

“Carteles Viales” (Traffic signs)

Posting of signs during the *escraches*¹ in Buenos Aires and other cities in Argentina.

The human rights organization H.I.J.O.S². & GAC (Grupo de Arte Callejero) worked together since 1998.



CONFLICT

The responsables for crimes against humanity were not able to be judged until 2004. The impunity laws applied during the 90' absolved and freed the genocide responsables and stopped the possibility to get them on trial.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The human right's struggle has a long history in Argentina, started by *Madres de Plaza de Mayo* in 1977. In 1995, a new generation of activists took over with creative demonstrations, in which the music, the “invisible theatre”, the visual arts and other non-conventional formats became protagonists.

GOALS

To point out the presence of the *genocidas* (genocide responsables) and “ex-ccd” -*centros clandestinos de detención*- (illegal detention centers) in our own neighborhoods. “These people are waking among us.”
To raise people awareness of the importance of social condemn.



1 It's the practice of denouncing people who were responsible for the crimes (kidnapping, torture and murder) committed by the argentinian dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, including previous years when the “State terrorism” began.

2 *Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio* is a collective of sons and daughters of the “disappeared” victims of the dictatorship.

STRATEGY

To use the graphic codes of urban space, changing their meanings, to create a permanent mark on the street. After the *escrache* is gone, the sign stays in the place to be discovered by the neighbor or the pedestrian.



TOOLS /TACTICS

Subvertising: the sign informs proximity to the house of the responsible of genocide.



The icons were taken from usual traffic codes and were modified in a simple way to represent different situations related with the dictatorship crimes. As a special suggestion from some human rights organizations, we incorporated the slogan of "*Juicio y castigo*" (trial and punishment) that it's not justice by our hands, nor revenge.



“Aquí Viven Genocidas”

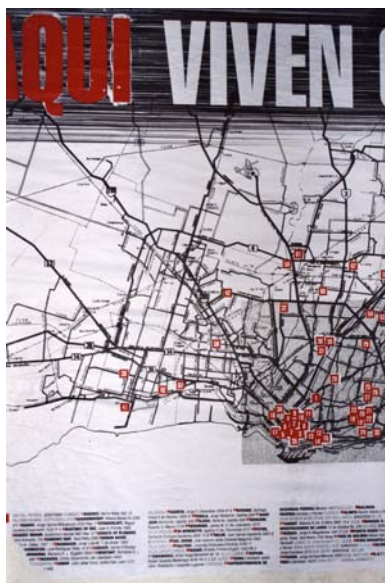
(Genocide responsables live here)

Mapping around the *escrache*. Gac.

As a result of collecting experience of *escrache* in different neighborhoods in Buenos Aires, suburbs and other peripheral cities where we arrived to denounce the presence of the genocide criminals, the need to create a map to denounce their presence came up.



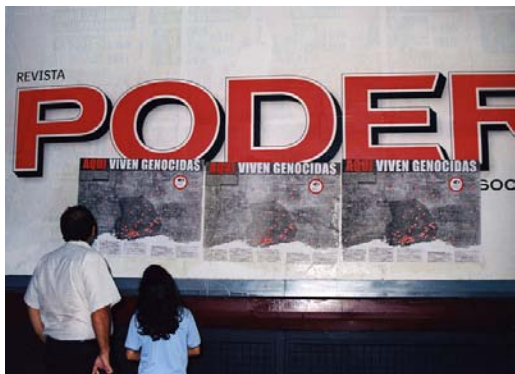
This work aims to make the people discover how near they live from a *genocida*, how many of them are in their neighborhoods, and be aware of the impunity in our country. It's a good device to show that past crimes are not already forgotten: they are still happening until justice arrive. That's why we use to say: “*si no hay justicia, hay escrache*” (if there's no justice, there will be *escrache*). The map helps to have a huge perspective of the problem, translated in real space.



The map was posted during the demonstration in the anniversary of the coup de etat on march 24, 2001. We repeated this action in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005.

small notepads were distributed with the maps along the demonstration, in which you can find adresses and phone numbers of the criminals.

