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The creative and performative practice as a methodology for research

↳ EXPLORING EPISICMOLOGICAL
DISOBEDIENCE IN ART COLLECTIVES
IN COLOMBIA



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The creative and performative practice as a methodology for research: exploring epistemological disobedience in art collectives in Colombia

Abstract

This thesis explores how artistic collectives in Colombia challenge hegemonic modes of knowledge production through the lens of research-creation. Grounded in a critique of Eurocentric epistemological paradigms, it examines how these collectives integrate corporeality, affect, and subjectivity into their artistic practices, producing alternative epistemologies rooted in localized and decolonial perspectives. Through a qualitative, ethnographic methodology, the study analyzes the methodologies, processes, and conceptual frameworks of four collectives: Red de Artes Vivas, Circuito Liquen, Colectivo.co, and El Cuerpo Habla. The text highlights the ways in which artistic creation becomes a site of resistance against colonial legacies and a platform for fostering plural, inclusive, and transformative knowledge systems. This work advocates for recognizing the creative arts as valid and vital methods for generating knowledge, emphasizing their capacity to address local challenges and foster cross-cultural dialogue in contemporary Latin America.

Key words:

Research-creation, geopolitics of knowledge, epistemological disobedience, Art collectives, corporeality

Soy una raya en el mar
Sola voy con mi pena
Sola va mi condena
Correr es mi destino
Para burlar la ley
Perdida en el corazón
De la grande Babylon
Me dicen la clandestina
Por no llevar papel
Para una ciudad del norte
Yo me fui a trabajar
Mi vida la dejé
En Tijuana pa' cruzar
Soy una raya en el mar
Fantasma en la ciudad
Mi vida va prohibida
Dice la autoridad
Mexicana clandestina
Haitiana clandestina
Boliviana clandestina
Colombiana clandestina
Peruana clandestina
Paraguaya clandestina
Hondureña clandestina
Brasileña clandestina
— Silvana Estrada, Clandestina

*I'm a line in the sea
Alone I go with my sorrow
Alone goes my sentence
Running is my destiny
To outwit the law
Lost in the heart
Of the great Babylon
They call me "the clandestine one"
For not carrying papers
To a city in the North
I went to work
I left my life behind
In Tijuana to cross
I'm a line in the sea
A ghost in the city
My life is forbidden
So says the authority
Mexican, clandestine
Haitian, clandestine
Bolivian, clandestine
Colombian, clandestine
Peruvian, clandestine
Paraguayan, clandestine
Honduran, clandestine
Brazilian, clandestine
— Silvana Estrada, Clandestine*

Esta canción acompaña esta tesis como un eco sonoro de las búsquedas que aquí se relatan: colectivas, afectivas y sobre todo, que resisten. Su letra es un canto a las vidas invisibilizadas, a los cuerpos en movimiento y a las luchas por existir en espacios que constantemente nos marginan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phwdcTarm-w>

Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	9
Data collection instruments.....	11
The collectives and their projects.....	12
1. Red de Artes Vivas.....	12
2. Colectivo.co.....	13
3. Circuito Liquen.....	14
4. El Cuerpo Habla.....	15
Research phases.....	16
Design and foundation fold.....	16
Selection and Contextualization Fold.....	16
Exploration and Narrative Capture Fold.....	17
Synthesis and Reflection Fold.....	18
First, some context.....	19
Historical genealogy: relationship between art and politics.....	20
Funding for artistic practices in Colombia.....	27
Precarization of Art.....	29
Research-Creation in Colombia.....	30
The time and place.....	32
The truth games.....	33
Ecology of knowledges.....	35
Oh my body, never stop asking me something.....	37
The geopolitics of knowledge.....	43
Methodologies of research-creation.....	46
1. Self-Publishing and digital circulation.....	46
2. Performative writing.....	49
3. Sprouts and creative gestures.....	52
4. Movement workshops.....	55
5. Triggers.....	58
6. Encounter and intersubjectivity.....	59
Performance is not a stable reference.....	63
Epistemology of affection.....	68
Only deep sensitivity to the environment can collectively guide us out of the dense jungle.....	72
Final reflections.....	80
References.....	86

