M” and “r” were added in smaller, cursive font to spell out the title alternative, *Marco de pruebas*. Thus, Díaz gives the option of two titles for this piece.

This option sets the foundation for Díaz’s critical discourse within the piece: in *BMP* Díaz applies his experimental tendency to the deconstruction of authoritative power. Essentially, he reveals the control systems at work through the metaphor of the frame. One example of such a frame is the hopscotch grid in *Catálogo* [Figure 7]. The cells each contain one mortal sin as well as a number. The seven deadly sins are an allusion to how the Catholic Church regulates the lives of Catholics and how these rules literally establish the limits of a believer’s daily life practices. This at first seems like an irreverent critique of how the Church controls the daily lives of Catholics since Díaz

diminishes the severity of mortal sins by transforming them into a child's game.

However, Díaz's interest in the Church as an institution runs deeper; for him, the Catholic Church is a point of critical intrigue.

Another religious symbol that appears throughout *BMP* is Santa Teresa de los Andes [Saint Theresa of Los Andes], the first Chilean-born saint. Colloquially known as Sor Teresa, she appears wearing her nun's habit in three nearly identical reproductions. In the diptych behind the central installation and in *Catálogo* she appears in full-length; while in *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica* Díaz reproduces her headshot [Figures 8-10]. These are the prototypical images of Sor Teresa, which can be found on souvenirs from her sanctuary's gift shop and throughout religious websites. In 1987, Sor Teresa was beatified. According to Díaz, this event took place because "people started generating a myth around her until at last the church—the Vatican—decided that it would be good if, within the next ten years, each one of the countries in Latin America would have its own saint."⁷ Thus, Sor Teresa is a regulating device because she calls people back to the Church and is a reminder of the ideal way to live, by dedicating one's life to god. Hers is an example of an unattainable yet idealized Catholic life. Thus, the Vatican's campaign is another form of controlling Catholic lives.

In response to Sor Teresa's place as a religious icon, Díaz experiments with another women's dead body as a frame over the saint. The pairing between Zulema Morandé, an aristocrat brutally murdered by her husband in 1914, and Sor Teresa appears in *Catálogo* [Figure 9]. In this image Díaz reproduces a police sketch of Morandé's murdered body, including the notes written by a police officer. According to excerpts from the police medical report, Morandé had stab wounds on her left palm, forearm,

abdomen, and neck. In particular, the wound at the neck was the worst: “an extensive wound at the angular level of the lower jaw that encircled the entire neck and finished ten centimeters from its start, leaving only a few centimeters of undamaged skin.”⁸ The report also concluded that Morandé had been stabbed repeatedly in the neck and that this wound ultimately killed her. Díaz presents an outline over a mostly black space, with Morandé’s colors inverted; this highlights the wounds listed in the police report, especially the one on her neck. Over Morandé’s chest, on the left side, is a stab wound with a graph over it and a line with notes: “bruise. Two linear wounds...”⁹ Díaz places the outline of Morandé’s body over Sor Teresa’s full-length portrait. Her white cape gives high contrast to her black underclothes and headpiece. She holds a cross in both hands as the rosary beads hang down the length of her body. The setting and her positioning suggest that this photograph was done formally in a studio. The space next to Sor Teresa is empty, as if this image of Morandé was intended to stand straight next to her but instead floated away.

In comparing these two images, there is significant interchange between both depictions. Both women are portrayed lengthwise. Yet one is overly dressed while the other is nude. Sor Teresa’s white cape, which covers much of her body, is in contrast to Morandé’s black nudity. Her clasped hands are in contrast to Morandé’s open and wounded palms, a possible allusion to Christ on the cross. The white of Morandé’s slit throat recalls Sor Teresa’s high collar. The location of where Sor Teresa’s cross lays is where Morandé received a grave stab wound. Both images betray a scientific or detached coolness that reveals little about the subject. Both women were similar in age, contemporaries of each other, and came from the same social class. Though they died

around the same time, how they died and what their deaths mean in Chilean history are considerably different.

Díaz's use of Morandé as a frame over Sor Teresa can be interpreted in many ways. At first this pairing may seem like a victimization of the saint, where Díaz defiles Sor Teresa perhaps as a form of resistance. However, the Church was not necessarily the enemy in 1980s Chile. The Catholic Church was "the only institution able to retain a more or less independent profile" during the dictatorship.¹⁰ Perhaps because of this, the Church was able to mediate between citizens and the government; for example, the Church documented incidents of torture. Due to the important position enjoyed by the Church, "no all-out counter attack was possible" from the regime.¹¹ It is possible then that Díaz's defiling of Sor Teresa is an in-direct attack on the state. Since Díaz could not openly criticize the regime because of the dangers involved, instead he utilized the Church as a replacement for the state.

However, in this scenario Morandé is just an object. But if her story is taken into account, then another interpretation emerges. The medical examiner, as well as other physicians, concluded that because of the nature of the wounds someone had killed Morandé. The family maid testified having been an unwilling accomplice to the murder and named Morandé's husband as the murderer. His attorneys had several physicians who supported the idea that Morandé, who many said suffered from depression, committed suicide. When Morandé's husband was declared innocent, the public was outraged. *Ilustrado*, an important newspaper from this period, noted how public opinion "condemn[ed] with angry indignation the judicial error that has absolved the El Bordo assassins [...] We find ourselves truly in the presence of a failure of Chilean justice."¹²

Thus, Morandé suffers tragedy twice—her murder and her trial. But what is the relation to Sor Teresa? According to Pastor Mellado, Sor Teresa’s beatification process

Was put in relation with the process followed by Zulema Morandé’s husband, the author of her assassination by slitting her throat, but favored in an initial trial through a corrupt decision. From here it can be understood how this corrupt decision contaminates the process of beatification.¹³

In this interpretation, Morandé’s double tragedy contaminates the saint’s beatification process.

