

Shamanic Materialism: Autonomous Forms of Remembrance
Colectivo Los Ingrávidos in Conversation with Almudena Escobar López
October 16, 2020
english transcription

[Almudena](#): The first thing is for us to talk a little about the relationship of these two programs. The first is [Twelve frames of relation](#) dedicated to the VSW archive and then the [24 Omens](#) which is the program dedicated to your work. I would like you to explain the relationship between both programs.

[Colectivo Los Ingrávidos](#): What we wanted to do with the VSW archive as well as with our audiovisual work was to develop a kind of constellation to reveal or make legible elements or relationships that are not otherwise visible. We chose 12 works from the VSW archive for the commemoration of October 12 and they are pictures that establish a relationship because when looking at the archives we realized that they have the character of a report, testimony or documentation, which referred us to the *Letters of Relation* that Hernán Cortés wrote, but also to the reports that the chroniclers prepared to be sent to Spain.

The [24 Omens](#) are audiovisual pieces we made and that we have now put into relationship. For us, the 12 pictures from the VSW archive generate a reverberation that allows doubling the number to 24 pictures, which is also the number used to create and compose movement in one second of an image, the 24 frames that are the origin of the moving image in cinema. This enabled the composition and emergence of [24 Omens](#) which are 24 audiovisual pieces that take up aspects of superstition such as trance, clairvoyance, spell, suggestion, omen and possession in order to somehow counteract the violence of the collision produced by the European invasion of the American continent, recovering and also transforming three aspects that led to the destruction of Mesoamerican civilizations: epidemics, alliances, the construction of the common enemy and the ideological, cultural or religious aspect, which was interpreted in negative terms by Christians as “superstition”. From the relationship between these elements we build different concepts such as that of **Shamanic materialism** and **Aesthetics of the trance** to point out the different ways of narrating the event.

From the perspective of the chroniclers of the Indies, we took up four modes of testimony or four ways of narrating the event. For example, we were struck by the approach of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún who tries to suspend judgments or biased evaluations, seeking to be impartial in order to recover the testimony of the natives; more than anything else it is a documentation, gathering of testimonies or narrative recovery. Meanwhile, the chronicle of Fray Toribio de Motolinía comes from a more subjective perspective and through the filter of Christianity, interpreting the rites, deities, and customs of the Indians as demonic. It is an extraordinarily subjective chronicle carried out under the influence of his horror. On the other hand, the

chronicle of Bernal Díaz del Castillo is more secular since it is about a soldier who tries to be impartial and objective by creating a documentary record of the battles. It is remarkable that he calls his text the “True History” precisely to counteract what he considered the false stories circulating in the writings of several chroniclers who had not been present at the events. Bernal Díaz focuses on recounting the strategies that enabled Hernán Cortés to invade Tenochtitlán with so few soldiers, constantly trying to emphasize his strategic ingenuity. Finally, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas produces a chronicle from a social and political perspective that focuses on denouncing the excesses of the conquerors in Mesoamerican lands. So, we asked ourselves, how did the chroniclers make use of testimony and from what perspective? Our response was the preparation and composition of 24 audiovisual pieces that take up the irrational testimony or rather the “irrational” and “superstitious” character that makes up a completely different kind of religiosity and that, under the Christian gaze, acquires a negative meaning since it is seen as an irrational and demonic belief. So it was about taking a leap at the moment of the “semiotic” collision of the so-called “conquest” to recover different elements and use them in making our work.

A: They are two ways of looking at the same object but in a different way.

CLI: Exactly, the event of October 12 involved a huge “signic” collision, and what we are trying to do is reformulate as well as, as far as possible, counteract the violence of that collision with the recovery of different “demonic” practices such as the omen, the spell, the suggestion, the magic, the trance or the incantation.

If we look at the VSW Files, for example the first video [Our Trip to Mexico](#) It suggests different ways of making a journey, of traveling through a landscape or in this case making a partial tour of a country, it is a piece that documents and informs us about a certain vacation trip. In contrast to this perspective, the different ways in which the weightless pieces are made suggest destruction, repetitions, the excesses of invasions, but also an animistic or suggestive penetration into the landscape.



Our trip to Mexico. VSW Archive

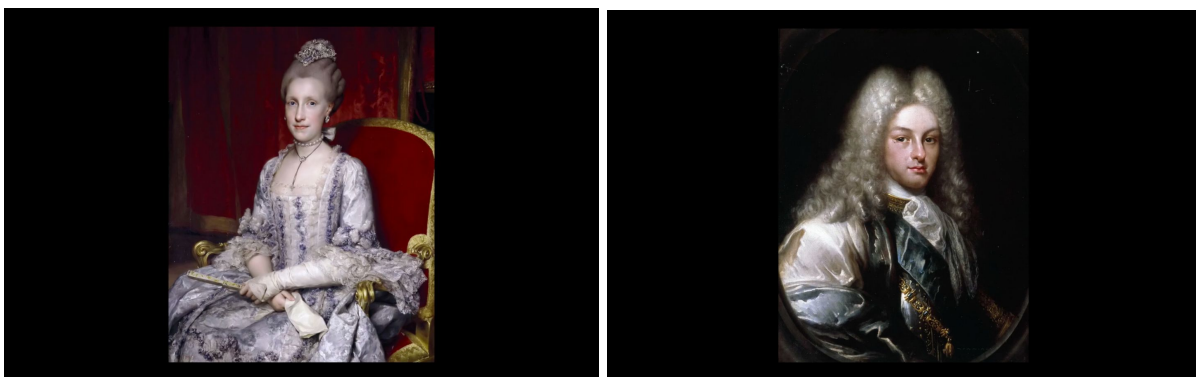
A: The first piece in the archive is a personal record of a vacation in Mexico.

