

VOICES ON WALLS. DISSIDENT GRAPHICS IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ

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1 Cfr. MARTINEZ, ÓSCAR J.: *Ciudad Juárez: el auge de una ciudad fronteriza a partir de 1848*, Ciudad de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982.

2 To reach this extreme a series of factors are necessary, operating as strategies to silence the population, and to empower the authorities and criminals: drug trafficking and war between drug cartels, the disgrace of the media, a dispersed urban physiognomy, the inefficiency of the institutions, manifest impunity, abuse of power, daily insecurity, political brutality and estrangement, work precariousness, and many more factors. The extension of this text does not allow further scrutiny into the conflictive state that comes from the juxtaposition of such collection of problems, with closely linked origins, that form themselves and strengthen longitudinally. However, for more information, you can consult Mínguez and Zamarripa (2016), Méndez (2016), Zamarripa (2016), Borja (2015), Esquivel (2012), etc.

3 BADIOU, ALAIN: “Las condiciones del arte contemporáneo” in: *VVAA: El arte no es la política / La política no es el arte. Despertar la historia*, Madrid, Brumaría, 2014, p.31.

4 Taking that power, in the universal way of H. P. Newton, as a capability, and the power of defining a phenomena and making it act and behave in the desired manner. Evidently that capability has levels of action, circumstances and acceptance and submission. Abuse comes from inequality in how it is shared and used.

Ciudad Juárez is a border metropolis in northern Mexico that shares a boundary with the United States. It is a city known to be the victim of a series of violent and criminal acts, especially between 2007 and 2012, which restricted the social and cultural development of the region. Simultaneously, artistic groups and artists began to emerge focusing their efforts on a will to reconstruct the city through graphic expression, taking the city as a project and the media itself for their work, incorporating a human dimension through the sensitisation of citizens. They will become strategists and dissidents who will show in their creations other political constructions from their representations of everyday life.

Key words:

Urban graphics, affectivity, politics, Ciudad Juárez, urban art

The disease of violence as an introduction: of heroes and monsters

Ciudad Juárez is the largest city of the state of Chihuahua, to the north of Mexico. The level of violence reached in Juárez, particularly during the six years that Felipe Calderón was president, peaking in the years between 2007 and 2012, is widely known. This city borders with El Paso (Texas, USA), its geographic proximity to the US, along with the long distance from the Mexican capital and the centralism that dominates the country define this city, as though it were an economic satellite with international vocation¹.

This scenario has earned Juárez the names of *ciudad serial* (*Serial City*) or *ciudad laboratorio* (*Lab City*), in which organised crime has deposited its projects and practiced its brutality, against all sense of humanity². Simultaneously, it has been glutted by authorities blind to the pub-

lic dimension of their work, and steeped in their own political incapacities and lack of productive effectiveness. Thus, in this context, while politicians and business people pour their own interests over the space and the intention of the community, the community focuses their effort in trying to inhabit an urban space that is reluctant to be used. It also incorporates social dynamics at the service of coexistence while generating a collective memory through graphic expression, illustration on walls, visual metaphors, etc.

Such practices stem from the will of reconstruction from an artistic strategy, taking the city itself as a project and media for its tactics; incorporating a human dimension by raising awareness among its citizens. Pieces that clearly are going to be inserted in the realm of just politics, as Badiou would say, they try to produce a subjective transformation and, at the same time, is the living testimony on life.³ They become necessarily conflictive and resistant. These artistic actions face the limitations of social standardisation and “abuse of power”⁴ over the population, in order to sustain political relationships and possibilities⁵.

As a matter of course, in this sense, we must not forget the scope of the Institution. This is to say, it is convenient to consider that parallel to such practices which inscribe themselves within not legitimated circles, there will also be “public” pieces within the approved art system, through competitions, commissioned work, etc. For the purposes of this text, I will focus on those pieces that aspire to resist, or to *become-dissidents*, from an educational or political perspective, in order to promote their idea of social welfare. Which poses the question, how to articulate these projects with daily events? How can they become a vehicle for continuous transformations (cultural, aesthetic, political, etc.)? Which would be the strategies of social graphics to face the industrialisation of subjectivities? How

will they include new customs that will reveal the possibilities of outdoors politics?