In another interpretation Díaz could be implying that Morandé and Sor Teresa are the same person. For example, if Morandé were rotated and placed in the black space next to the saint, then she could appear as the naked and mutilated version of Sor Teresa. If this upright image were moved to the left and placed over Sor Teresa, the stab wound and the cross would be aligned. Beyond these formal aspects, what are the implications of this figure being one woman?

Since Díaz demonstrates the framing devices at work in various institutions, the notion of experimentation allows him to deconstruct the meaning of these frames. Essentially, by approaching the frame as something to be experimented with Díaz can reveal how institutions administer their control.

III.

Though the Church is a significant institution in *BMP*, the state is the primary institutional agent of control in this piece. One symbol of state control within *BMP* is the Chilean territory. Díaz utilizes the land as a framing device of state control. He analyzes how the state exerts control over how citizens occupy the land, notably in their death.

The military coup d'état, which took place on September 11, 1973, “represented the worst political breakdown in the history of the republic.”¹⁴ After La Moneda, the presidential palace, has been bombed and the sitting president, Salvador Allende had committed suicide, the violence born from the uprising entered a new phase. Towards the end of 1973 a secret police unit was formed, the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional [Directorate of National Intelligence], commonly referred to as DINA. This taskforce “kidnapped people at their homes, on the streets, at workplaces, at the university, or from other public places” and brought them to torture centers in the National Stadium and the infamous Villa Grimaldi in Santiago.¹⁵ Tens of thousands of citizens, deemed subversive enemies, were arrested “and likewise tens of thousands of Chileans were simply banished” joining the ranks of the disappeared.¹⁶ The bodies of the victims would either turn up in mass graves or disappeared entirely, representing a double vanishing of the person and their body.

In this last respect, the state exercised their control of citizens during and after their death. The state has the power to literally make its populace disappear from the face of the earth because the nation's territory is the physical manifestation of the state's domain. Land denotes citizens living within the state's boundaries, like chess pieces on a board; in order to be part of the nation and enjoy, or suffer from, the rights of citizenship, a citizen must live within the borders. These boundaries are another framing device since they literally demarcate the state's power, highlighting what Chile is: the land and the people within the borders. Thus the territory, for the state, is something that frames citizenship. But perhaps the most sinister fact is that since the territory belongs to the

state they can utilize it to hide their crimes against the citizenry, as in the case with mass graves.

Díaz reacts to this totalitarian use of the land through a variety of depictions of the Chilean territory. To begin with, in *BMP* Díaz chooses to illustrate the most formidable landscapes in Chile: the Pacific Ocean, the Andes mountains, and the Atacama Desert. Díaz highlights the land as a frame through the depictions of Chile's natural boundaries; the mountains to the east and the ocean to the west stretch for thousands of miles from north to south [Figure 11]. Chile's borders are especially impenetrable and close the nation off from the rest of the world. Thus, in referencing these natural borders Díaz underscores the state's hostile and domineering stance in controlling the population. The desert presents another level of control in this scheme of landscapes [Figure 12]. In addition to being a border, it is also barrier for the population since life is not very sustainable in this area; thus, the population in the north has always been low. Perhaps because of this desolation, the desert was one of the stops on the Caravan of Death, a military operation initially organized to "revise and speed up the [legal] processes of the detained after the coup d'état."¹⁷ However, the operation became one where the regime's political opponents were executed and their bodies buried in mass graves or disposed in the ocean. The army unit made over forty trips, as it "traveled from town to town in a Puma helicopter, armed with grenades, machine guns and knives. The Puma landed in Cauquenes, La Serena, Copiapo, Antofagasta, Calama in northern Chile and at least one southern city."¹⁸ Many of the bodies of the political prisoners were either buried in the desert or dropped from helicopters into the ocean.

Perhaps the most unique landscape Díaz reproduces contains open and empty graves in one cell of *Catálogo* [Figure 13]. The eerie pits within this scene are in contrast to the flatness of the desert. This image of empty graves represents a reverse order that defies our expectations. For example, when looking at an image of a grave, we literally read the cross and tombstone, move our gaze to the grass carpet beside these monuments, then shift our gaze away from the grave. In Díaz's rendition we begin at an empty grave and once we reach the cross, we know that there is no tombstone since there is no body. The image demands an essential question: what happened to the body?¹⁹

As stated earlier, in many cases the bodies were buried together in mass graves. During the dictatorship, the country lived under the specter of discovering bodies. Less than a month after the coup, despite not having official detainment orders, a police force arrested a group of agricultural workers in Lonquén, a small town south of Santiago. The government repeatedly lied to the families of these workers regarding the whereabouts of their family members. Three years later, the bodies of these men were discovered “through a soldier's confession to a priest. The church went there and found 14 bodies.”²⁰ This became the first discovery of a mass grave of the disappeared and also one of many cases of injustice surrounding the disappeared since the perpetrators of this crime remain free. In 1989, Díaz exhibited an installation inspired by this tragic story titled *Lonquén 10 años* [*Lonquén 10 Years*]. Within a panel of *Zulema Morandé, la escritora* is “a patio in a cemetery where hundreds of persons were buried in 1973. In 1991, this patio was dug up so that the interred (*los desa-parecidos*) could be identified.”²¹ Thus, during this period discovering buried bodies was a palpable reality. In many cases, a body was never recovered. Since the return to democracy in 1989, investigations like the one conducted

by Judge Juan Guzmán, have confirmed the practice of disposing the bodies of political dissidents in the Pacific Ocean.²² In this case, there are no remains, which deprive the families of a material burial. Though the location of the bodies of the disappeared is important, another pressing question is how it was possible to treat humans this way.