CLI: [Our trip to Mexico](#) is a tour to different places in Mexico. We placed this piece in relation with [Coyolxauhqui](#) and with [Numbers](#), which are two of our audiovisual pieces. What we wanted to show is what lies out-of-shot of a tourist account, what is not going to be seen, or rather its correlation, the abandoned wasteland, a landscape in a trance, the desolate region. [Coyolxauhqui](#) is our dismembered goddess, she represents the moon. It is about the reactivation of the myth, of placing it in relation with the current spate of femicides. The piece also implies a devastated, destroyed space, and in that sense tourism, while benefiting a country in economic terms, is still an extractive industry since it leaves behind garbage, sewage, pollution, especially when it is based on the exclusive economic benefit of a few.



Coyolxauhqui, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2016

[Numbers](#) is also a journey, a tour of the museum. Specifically, it is about the Prado Museum collection that recently turned 200 years old, and it is also the face or the other side of what this collision means, intensified by the Spanish invasion of the American continent. In fact, the extraction of Mesoamerican wealth was not precisely for the benefit of the Iberian people but for the monarchy, for the kings. In some way, the official “portrait”, which could be considered apolitical, is the liminal correlate of the excesses of the so-called conquest, yet if we place it in relation it is fundamentally political because it is the face of extractivism, of the pillaging of Mesoamerica as well as the ecocide carried out with mining and slave labor, destroying the ecosystems and the way of life of the peoples: all of this murmurs in the silent royal faces.



Numbers, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2020.

A: In addition to the fact that these are portraits, it has to be said, most are paintings by Diego Velázquez and Francisco de Goya.

CLI: Exactly, they are mostly by Diego Velázquez and Francisco de Goya, both painters worked for the crown. They were immortalizing these people while a continent was being destroyed. The audiovisual piece ends with the painting “The Triumph of Death” by Pieter Brueghel.

A: Maybe this is a good time to talk about museums, about what happens like in the film [Prehistoric Iroquois Sites](#) which is a film by the Videofreex. In this case, what interests me is to think about the ways to document, the ways to tell the story, and this piece for example presents an archeological excavation of an Iroquois Indian site, in the Rochester area, where I am now. And it shows how objects are classified, that is, an object that had a spiritual or daily function, through the archeology of historical classification, is colonized, stripped of everything that it meant in another context, to transform it into an art object, that is, an object of knowledge that can be known. It is a way of documenting things, placing them in context with the documentation of the chroniclers you mentioned. I find it interesting to think about the methods of colonization.



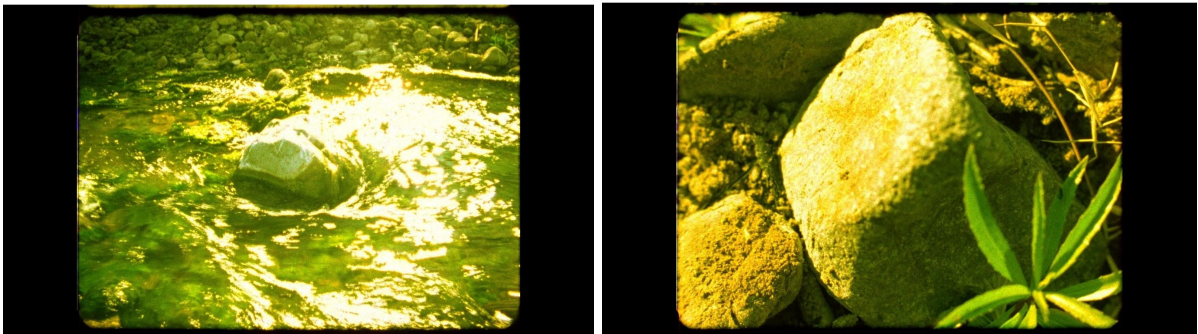
Stills: Prehistoric Iroquois Sites. VSW Archive

CLI: At the same time as the museum protects, recovers and preserves the documents and objects of the cultures that it classifies, by giving them a rereading it appropriates them. The museum cannot avoid a kind of forensic connotation, like a morgue: it stores these remains in the refrigerated and aseptic spaces of glass, steel and concrete, causing what we consider to be an anguish and spatial terror, as in the case of the **General [Archive of the Indies](#)** in Seville which holds the documents, maps and objects from the time of the invasion, as well as the portraits of the conquerors, but does not show the other side, the cultural, demographic and natural devastation, the destruction of the ecosystems. However, that other side is there and is making its way, erupting into the museum with the rhythmic, “civilizing” barbarism. Nothing scarier than a museum.



Archivo de Indias, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos

[Prehistoric Iroquois Sites](#) is a record, a documentation, as you put it so well, of a prehistoric settlement at the moment of its excavation. What we did was put it in relation to [Pirámide erosionada](#) since one of the aspects of Shamanic Materialism is the importance of documentation, of the empirical dimension of things. [Pirámide erosionada](#) is another way of documenting or recording a pre-Hispanic settlement, a pyramid or site that has been absorbed by nature. It is a pyramid that has lost its verticality because it has been absorbed by nature, so here the record enters a kind of trance, it is a landscape between two worlds, a hypnotic landscape, it is also a gaze or point of view of the stones, the minerals, the moss, the water, the river, of the different elements that have been absorbing the pyramid, erasing and dissolving its defined forms and giving it another kind of life, another psychic rhythm, thus producing a horizontalization of the pyramid, and in the end allowing us to perceive how the pyramid used to be a mountain.