In all, the sum of circumstances arranged on polyhedral stages, places the origin of a discussion focused on those urban graphic projects⁶, devised from diverse artistic strategies. Poetic discourse in street format publicly responding to those demands, through symbolic counter-reforms in the place. This is to say, we are going to relate actions that stem from citizen commitment and which pour themselves onto the community; which incorporate “a regime of adopting contexts, languages and even problems that these social reversals and collective subjectivity to share with us the extreme internal and external difficulties of making a certain idea of “improvement” useful”. Consequently, this is a panorama of poetic graphics that are implemented with Ciudad Juárez as a canvas, the city as the skin to be intervened.

Graphics of affectivity and contexts of violence

Going against the mainstream of cultural industry, or at least pretending to do so, as well as against the grain of the regulating the citizen discourse, must imply seeking alternative paths, routes that become dissidents themselves⁸ from homogeneity in order to erect their manifestations of inconformity through self-exclusion. It means not wanting to continue belonging to certain behaviours or lines of thought that are vertically inoculated, and which are presented through poetic languages and symbolic production in the city. Such dissidence advocates tending to social life, and re-formulating it, towards constructions that are more habitable within public space⁹, however, with no specific path or strategy nor rules to administer it.

They will be the opposition to that confabulation of affectivity for the dominant discourse that wishes to define alternatives to standard urbanity. They will take affectivity as essential foundation and sustenance for future social forms. Affectivity will be the aesthetic tactic chosen to crumble the imposed simulacrum, desired, on the other hand¹⁰, in a continuous dissident drift in the city, taking “the event as the place”, and taking part in the “affectivity for the social aspects”¹¹. They will happen as a system to unmask instrumental reason that brings closer to it a beauty in critical sense that would serve as a promise of happiness, *à la* Stendhal, producing new gratuitous approaches to reality.

Placing Ciudad Juárez as the centre of these affective poetics that alter the daily life and anonymity of the city, we can observe those discourses that dissent and resist the dominion of what is accepted by the majority through the exhibited graphics. Actions that are imposed on the citizens in order to redefine the public space, be it

in defense of a cause or in protest, with symbolic actions and critical proposals to vanquish stagnation and apathy in the city.

All these actions will connect and establish links with the citizens in many and diverse ways; in different locations that are politically and aesthetically juxtaposed. Most of them stem from the necessary creation of collectives during the period of violence, however, it was before, during the 1990s, that due to the urban development and extension of the city, young collectives emerged deciding to plant their creations throughout the public space. First it was scribbles and *tags*. Later on, there was a greater graphic development and collectives leaning towards mural painting. One of the first crews of this type of urban art was *Rezizte* (2003), which signified the core of the expression of these contexts of violence in the city. It arose from “the crack that opens between two juxtaposed cultures in the Northern border of Mexico, in order to manifest its stance and to counter the apathy of the Juárez community before its social problem. It is comprised by twelve artists from six different states within the Republic of Mexico: Chihuahua, Distrito Federal, Durango, Estado de México, Sinaloa and Sonora.”¹². Thus, within this identity searching, as border agents, they assume the line: “*Ni del Norte... ni del Sur*” (Neither Northern nor Southern) since, according to Osvaldo Ogaz, the “border thinker,” from Walter Mignolo’s perspective, is that individual who is in the correct position, in the middle; who can walk in the wealth of the first world and reach the place where the third world is. The “border thinker” places himself on the frontier dodging cultural blows and remaining in the subordinate position. Living in that time and space gives him an advantage over the multiculturalism which he faces. [...] Neither Southern nor Northern, just frontier.”¹³

This way, through their collaborative, participative, vision they became the spokespeople of the “other voices”, those which were silenced by the authorities, the municipality itself and urban interests, as well as pushed aside by society at large. *Rezizte* condensed art practices in a clear, synthetic graphic, which would narrate not only cultural border geography, but also citizen interaction as a necessary organ. Their *stencils* and *stickers* tattooed the city with multiple graphic messages of social resonance, in different spaces out on the streets, whether abandoned or symbolic, thus making the protests visible and publishing their political stance with regards to the work of the police, the abuse of power and the delinquency in the city¹⁴.