Introduction

I have been living in Germany for two years. I started my Master's in Cultural Studies two years ago. I graduated in Performing Arts and Visual Arts four years ago. I have been training my body and calling myself a dancer for 12 years. When I arrived, so alien to the true academic world, the one where you read 10 texts a week and grasp their meanings, the one that separates life from its content, the one where you discuss realities from the safety of recognized authors, it is then that I recognize the distance. My body is not necessary in this method, just as my name is not either. How many authors I recognize and am able to quote, perhaps, in part, it is. Since my undergraduate studies, particularly in performing arts, there has been a question about the self. And not the neoliberal question about the individual and self-sufficient subject. On the contrary, in fact, from a somatic approach, the first-person experience became the input and starting point for any positioning in the world. It was to recognize in my body, mind and in my ideas, body. To understand that the realities I have lived are valuable because they happened to me and that there is no way to abstract myself from them in favor of a proclaimed objectivity.

Studying this Master's has made me realize the distance. The distance that separates and delimits "knowledge" and makes it accessible only in certain spaces, pronounced in certain ways, by certain people, and in certain contexts. In this scenario, my body became background again, my experiences became anecdotal (and even exotic), and "my" authors became irrelevant, constantly questioned and contrasted with others closer to the European experience. Beyond the cultural shock of moving to another country, this experience has been, first and foremost, realizing the difference and recognizing in the other the signs of my cultural identity. For this reason, I consider it relevant to state my point of enunciation in this text. This research is not separate or detached from what I am and the experiences I have lived as an artist, as a dancer, as a woman, as a Colombian, as a migrant, as a foreigner.

Having outlined my point of enunciation, it is in this context that my interest in the work of artistic collectives in Colombia emerged, which, like me, find themselves at the intersection of bodies, histories, and systems of knowledge. Red de Artes Vivas, Circuito Lique, Colectivo.co, and El Cuerpo Habla represent practices and ways of doing that traverse between art and research, creating links between territories, communities, and sensibilities. From movement workshops and performative writing to interventions in public spaces, these

collectives have developed methodologies that move away from the hegemonic paradigms of knowledge production, addressing issues such as the body, memory, and territoriality.

This text does not aim to invalidate the academic or scientific path in the production of knowledge and the establishment of methodologies, but rather to shed light on other paths, perhaps some more different than others, of approaching the question of knowledge. Based on Sousa de Santos' notion of the ecology of knowledge¹, this research seeks to contribute to the epistemological, cultural, and political diversity of the world, recognizing from the South enabling pathways for knowledge. Hence the focus on four artistic collectives in Colombia that have been building bridges between research and artistic practice. **How do these collectives understand the production of knowledge, and how do they articulate their creative practice to research in the arts?** More than the question of *what* the collectives are researching, I am interested in the question of *how*. To shift the focus from results to the processes and methodologies of research. The objective is not to uncover what is hidden, but to analyze the rules that allow something to be said and the conditions that enable it to appear as a form of truth. (Foucault 1997, 7)

Ceasing to suspend the epistemological question implies, as we will see throughout the text, a tint of rebellion. I learned more in my school about the First and Second World Wars than about the history of my own country. I learned that "we"² were discovered and that civilization comes from another place. Years later, I learned more at university about European art, epochs, and avant-gardes than about Latin American art. Writing this, I have the feeling that I am only stating what everyone already knows. That I am repeating assumptions that seem evident. Who still believes in this century that America was discovered and that colonization was a civilizing process? Even so, little has changed and they continue to be taught in the Colombian school system, at least. This discourse, which insists on the superiority of a Eurocentric civilizing model, not only perpetuates the exclusion of other knowledges but also restricts the possibility of imagining alternative worlds from the stories and realities of the territories.

¹ This concept, primarily developed in his essay *Epistemologies of the South: The Reinvention of Knowledge and Social Emancipation*, is an approach that promotes dialogue between different forms of knowledge (scientific, traditional, indigenous, popular) without hierarchies, rejecting the idea that Western scientific knowledge is superior. It seeks to overcome the "monoculture of knowledge" and foster cognitive justice by recognizing the value of local and situated knowledges to address global challenges in a more inclusive and equitable way.