One way to approach this question is in rethinking Díaz's use of Morandé's murdered body, where Morandé becomes a symbol of detained political prisoners. In this case, what does Morandé's presence over Sor Teresa represent? According to Pastor Mellado, "the diagrams of the cases of Zulema Morandé and Sor Teresa put under judgment two judicial processes: one civil, the other canonical."²³ However, while Sor Teresa's process guaranteed her place as a revered symbol, Morandé's civil process marked her as someone whose death meant nothing to the state. In death, she received no justice for her murder; thus, Morandé is a *homo sacer*. For Giorgio Agamben, a *homo sacer* is a person "who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed*"; this person's death is condoned because it is done by a sovereign power and because the *homo sacer* is a person essentially outside society.²⁴ Though it was her husband who murdered her, the state condoned the act by declaring him innocent, thus marking Morandé as a marginal citizen. In a similar vein, the disappeared are also *homo sacer*. Their citizenship status was effectively suspended as they were ostensibly tried as enemies of the state. Thus their murder, at the hands of the state, was acceptable.

The desert landscape, open graves, and the ocean symbolize how the government regulated the life of its citizens even after they died. This brings to mind Achille Mbembe's thoughts on necropolitics. Though Mbembe utilized the notion of necropolitics more in the sense of "the subjugation of life to the power of death" with the

implication of non-state sovereigns in contemporary forms of necropower, I found the focus on regulating death rather than life useful in this section.²⁵ Though Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics implies the regulation of death, Mbembe's discussion surrounding necropolitics aided me in thinking about a circumstance where death is the ultimate goal. In the case of the disappeared, their deaths and ultimate vanishing represent the realization of necropolitics.

IV.

Another symbol of state control Díaz addresses in *BMP* is the baluster. Díaz analyzes and deconstructs the regime's version of democracy through this neoclassical motif, which serves as a framing device of state control.

La batalla de Chile, a 1973 documentary by Patricio Guzmán of Allende's final months in office, illustrates the literal destruction of state power. The coup d'état not only usurped Allende as the president of Chile but also destroyed the concepts of the state and democracy. Guzmán's vivid imagery of the bombings of La Moneda, with the concrete balusters exploding into dust, ushered in a state of exception [Figure 14]. For Agamben such a period is characterized not by "the chaos that precedes order but rather the situation that results from its suspension."²⁶ In these moments following the coup the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Augusto Pinochet, assumed the presidency and immediately enacted measures to rebuild Chile. The regime dismantled "such intermediate institutions as political parties and labor unions [in order] to establish direct authority."²⁷ Part of this "national reconstruction" also included repressing the population; for example, citizens were under "a state of siege, called a 9 o'clock curfew."²⁸ Perhaps the most sinister actions were the arrests of political prisoners, carried

out by DINA. The detainment of these prisoners, discussed in the previous section, recalls Agamben's discussion of concentration camps as the primary example of a state of exception.

However, the regime maintained that their government was still a democracy—Pinochet's intentions were to “move Chile toward a new, albeit, ‘protected,’ democracy.”²⁹ The government, perhaps in an effort to diminish their totalitarianism, followed the channels of democracy as they established their power. For example, the destroyed the presidential palace was eventually rebuilt according to the original architect's late eighteenth century plans and re-opened in 1981. The regime also did not obliterate the Constitution but rather revised it: the presidency would now last for eight years, Congress' powers became more limited, and “various institutional mechanisms [were established] to entrench military influence over future governments.”³⁰ Most importantly, “the ‘transitory dispositions’ were to remain in effect for nearly a decade”; here the “dispositions” refer to Pinochet's repressive acts.³¹ This guaranteed a state of exception at the minimum until 1988, when Pinochet's eight-year term ended and a plebiscite would decide whether to continue with the military government. However, the changes made to the Constitution were met with resistance. Ex-President Eduardo Frei Montalva called this project “a case of science fiction, a joke on the country.”³² Frei Montalva's words underscore how sacred these democratic symbols are in Chile. In comparison to other Latin American countries, before the coup Chile had enjoyed a long democracy:

Between 1818 and 1973, Chile experienced two major domestic conflicts: the 1891 civil war which split the ruling class around issues of political organization, and the 1920s crisis which marked the end of the

oligarchical republic, the rise of the middle class, and the emergence of labor organizations³³

Thus Chileans had a strong faith in the symbols supporting their long history of democracy: the Constitution and the presidential palace. Because of this, the regime outfitted their government with these tokens of democracy; to the point where the state of exception “ceases to be referred to as an external and provisional state of factional danger and comes to be confused with juridical rule itself.”³⁴ The state of exception, begun in 1973, was dressed with the cloak of democracy.

Díaz is interested in systems of governance and how state power is transferred to paper and structures. For example, the Chilean Civil Code formed the basis of the “visual operation” of *Unidos en la gloria y en la muerte* (1997).³⁵ The Civil Code is a “monument to the installation of the republic in Chile” that regulates the daily civic life of Chilean citizens.³⁶ In *BMP*, Díaz examines how state power is transferred to structures, particularly architectural elements like the baluster, a typical motif in neoclassical architecture. This style, evident in many governmental buildings in Santiago, “is associated with the birth of the Chilean republic and its political institutions.”³⁷ Thus, state power is instilled in this type of architecture and as an extension of the state, architecture has the potential to frame civic life. Architecture of the state is a conceptual controlling mechanism that keeps the population in check and in order. For example, La Moneda has balusters along the top, proclaiming the importance of this space and creating the illusion of a fortress [Figure 15]. Here the balusters are purely decorative devices that indicate supreme strength. Within a balustrade, a row of balusters that supports a railing, balusters go beyond mere decoration [Figure 15]. Here, the baluster is a weight-bearing element that literally holds structures together.