It is precisely in this intermediate positioning, undefined, fluctuating of them who are borderline, that the collective *Rezizte* took Germán Valdez “Tin Tan” and his “*pachuquismo*”, as their banner, assimilating

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These powers will be guided by the understanding of politics in Rancière (2009), taken as a redefining activity of society’s sensitive frames in which the public life of the individual’s every day is defined under regimes of obedience or insubordination.

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For this paper we shall take the social graphics as those which inevitably exercise publicly and in common, and that can use both the tools of graffiti and postgraffiti, within the “recognisable graphic style” with which any passer-by can identify.”(Abarca, 2010, p.54), from spray to brush, from line to illustration on the wall, but always within a discourse coming from a certain intellectual minority, popular culture or predicaments not imposed politically nor vertically in representing the world in its images. Thus, from now on, all artistic action mentioned will refer to this type of street expression. Cfr., also the essential study: FIGUEROA, FERNANDO: «*El Postgraffiti*», en *Graphitfragen. Una mirada reflexiva sobre el Graffiti*, Madrid, Minotauro Digital, 2006, p. 195-201.

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GUATTARI, FÉLIX; ROLNIK, SUELY: *Micropolítica. Cartografías del deseo*, Madrid, Traficantes de Sueños, 2006, p. 274.

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Here I shall refer to those graphic productions that arise from the ideological antagonism I note, are created to be shown, activated and developed in the scenario of the city. Pieces placed on the city, a space that is practically impossible to organise due to the endless forms it sustains, something which cannot be defined nor limited by its geographic borders.

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This “space” is not neutral, but neither is it natural nor permanent, and what is public or private is defined by the users themselves [...] who have the power to define the dominant meaning of each space. Therefore, we can assure that the spaces are not static formations but rather the result of a cultural process that mutates and reshapes itself according to the specific needs of the specific users (Aliaga y Cortés, 2014, p. 107).

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Every citizen knows the distance between the real and the ideal, and limits himself to bolstering the predominant speech, accepting an illusion comfortably, which, to an extent, is convenient: “It is the dominant fiction, consensual fiction that negates its fictional character pretending to be true in itself, tracing a simple dividing line between the dominium of what is real and the representations and appearances, the opinions and utopias.» (Rancière, 2010, p. 77).



Fuck Trump (Ciudad Juárez, 2016) by Nonsense. Image courtesy of the author.

that marginal identity, borderline, reinvented through his image, to invade and extend across the city.

Above all, what mattered was generating graphic symbols that would be the vehicle of a certain symbolic revolution of appropriation of the streets, to be able to involve the community in the discourse, so they would return, somehow, to the street. Going upriver, against the force of the “system that establishes beliefs, tastes, morals, obsolete pattern which, in turn, create «correct behaviour» models that originate repressions that often are ferocious and terrible and that are not only in the past”¹⁵. Moreover, in a place such as Ciudad Juárez, where it was necessary to announce that the streets existed due to counter-cultural movements that allowed other customs that would mean significant changes in the face of daily violence¹⁶. It is this way that Rezizte would be an essential breeding ground and hinge that will articulate successive graphic, participative projects in Ciudad Juárez. In those projects, it will be through affectivity that common political possibilities would circulate and manage dissonant thoughts as strategies for resistance, as revolutionary positioning of a cultural alternative.

Elsewhere, within the same geography, one of the first supports of dissidents is the so-called “*bordo*”, the riverbanks of what is called in the North Río Bravo, or Río Grande. On it, diverse messages of resistance are displayed. They conquer such a space to assault it “from the anonymity”, with counter-

discourses that alert, denounce or voice opinion. This space is an emblem of the natural separation between the United States and Mexico. It is too the perfect geography to dissent on international relationships with the neighbouring country, migration policy, to challenge the US treatment towards the Mexican people, as well as outrageous events between those countries, including crimes of state. Aesthetic constructions show us the “folds of the common sensitive fabric that in which aesthetic politics and the aesthetics of politics come together and come apart. What is real as such does not exist, in itself, but rather configurations of that which is given, and we accept, as real; the object of our perceptions, our thoughts and our interventions”¹⁷.