The maps were used in different communities, schools and social organizations.



<http://grupodeartecallejero.blogspot.com.ar/2009/09/blog-post.html>

“La Procesión” (The procession)

Action in Monterrey, Mexico, July 2001.

Participants: GAC made a workshop in this city, during a seminar of Performance & Politics in the Americas. The action was co-organized with the audience, most of them were local students of theatre.



CONFLICT

Our identity is being transformed by neoliberalism. Our desires, customs and thoughts have been modified.

While, labor violations and environmental devastation occur in broad daylight.

The state role has changed: it became a sponsor of the economic power.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The *maquiladoras* -the multinationally factories- came to Mexico looking for its cheap labor. This border city is losing public space and its traditional landscape. While the power pushes these new shapes on people's lives, the culture still keeps its traditions. For example, the religious processions are quite common.



GOALS

to denounce the collusion between the state and the transnational economic power

STRATEGY

To use a very popular format of collective performance (the procession) to claim the attention of those who usually never felt involved in political issues, and are also victims of this situation.

TACTICS / TOOLS



costume design: employees of a transnational company

subvertising logos: each garbage bag was tagged with a logo



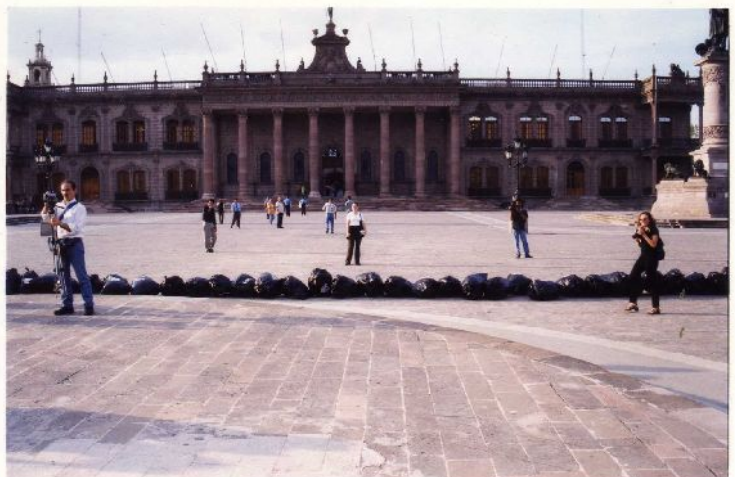
Body language. The gestures: faithful of the economic power



Subvertising: the national mexican flag was replaced by the "trade mark" symbol



ephimeral installation/ intervention:
transforming the public square in front of
the government palace, leaving a line of
garbage bags as an offering.



Plan Nacional de Desalojo / Ministerio de Control (National Eviction Plan /Ministry of Control)

Buenos Aires, 2003.

CONTEXT

After the devaluation of the national currency occurred as a consequence of the economic crisis of 2001, some southern neighborhoods of Buenos Aires became a target for Real State speculation. The foreign investments aimed to develop building projects in historic areas of the city. Old family buildings were threatened and even affected by growing evictions.



STRATEGY /TACTICS / TOOLS

Over-identification:

It has to do with the possibility to publicly express those well known aspects of culture that are still taboo, or consciously disregarded. This method takes into account the logic of thought and cultural dominance there where they are not expressed. It consists of expressing positively the hidden aspects of communication in a convincing way, better if it's close to the dominant system logic. This is a call to the background parts of the message not always seen but felt.



Tactics/ tools

Faked Surveys: sign up for voluntarily eviction. Give up your right of reaching a decent home. A statement with multiple choices to describe and select different ways of being evicted: with use of violence, tear gas, bullets, loss of human lives, property loss, etc. It also mentions the mass media role played in building prejudice around the stereotype of the homeless and poor people. The silence and indifference of the society is another item.