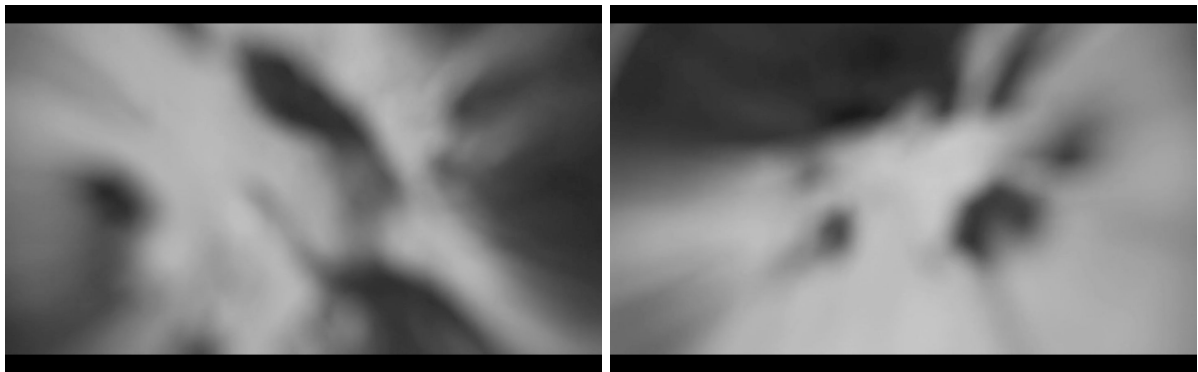
Stills: Pirámide erosionada, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2019

We wanted to recover what reaches us from that pre-Hispanic era, which is part of our past and of our culture, but which is still present. It is that animistic dimension, what we consider the animistic penetration of the landscape, that is, when you travel to those regions you too are absorbed into that nature, the camera acquires that animistic relationship with things, with the environment, with how the light falls on water, the plants, the rocks, acclaiming the powerful life of the surroundings. In some sense, these elements are not on view in [Prehistoric Iroquois Sites](#) because it focuses more on the record of the excavation and classification of the archeological

objects at the site than their immersion in the environment, while in [Pirámide erosionada](#) what appears in the foreground is the animistic acclamation of space, the material pulse of the living ruins, the agitated penetration of the landscape.

A: It is almost like an emotional landscape, you receive the sensorial aspect more than the discursive knowledge, in this case the archeological knowledge of the objects.

CLI: It is about the emotional powers of rocks, water, plants, it is a region in a trance, that is why we also relate it to [Nahualli](#), which is an entity that is between two worlds, in a continuous trance, it dissolves its outline, it is a form of intermediate perception that we see through, it is an entity affected by the animal powers that transform it. We also chose it for the black and white composition, such as the [Prehistoric Iroquois Sites](#) but we no longer see through archeologists but instead access the perception of this entity and its transformed environment.



Nahualli, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2015

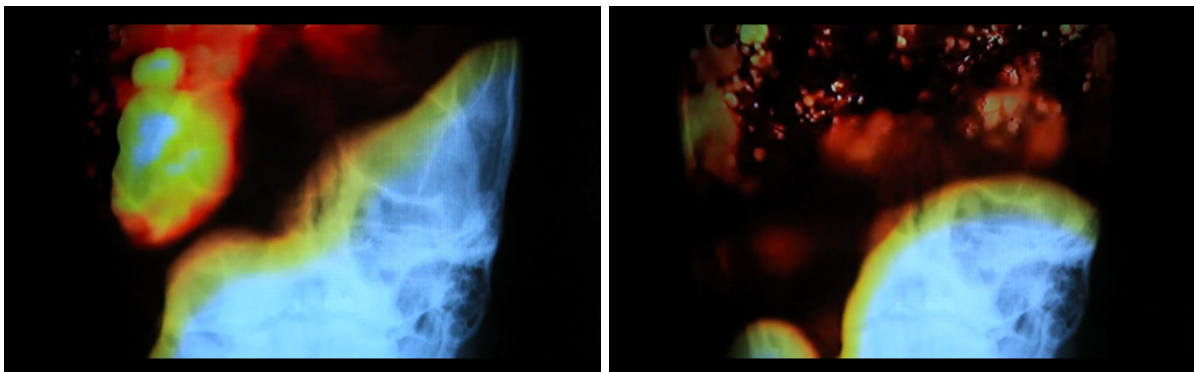
We can also set [Nahualli](#) in relation to [Now that the Buffalo has gone](#) which in turn goes with [Venado](#) and [Cóalt](#), the three are considered sacred animals, they travel through space following a very different route to that of the tourist in [Our trip to Mexico](#) or in the case of a museum tour like in [Quetzalcoátl](#) where they show us pre-Hispanic deities while the myth of Quetzalcoátl is narrated, or in [Colonial Expansion of European Nations](#) which involves a report on how the European countries expanded. Here what we are seeing is how capitalism developed in line with the colonial expansion and, as a result, how mercantile development exploded, in turn decimating the Mesoamerican peoples as well as destroying ecosystems.



Stills: Colonial Expansion of European Nations, VSW Archive

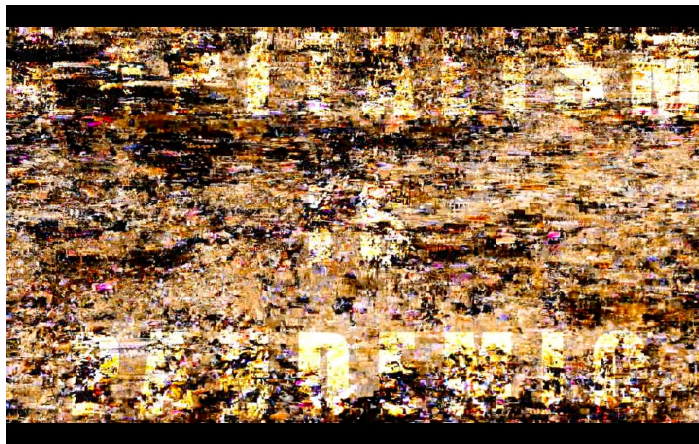
A: It is interesting how it follows the line of the portraits in the walk through the Prado Museum in [Numbers](#), because these portraits are all we see in [Colonial Expansion of European Nations](#). You don't see what's happening outside of the frame, as you said, in Mesoamerica, all that matters is why Europeans go to America to colonize it. So the report comes only from one point of view, but it does not tell us anything about the rest, about the people who were already living there. In this piece they are telling us why Europeans go to America and about the mercantilist theory, it is the only thing, there is nothing outside of this perspective.