Thus, it is in that “*bordo*” that multiple messages surfaced. These bear witness to the current political deficiency, and the dissonance of the dominant discourse with the necessities and concerns of the community. As I was saying, it has been the stage of a variety of proposals, both from mural paintings and social actions¹⁸. From the realm of affectivity comes a very interesting reply referring to the political propaganda of the then candidate Donald Trump, that was broadcasted in Mexico: the mural by artist Nonsense (*Sin Sentido*) with the caption “fuck Trump” satirizes the businessman, now politician, wearing a Mickey Mouse hat in the very moment he is inserting the last brick of the famous wall that, according to the tycoon, he

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HERRERA, MARTHA CECILIA; OLAYA, VLADIMIR: “Ciudades tatuadas: Arte callejero, política y memorias visuales” (Tattooed Cities. Street Art, Politics and Visual Memories). In *Nómadas* (Colombia) n. 35 (October 2011), p. 114.

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FLORES, DAVID; GALLARDO, VÍCTOR E.: *Colectivo Rezizte. Transborderistas de la gráfica fronteriza*. Unpublished thesis for a Degree in Design of the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez, 2007, p. 43.

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REZIZTE: <https://www.facebook.com/Colectivo-Rezizte-118847684850642/>

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ROSAS, CAROLINA: “La reivindicación de la ciudad por el arte urbano: Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México”. In *Arte y Ciudad, Revista de investigación* (Madrid), n. 3 (April 2013), p. 59-70. Cfr. DE DIEGO, JESÚS: “The graffiti aesthetics in the social dynamics of the urban space. Indications for a study of the urban cultures at the end of the century.”. In <http://sunsite.icm.edu.pl/graffiti/faq/diego.html>, (1997). s.p. Specially when it supports its study in de-centralisation in the interpretation of graffiti (in this case), based on three fixed values: the intertextuality of common characters with other forms of expression, structural and formal elements of the pieces, and lastly, productive interaction of the media and conditions to achieve this expression.

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HERRERA, JOSÉ LUIS: “Filosofía y contracultura”. In *Quaderns de filosofia i ciència*, 39 (2009), p. 74. Available online from: https://www.uves/sfpv/quadern_textos/v39p73-82.pdf. If you wish to delve on the countercultural origins of these movements you can relate to the foundational studies of MAILER, NORMAN: *The Faith of Graffiti*, New York, Praeger/Alskog, 1974; COOPER, MARTHA y CHALFANT, HENRY: *Subway Art*. London, Thames & Hudson, 1984; CHALFANT, HENRY y PRIGOFF, JAMES: *Spraycan Art*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1987. As well as the fantastic re-edition of *Getting Up. Hacerse ver. El graffiti metropolitano en Nueva York*, by CASTLEMAN, CRAIG, Capitán Swing, 2013, a revision of the 1987 edition (*Los graffiti*, Hermann Blume); Sources that might well be closer to the comprehensive studies of these movements (specially Writing and its “evolution”), give faith and account for their propagation and importance in the urban contexts.

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And participating in and of the streets – with workshops and tags – implied the need of living it redefining the neighbourhood and its characters as agents of change and redefinition of identity. Somewhat later this would be extended through the Panadería Rezizte where other processes of social construction based on specific forms of artistic practice were included, such as, poetry recitals, motion pictures, workshops or exhibitions.

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RANCIÈRE, JACQUES: *El espectador emancipado*, Buenos Aires, Manantial, 2010, p. 77.

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Some that have lately enjoyed great repercussion have been, for example, the binational initiative “Hugs not Walls,” that tries to minimize the harm done by the separation of families due to the United States deportation laws. On several occasions this year 2016 there have been meetings organised in this border zone so that families might hug – however briefly – those they were not able to see during years due to the immigration processes. An event that needs to be hurried before the immigration laws are hardened with the government of the republican Donald Trump beginning January 2017.