² Here, I would like to point out that although I use the pronoun "we" to refer to a narrative reproduced in the school setting, it would be extremely difficult and complex to definitively determine what could be called "ours" as if things existed in a pure state. Distinguishing between what is the result of colonization and what is not, what is European and what would be "purely American" would be a futile task.

In Colombia, the positivist approaches that have historically dominated both the educational system and cultural policies have relegated artistic practices to an accessory role in the construction of knowledge, limiting the possibilities for artists to develop long-term projects outside of traditional institutions. In this context, artistic collectives position themselves as spaces for critical exploration that engage with these historical tensions. Their practices, rooted in the local and community-based, allow for questioning the perpetuation of these authoritarian narratives, opening possibilities for new forms of thinking and creation. The connection between art, pedagogy, and research in the analyzed collectives points to the need to reconsider the ways we understand knowledge, memory, and identity in a context still marked by the traces of coloniality. Approaching the question of the nature of knowledge thus implies, in this sense, rebelling against these histories that I learned as truths and understood as the only real ones. It implies disobeying the experts and examining the processes before the results.

It is here that the concept of epistemological disobedience emerges as central in this study. This concept, coined by Walter D. Mignolo, refers to a form of resistance against the dominant knowledge devices that come from Eurocentric modernity. Within the field of postcolonial studies, Mignolo argues that modern Western knowledge has dominated and marginalized other forms of knowledge and ways of knowing. (2002, 3). Hence epistemological disobedience develops as a notion that implies a form of resistance seeking to question and challenge the supremacy of Western knowledge. This perspective is especially relevant in the Latin American context, where artistic practices have historically been marginalized and devalued in the academic field.

From the epistemological paradigm of modernity, every research method must be organized under the mathematical discourse, which will provide verisimilitude and validity to any study. Reality is, from this gnosological core, a phenomenon foreign to human experience, susceptible to becoming data and indicators that, in turn, serve to establish an immutable order of nature itself. (Méndez, 2015). For this rhetoric of truth, scientific reason is the basis of absolute truth, neutralizing any influence of the subject in the process of constructing knowledge. The method then appears as a mediator between science and human perception, placing science as a set of techniques of apprehension that guarantee objectivity and automate the product of its conditions of production. (Merleau-Ponty, 1977).

These notions surrounding research are consolidated with the emergence of empiricism and later positivism, where a one-way relationship between scientific research and investigation

is reinforced. (Hernández, 2008). These paradigms marked the ways of knowing, establishing the scientific method as the only legitimate model for considering what is (and is not) research. These paradigms, consolidated under the Cartesian notion of "absolute dualism" between mind and matter, have meant the exclusion and invisibilization of bodily, sensory, affective, and aesthetic potentialities in the academic field. (Hurtado & Toro, 2005). Under the premise of objectivity, the scientific discourse was consolidated as the only valid knowledge, considering rationality as the basis for all sense-making processes.

Invoking the religious myth of the "Immaculate Conception" (Ibañez, 2001), modernity has granted scientific reason the authority to determine what is true and what is not, radically separating the product from the process that produces it. This hegemony of reason, turned into a belief system, has shaped research into a series of assumptions, rules, structures, and conditions, operationalized under adjectives of neutrality, coldness, fragmentation, and control. (De Jesús, 2018).

Particularly in our Latin American context, the dualist paradigms of rationalism, which separate and hierarchize reason over bodily and sensory experience, have functioned as ideological frameworks and disciplinary devices characteristic of Western modernity and the colonial geopolitical regime. (Citro, Podhajcer, Roa & Rodriguez, 2020). These paradigms have perpetuated exclusion, marginalizing research practices that integrate corporeality and sensitivity as legitimate ways to generate knowledge. This absence of the body is the heir of a system of invisibilization that links corporeality with societies considered as counterpoints to modernity, and therefore perceived as the focus of primitivism by colonial thought. (Citro, 2009).