CLI: That is why that constellation we are talking about is important, since the elements and relationships that exist there are made legible. Along the same lines that claims the political importance of the portrait is the piece [Cortés](#) since it is a portrait, as in [Numbers](#), however, what we see is the correlate of any official portrait: a bloody skull. We must remember the long tradition in painting of including a skull, for example, the Baroque painters used skulls as *vanitas*, to represent the *momento mori*. It is also important to remember that in Mesoamerica the Spaniards erased the faces of the deities and it is remarkable that, centuries later, one of the most bloodthirsty methods of the counterinsurgency and Latin American dictatorships was to flay the faces of prisoners and opponents as an extreme form of state terrorism. A recent case of this procedure was what they did to one of the students of the Normal Rural School in Ayotzinapa in 2014.



Cortés, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2015

To go back to [Colonial expansion of European Nations](#) we put it in relation to our pieces [El Dorado](#) and [El ángel exterminador](#), El Dorado is that imaginary place whose supposed existence caused the destruction and devastation of the way of life of whole peoples and ecosystems. Looking for that imaginary city covered in gold, everything around us was destroyed, in our work [El Dorado](#) the screen festers with golden pixels until it forms the motto implied by that imaginary city: “CAPITALISM IS PANDEMIC”, a motto that could also underpin all the porticoes of the great global megalopolises, the audio is a combination of the drilling of the earth through fracking as well as the electronic sound of banking machines. It is an imaginary space. Like [Coyolxauhqui](#) it is the region in a trance, but also a destroyed space, [Nahualli](#) is the space between two worlds or in [Archivo de Indias](#) in which the space itself is the source of a kind of terror, the spatial anguish of what a museum or a space for protection from extractivism and destruction of a continent implies: an archive of barbarism. Finally, El Dorado is that space whose (non-)existence caused so much devastation. “*El ángel exterminador*” would also be a destroyed space, the space of the “little leprosy” as the chroniclers describe the colonial plagues.



El Dorado, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2020

A: It would be interesting to highlight these four territories of which you speak so that they are very clear, you speak of the imaginary region in relation to [El Dorado](#), you speak of the intermediate and eroded region that is the [Eroded pyramid](#), for example, then you speak of the destroyed landscape with [El ángel exterminador](#) and [Coyolxauhqui](#) and finally of the spatial terror of museums with [Numbers](#), [Archivo de Indias](#) and [Hernán](#). I'd like you to describe these four spatial levels.

CLI: It is a formal axis, that is, the conditions of possibility for understanding the **Aesthetics of Trance**, it also implies an axis of articulation and mobilization of the relationship of the VSW archives with our audiovisual pieces. These spaces, regions, landscapes that you have already mentioned are distinguished from Western spatiality that is linear, progressive, teleological, while in Mesoamerica spatiality as

well as temporality is cyclical, there is no end of time and then eternity, but epochal transformations, returns, cycles, recursions, phases, etc. That is why there is what we call the **Aesthetics of Trance**, where it is not only about space and time but also about space-time dynamics, agitations, twists, bursts, loops, vortices, recursion, synchronicity and simultaneity, porous coexistence. Once again the constellation traces a horizon of readability and experimentation that expresses these dynamisms and makes them momentarily legible. No matter what year an image is from, or in what epoch it emerges, it is always possible for it to enter into relation with other times and to trigger its synchronicity, thereby erasing a persistent temporal linearity. Thus, the image of El Dorado emerges in the colonial period with the epochal collision, yet its effects are absolutely current.

To go back to the pieces once more, in [El ángel exterminador](#) becomes legible in the flight of images, a few words, an ominous event, the image oozes a name: PÁNFILO DE NARVÁEZ, a conquistador who arrived in Tenochtitlán in 1520, a year before the fall of the Mexica empire, triggering a biological hecatomb since the people who disembarked with him were carrying measles for which the Mesoamerican peoples had no antibodies. This was one of the first and most devastating epidemics, producing one of the first demographic catastrophes on the continent that served as the foundation for the subsequent epidemic devastations. The chroniclers called it the year of the “little leprosy”, exactly 500 years ago.

A: Note that, 1520-2020.

CLI: A synchronicity



El ángel exterminador, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2020

The image of this piece comes from the series of images that began to proliferate and that went viral with the pandemic, the shots taken with drones, with their uncanny, passive flight, of the empty cities due to the emergency. In this case it is the city of San Francisco. A Semitic figure, the exterminating angel is the flight of the angel of the abyss that in the biblical story brings to the Egyptians the last plague

that leads to the liberation of the Israelites. But it also has to do with Luis Buñuel's film that echoes this devastating myth and puts the notion of society as a civilizing force in check. In this way, these audiovisual pieces, what has been, what has happened, enter into relation with the present day, making its elements legible. However, this legibility is fleeting, which is why the lightning, the flash, the irruption, something that appears for a moment and then fades, all of this is recurrent in our works.

