

## on living in the city

“Resbalé por los intestinos de Santiago,  
supe que me alimentaba de sus jugos,  
temblé ante la inminencia de los vómitos  
y la náusea.”

“I slipped through the intestines of Santiago,  
knowing I was fed by its juices,  
I shivered before the imminence of vomiting  
and nausea.” — Carla Grandi, *Contraproyecto*

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I’ve been thinking a lot about Santiago lately. Spurred by the ongoing protests, and my own memories of a place that had been so enriching and sickening, and all-encompassing. I studied abroad there and was like a fish to water. However, when the time came to return, I balked and fled to Berlin instead. A city with which I had no history or familiarity, but where I had a passport and, thus, a legal right to residency and mobility.

Berlin was difficult. Slippery, elusive, hard to find a foothold or sense of self within the city’s own fragmentation. It seemed drugged, with euphoric highs and desperate lows. Missing the thick layer of cynicism and pollution that I had found in Santiago, but also without the majesty of the Andes that seemed to express some core solidity. With its partition and thorough bombing, it is difficult to see the history of Berlin as something coherent. Its inhabitants are a hodgepodge: my first friends including an American who might have been a Berliner if not for the Shoah, a wonderfully neurotic Francophone Serb who was once a refugee herself, and others with similarly divergent stories of migration.

What does it mean to curate in a city such as this? What sort of vantage point does it provide on the places we come from, and the places we’ve been? In the face of the impossibility of presenting this city in its entirety, we may only attempt to test its waters in glimpses and whispers, through different eyes and ears, each scene like another slide in a stereoscope: sometimes congruent to its antecedent, sometimes completely diverging.

## on transcending auteurism

What is the difference between individuality and collectivity? Can we think of a collective as an alternative form of leadership, one that is not determined by a single auteur, but by a multiplicity of selves? Angela Davis claims that we live in an “exciting” moment in the history of revolutionary activism, as “we are witnessing new forms of leadership—collective leadership, empathetic leadership” against the idea of the single, recognizable leader.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Angela Davis in Angela Davis, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Nikita Dhawan, “Planetary Utopias,” *Radical Philosophy*, issue 2.05, series 2 (Autumn 2019), <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/planetary-utopias>.

“I make the revolution; therefore I exist. This is the starting point for the disappearance of fantasy and phantom to make way for living human beings. The cinema of the revolution is at the same time one of destruction and construction: destruction of the image that neocolonialism has created of itself and of us, and construction of a throbbing, living reality which recaptures truth in any of its expressions.”<sup>2</sup>

Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World,”

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In an attempt to challenge and disrupt extant models of production, filmmakers have developed unprecedented forms of interrelation. From the Birmingham Arts Lab to Black Audio Film Collective, from Cinema Action to the Berwick Street Film Collective, from Grupo Cine Liberación to Kasseler Filmkollektiv, from Le Groupe Africain du Cinéma to L.A. Rebellion, from San Francisco Newsreel to Women Make Movies, film has been an experimental field for political resistance and disruption, challenging and augmenting notions of collaboration and togetherness. Each of these moments in the history of cinema were moments where filmmaking was something more than just working together, more than just collaborating. They were moments in the history of cinema where political filmmaking was inseparable from political activism and action.

How can we, as audio-viewers, revisit these moments of collective efforts to challenge the dominant epistemologies and power dynamics in cinema? What is the responsibility of art institutions and film archives to communicate such moments in the history of cinema without historicizing them or positioning them within the sphere of an already-dead past?

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From the tape recorder:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5zZcgRy1Mw>

1:35 - 2:17

Raise your voice in song  
We can still sing

Your song among the chorus shakes my joyous heart  
Healing all my wounds  
When you dance, I dance, I'm compelled to dance  
Our dreams become intertwined  
When you dance, I dance, I'm compelled to dance  
Don't be defeated, don't break down  
Don't be afraid  
Be a dream sprouting in the desert

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<sup>2</sup> Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, “Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World,” in *New Latin American Cinema, Volume I: Theory, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, ed. Michael Martin (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997).

## on the soul and con-vivir

“Mucho dice el cómo nos dan de beber, o de comer, o de convivir. Dan algunos con bonito ademán, con sonrisa sobre el agua, sabiendo que ‘ofrecen’ y otros dan la copa con desgabo, prisa o fastidio; otros la alargan mecánicamente, como quien pasa un boleto de tren. Y estas maneras de dar casi resultan ‘test’...Todo está dicho allí en dos manos que estiran un vaso o sujetan una cabeza sobre el vertedero.

Aunque para los más sea poco el dar agua porque valoricen sólo el dar alimento, la verdad es que, a la siesta, en ruta polvorosa, y al sol vertical, llegar el agua a una boca cuenta tanto como servir una comida ‘de mantel largo,’ ya que la sed es peor que el hambre.”<sup>3</sup>

“The way we are given drink, food, or conviviality, speaks volumes. Some people give with a beautiful gesture, with a smile above the water, knowing they ‘offer’; others give without care, hurrying or feeling annoyed; some give water mechanically, as if handing a train ticket. These ways of giving are almost a ‘test’...All is said by two hands extending a glass, or holding a head under a faucet.

Although, for most, giving water is but a small thing because they only value giving food, the truth is that before a siesta, on the dusty road, and beneath the beating sun, to bring water to a mouth counts as much as to serve a feast, given that thirst is worse than hunger.”

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This city has no dearth of discourse, exhibitions, and screenings. Berlin’s most valuable resource is its cultural capital. However, the excess can be overwhelming, and it is impossible to savor it all. I have been both a glutton and an ascetic, experiencing fits of existential starvation even as I sated myself with learning. In this passage from Gabriela Mistral, I see the distinction between thirst and hunger as contrasting the needs of the soul with those of the mind. There are thus two dilemmas: how to address the needs of the soul and how to ensure that these needs are not undervalued next to those of the mind. To feed the mind is easy, but it is not easy to feed the soul.

How can we construct lives and build practices that nourish rather than exhaust? How do we account for the fact that we are not just brains, but also limbs and stomachs and hearts and guts?

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Gabriela Mistral, “Sobre Cuatro Sorbos de Agua,” published in *La Nación*, Santiago, October 19, 1947. Reprinted in *Prosa de Gabriela Mistral: materias* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1989), 199. First encountered in *Slow Down Fast, A Toda Raja* by Camila Marambio and Cecilia Vicuña (Berlin, Germany: Errant Bodies, 2019.) Translation of first paragraph from *Slow Down Fast*, second paragraph translated by Pia Chakraverti-Würthwein.

Our practice aims to facilitate rather than impose, to offer rather than to extract, to think in rhythms of slowness rather than those of capitalist acceleration. Following our forays into film, we now turn to *sonic disobedience* as a means to disrupt public space and to challenge the dominance of the visual.