

Hypomnemata for a contradiction to inhabit

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Abstract

In this *hypomnemata* we share a set of readings and notes, trying to briefly focus on a series of events in time but nonactual in many senses, that concern the fields of culture, art, and its relationship to politics, most of which have taken place in the city of Madrid. Due to their fragility (or their exposure to oblivion) we want make them available as *supports* –in Foucault’s terms– for a future review, reflection and meditation, either collectively or individually, because it involves a set of not yet assumed contradictions. An act of personal memoir that, in the round trip journey from writing to reading, might concern many more people. Its availability –as Foucault points out on *hypomnemata* writing– opens possibilities of subjectification *between* the self and the world, –therefore this form is proposed to the calling of the present issue. We are wondering how the image and the gaze, or the forms and their perception, are related in this *writing of the self*, which we believe will only reach political meaning when put in relation to others.

Keywords: art, culture, politics, fights, memory, 15M, Madrid, writing, Foucault, nonactuality

What it [X] · How it [X]



Detail. Ainaro Makalilo (Tunisia, 2011)

We would like to type these notes, as we already tried in *Talares de Primavera*¹, with the calligraphy shown in the picture². Far from the typographical problem, our concern is the difficulty implied in giving ourselves means that already contain the goals we are looking for. The morphology of scientific discourse –which official approval accredits the indexation of this magazine, for example– often jeopardizes both the beauty and the formal possibilities of the game of knowing. Despite this, we keep rehearsing –as is the case of the present *hypomnemata*– ways of taking presence by writing, while also shaking off the acquired familiarities. Thus, a small “touch of coquetry”³, a modest aesthetic work, can be very telling in the dream of meeting, in reality, with others. We read it in a poem: “the chance to recognize in the noise produced by others / part of your own sense is there”⁴.

The presentness of the past · The past of the present



Plataforma por la Educación Pública de Pozuelo y Aravaca
[Platform for Public Education of Pozuelo and Aravaca] (2013)

The *Marea Verde* (Green Tide, in education) and the *Marea Blanca* (White Tide, in the public health service) visit the Prado Museum⁵. The groups stop to look at the works by Goya: *Boys with Bloodhounds*, 1786: "the power, the control, and the civil force". *The Blind Man's Bluff*, 1787: "the politicians play like this with us". *Boys climbing a tree*, 1791-92: "the organization and mutual aid between citizens to achieve common goals". *The Dummy*, 1791-92: "we will end up like him, under the private interest". *The Hermitage of San Isidro on a Feastday*, 1788: "a happy and participatory democracy". *Shepherd Playing a Dulzaina*, 1786-87: "arts and culture as indispensable reinforcers of democracy". *Poor People at the Fountain*, 1786-87: "unfortunate situation of many people today". *Wounded Mason*, 1786-87: "the future of the public health service if we do not avoid it".

It seems that something more than the current relevance of Goya is at stake. We are not ask ourselves if these people have read Didi-Huberman, but we do wonder how contemplation and observation might serve politics. A newspaper refers about the visit:

Some of the museum workers have verbally supported the demonstrators, among wick were families with children –one of them, a little infant, was being held by its mother sitting on a bench close to the hall of the universal painter born in Fuendetodos⁶

She lifted her green agitprop t-shirt to breastfeed the baby. We think of the breastfed child nestled at the foot of a Goya pat day, the institution was named *El Prado Blanqui-verde* (The White-green Prado), thus stating the people's competence in the task of naming what was but has not yet been.