On the other hand, the Spanish Baroque addressed these themes of sleep, loneliness and death. We thought that just as Walter Benjamin returns in his research to German Baroque Drama to recover an aesthetic procedure that is *allegoresis* or allegory and uses them in his analyses to talk about what is a preamble to the future, which brings in the emergence of the dictatorships, the recrudescence and radicalism of fascism that will lead directly to the great conflagration of the 1940s. In this way we establish a link to elements of that moment of collision five hundred years ago, of the first epidemics that occurred here in America, of the cultural, ideological and religious cataclysm, of the ecosystem-destroying processes such as mining or the construction of gigantic megalopolises, the proliferation of industrial farming or the phenomenon of the *maquila* which is the textile factories of exploitation and that produces devastated landscapes such as [Coyolxauhqui](#) as well as femicides and ecocides. All this happens with the expansion of capitalism, made possible by the huge transfers of gold and raw materials that went from America to Europe and that finally, after five hundred years, means we are coinciding with the most savage phase of capitalism, that is, with neoliberalism.

A: I'm also thinking about things that are one way but then work in another in other spaces. I would like you to talk a little about the idea of the omen and how the Spanish used omens, the things that happened naturally among the Mesoamerican peoples and how they were appropriated to change the discourse and use it against the Mesoamerican peoples themselves. So the idea of the omen and how it can be used as a double-edged sword.

CLI: As you've said, what we wanted to do is take up different elements that emerge from the cultural collision, such as the omen and the suggestion, since the battle produced by this collision largely took place in the field of images and signs, and it was precisely the chroniclers who began to show us the way ahead, with their intense semiotic grief. It is precisely the way in which the chroniclers narrate things, it is what they tell us with a sense of terror that calls our attention. For example, Motolinía, who sees everything from a more subjective point of view, who interprets everything as demonic and insists on conversion as a way of "making people escape" from their dependence on pagan beliefs: it is precisely his narrative outburst that makes us experience the expressive degree of the collision. Although it is true that there was a deep religiosity in the Mesoamerican peoples, this religiosity began to work against them. When the epidemics arrived, they began to reread and

reinterpret their old omens, their dreams, their spells with a specific meaning, the image of the destruction of their culture became legible to them, “accepting” the image of their defeat, the apparently inevitable. Their sorcerers could no longer do anything about this. They destroyed all the symbolic sustenance as well as the semiotic practices, the relationship with the signs became widespread despair. There is a cunning in Hernán Cortés to make them see that their gods had abandoned them, or that they had chosen the wrong ones. Of course, the defeat of the Mesoamerican peoples has to do with multiple factors, but we consider three aspects when we look at the elements of the collision. The first aspect is the plagues or diseases and their social correlates, that is, hunger and slave labor; the second aspect is the construction of alliances as well as the configuration of a common enemy; and finally the use of their omens, suggestion which, under the Christian lens, was interpreted in negative terms as superstition. That is, the deep Mesoamerican religiosity was transformed into a cultural, ideological and religious cataclysm, a battle that took place largely through images and signs ended up underpinning a defeat. We wanted to draw out this last element, that of superstition, but as a trance, ultimately it is a praise of superstition, of spell, of trance. In that sense, [*Tales of Wonderful Potato*](#) which is narrated as a “story”, brings us closer to the history of the potato in its cosmic dimension, that is, the real dimension for all ancient cultures, we relate that piece with [*Impressions of the Wonderful Toloache*](#) which is a deviation in the narrative, it is a rhythmic, suggestive, repetitive, interval-based trance, which with the recursive character of the flower and its petals generates a shock on the retina, there are loops, clumps, clots but also hypnosis and porosity. The Toloache is a plant considered sacred, it produces hallucinations and in high doses intoxication and even death, we related it with [*Barranca*](#) which is an intermediate space, a spatial region that makes you enter suggestive resonances, blurring lights, it is like being under the effect of Toloache, it is a region that dis-oriens, a cosmic region by day as it protects you from the sun, refreshes, there are springs but at night it is transformed into a dangerous region, an area of heavy density, conducive to trance, a magical ecosystem, in addition to integrating a sound density caused by living entities, but at the same time, and unfortunately more up-to-date, it has been a place where the hitmen leave the bodies of those they have murdered, the flowers, the rocks, the springs and the animals being the living witnesses to all these diverse events. In [*Barranca*](#) it is about the point of view of the cactus flower, in whose movement the mental landscape of the Barranca folds and unfolds, its visual path, its space-time dynamism, making it an animistic and suggestive penetration into the landscape.



Barranca, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2019

After [*Tales of Wonderful Potato*](#) comes [*Democracy in Communication: Popular Video and Film in Latin America*](#) which is very interesting because it is a continuation of colonialist tropes but from another side, from the north, from the United States. For us, television has had the impact that the conquest had on Mesoamerica in a sense, that is, what the so-called conquest did; this is ideological colonization, the imposition of a language, a religion and a way of life, this has all been induced by television over the last forty years in what we now call Mexico.



Democracy in Communication: Popular Video and Film in Latin America

A: It is the continuation of the cultural and aesthetic cataclysm that we spoke of before, it continues in a different way, adopting other faces, but it is equally violent.