The baluster is perhaps the most repeated motif in *BMP*. It appears in three-dimensional form in the central installation [Figure 16]. According to the exhibition catalog, Orlando González Prendes, a Chilean sculptor and master stucco-plasterer, made these balusters. González Prendes constructed two types of balusters: ten pristine ones and four decayed-looking ones. The newer balusters are in a box to the left of the central workbench; to the right of the workbench is a trio of decrepit balusters, packed in dirt. The fourth decayed baluster is on the workbench, in the box with the neon rod.

Díaz also depicts balusters through black and white photographs. The balusters appear either in groups or alone. Except for one depiction in *Catálogo* of decayed balusters, the rest of the illustrations are of new balusters. There is little context to the balusters in *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*, especially since they are shown within a larger collage. However, in *Catálogo* there is a diversity of context. The third baluster depiction in *Catálogo* is a singular, new one that is partially in its mold [Figure 17]. The close-up of this object offers a more intimate look at its curves and three-dimensionality.³⁸ A final rendition of the balusters in *BMP* is the baluster outline. This exclusively appears in *Zulema Morandé, la escritora* [Figure 18]. Here the baluster outlines are large; depending on their orientation, they occupy most of the vertical and horizontal space and frame large portions of their respective panels. For example, in one of the panels the baluster frames a landscape, Zulema Morandé's portrait, and some writing. And in at least one of the panels, the baluster outline is in red.

In considering what all these different depictions of the baluster mean, we can begin by thinking about how Díaz literally deconstructs the baluster's materiality, from a physical object to a photo reproduction to an outline. This is perhaps a metaphor of how

Díaz deconstructs the state's power. The state constructs monuments with balusters "to install their vision of the whole, the domination of the totality."³⁹ The baluster, thus, comes to represent all the changes the regime made to Chile as a democracy; notably, the modifications with the Constitution and the presidential palace. And because these were adaptations made to the democratic practices under the state of exception, there is something inverted about the democracy Pinochet creates.

Díaz reacts to the regime's revision of Chile through the decayed balusters; these objects in turn address the inversion ignited by the regime [Figure 19]. They are in direct contrast to the new, pristine balusters; the cause of their decay remains unclear. Díaz's presentation of them packed in dirt inside an old container recalls an archeological dig, as if these balusters had been excavated. In this light, are the balusters metaphors of a hidden truth waiting to be unearthed? Is it possible that these balusters belonged to the original presidential palace and were not destroyed during the bombing? When comparing these balusters to the pristine ones, it becomes apparent that the deterioration of the former prevents them from being used in new construction.

In the presence of the new neo-classical balusters, these decrepit ones signal an inverted world. These balusters represent the ugly side of the revised Chile, illuminating the reversed world of the state of exception. In this inverted world commonly held beliefs are turned upside down. To begin with, the decayed balusters represent the vulnerability of state power. In his revised version of Chile, Pinochet enacted measures to secure his power and his form of democracy. However, his power was not entirely invincible. *La batalla de Chile* illustrates how the destruction of the presidential palace literally enabled Pinochet to build his own version of Chilean democracy. The decayed balusters are a

reminder that despite establishing laws and structures that are intended to last a long time, the state is ultimately vulnerable and nothing guarantees the state's power. Perhaps the decayed balusters are an allusion to the 1988 plebiscite where the dictatorship would end by a vote, not a coup. Thus, in this inverted world, a decayed baluster rather than a new one represents justice.

The balusters also represent the illegitimacy of the new regime, calling attention to the false order they promote. Since Chileans had a strong faith in the symbols supporting that democracy, the Constitution and the presidential palace, tampering with these symbols is unthinkable and inverts the notion of democracy in Chile, calling into question the legitimacy of the new Chile. The manipulations made to Chilean democracy come after the murder of the legitimate democracy. According to Pastor Mellado, "with the 'death moment' of the democracy [...] the fiction of social preservation emerges."⁴⁰ Thus, this "fiction" is comprised of the changes done in the name of the nation. This theme will be explored in the next section of this paper.

V.

Daily life under Pinochet is characterized by biopolitics, in the sense that the regime's repressive measures were enacted to protect and control the lives of citizens. Foucault notes how with the emergence of biopolitics the management of life gained eminence over death: "now it is over life, throughout its unfolding, that power establishes its dominion."⁴¹ In addition to the repressive measures mentioned earlier in this essay, cultural life was also restricted after the coup: "during the early years of the dictatorship, censorship gagged literary and artistic dissension, creating a state of cultural blackout, *apagón cultural*."⁴² However, all these measures were enacted, according to the state, for

the sake of the citizenry: “outward peace and quiet, the *tranquilidad* frequently eulogized by the Junta and its publicists, quickly returned to Chile. To guarantee its continuation, the apparatus of a modern police state was systematically assembled.”⁴³ Thus, in the spirit of biopolitics, repression is enacted in order to preserve the nation.

The notion of state control is especially evident in Diamela Eltit’s novel, *Lumpérica*, published in 1983. In this world, curfews are the norm and the state controls the spaces citizens occupy, like plazas. The plaza is a public space because it is owned and maintained by the state. Moreover, the state attempts to impose their sanctions on public spaces, like plazas, so they may serve as urban decorations. Under Pinochet, the plaza “would go back to being a decoration for the city.”⁴⁴ Robert Neustadt notes how during the 1980s in Chile “the public plaza becomes a superficial façade, a decoration, remodeled by those who represent the nation.”⁴⁵ There is a clear distinction between the non-marginal and marginal figures in *Lumpérica* in terms of how they use the plaza. The non-marginal use it as a short cut while the marginal reclaim it as public space. The plaza as an official state space during the day reflects how the regime’s biopolitical agenda extends to controlling how and when citizens occupy public spaces. For Foucault, biopolitics is characterized by a shift where “the old power of death that symbolized sovereign power [is] now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life.”⁴⁶ But at night the plaza is a reclaimed public space: “the collective performance of ordinary citizens creates an aesthetic form that has the potential to explode from within the boundaries of an oppressive authority.”⁴⁷ This is just one example of resistance to biopolitical control.