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DPA: “Mural junto al Río Bravo ridiculiza a Trump”, (Mural next to Río Bravo Makes Fun of Trump” En *La jornada en línea*, (The Day on Line) (Monday June 27th, 2016). Available from: <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/ultimas/2016/06/27/mural-junto-al-rio-bravo-ridiculiza-a-trump>

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COLORWALK: <https://www.facebook.com/colorwalkciudadjuarez/>

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The story of the forty-three students who disappeared from Ayotzinapa has produced one of the greatest impacts on the Mexican society in the last years, shaking the pillars of the government in power. There are many and varied chronicles to this respect, even books and publications with long history.

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JELLYFISH: Personal communication, December 27th, 2016.

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Op. Cit. HERRERA, MARTHA CECILIA; OLAYA, VLADIMIR: p. 114-115.

would build during his term in government and that will separate both countries.

The artist says, “We wanted to paint that man the way we see him, as a child in a tantrum to get his way.”¹⁹ For those familiar, even superficially, with Mr. Trump’s discourse, location is unbeatable, in the section of the “*bordo*” next to what is known as Puente Negro, where migrants wait to cross over to the US side, in an oversight of the Border Patrol, which makes the rounds of the El Paso (Texas) riverbank of Río Bravo. This graphic does not only respond to the context, but makes visible social situations and situations of vulnerability of people’s rights. It challenges the realm of what is common, animating and highlighting how relevant it is to enunciate, the importance of narrating, establishing links, and the importance of commitment. The mural establishes a precept: the rants that soon would decide the US elections should not be silenced.

To continue with the symbolic production of dissident singularities from social graphics and the construction of collective places to preserve, established through a reconstructive period of the city, we find the generation of the collective *Jellyfish* (2010). Initially formed by Leonel Portillo (*Pilo*) and Atenas Campbell, two more members would later join them, Ricardo Herrera (*Kukui*) and Francisco Chávez (*Pika*), facing Ciudad Juárez’s bloodiest time. Their main motto is “Making love, making art, making life”. It introduced murals of great chromatic, vivacious themes that aim at giving new life to the degraded image of the city. Dissidence is, in this sense, not only in the association of art, love and life itself, but in doing it as a way to contribute toward a new citizen viewpoint, to face the immobility of the *status quo*, aware that waiting time is over, since today is volatile, thus precious.

Love, art, life form part of inhabiting, of being human, and *Jellyfish* uses them as tools for social construction and revitalisation of vulnerable areas, in projects that seek citizen participation to heal the wounds caused by the context of violence. Some of their latest projects are *Hola Color* (2013) and *Color Walk* (2014). The first one, absorbed the cultural week December 14th-19th, which imported diverse artists, local, national and international, which became an affective link between the citizens, since they established workshops, courses, *tianguis* [street markets], mask-making, live music and mural painting, in particular for the children of the *colonia* [neighbourhood] known as Riberas del Bravo. The second one, on its part, included an integral culture management plan from street intervention: “Ciudad Juárez presents a number of problems: within our scope of competence, we have studied and developed proposals to generate a new alternative of cultural tourism for the city, a

factor that throughout the years has been deemed of little or no importance. Culture is a constructive tool for progress, development and social integration at all levels.”²⁰.

It is with this perspective that *Color Walk* started in November 2014, aiming to become the channel for a specific murals route which would improve cultural tourism of the city, with the participation of artists from the US, Argentina, Spain, other parts of Mexico, as well as local artists. One of the murals painted by *Jellyfish* for this project was the one at the junction between Montemayor Street and 20 de Noviembre Street, dedicated to the 43 students from Ayotzinapa who disappeared²¹: “the birds on the mural are thrush, a type of black bird that can be found in the State of Guerrero. They are dressed in uniform, to represent the disappeared students; the wolf that leads them is also in uniform, a blue uniform, indicating he is a policeman that has captured them. Some of the birds wear skull masks, symbolic their death after being captured.”²²