Ministerio de Control | **Sub Secretaría de Planificación Urbana para la No-Vivienda**

PLAN NACIONAL DE DESALOJO

Ud. Será desalojado próximamente. Complete los requisitos del siguiente formulario:

DECLARACIÓN JURADA

Mediante la presente solicitud de desalojo, yo, AGUSTINA HERRERA, con domicilio constituido en Av. 3080, ciudad / localidad BSAS, provincia _____, **renuncio a mi derecho de poseer una vivienda digna** y solicito la inmediata intervención de la autoridad gubernamental y policial para efectuar en forma urgente el desalojo de mi lugar de residencia, **a fin de beneficiar a los grupos económicos que negocian con el gobierno.**

Firma: AGUSTINA HERRERA
Aclaración: _____
Documento: 20.285.458

1. Elija su propia modalidad de desalojo (marcar con una cruz)

☐ **DESALOJO "DE QUERUSA"**: un día volvé a tu casa y tenés las cosas en la calle.

☒ **DESALOJO MEDIÁTICO**: con presencia y complicidad de los medios de comunicación.

☒ **DESALOJO VIOLENTO**: con intervención de fuerzas de seguridad.

Fuerzas intervinientes:

☒ PFA - INFANTERÍA
☒ PREFECTURA
☐ GENDARMERÍA
☐ PATOTAS PARAPOLICIALES

Con represión:

☒ PALOS
☐ BALAS DE GOMA
☐ GASES LACRÍMOGENOS
☒ CARROS HIDRANTES

Con detención de personas: (Indicar cantidad)

☐ HOMBRES
☐ MUJERES
☐ NIÑOS
☐ ANCIANOS

Con Muertes: (Indicar cantidad)

Con Heridos: (Indicar cantidad)

Con destrucción de bienes y pertenencias: (Indicar monto total de la pérdida deseada) \$ (son _____ pesos)
Lo menos posible.

Consulte nuestro PLAN ESPECIAL PARA DESALOJO DE ESPACIOS COMUNITARIOS. Promoción exclusiva para Asambleas barriales. Movimientos de desocupados y fábricas recuperadas. Con o sin intimidación previa, con o sin orden judicial. ¡LLAMÁ YU!



GOAL:

The survey aims to question the role of the State and governments in the neoliberal system, denouncing hidden interests and the abandonment of their social responsibilities.



Ephimeral installation of eviction stands / performance / parody

All these elements were thought to produce surprise or even overwhelm the people; therefore, at first the device seems to be disgusting as any other bureaucratic process, but at the same time, performing the action makes people feel involved.

It's important to clarify that this kind of principle (over-identification) and specific contents not always work in the right way. It depends on the social context, the ability to create empathy or to make the audience get sensitized with victims of the unfair situation. The same proposal could produce the opposite effect, according to the social context.

<http://grupodeartecallejero.blogspot.com.ar/2009/09/blog-post.html>

Speaking sculptures

Resistencia, Provincia de Chaco. December 2007.

For the anniversary of the *Masacre de Margarita Belén*¹ we made this collective and participatory intervention on the sculptures of the city.



CONTEXT:

The city of Resistencia, Chaco, is full of sculptures along its streets. This special characteristic is founded in an old urban planning that aimed to transform the city into a touristic center of cultural attraction. Indeed, Chaco is well known for its sculpture art contests. The public spaces are plagued of different and eclectic styles of spacial objects and constructions.



¹ Clandestine execution of political prisoners by the military forces in december of 1976, in Margarita Belén, Chaco, Argentina.

GOAL:

We decided to resignify them, creating new meanings and functions of these objects, to remind people that memory is present in the heart of the city.