CLI: Exactly, it is an extreme perceptual violence, because it is an imposition of what the expansion of neoliberalism and the end of many social projects will be in the 1980s and 1990s. In general terms, the 1980s was when the neoliberal regimes in Latin America commanded by the United States were established through dictatorships and military coups, and the dissemination of that new ideology, the dissemination of that new way of life is carried out fundamentally through the television. Television programs are imported from the United States, a grammar of television, cultural values, the establishment of a class and racial profile and

hierarchy, as well as a paradigm of exorbitant consumption. This is what we see on Mexican television through soap operas, series, commercials, films, music, etc. It is the establishment of an ideal of beauty, an ideal of life, we don't only import their programs but also copy them. In this way television creates a **new grammar**, a **system of images** that permeated Latin American society, culture and consciences through the news, reports, series, comedies and soap operas, the latter are also classist and racist in the extreme. Showing indigenous peoples only through their folklore, appropriating their traditions and depoliticizing their resistance struggles, propping up a fundamentally corporate notion of class and race. Spreading a classist, racist, individualist ideology, the exaltation of meritocracy, runaway consumerism, the absurd idea that things are earned on their own merits, devaluing the community and the collective. Television had an impact on the production of a national subjectivity as great as that of the golden era of Mexican films, in terms of the formation of national images and how the dialectical image of the nation was shaped. In this sense, television implies the dissemination and underpinning of a specific ideology and economy of life: neoliberalism. It is an imposition. For example, in terms of language, we have an imposition of Spanish over and above the near-disappearance of many of our native languages, since Spanish is the only official language. It is on television that we watch films which are often dubbed or with subtitles but it is mainly American cinema, although there were also films from the Mexican golden age, since Televisa, the television monopoly, owns a huge part of the country's audiovisual and cinematographic archive.

A: And how do you see it in relation to [Visión de Anáhuac](#) which is the one you put in relation to [Democracy in Communication: Popular Video and Film in Latin America](#) in addition to [Mictlantecuhtli](#).

CLI: We placed them in relation because soap operas often gave us an ominous contemporary "vision" of Anahuac, television achieves a trance even cinema rarely achieved. The Anahuac basin is where the settlement of Tenochtitlán is located, which today has become a gigantic megalopolis and which is one of the nerve centers of political and social demands, [Visión de Anáhuac](#) shows an epicenter in crisis, a calcareous, bloody and burning vision with a gigantic closed horizon, above a crushing dark and starless night, below the burning city, in the distance the patrol cars, ambulances and firefighters filling the landscape, screams everywhere, images of grief, images of our current "democracy", a scorched earth policy. Meanwhile, [Mictlantecuhtli](#) is the lord of the underworld, a work created as a portrait in movement, it is the prevailing face of the viewer, the silent laugh of our expectation, the cadaverous trance of democracy, on television the underworld begins for us, the region in which we are all limbo, the induction of a generalized coma to access a hegemonic and economic vision, but also a Nation-State vision.



Visión de Anáhuac, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2019

A: Eliminating the epistemological diversity of peoples. There is only one way of knowing and understanding that it is centralized, a reproduction of exacerbated colonialism.

CLI: That is why we wanted to emphasize the significant of television in the imposition and control of peoples. Since television became a kind of new chronicler, we are interested in its character as an informant. Since our work lays claim to a derivation of that grammar and system of images in a critical way that in turn has to do with the chronicle and alternative forms of journalistic investigation. Just as the chroniclers reported to the kings what was happening in America depending on who wrote it, the reporting had different characteristics, television became the chronicler of the event, homogenizing our awareness.

A: It is very good how you relate it because you have the chronicle, then you have [*Tales of the Wonderful Potato*](#) which is a way of telling the story of the potato and then [*Democracy in Communication: Popular Video and Film in Latin America*](#) which is the discourse, grammar or image system of Television, there are three linear ways of narrating the facts, the event. Maybe we could talk about the last film [*Autumn: Frost Country*](#) which is completely different from all the others because it has to do with poetry and is a good way to end the conversation by placing it in relation to [*Danzas lunares*](#) and [*Bajo el volcán*](#), and talk a little about poetry and music.

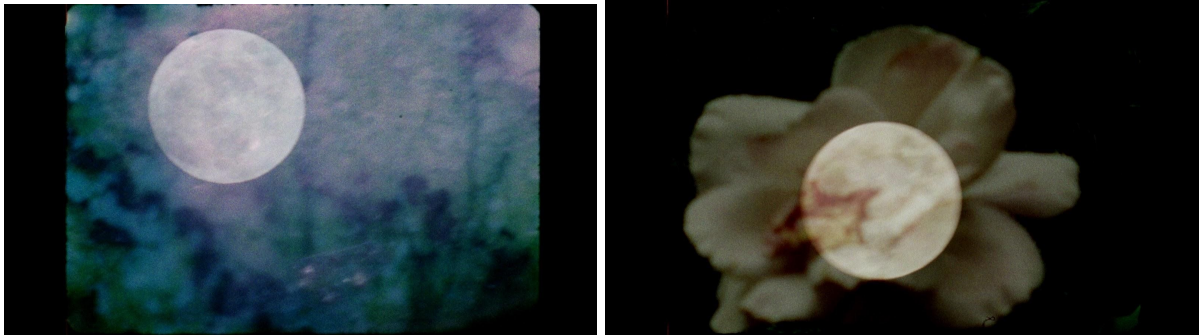


Autumn: Frost Country

CLI: And so we return to the film material. I also like the fact that it contrasts with the first archive, which is the vacation trip [Our trip to Mexico](#). In [Autumn: Frost Country](#) we have a cyclical landscape because it begins with autumn and the landscape gradually transforms into winter, it is a cyclical time and a space in rotation.

A: I also find it interesting that it is a way of penetrating the landscape, as you mentioned at the beginning, but the curious thing is that it seems that poetry is a way of approaching knowledge from the western point of view and that has a greater possibility of generating a diverse epistemology, of accessing knowledge through the senses, of leaving aside linear knowledge.