The art of organizing the work of art making



Ocupa el Reina [Occupy the Reina Sofía Museum] Photo by the author (2013)

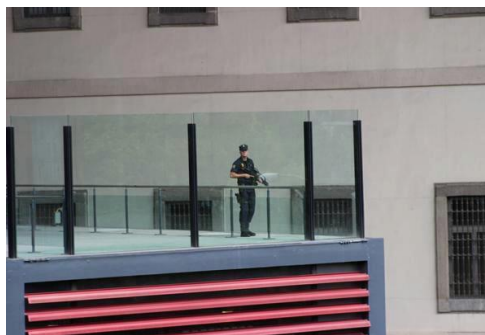
The "Ocupa el Reina (Occupy MNCARS)"⁷ happened between:

- The *suspicion* of the critical voices of those who don't attend the event –who claim that it is organized collusively with the institution, hiding the fact that the event is being instrumentalized.
- The *caution* of the institution itself, despite hosting the event, to prevent an overflow.
- The *insolence* of the political organization. There was a predetermined discussion during the preparatory assemblies: 'we' were already in possession of the right arguments. The concern might be how to embed with the 'exterior', with the public, with the people who aren't involved in politics yet, so that our demands could be widespread and rise like a tide. We (activists, intellectuals, journalists, artists...) imagine, because of the distance to the subjects where we deem ourselves to be experts in. But "It is rather the intellectuals and the artists who would have to be emancipated in the first place, releasing them from the belief in inequality, in the name of which they attribute themselves the mission of instructing and activating the ignorant and passive spectators"⁸. (Try to spread this idea.)
- The *lack of sensitivity* about what we strive for. Doubting that culture may concern us to the same extent as education or health. In the course of the assembly, people from the public health service appeared, with their chants and their party happiness –they seemed more committed to the question of sensitivity. ¿What is the point of all this? Remember Ventura's words in *Juventude em marcha*⁹: "No pens in the hut? So sad".
- The *amnesia*. Forgetting the idea of culture and communication that captivated the squares. We live it and it lived us, and it rendered some divisions partly impossible – between those who create and those who have the creations at their disposal, so we place no faith in the ruptures. Nothing that is been said here is held accountable for what was said and lived at the time of the *acampadas*. Although it is true that what

happened in the *acampadas* must have only affected a few people, it is disturbing because this experience claims to possess rights of reality prevailing above the others.

There was hardly any space left for anything, except because a small group, in the following days, tried to plan an occupation of an abandoned library, owned by a bank – however, the plan could not be carried out. The day of the confinement in the museum, despite of our disagreement, there was quite a large subgroup that were unsure whether there could exist or occur a link between culture and politics. To further the talks, an emptier space was invented. An image shows the presence of this group at the foot of an artwork; Lichtenstein's *Brushstroke*, while the sculpture was contemplated by someone else. (Make up an observation for this.)

“Enemies, there is no enemy”



Terrace of the Reina Sofía Museum. Unknown authorship. Twitter (2012)

He carries an H&K G36C during the XXVth anniversary of the *Royal Association of Friends of the National Museum Centre of Art Reina Sofía* (September 25, 2012). Most of us confused one event with the other¹⁰, but it could also be said that they are, indeed, the same thing. Each institution in its place, and the police in everybody's.

Art disappears · Politics appear



Creación política. (Political Creation). Reproduction of a still life painted by Francisco Franco. Levi Orta (2014)

The Antifascist Artists Platform, which thought up a simple method for the antifascist ‘agency’¹¹, organized an exhibition in a self-managed space in a working-class district of Madrid to denounce the lack of freedom of expression in the art scene (due to a censored artwork in ARCO / Madrid Modern Art Fair). The ‘enemy’s’ access to the

exhibition was nevertheless limited and restricted¹². The exhibition was a public derision event against the dictator, so there could be many other reasons to act this way. Many people in the neighborhood celebrated the event, and –even though we don’t want to look down on this antifascist act or on the welcome it received– the welcome could be attributed to a certain ideological affinity. This fact may perhaps render the act less public. Also, possibly, in relation to one’s own life, since we have decided to be antifascist and not simply anticapitalist –which would probably compromise our lives more seriously. Recently, the same platform has started a sale of works of art and a crowdfunding campaign to finance the disinterment of a mass grave from the Spanish Civil War in Monte de Estépar¹³, Burgos –wich is unquestionable and we support. However, a piece belonging to one of the artworks to be exhibited, wich came from the same time and the same war, from the same possibility to be murdered, disappeared during the installation. We don’t want to present the anecdote as an irony or gossip, but as a question linked to the material disappearance of art and to the various disappearances (and appearances) that take place here.