Another example of resistance in *BMP* is with marked figures and spaces. The notion of marking is a play on words since “marco” [frame] from the title also functions as a verb, “marcar” [to mark]. One example of marks in *BMP* is the tilted X, seen in the corner of each cell in *Catálogo* [Figure 2]. This X is reminiscent of Lotty Rosenfeld’s crosses in *Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento* (1982-1985) and CADA’s NO + art actions. The X was adopted by “the human rights movement during the military dictatorship [...] [as] a quick way to register opposition in urban areas under surveillance [...] this became a signature of the anti-Pinochet, pre-referendum movement of 1988.”⁴⁸

Marks in *BMP* also translate to the human body. As noted earlier, Díaz reproduces Morandé’s body as a container of marks and proceeds to mark Sor Teresa with this murdered body. Another example of marks on the body is evident in Eltit’s performances. For example, in *Maipú* (1980) she visited a brothel in a working class neighborhood in Santiago. Her performance consisted of three parts. In the first, Eltit “inflicts cuts and burns to her arms.”⁴⁹ She then reads from her unfinished novel, *Lumpérica*. In the final part of her performance Eltit hand cleans the pavement in front of the brothel. According to Neustadt, “by accentuating the ‘limits of representation,’ Eltit discursively opposes the neo-fascistic sense of order imposed by the military dictatorship.”⁵⁰ Eltit’s self-mutilation extends to her novel, where there is a full-page image of her arms with markings on them.⁵¹ Though images from *Maipú* (1980) are not present in *BMP*, the spirit of the novel influences how Díaz portrays the relations between the populace and the state under the dictatorship; Díaz utilized the title of this novel for one of his triptychs. The novel is a conceptual example of how the government controlled the bodily movements of citizens and how people resisted this control.

A final example of marks as resistance in *BMP* is the secondary text that appears near the installation's title [Figure 6]. In both exhibitions of *BMP*, a translucent partition greeted viewers as they approached the central installation. This partition was probably just two or three feet high, measuring from the photos. A horizontal neon tube was affixed to the top of the partition, shining blue light on the installation's title. Below this title was another seemingly unaffiliated text: Chile Crea. This phrase appeared in red, in capital letters, and at a 45-degree angle to the main title. It is unknown why this title was affixed to the partition. Was it intended to replace Díaz's name as the creator of this piece, especially since the piece can be read, "Chile Crea Banco/Marco de pruebas"? An examination of this phrase will illuminate its presence in this installation.

Chile Crea was a protest slogan used throughout the 1980s, first by underground movements who organized cultural activities and later in public activities that were explicitly anti-Pinochet. The *Chile Crea* campaign represents a mission to reclaim democracy for Chile. A festival titled *Chile Crea* took place in July of 1988, a few months before the plebiscite to extend military rule. *Chile Crea* was promoted as "an international encounter of art, science, and culture on behalf of Chilean democracy."⁵² During this weeklong festival, which took place throughout Chile, thousands of people participated in a variety of cultural activities. A text, published in relation to the festival, is this movement's manifesto. Authored by a Chilean commission on human rights, the book presents critiques and recommendations on various texts. For example, the section on "Los Derechos Económicos, sociales y culturales en Chile: Un análisis de dos fases" [Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in Chile: An Analysis in Two Phases] reviews how the regime's laws have impacted cultural life in Chile. According to the authors, "the

following texts present themselves, they simply illuminate some of the spaces of humanity that can and should be open to every man and women of this land, to make into reality the instruction of ‘Chile Crea’.”⁵³ Thus, the movement promotes freedom and democracy to Chilean citizens. The formal tone of these writings represents a rational way to combat the dictatorship and mark the movement as one dedicated to the democratic process. This falls in line with one translation of *Chile Crea* as “Chile believes.” In this interpretation, *Chile Crea* could be a reference to the impending plebiscite of 1988 in which Chileans would vote on whether to extend military rule and by extension Pinochet as president. This interpretation further supports this notion of citizens reclaiming democracy since it reflects how the populace believes in the democratic process as the way to oust Pinochet.

A second translation of *Chile Crea* as “Chile creates” is tied to the installation as a liberated space. Díaz utilizes this slogan to mark the installation as an emancipated space, autonomous of the controlled Chilean land surrounding *BMP*. This is the first liberated space in Chile in a campaign to reclaim democracy. Thus, Díaz transfers the resistance-movement origins of the *Chile Crea* slogan to this installation. When people walk into this space, as they did in its first exhibition, they enter a zone that has been liberated from the state’s application of biopolitics. Moreover, people are literally marked with the *Chile Crea* logo as they pass through since this text floats over the entire installation. This is similar to the zone Joseph Beuys established during *Bureau for Direct Democracy* (1972), an installation at Documenta 5. In this piece Beuys established a space where people could freely discuss “the idea of direct democracy through referendum and its possibilities for realization.”⁵⁴ Though Díaz is not a performance

artist, the fact that people enter a liberated space and are marked as having been liberated speaks to a more conceptual yet active performance. Also, there is a sense of resistance to biopolitics through the reclaiming of one's body through this space.

VI. Conclusion

BMP is characterized by the tension between control and resistance. In this installation Díaz established a counter-history of 1980s Chile where these two points of tension are in direct conflict. It is a counter-history in the sense that unlike linear historical accounts where histories reside next to each other, in Díaz's version the histories are layered and thus forced to confront each other. The present analysis examined the top layers of Díaz's process. Since the artist has embedded these tensions in multiple layers within *BMP*, the next step is to examine what lies beneath the surface.