Castro-Gómez and other postcolonial authors like Dussel and Mignolo criticize this Eurocentric and teleological perspective that reduces colonialism to an economic and political phenomenon, highlighting its epistemic nature. Aníbal Quijano's concept of coloniality of power describes the persistence of colonial structures in contemporary societies, including the coloniality of knowledge, where Western knowledge is imposed as superior and universal. Mignolo and Castro-Gómez emphasize that this Eurocentric vision delegitimizes other knowledges and ways of thinking, consolidating a cultural and epistemological hegemony. Likewise, Sousa Santos' concept of "abyssal thinking" illustrates how modern science monopolizes truth, relegating other knowledges to epistemological non-existence. For the author, this exclusion is constitutive of both historical and contemporary hegemonic practices.

Thus, the geopolitics of knowledge reveals the use of knowledge as a tool of colonization. Foucault and Quijano agree that power not only represses but also produces new forms of subjectivity. In the cultural sphere, institutions like the Alliance Française and the Goethe Institute perpetuate European intellectual and sociopolitical domination in Latin America. This influence is reflected in the valuation of Latin American art, which often falls into self-exoticism to satisfy the expectations of international circuits (Sanguino 2020). In this regard, Sanguino highlights how Latin American artists face structural disadvantages in art markets dominated by Eurocentric criteria (2020).

When we speak of a possible decolonization of knowledge and culture, it is necessary to open the questions to a transversal and intersectional approach that challenges colonial, capitalist, and neoliberal frameworks. Authors like Dussel and Mosquera advocate for developing their own categories to analyze Latin American historical conditions, avoiding simplifications and stereotypes. Mosquera emphasizes the need for true diversification that transforms the hegemonic status quo, promoting art that reflects the complexity and diversity of Latin American culture rather than conforming to uniform global expectations (2010, 136).

It is also important to highlight that these collectives do not operate in an aesthetically constructed, immaculate vacuum. Their practices are articulated within a specific historical and social context, marked by the Colombian social and political conflict, the precariousness of art, and the struggles for the democratization of knowledge. Since the 2019 protests in Colombia³, we have witnessed how the arts have played a central role in expressing political and social demands, serving as a means to question power structures and coloniality. Have artistic practices in Colombia transformed, positioning themselves not only as forms of resistance but also as legitimate means for the production of knowledge?

Since the early 1980s, with the narrative shift in Social Sciences, various movements like Art-based research, participatory research, or research-creation have emerged as a way to explore the different nuances of expression and experience of reality that had been hidden under the hegemony of objectivism. (Hernández 2008, 87). Art, for some of these movements, appears as a meeting place to question research methodologies as well as notions of thought construction. More than offering theories, certainties, or securities, they

³ The 2019 protests in Colombia, also known as the National Strike (Paro Nacional), were a series of mass demonstrations that took place between November and December of that year. These protests were in response to a wide range of social, political, and economic demands, including opposition to labor and pension reforms, corruption, violence against social leaders, and the lack of effective implementation of the Peace Agreement signed with the FARC in 2016. During this period, art became a powerful tool of resistance and protest, from graffiti and murals that covered the streets, to performances and symbolic acts carried out in public spaces.

offer perspectives, signposts, unexplored places, and other viewpoints. In this sense, these movements ask themselves about the possibilities that the use of the arts as a referent in a field that is alien to them offers. Would meanings emerge that would not otherwise arise? To what extent can the arts reflect a research process?

In this respect, performance appears as both an artistic practice and a methodology for research, inscribed in a space where the body, affectivity, and politics intersect. Its inclusion in this analysis of epistemic disobedience responds not only to the need to displace the focus of scientific reason as the sole axis of knowledge but also allows for an understanding of how the body and its gestures constitute tools of resistance and agency. Hence, the relationship between performance and epistemic disobedience is manifested in its capacity to articulate new forms of knowledge that emerge from experience, corporeality, and community. Rather than conforming to the dominant languages of academic disciplines, performance proposes other ways of knowing and narrating that overflow traditional frameworks. In this context, performance is a practice that, in itself, destabilizes traditional knowledge hierarchies. As an embodied practice, performance invites a questioning of the dichotomies between mind and body, theory and practice, formal and informal knowledge.