“If they find us, we are lost”



EKO @pollobarba (2013)

A green graffiti appeared on the walls of the EKO Squatter Social Centre, in the district of Carabanchel, which read “Freedom for artists”. We really don’t know what arrests them or what they are accused of. Neither do we know who are those who claim their freedom. We don’t know what art these artists make –or will make when they recover their freedom, if they do recover it. While, in a squatter social centre, someone cries out for artists’ freedom, in another part of the city, in a festival funded by a bank cultural foundation, a group of artists are considering to *stop being* artists –but we aren’t really sure to ever have been artists¹⁴.

[X] is a square

Insect hut in *Esta es una plaza* (This is a square). Photo by the author (Madrid, 2013)

What room might there be here for the discreet beauty of a little insect house –beings for which the world is “all a lap”¹⁵, if it weren’t because is placed where relationships do not seem to be broken? A conceptual painting at the entry, pink and yellow, welcome us. *Las Manuelas*¹⁶ –Peruvian weavers– knitted a beautiful sunshade with plastic bags: light comes through, but it does not suffocate. The canopy seems “a ship” to the women. A small Greek amphitheatre, with his little orchestra¹⁷, sometimes hosts a seminar on European poetry¹⁸. There is an oven from *Tierra de Campos*, made of adobe¹⁹. And a small playground that knows no boundaries because childhood is not separated from the rest of the world. *This is a square*, it is emphatically stated, every time this place is named. And it does really resemble the little paradise we have in mind when we have to wait or when someone waits for us in the city. Pampering oneself for a while. The artichokes and the tomatoes grow. The forms *communism us*. But what the city knows about what could contains. But what does the city know about its contents? What does it ignore about what already knows? *The city is a town that went wrong*.

Mimesis

No to the privatization of the Public Water Service. Marches for dignity.
Photo by the autor (Madrid, 2014)

During the arrival of *Las Marchas por la Dignidad* (*Marches for Dignity*) to Madrid²⁰, the only fabric that we could see –apart from the clothing– that did not turn into the symbolizing sign of the flag or the informant sign of the picket, was a river. Since earth is a meat of God, do what she does; contemplate its mysteries and conceive like she conceives²¹.

“The crowds are the artist”



Something moves in the basis. Solarigraphy. Diego López Calvín (2013)

“The crowd boils like a monstrous, wild, ardent, voluptuous animal, and stirs within the depths of our being, deeper down than the mothers themselves. Despite its age, it is the youngest among the beasts, the essential creature of earth, its goal and its future. We know nothing about it and we live, supposedly, as individuals. Nevertheless, at times the crowd swoops down on us like a roaring tempest”²². Once we saw pinhole cameras being installed in lampposts, roads, highways bridges, but we didn’t understand to the service of which gaze or duration they were placed²³. But here, connected to the duration of politics, to the restlessness of the bodies, we could say that “something moves in the basis”²⁴ can be seen at last. What resonates and how they resonate with each other, and at times the image swoops down on us like a roaring tempest.

Público



Demonstration Todos somos cultura (We are all culture) D.C. Madrid (2014)

The day before the demo *Todos somos Cultura (We are all culture)*²⁵ that took place in Madrid on March 9 the same year, Carmen Lozano Bright wrote a post in her blog about the “vertical staging” that determines a division between “speakers-attendees, creators-audiences, producers-consumers, artists-spectators, intellectuals-people”, so we cannot find the way to refer to the what the culture has of “transversal” quality of

culture in relation to our lives, nor can we fight for it from the common²⁶. The organizers of the demonstration, *La Plataforma en Defensa de la Cultura (Platform for the Defence of Culture)*, understand transversality differently; music, dance and theatre places were arranged throughout the course of the demonstration. People arrived. As can be seen on the picture, they weren't carrying any flags, so the event would be considered a successful concentration by those who use to believe that flags obstruct politics and public meeting. But maybe the *Platform for the Defence of Culture* has an idea of 'people' that is pivotal to the sector demands and that is not very far from Lozano Bright's, because emancipation cannot be understood or accepted if it doesn't occur through transversal participation and the dissolution of certain divisions between art and culture. And this dream will surely be beautiful, real in many senses and many worlds, but we don't manage to give it a truly public image. And the images that are public often confront those worlds. Maybe this is why we always find objections against what people do. As the Culture Commission of Acampadabcn already said two years ago:

[C]ulture and communication are common goods, also a process in constant transformation which reflects social dynamics, and the result of this process doesn't necessarily have to be a commodity [...] Cultural policy is not culture [...] the public institutions don't make culture, they manage the public resources destined for culture²⁷.

In the midst of this, the murmur of the "Author's" voice in the *Untitled Comedy* by Lorca, who "left us" on a day like today –it was said on RTVE [Spanish Public Television]). A voice that a group of actors-protesters have made into a Greek chorus. A shape which current relevance lies in its own nature and which helps to gather together those who create and those who have. A formal transition between the poet and the city, in a final question that will haunt us forever:

Modestly, I must admit that nothing is invented: angels, shadows, lyres of snow and dreams, they exist and fly among you as real as lust, or the coins you have in pocket, or the latent cancer in the beautiful woman's bosom, or the tired lip of the merchant. [...] All you do is look for a way to be unaware of everything. When the wind sounds, so you won't understand what it says, you play the pianola; you cover the windows with lace; to sleep in peace and quiet and silence the permanent cricket of conscience, you invent the almshouses [...] Reality begins because the author does not want you to feel you are in the theater, but in the middle of the street; and therefore he will not make poetry, rhythm, literature; he wants to teach your little hearts a lesson; for this is why he is a poet, but ever so modestly. Anyone can do it. [...] The fragrance of white lilies is pleasant but I prefer the smell of the sea. I can say that the smell of the sea flows from the sirens' breasts, and a thousand other things, but he doesn't care or hear, he keeps calling to the costs waiting for the new drowned bodies –this is what matters to man. But how could the smell of the sea be delivered to the theatre, or how can the stalls be flooded by stars?²⁸.

El mundo que imagina el teatro



Line at the entry of the opera. CS Tabacalera de Lavapiés. Juan Martín Zarza (Madrid, 2013)

In this spectacle, the onlookers partake in the scene, and the scene partakes in the society that watches it. The form of the spectacle seems utterly conventional; scores, models, sets, songs have been made, but one could say that the means already contained the intended goals. They wanted to do make a real opera of the people – and they did it popularly at the time. Authors, artists and audience meet in their difference and they recognize each other in one thing only: the social fight. Along the way, the attributes they took for granted about themselves are deprogrammed, and together they attend the scene that contains them. At the end of this new popular opera, a banner is shown: REVOLT, and the audience broke into applause and cries of sympathy. *El Crepúsculo del Ladrillo* (*The Twilight of the Brick*), played at the Tabacalera de Lavapiés²⁹ was a success; long queues trailed for three days before the entrance to the old tobacco factory. It was an unprecedented thing in this city –in the classical and still truly popular dimension of the event. The self-managed culture and the institutional culture don't take on themselves such a perspective, unless they do it in a quaint or populist mood; some people have done it their own way.

Un gesto decorativo



International Libertarian Meeting in Barcelona. (1977) Reproduction of the installation in the exhibition *Ajoblanco: Rupture, contestation and vitalism*. (Madrid, 2014)

The connecting room between the underground period (1974-80) and the 'cultural' (1987-99) period of the *Ajoblanco* magazine³⁰. It's a picture taken at the International Libertarian Meeting in Barcelona in 1977³¹, facing the image of the Montjuïc, during the CNT political rally after the return of F. Montseny³². These are, by far, the biggest pictures of the whole exhibition and, in the case of the picture of the Libertarian Festival, it's the only one showing people in assembly. We find the display of this image worrisome: it is sectioned vertically and and opposed so that the inside of the

assembly circle seems to open and reverse, projecting itself outward –which would imply a beautiful idea: a spreading of the public meetings.