VII. Works Cited

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/850932.stm>.
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VIII. List of Illustrations

Figure 1: *Banco/Marco de pruebas* [*Testing Bench/Frame*] (*BMP*), 1986-1989; mixed media installation, includes two paintings in the background; dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the Blanton Museum of Art.

Figure 2: *Catálogo* [*Catalog*], 1988; mixed media (paint, photography, silkscreen, photomechanical process, and Mylar attached to painted Masonite support), wood, and metal scythe; (object unframed) 82 3/4 x 60 inches; (sculpture) 88 1/2 x 65 3/4 x 23 1/2 inches. Image courtesy of the Blanton Museum of Art.

Figure 3: *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*, 1989; mixed media (paint, photography, silkscreen, photomechanical process, and Mylar on mat board and Masonite); (each framed panel) 27 1/4 x 36 x 5 inches; (ledge with wooden horse on left front of bottom of frame) 5 1/4 x 8 3/4 inches. Image courtesy of the Blanton Museum of Art.

Figure 4: *Diamela Eltit, la degollada* [*Diamela Eltit, The Beheaded One*] 1988, media unknown. 27 1/4 x 36 x 5 inches. Image from Art Stor.

Figure 5: *Zulema Morandé, la escritora* [*Zulema Morandé, The Writer*] 1988, media unknown. 27 1/4 x 36 x 5 inches. Images from Art Stor; *Número Quebrado*, Issue 1 (1988).

Figure 6: Detail of *BMP*.

Figure 7: Detail of *Catálogo*.

Figure 8: Detail of *BMP*.

Figure 9: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog, scanned from the catalog published by the Galería Arte Actual, 1988.

Figure 10: Details of *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*.

Figure 11: Detail of *BMP*.

Figure 12: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.

Figure 13: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.

Figure 14: Patricio Guzmán, *El golpe de estado*, 1976. Still image from the documentary of *La Moneda*. Courtesy of Deeper Into Movies.net.

Figure 15: Post-coup image of *La Moneda*. Courtesy of Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales.

Figure 16: Detail of *BMP*.

Figure 17: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.

Figure 18: Detail of *Zulema Morandé, la escritora*.

Figure 19: Detail of *BMP*.

IX. Illustrations



Figure 1: *Banco/Marco de pruebas [Testing Bench/Frame]* (BMP), 1986-1989; mixed media installation, includes two paintings in the background; dimensions variable. The Blanton Museum of Art.

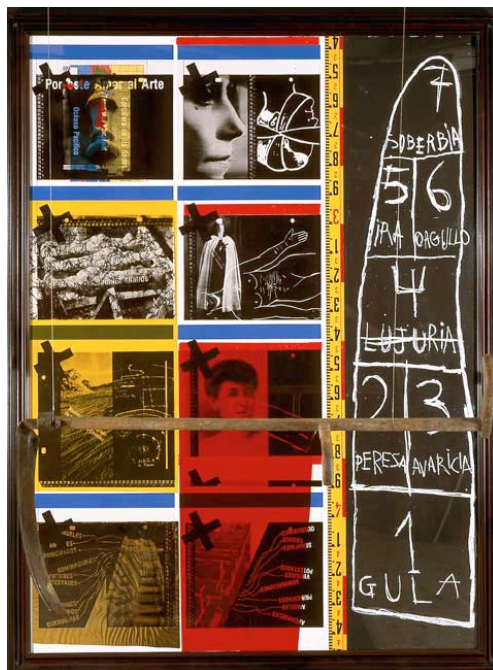


Figure 2: *Catálogo [Catalog]*, 1988; mixed media (paint, photography, silkscreen, photomechanical process, and Mylar attached to painted Masonite support), wood, and metal scythe; (object unframed) 82 3/4 x 60 inches; (sculpture) 88 1/2 x 65 3/4 x 23 1/2 inches. The Blanton Museum of Art.



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Figure 4: *Diamela Eltit, la degollada* [*Diamela Eltit, The Beheaded One*] 1988, media unknown. 27 1/4 x 36 x 5 inches. Images from Art Stor.

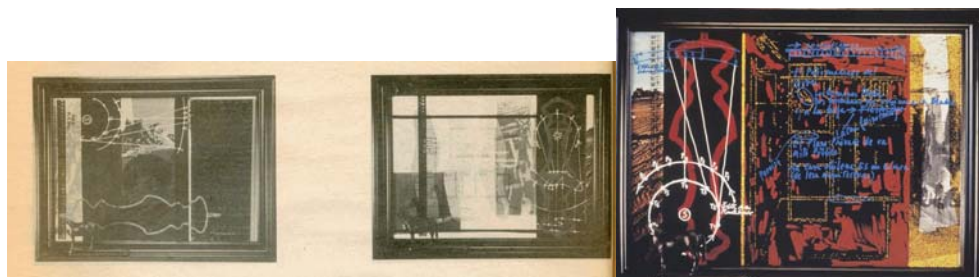


Figure 5: *Zumela Morandé, la escritora* [*Zulema Morandé, The Writer*] 1988, media unknown. 27 1/4 x 36 x 5 inches. Images from Art Stor; Número Quebrado, Issue 1 (1988).



Figure 6: Detail of *BMP*.



Figure 7: Detail of *Catálogo*.

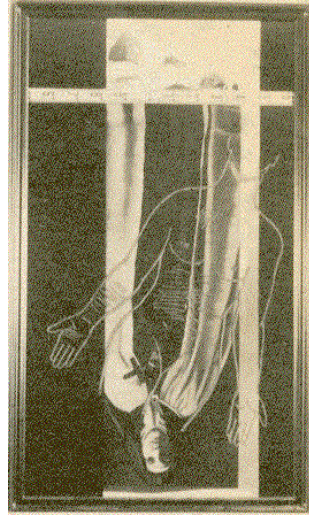


Figure 8: Detail of *BMP*.