Undoubtedly, the objectives of these collectives are not solely in artistic creation and production, they also see themselves as key players in generating situated knowledge from their social and political realities. These collectives operate in a panorama where artistic practices move away from mere production of works to explore broader dimensions of social, political, and epistemic impact. In this sense, art is no longer conceived for these collectives solely as an object of contemplation but as a space of interaction and action that dialogues with the complexities of the present. Through their practices, they respond to the tensions of the Colombian context, marked by armed conflict, inequality, and the struggle for the democratization of knowledge, inscribing themselves in a tradition of activist and community art that challenges conventional notions of art as an autonomous and disinterested practice. Thus, their approaches reflect a commitment to research-creation as a means to generate situated knowledge, using methodologies that transcend disciplinary boundaries and reconfigure the relationships between art, society, and politics.

Red de Artes Vivas, for example, has focused its practices on an ecological paradigm, weaving relationships between the body, territory, and local communities. Similarly, Colectivo.co works from a logic of co-creation and community participation, involving local artists in the construction of knowledge. El Cuerpo Habla, in particular, has a deep

connection with the country's social reality, approaching political activism. Circuito Liquen, for its part, focuses on the body as a means and methodology for research.

This fabric of knowledge and creative practices also engages with the broader question of the relationship between art and knowledge. What is knowledge, and how is it produced? For these collectives, knowledge is not a fixed entity, but something that is produced through interaction, the body, and experience. Here enters the epistemology of affect, where the emotional and the corporeal carry the same weight as the rational and the verbal in the production of meaning. In their practices, the body is seen as a living archive, charged with memory, politics, and affection. Their processes do not aim to illustrate academic theories, but rather begin from the bodily experience as a legitimate form of producing and sharing knowledge.

In this context, I suggest that the processes and methodologies developed by artistic collectives in Colombia actively challenge this all-encompassing epistemological narrative proposed by modern science. Under the umbrella of research-creation, these collectives aim to integrate sensory experience, subjectivity, and aesthetics into their investigative and artistic practices, articulating diverse ways of building and spreading knowledge that not only detach from colonial structures of power but also present a tangible and vital alternative for the production of knowledge in Latin American contexts. Ultimately, the hypothesis posits that artistic collectives in Colombia not only generate alternative forms of knowledge but also represent an act of resistance against the hegemony of Western scientific knowledge and its colonial effect in the region.

Thus, the relevance of this research lies in addressing a fundamental issue in the production of knowledge: the exclusion of non-scientific practices and the marginalization of corporeality and subjectivity. By offering an alternative to hegemonic narratives, this study promotes greater integration and recognition of the arts as valid forms of knowledge, challenging the dichotomy between doing and thinking. This challenge is not only relevant for arts and humanities studies but also for any discipline seeking to integrate more inclusive and diverse forms of knowledge. In the Colombian context, where the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MinTIC) has formally recognized research-creation as a valid category of scientific production, it is relevant to examine how these artistic practices interact with academic institutional systems.

Likewise, the research contributes to the revaluation of artistic practice as a legitimate and meaningful method for knowledge production. In a world increasingly aware of the

importance of diversity and inclusion, the research responds to the need to expand epistemological approaches to include different forms of knowledge. By validating artistic practices as investigative methods, this study aligns with contemporary trends seeking to enrich the academic landscape and address global issues from varied perspectives. The creative and performative methodology also opens new possibilities for interdisciplinary research and collaboration between art and science, enabling a greater exploration of subjective experience and corporeality as legitimate forms of knowledge.

How do the art collectives define and conceptualize knowledge? What methodologies do they use to articulate their creative practices with research? What role does the body, subjectivity, and the sensory play in their investigative practices? What role does knowledge and "non-knowledge" play in these dynamics? What kind of knowledge and experiences do these creative practices generate? How do they challenge the coloniality of knowledge? Do they really challenge the coloniality of knowledge? Are they really so distant from the European tradition? How are their artistic practices integrated into the social, political, and cultural discourses of their environment? What does this approach reveal about the production of knowledge in art? What are the implications of this research for art and epistemology studies in Latin America?