Their numerous projects and their impact in diverse creative fields have earned the collective *Jellyfish* international respect, becoming one of the most consistent and daring independent cultural associations, even more so than other which are institutionalised or that originated in the business sector. *Jellyfish*’s positive vision of the city implies a transcendence of their graphics beyond line or texture, since what lies beneath implies breaking with silence, through a poetic discourse of public space towards the common: “These expressions defy conventional ways of understanding art, placing themselves as hybrid forms originated, in most cases, along the borders and in urban suburbs. They become an expression of memories which strive to display different facets and faces to those of the established social order. They invite other ways of seeing, although they also risk being institutionalised by the very social order they question, since the logic of late capitalism tends to take culture as mere entertainment.”²³.

Concluding as an opening

As we have seen, the emergence of these graphic public agents has nothing to do with acclaiming national hymns, militating in political parties, or participating visually in the collective imaginary; it means to narrate with images, in order to remember what we do not want to happen again. It is using memory as an act of resistance, remembering as an exercise in dissidence to give voice to those victims that were silenced by the system. The artist, therefore, safeguards a fundamental rejection of silence and immobility pro-state. They take once and again the path leading away from the usual sphere of the legitimated art circuit and get closer to collaborative, communitarian uses of art production. Dissent from dominant

culture is a need, when it comes to being able to tell the other stories, with complete detachment from any other aesthetic institutional criticism. Social graphics are not social if they are not integrated with the citizens, if they do not represent their context or if they do not manifest and relate to the concerns of the community with no voice. The illustration on the wall is the cry of that being silenced.

Citizen and contextual integration in the creative process and of art production allows more complex perspectives that introduce singularities and associations from contemporary fragmentation. These actions allow providing sense from a dissident graphic from a “political self-definition”, be it against a specific oppression, cultural threat or a certain “traditional discourse”²⁴. Moreover, when this desire of a specific political result through art expressions on the public space need to construct independence of opinion within a space, that of Ciudad Juárez, that brings citizen life from the streets, squares and parks to shopping centres, since most of public spaces have become, in most cases, disabled and debilitated. Producing the subjectivities of these gazes that not only reclaim “everybody’s” spaces, but also dovetail with policies originated in recovery and memory, against all corruptions and incompetence of those who support and feed the dominant discourse. For this type of graphic production, the interrelation of social backgrounds goes beyond the connection between micro and macro, even within the city, since it holds power responsible and demands that it be also accountable for its opacity and excesses against the citizen.

Let us not fool ourselves, it is not easy to gain the sufficient power to re-situate policies and social relationships. Let us remember that art “does not make rebels of us because it shouts out what is despicable, nor does it mobilise us just because it came to us outside the museum. Perhaps it can infect its criticism, not only its indignation, if art itself sheds those languages that are accomplices of social order”²⁵. We do not become critical only by publicly displaying our messages of resistance, vindicating dissent, making visible the social inequality or the intellectual poverty of the dominant classes. It is necessary to create links and habits that reduce the distance with what is represented, to make that path between oppression and resistance something elastic, pliable. This is something that becomes public precisely with urban art, not only because it imposes itself in the shared space, but because it places itself within the realm of the common, with no specific owner, of the citizenship in its entirety. These tactics “become vehicles for the struggles for memory and acknowledgment which, in this case, is founded on the sense given to space. These are expressions chiselled in the texture of concrete, meeting places, of similarity and difference, of identity and otherness, individuality and the collectivity meet, as they present themselves bearing the mark of the transience, they look for ac-

complices with whom to constitute the collective, while insinuating the possibility of the difference”²⁶.

Of course, we must be careful, certainly these pieces force the viewer’s gaze, who must see what the artist, transformed into a sort of preacher delivering a sermon on the injustices of the world, believes. “Social criticism is indubitably a noble cause, and changing the world for the better is doubtlessly an heroic enterprise; however, it is not so obvious that art could be effective in any of those endeavours. The artist is not exactly the best person to educate us on the realities of the world, nor to help us to endure, even to overcome suffering.”²⁷ Certainly, artistic moral teaching from outside the legitimate spaces cannot be /lenient with brutality in the world, and perhaps it also borders aesthetics and beauties deserving of the autonomy that is defended from critique. However, offering contemplative alternatives is not the function of this street graphic. Its function is to facilitate affective links, establish relationships and weave a common consciousness of what is to be arranged in and for their city. The art piece here is not an end, but the process to make other things happen.