Figure 9: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.



Figure 10: Details of *Sor Teresa, la lumpérica*.



Figure 11: Detail of *BMP*.

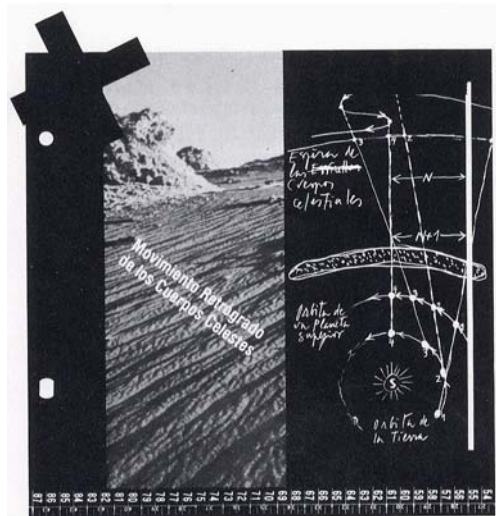


Figure 12: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.

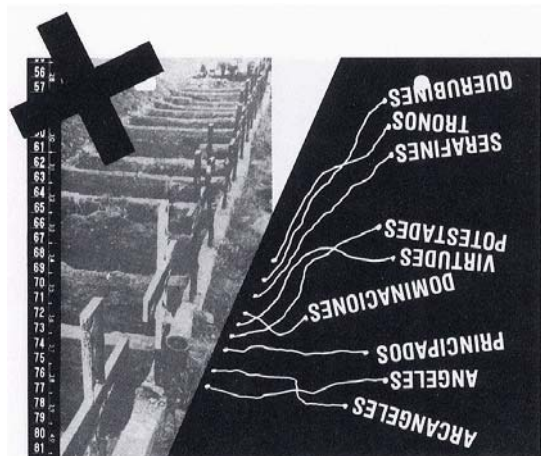


Figure 13: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.



Figure 14: Patricio Guzmán, El golpe de estado, 1976. Still image from the documentary of La Moneda.



Figure 15: Post-coup image of La Moneda.



Figure 16: Detail of *BMP*.



Figure 17: Detail from the *BMP* exhibition catalog.



Figure 18: Detail of *Zulema Morandé, la escritora*.



Figure 19: Detail of *BMP*.

X. Endnotes

¹ In 1997, the Huntington was renamed the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art.

² The images in the *BMP* exhibition catalog from the Galería de Arte Actual (1988) are the same as the images in *Catálogo*. And because for the moment I have low-resolution copies of this piece, I will rely on the images from the exhibition catalogue for my analysis in this paper. I will also utilize these images in my list of illustrations.

³ Julia P Herzberg, “Recovering Histories: Considerations on the Practice of Twelve Artists,” In *Recovering Histories: Aspects of Contemporary Art in Chile Since 1982 = Historias recuperadas, aspectos del arte contemporáneo en Chile desde 1982* (New York: Center for Latino Arts and Culture, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 1993), 56. According to Julia Herzberg, the three triptychs “were originally part of a large installation titled Banco/Marco de Pruebas (Test Bench) of 1988, which was first seen at Galería de Arte Actual in Santiago that same year. Díaz exhibited the nine panels of the triptychs on a wall behind some of the large freestanding elements in the show, so that the smaller works were contextualized within the large installations, thereby functioning as part of a whole instead of as individual pictures.”

⁴ “Gonzalo Díaz: El Kilómetro cientocuatro” by JPM, edited by Francisco Zegers, in *Cuatro Artistas Chilenos en el CAYC de Buenos Aires: Díaz, Dittborn, Jaar, Leppe* (Santiago: Cabo de Hornos, 1985), 3. en la actual coyuntura plástica chilena Gonzalo Díaz es una de las figuras claves del reposicionamiento de la pintura.

⁵ Originally published in Revista *La Separata*, número 4, Stgo, agosto de 1982. Reprinted in “Gonzalo Díaz: El Kilómetro cientocuatro” by JPM, edited by Francisco Zegers, in *Cuatro Artistas Chilenos en el CAYC de Buenos Aires: Díaz, Dittborn, Jaar, Leppe* (Santiago: Cabo de Hornos, 1985), 3. la instancia de revitalización a la cual apeló como beneficio primeramente coyuntural de la obra de Gonzalo Díaz—esa instancia de reactivación, de reenergización de una experiencia pictórica chilena en función de nuevas estimulaciones críticas...

⁶ Justo Pastor Mellado, “The Chilean Novel of Gonzalo Díaz,” In *Gonzalo Díaz: El Padre de la Patria Instalación*, translated by Jean Paul Beuachat, 1-19 (V Bienal de La Habana, Castillo del Morro, La Habana, Cuba, 1994), 34.

⁷ Don Greenless, “Gonzalo Díaz: Everybody Needs a Madonna,” *Art News* 90.8 (1991): 97.

⁸ Hosman Pérez Sepulveda, “Crimen en la historia de Chile: La injusticia de la justicia” *Tradicción: Revista Oficial Del Cuerpo De Generales De Carabineros De Chile*, 27 (2005), 12. Una extensa herida al nivel del ángulo de la mandíbula inferior que le circundaba todo el cuello y terminaba a 10 centímetros de su comienzo, dejando sólo unos pocos centímetros de piel indemne.

⁹ “*equimosis. Dos heridas linear...*” The rest is illegible.

¹⁰ Simon Collier and William F. Sater, *A History of Chile, 1808-2002* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 361.

¹¹ Collier and Sater 362.