The curator was asked about the display of this picture, and he replied that it was only a “decorative” issue, with no specific meaning. For us, though, it was an enormous and relevant operation: to separate or to interrupt this image –something unimaginable if it weren’t with because of some kind of sense that would arrange it opposed to the logic of the representation that can be perceived in the image of the Montjuïc. Maybe this gesture could be related to the strange weddings between underground culture and politics extant at the time. Pedro G. Romero criticised that question as ‘psychoanalytical’ –and this was a double surprise because the relevance that this ‘iconoclasm’ has for us was unacknowledged. We hear the chants towards the basis and the below, but how rarely do we allow ourselves the conditions for trust, or to really begin there. To the point that we are unable to recognize the images or the forms that might contain them. (To invent a restitution of the image.)

The world imagined by cinema



Tres instantes, un grito [Three Instants, One Shout]
Cecilia Barriga (2013)

“We are learning, just we need time” –can be heard in the beginning of Cecilia Barriga’s film *Tres instantes, un grito (Three Instants, One Shout)*³³. We watched it, on a night in July, on the rooftop of La Morada, a squatter Social Center in Madrid, in the popular celebrations of Chamberí. The memory of the *acampadas* is fragile. The film progresses slowly; it works like a patient accumulation of images and words, and the frailty of memory is thus shown; these are images for this slow learning that takes place when people get together to organize themselves. We find some of the things, of the gestures, that really created a world, one where it is possible that someone can love us and miss us, although we don’t know each other. And through the images echo some important questions, maybe a bit forgotten: “To whom are these proposals directed?”. We can say today to ourselves, if we haven’t forgotten it completely. And meanwhile it is also possible to learn a bit more about active listening and collective thought. The film does not search for main characters, nor for the ‘of action’ neither those who stand above the event. Neither the brilliant minds, nor the ‘professionals in action’ that we see in Grueso’s movie³⁴, nor the beautiful women’s faces filmed by Sylvain George³⁵. The happiness of Barriga’s film is reasoned, intense, in contrast to the exuberance and the joy of Martín Patino’s film³⁶. It seems as if this movie has stopped to look at the real breakups between the state of things and us –in the

ordinary world, especially. A poet says: “Blossomings of the speech and of the bodies that transport it”³⁷. Beautiful faces like raised squares. What a happy and rejoicing people who thinks itself able to live the life it would have liked to live. What happiness to find “what cinema can do with what we could do” –as could be read in the calling to the screening³⁸. From the Madrid square, the movie will take us to the New York square. The images show the performative scene, concurrent with an explanation about the mechanisms of public speech and the spreading of voices when it this should not be happening, but this doesn’t prevent us from attending to the ripening of the tree leaves: “realizing that duration turns us into feminists, that it requires a caring work: the stressing schedules of the *acampada* kitchen works, the water carriers of Puerta del Sol, the veterinarians in Zuccotti Parkhe, the mattresses and the affections in the schools of Santiago of Chile”. If the experience has taken place here and has happened through the people, why does it seem that the desert keeps moving forward? Is it really moving forward? What does remain of our own social fights? The relevance of the questio about the survivals lies here. Above all, it lies in the survival of the ruptures. Who could imagine that this would happend to us? This has been said from a fight in the south of the world, boys and girls in relation to the occupation of their high school, whose fight the movie showed, too, with a happiness both touching and combative, at the time when the occupation comes to an end –but they know that the memory of this experience can not be shattered. We leave the squares, we leave the schools. We leave the occupation of the university. We return, occasionally. We can’t. We can’t go back to our previous lives. (No more living in one world and naming in another.)

[X]



Detail of the woman's gaze. Tell Asmar sculpture group (2775 B.C.)

Notes for a collage.