The pieces presented serve as a sort of critical violence which looks upon consolation suspiciously, since “art must not offer consolation, and it is not here to soothe, alleviate or protect us”, but to offer “a vision of a future (...) to say that disaster is a possibility, a most probable one, yet we can avoid it”²⁸. In this context of violence, disaster has already taken place, it is happening and it seems to continue, so this evasion is not about avoiding it, but about “preserve a living memory of the past: not to demand reparation of the damage, but to remain alert when facing new, yet analogue, situations.”²⁹ These practices will be memory tools for resistance that will highlight what must be treasured in order not to forget a past that can repeat itself³⁰, this is why a construction of the capacity to inhabit is needed, to project citizens over individuals and to make visible the concerns of some for others. This concern is constructed through different languages and metaphors, in a gap in the opaque discourse of daily life.

Rezizte, *Nonsense* or *Jellyfish* state what is common, therefore they bear witness of that construction, that care, but also of the atmosphere of risk, which was perceptible, but not visible. In this respect, they can always be judged for taking part in forcing a certain “consensus” of niceties, as well as for establishing social links with that which is excluded from “normality”. Beyond today’s world apparent concern with aesthetics, this urban graphic vindicates a return to the social field and the “needs derived from material and immanent links of the political constellation”, fighting to prevent that representing such singularities becomes a “synonym of a descent from the dimension of art to the level of mundane needs, as if those who have no ties with the

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Cfr. PALACIOS, ALFREDO: “*El arte comunitario: origen y evolución de las prácticas artísticas colaborativas*”. In *Arteterapia. Papeles de arteterapia y educación artística para la inclusión social*, vol. 4 (Madrid) (May 2009) p. 197-211.

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GARCÍA CANCLINI, NÉSTOR: “*¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de resistencia?*”. In *Estudios Visuales*, n. 7 (In Visual Studies, n. 7) (January 2010), p. 30. Available online: http://www.estudiosvisuales.net/revista/pdf/num7/02_canclini.pdf.

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Op. Cit. HERRERA, MARTHA CECILIA; OLAYA, VLADIMIR: p.104.

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KUSPIT, DONALD: *El fin del arte*, Madrid, Akal, 2006, p.38.

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Op. Cit. BADIOU, ALAIN: p. 34-35.

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TODOROV, TZVETAN: *Los abusos de la memoria*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2000, p. 58.

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Cfr. ZAMARRIPA, JUDITH: *Expresiones artísticas de resistencia en Ciudad Juárez, México. Una perspectiva desde la memoria y la afectividad a través de los murales de Mac (2013-2016)*. Unpublished thesis presented in a Master Course in Studies and Creative Processes in Art and Design in the Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez (México), 2016.

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CHUKHROV, KETI: “*Sobre la falsa democracia del arte contemporáneo*”. In: *VVAA: El arte no es la política / La política no es el arte. Despertar la historia*, Madrid, Brumaria, 2014, p. 65.



Sticker celebrating the struggle to bring down the fencing in Lomas de Poleo (2009), by Mamboska. Images courtesy of the author.

world of culture could not have the ability to experiment the dimension of the non-mundane, non-utilitarian, or to capture the dimension of what is general, a category that is as artistic as it is ethical and political”³¹.

Thus, I believe these social graphics respond to an aesthetic construction of Ciudad Juárez from affectivity, which propitiates and extends the political spectrum to the city’s outdoors, where relationships and contexts balance their “lack of autonomy” in search of transformation through cohesion. I do not think they should follow some measurable or practicable efficiency, not even that they mean powers of change in the face of domination. We know that durability of urban graphic is short, and the spaces for debate are dynamic; however, they must display that distance covered, going from violence to an approximation that is surpassed from links established that would allow folding and unfolding memories, visions and ideologies through visibility.

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