¹² Pérez Sepulveda 13. Pocas veces en Chile, la opinión pública se ha pronunciado en forma más unánime y más enérgica que en los actuales momentos para condenar con airada indignación el fallo judicial que ha absuelto a los asesinos de El Boldo [...] Nos encontramos realmente, en presencia de un fracaso de la justicia chilena.

¹³ Justo Pastor Mellado, “Pequeño ensayo de teoría local,” In *La declinación de los planos*

(Santiago, Chile: Ediciones de la Cortina de Humo, 1991), 22-23. Está puesto en relación con el proceso seguido al marido de Zulema Morandé, autor de su asesinato por degollamiento, pero favorecido en un primer juicio por una decisión venal. Desde ahí se entiende que la decisión venal contamina el proceso de beatificación.

¹⁴ Collier and Sater 359.

¹⁵ Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 45.

¹⁶ Collier and Sater 360.

¹⁷ “Caravana de la muerte,” *Educarchile*: El portal de la educación.
<http://www.educarchile.cl/Portal.Base/Web/VerContenido.aspx?GUID=123.456.789.000&ID=137995>.
Revisar y agilizar los procesos de los detenidos después del golpe militar.

¹⁸ “Flashback: Caravan of Death,” *BBC News: Americas* (Tuesday, July 25, 2000),
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/850932.stm>.

¹⁹ These landscapes are consistently depicted in color, unlike the representations of people. The landscapes in *Catálogo* all contain text. I will examine the images closer, once I can see them magnified; right now I am relying on black and white renditions.

²⁰ Greenless 96.

²¹ Herzberg 57.

²² An article regarding Guzmán’s findings illustrates a macabre rendition of how the bodies were prepared and ultimately thrown from helicopters.
http://www.lanacion.cl/p4_lanacion/antialone.html?page=http://www.lanacion.cl/p4_lanacion/site/artic/20031122/pags/20031122213251.html

²³ Justo Pastor Mellado, “Sueños privados, mitos públicos,” In *Banco/Marco de pruebas* (Santiago, Chile: Galería Arte Actual, 1988), 11. Los diagramas del caso de Zulema Morandé y de Sor Teresa ponían en (tela de) juicio dos procesos judiciales; el uno, civil, el otro, canónico. En ambos, a mi (propio) juicio, existen vicios de procedimiento.

²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 8.

²⁵ Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, translated by Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15.1 (2003): 39.

²⁶ Agamben 18.

²⁷ Thomas Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 6th Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 134.

²⁸ Skidmore and Smith 133.

²⁹ Collier and Sater 364.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

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- ³² “Constitución 1980.” Educar Chile: El portal de la educación.
<http://www.educarchile.cl/Portal.Base/Web/VerContenido.aspx?GUID=123.456.789.000&ID=138011>.
- ³³ Sol Serrano, “Crisis and Renewal in Chile: 1970-1990,” In *Recovering Histories: Aspects of Contemporary Art in Chile Since 1982 = Historias recuperadas, aspectos del arte contemporáneo en Chile desde 1982* (New York: Center for Latino Arts and Culture, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 1993), 23.
- ³⁴ Agamben 168.
- ³⁵ Pablo Oyarzún, “El poder y la gloria, el deseo y la muerte,” In *Unidos en la gloria y en la muerte*, edited by Gonzalo Díaz (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones de La Cortina de Humo, 1997), 58.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.* Monumento de la instalación republicana en Chile, que está datado el 22 de noviembre de 1855.
- ³⁷ Mari Carmen Ramírez, “Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America,” In *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, edited by Waldo Rasmussen (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 162.
- ³⁸ The balusters in *Catálogo* are notable for the writing that appears on and around them and how they are layered in colors. I will expand on this once I have access to magnified images.
- ³⁹ Pastor Mellado, “Sueños privados, mitos públicos”, 4. Para instalar su visión del conjunto, el dominio de la totalidad.
- ⁴⁰ Pastor Mellado, “Sueños privados, mitos públicos”, 12. Con el ‘momento mori’ de la democracia [...] hace emerger la ficción de preservación social.
- ⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 138.
- ⁴² Robert Neustadt, “Diamela Eltit: Performing Action in Dictatorial Chile,” In *Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Perform*, edited by Diana Taylor and Roselyn Constantino (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 26.
- ⁴³ Collier and Sater 360.
- ⁴⁴ Diamela Eltit, *E. Luminata*, translated by Ronald Christ (Santa Fe, NM: Lumen Books, 1997), 60.
- ⁴⁵ Neustadt 123.
- ⁴⁶ Foucault 139-140.
- ⁴⁷ Amanda Holmes, *City Fictions: Language, Body, and Spanish American Urban Space* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 123.
- ⁴⁸ Gómez-Barris 62.
- ⁴⁹ Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001) 294. Barnitz cited this from Nelly Richard, ed. *Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile Since 1973*, Preface by Juan Dávila and Paul Foss, Victoria, Australia: *Art and Text* 21 (May / July 1986), 68.
- ⁵⁰ Neustadt 27.
- ⁵¹ Diamela Eltit, *Lumpérica*, 3rd Edition (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1998), 16.

⁵² Shifra M. Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin American and the United States* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 263.

⁵³ Comisión chilena de derechos humanos, *Chile Crea*, 9. “los textos que a continuación se presentan sólo iluminan algunos de los espacios de humanidad que pueden y deben abrirse a cada hombre y mujer de esta tierra, para hacer realidad la consigna de ‘Chile Crea’.”

⁵⁴ Joseph Beuys and Dirk Schwarze, “Report on a Day’s Proceeding at the *Bureau for Direct Democracy* (1972),” In *Participation*, edited by Claire Bishop, 120-124 (London: Whitechapel; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 120. Further research can examine the extent to which such a conversation was possible outside this installation or the significance of such a conversation given the division in Germany during this period. It might be interesting, too, to compare both works as pieces that engage democracy on a grass-roots level.