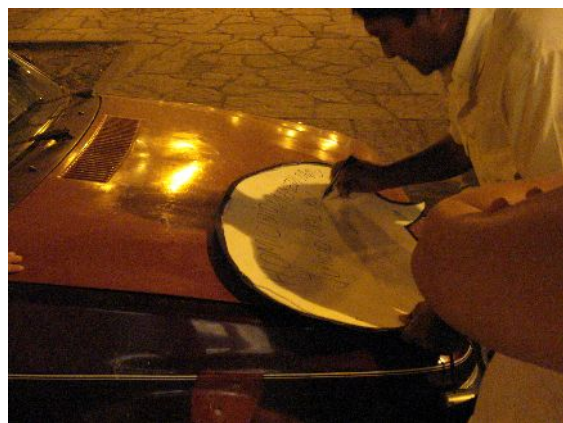
STRATEGIES AND TOOLS:

The approaching strategy is inspired on the principle of distancing: the disruptive device of the cartoon balloon surprises the passersby because its aesthetic is completely different from the traditional materials and shapes of the sculptures. At the same time, the message become more visible because the sculpture is “talking”.

We made a workshop with people who attended to the commemoration act, allowing them to write their thoughts or reflections about “memory” contents on the balloons. Most of them were already aware of this subject. They knew enough about this historic event. But the message was addressed to those who didn't have information, and are not human rights activists either.



The balloons were placed on statues, trees and other spacial objects around the park in the center of the city. They were set in different orientations to be discovered occasionally, while walking through the space.



Personajes fundamentales de nuestra historia (Key figures of our history)

Grupo de Arte Callejero + Historia Vulgar + Es-cultura Popular¹, Buenos Aires, May 2010.

CONFLICT

The official version of History talks about big heroes, some of them members of an elite. The history stays far away from common people: they feel they they don't belong to history and history doesn't belong to them. Most of them believe that history was made by “some selected special men” ignoring the fundamental role played by masses.

LOCAL CONTEXT

During the 200th anniversary of “May Revolution” (the beginning of Argentina's independence from spanish crown), Buenos Aires became a big celebration centre. People from many regions of the country arrived to the City to attend official festivities. The streets were taken by large crowds gathered at concerts and exhibitions.

GAC was working with Historia Vulgar (a politically independent group of historical researchers) and other activist groups, redefining notions of independence, heroes and multitude.

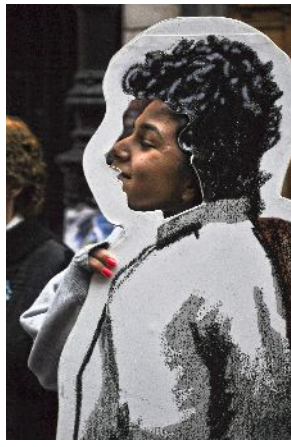


GOAL

To raise awareness of the importance of anonymous crowds in argentinian history, as they were present in each great event. Acknowledging that History is a collective issue.

“Without them (the “key figures”) the change would not hapanned. Without you, the social change is not possible. Be part of our own history, be the protagonist.”

1 “Collective of collectives” gathered at this specific project, the groups were working together over the course of a year.



STRATEGIES

Each board-figure was selected as an archetype of a relevant moment of argentinian past and present history. They were created from historical documents, eyewitness accounts and archival photographs. Some of that figures were real characters, others were invented. The hole in the figure's face invites the public to set his/her face and take a picture.

As a touristic circuit, this project transforms the street space into an interactive installation, allowing participants to choose those figures with which they feel identified, inducing to question themselves why they took that decision. Sometimes, it could be the gender, the social class, the ethnicity, or just the pose. After this happens, the “assistants” provide full historical information about the chosen character.



TACTICS/ TOOLS

Resignify the typical “face in hole” tourist advertisements, fully using the participative characteristics of the device



Body language:

Entire families and groups of friends wanted to be photographed. They all were part of the intervention with their bodies unconsciously performing different poses. The scale of the figures is relevant for the sense of multitude.

**Materials:**

The figure-boards are photographic prints stuck on a light recycled wood sheet, so they're easy to move from one place to another, and replicate the intervention overtime.



A small magazine with full information about the historic figures was distributed after each participant finished the action of taking pictures. The importance of the “face to face” communication is the key of this intervention. The efficacy does not mean massivity.

The image is an excuse to start a question, to provide or receive information, to be in contact with others...