To stare.	<i>Look</i>
To open perception.	<i>See</i>
To recreate the gaze.	<i>Observe</i>
To invent an observation.	<i>Experience</i> ³⁹

(And in the center an image of estrangement. Perhaps of a mask.)

A paper in *Re-Visions* wonders about Samuel Beckett's *Film*⁴⁰. It contains a reference – hardly more – to the unique artwork, the sole creative piece, showed in the film. We can't help looking at it. But looking isn't still enough to understand.

To listen.	<i>Think</i>
People with teapot.	

(The simplest gestures of existence can be re-learned.)

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Notes

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³ “- If everybody knows you, why the balaclava? / - A touch of coquetry, they don't know who I am, and they don't mind. What is important here is not who is or was Subcomandante Marcos”. *Habla Marcos*. The Subcommander interviewed by Gabriel García Márquez and Roberto Pombo. (2001) URL: http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/comunicados/2001/2001_03_25.htm (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

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⁶ Efe, *El Mundo*. URL: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2013/03/01/madrid/1362169896.html> (Consultado: 24-07-2014) (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

⁷ *Encierro en el Reina (Self-confinement in the Reina)*. URL: <http://madrid.tomalaplaza.net/2013/04/26/viernes-10-de-mayo-encierro-en-el-reina-sofia-derechos-democracia-y-dignidad-para-la-cultura-y-la-comunicacion/> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

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¹² Opening of the *Jornadas contra Franco*. Germano Paris [pseud. 2013,] URL: <http://contraindicaciones.net/?p=2327> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

¹³ *Monte de Estépar* AAP URL: <http://montedeestepar.org/index.html> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

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- ¹⁴ VVAA, *What if we stop to being artists?* URL: <http://www.yasidejamosdeserartistas.com/> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)
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- ¹⁹ Red de Huertos de Madrid, Traditional oven in *Esta es una plaza* URL: <http://redhuertosurbanosmadrid.wordpress.com/2013/07/03/taller-de-horno-de-adobe-en-esta-es-una-plaza/> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)
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<http://www.periodismodigno.org/manifestacion-todos-somos-cultura/> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

²⁹ *The Twilight of the Brick* opera URL:

<http://elcrepusculodelladrillo.wordpress.com/2013/10/05/presentacion-2/> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.) URL (Video): http://youtu.be/KI1m4d_cB_A (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

³⁰ Exhibition *Ajoblanco. Ruptura, contestación y vitalismo (1974-1999)*. Centro Conde Duque, Madrid, 2014. URL: <http://www.condeduquemadrid.es/evento/ajoblanco/>

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³¹ Fontova, R. *Un verano rojo y negro (A Red and Black Summer)*.

<http://tinyurl.com/ms9tus8> (Retrieved 24 August, 2014.)

Video recording of the libertarian meeting in BCN, by an attendant to the meeting.

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³² CNT meeting in Montjuïc. <http://youtube.com/watch?v=g8NmDwcsXt0> (Retrieved 24 August, 2014.)

³³ Barriga, C. (2013). *Tres instantes. Un grito (Three Instants, One Shout)*.

³⁴ Grueso M., S. (2012). *Excelente, revulsivo, importante (Excellent, Revulsive, Important)*.

³⁵ George, S. (2013). *Vers Madrid. The burning bright*.

³⁶ Martín Patino, B. (2012). *Libre te quiero*.

³⁷ Blog by María Salgado. <http://globorapido.blogspot.com.es/2014/07/un-recuento-no-una-resenia-sale.html> (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

³⁸ Miriam Martín calling tinyurl.com/mlzw7yl (Retrieved 24 July, 2014.)

³⁹ Wagensberg, J. (2002). *Si la naturaleza es la respuesta ¿cuál era la pregunta? y otros quinientos pensamientos sobre la incertidumbre (If Nature is the Answer, what Was the Question? And other 500 Thoughts on Uncertainty)*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores.

⁴⁰ Castellano, T. (2013), *To see or not to see. That is the question*. Madrid: Re-Visiones nr. 3.

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