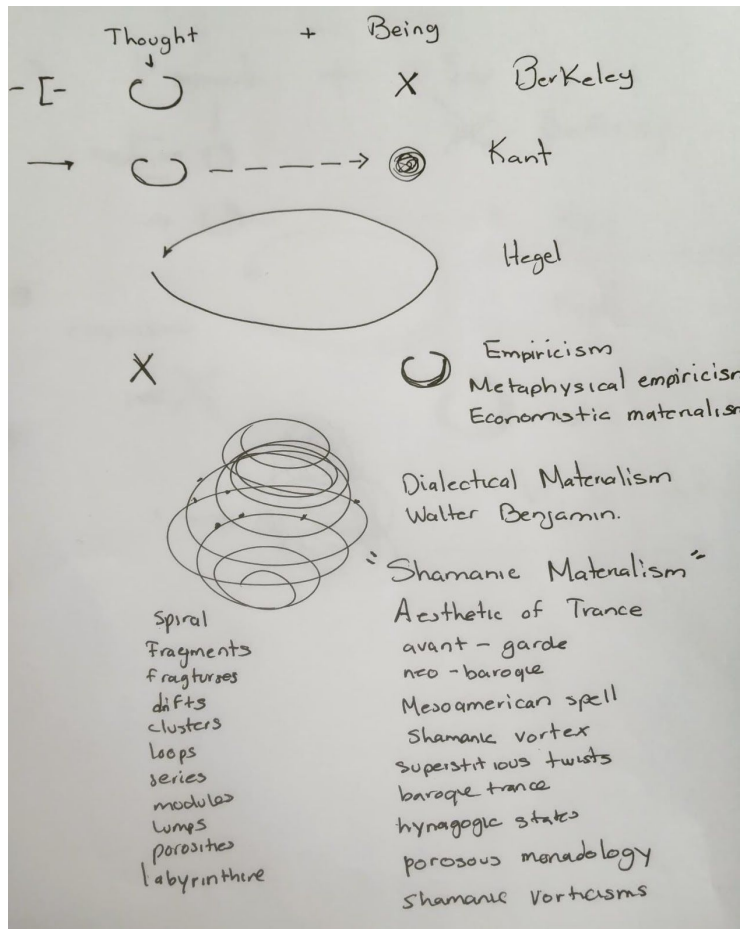
CLI: That's right, in addition it works by images. We have placed it in relation to [Danzas lunares](#) since the moon represents the cycles, it is in dialogue with [Coyolxauhqui](#) but it no longer has the characteristic of being a devastated landscape, here it is more the dancing character of the image, the lunar cycles used to be a dance and the elements with which it dances, the stones, flowers, plants, minerals that the moon affects with its cycles, this piece goes together with [Bajo el volcán](#) to generate a contrast between a transit through a snowy landscape and a volcanic one, on fire, it is a landscape in a trance, of how, when penetrating the landscape, the image melts due to the effect of the volcanic lava, the image rotates, rotation is an image and recursive form in our work, like entering a trance state, it is about accessing the vision of the volcano's slopes, the elements and entities that lie there, it is about accessing those experiences.



Danzas lunares, Colectivo Los Ingrávidos, 2020

A: It is Shamanic Materialism

CLI: That's right, **Shamanic Materialism** is precisely that affirmation of both the irrational character of the testimony as well as the testimonial drift, that is, when a testimony is perceived as supernatural, excessive, it has already "lost the thread" as we say, or it is saying crazy things, and even in current times, like a testimony extracted under torture, those testimonies that are not fully understood, raving testimonies; but also laying claim to the suggestive images, omens, trance states, the spell that appears in a lightning flash and that make up and illuminate an intermittent constellation that becomes legible at the moment in which various sound and visual images are linked together, acquiring thereby a dimension of actuality, making a figure, a form, a structure, a process, a perception legible. Materialism is the empirical and concrete dimension of things, the use of documents, files, objects, remains, elements. It also refers to a dialogue with different philosophical currents that link Thought and Being and that help us to intertwine concepts, going from Berkeley's Metaphysical Idealism, which is a philosophy that closes down thought, finally closing down Being, to Kant's Transcendental Idealism that starts from thought but throws a phantasmatic and unknowable line towards Being. For Kant there is an outside of thought, however it is unknowable, Being can only be accessed from the practical dimension, that is, from Morality and Religion, a rational religion of course, not a demonic one. Then there is another very special philosophy that starts from Thought to go to Being and then back, that is, it starts from Thought and returns to it, totalizing the whole procedure, here there is an outside that is integrated into the absolute movement of thought, this philosophy is Hegel's Absolute Idealism, a perspective that totalizes Being through Thought. **Shamanic Materialism** goes along these lines but in the form of a spiral, the relationship between Thought and Being is "spiral", there is a tissue there but any attempt to totalize Being and Thought is impossible, instead it proceeds through fragments, fractures, drifts, clusters, loops, series, modules, lumps, porosities, hypnagogic states, there is a torsion, twists between Thought and Being, a kind of porous monadology or shamanic vorticisms.



Model 1

A: It is a way to acquire different knowledge. It seems that in the western mode of apprehending there is always a distance between the mind and the object, there is never a communion, there is no vortex, there is no mixture, the object is always apprehended in a distanced way and always in relation to the subject. There is never a communion between both elements and this vortex that you describe between Thought and Being has precisely to do with understanding the world from an animistic perspective.

CLI: You are absolutely right, and there are also these philosophies that close down Thought, such as metaphysical empiricism or economic materialisms, which is where neoliberalism is found, they are empiricisms that close down Thought, there everything is seen from the thingified object, that is, everything is seen from the perspective of benefit, profit, the material in negative terms, for them there is nothing supernatural, thought is overdetermined by the economic and the technocratic, everything is at the level of profit, of pure economic gain. If we think about it in terms of the image, specifically the moving image, there is television (and more recently the hyper-mediatization of social networks), where thought is closed down, the relationship between images is unreflective and algorithmic, the neoliberal perspective of Being crushes and closes down Thought, there is nothing in between, only the pure creeping chaos of images, bodies and benefits.

We prepared a model (Model 1) where we set out these relationships. First, Berkeley's circular and solipsistic idealism, thinking closed on itself, there are no things outside of being, being is produced by thought, being is closed and thought is a recursive line that returns on itself, where the only consistent thing is thought itself, in terms of cinema, here is where we find fiction or documentary where the narrative prevails, films are made through established formulas, the narrative is encoded through formulas, models, there is a drive to narrate or to order everything on the basis of an ideal structure.

Then there is Kant's transcendental idealism that casts a broken line towards being, which is not closed, but is not knowable, thought remains closed on itself but that does not prevent there from being something outside of it, thought cannot do anything in the realm of being, only through the practical domain that is morality and religion.

In Kant there is an "impossible" relationship between thought and being, since being is unknowable and only accessed through the practical dimension, in the cinema it would be, for example, the American neoclassical cinema of the 1970s that was nourished by the avant-garde, and held out a practical line towards the American underground, it is an open line towards a dark environment.

There is a very special philosophy where there is a link that runs from thought to being and then back again, being acquires consistency through thought and can be known, everything begins with thought and ends in thought but leaves itself towards being. This is the idealism that assumes and grounds being. In Hegel, being acquires consistency through thought, there is a totalization between thought and being. This is classicism in cinema, even the avant-garde has its classicism at the same time that neoclassical cinema feeds on the avant-garde.

There is also empiricism, which we mentioned before, which is an idealistic, metaphysical or algorithmic materialism, it closes down and crushes thought in a recursive circle about being, everything remains embedded/installed in being. This empiricism, although it is the very opposite of the first type of idealism, dialectically coincides with the Berkeley system, since both solipsistically close down one of the two areas, whether that of being or that of thought, in ideological terms these systems lead to a fascist radicalism as well as a neoliberal hyperindividualism. In this empiricism that closes down thought we can find the economic side of neoliberalism, its exacerbated ideological correlate is fascism as well as algorithmic individualism. In terms of cinema and moving images we can find here everything that exclusively radiates content based on the algorithmic logic of the market, television, fake news, social networks, etc.

Finally, we have Dialectical Materialism, which takes the form of the spiral, its progressive reference is the philosophy of Marx, and when applied to the analysis of aesthetics and culture it largely draws on the philosophy of Walter Benjamin. Here the relationship of thought with the figure of the spiral and the constellation arises, here neither thought nor being is closed down. It is here that the dialectical image is

configured, materialism is rescued because it enables a focus on and concrete analysis of specific images, documents, photographs, cinema, architecture, and it is where the most suggestive content of the images is found. This materialism gives rise to what we call Shamanic Materialism, which never totalizes but rather proceeds through fragments, ruptures, loops, clusters, drifts, ascents, descents, series, folds, that is, it breaks the solipsistic recursion of both thought and being. The spiral is both avant-garde and neo-baroque, a shamanic vortex, there are superstitious twists, porous monadology, it is labyrinthine, a baroque trance, Mesoamerican spell: this is what we call the Aesthetics of Trance.

Relations between videos Esquema

1- Our Trip to Mexico: <https://vimeo.com/464371079/d5641d3cf3>

- 1) Coyolxauhqui <https://vimeo.com/173879106>
- 2) Numbers <https://vimeo.com/434828846>

2 - Quetzalcoatl: <https://vimeo.com/464371079/d5641d3cf3>

- 1) Altares <https://vimeo.com/308051203>
- 2) Itzcóatl <https://vimeo.com/101742046>

3 - Colonial Expansion of European Nations:

<https://vimeo.com/464380227/14a9212706>

- 1) El Dorado <https://vimeo.com/403088474>
- 2) El ángel exterminador <https://vimeo.com/401140820>

4 - Now that the Buffalo's Gone: <https://vimeo.com/464307762/f67832d407>

- 1) Venado <https://vimeo.com/244769226>
- 2) Coatl <https://vimeo.com/132793631>

5. Tales of the wonderful potato: <https://vimeo.com/464288315/2b30d3a9a9>

- 1) Toloache <https://vimeo.com/355997764>
- 2) Barranca <https://vimeo.com/302532013>

6. Democracy in Communication: Popular Video and Film in Latin America

<https://vimeo.com/464290708/3a3129fd96>

- 1) Visión de Anahuac <https://vimeo.com/276512089>
- 2) Mictlantecuhtli <https://vimeo.com/393333635>

7. Native Wisdom <https://vimeo.com/463538733/085208d120>

- 1) Abecedario/ A <https://vimeo.com/100171062>
- 2) Amuletos <https://vimeo.com/318037903>

8. Prehistoric Iroquois Sites Bristol NY
<https://vimeo.com/464393400/b2495b2c30>

- 1) Pirámide erosionada <https://vimeo.com/285734959>
- 2) Nahualli <https://vimeo.com/132179021>

9. Festival of Nations Museum <https://vimeo.com/464401630/df6016c425>

- 1) Archivo de Indias <https://vimeo.com/102947395>
- 2) Hernán <https://vimeo.com/157638551>

10. High Steel <https://vimeo.com/465945198/a2220c2b42>

- 1) La región más transparente <https://vimeo.com/345942659>
- 2) Mictlán <https://vimeo.com/296356438>

11. The Lost World of the Maya
<https://vimeo.com/465954692/325b16a02e>

- 1) Dresden codex <https://vimeo.com/371004829>
- 2) Cortés <https://vimeo.com/162631816>

12. Autumn: Frost Country
<https://vimeo.com/463544658/c06d10ae01>

- 1) Danzas Lunares
<https://vimeo.com/384384931>
- 2) Bajo el volcán <https://vimeo.com/300060494>