These questions guide the research in a text that aims to intertwine subjectivity and creativity in the research process. A qualitative approach was chosen with an ethnographic method, using a multiple case study design to analyze specific projects from four art collectives in Colombia. Inspired by Deleuze's notion of the fold (1989), the singularities and narratives of each case were explored, proposing a continuum of multiple singularities. Thus, the use of a qualitative methodology responds to the need to address the analysis of subjective and sensory experiences involved in artistic processes from a holistic and flexible approach. The selected collectives, such as Red de Artes Vivas, Circuito Liquen, Colectivo.co, and El Cuerpo Habla, represent a variety of approaches in artistic and cultural creation in Colombia.

Thus, data collection was primarily carried out through online interviews with members and leaders of the selected collectives, adopting a semi-structured format that allowed for a combination of predefined questions with the flexibility necessary to explore open and detailed responses. In addition to the interviews, documents and files related to the projects of the collectives were reviewed, providing a contextualized understanding of their practices.

In order to remain consistent with the research problem and the critique of scientific hegemony, this document does not follow a traditional academic structure, but adopts a

more fluid and hybrid approach, inspired by Kathleen Stewart's narrative and fragmented style in *Ordinary Affects* (Stewart 2007). Rather than delimit analyses into compartments of introduction, methodology, results, analysis, and discussion, the text seeks to be an intertwined exploration of concepts, experiences, and field data, allowing critical reflection and analysis to emerge throughout the writing process. Alternating between theoretical reflections, analysis of the practices of the collectives, and observations on the political and social context, this structure aims to reflect the very nature of the artistic practices it studies, where the boundaries between research and creation, action and theory, are deliberately blurred.

Likewise, the language adopted is both reflective and evocative, aiming to capture the tensions between knowledge and "non-knowledge," between what is theorized and what is experienced. Thus, the text proposes a form of living writing, performative if you will, where the question of knowledge and the production of knowledge makes its way not only in the analysis, but in the very form in which the document is written. Formally, the document draws from fragments of interviews, descriptions of artistic projects, and autoethnographic reflections, which function both as independent narratives and pieces that, together, weave a broader narrative on the production of knowledge through the arts. Performative writing is, in itself, a gesture that seeks to escape the hegemonic logics of academic knowledge, proposing a closer relationship between text, body, and affection.

It is not about arriving at a closed conclusion or a solution to the coloniality of knowledge, but about opening a dialogue on the possibilities and limits of research-creation as a form of resistance and transformation in the Colombian context. It also aims to enrich a permanent debate in academia and in the institutional structures supporting this type of research in the country. This essay in motion then asks how artistic collectives in Colombia understand and articulate the production of knowledge and how this exploration is addressed, leaving space for subjectivity, doubt, and the multiplicity of meanings.

Methodology

For the development of this research, a qualitative approach with an ethnographic method was used. Through a multiple case study design, four art collectives in Colombia focused on artistic research were selected and analyzed. For this purpose, online interviews were conducted with some of the members of the collectives through the Google Meet platform. Additionally, an archive corpus with selected projects from the collectives was utilized to

complement the interviews. Evoking Deleuze's notion of the fold⁴, this research aims to unfold, through a series of transitions, the singularities and narratives of each of the cases belonging to the collectives. Although each of them has different qualities and specificities, this research proposes a continuum of multiple singularities that extend in folds while maintaining a certain cohesion⁵ (Deleuze, 1989).

For Eisner (1998), all qualitative research involves focusing on the meaning assigned to the content of our experience, emphasizing the relevance of qualities. From a holistic perspective, a qualitative approach allows for the exploration of nuances, perceptions, and meanings that individuals and collectives attribute to their investigative practices. This approach is particularly necessary for the research question, as it has the potential to study the subjectivities and the sensory and affective experiences involved in artistic processes. In this way, it facilitates the exploration of subjective aspects that are fundamental to understanding how different forms of knowledge and their methodologies are perceived and valued.

Similarly, it is relevant to highlight the coherence between the qualitative method and the social and cultural phenomena that will be analyzed. The qualitative methodology is appropriate because it reflects the complex and dynamic nature of the object of study. From my perspective as a researcher, it is essential that this approach allows for the incorporation of flexibility, creativity, and subjectivity into the investigative process, which is fundamental to exploring the interaction between colonial power structures and local knowledge practices. The qualitative method's ability to consider specific cases within a broader context is ideal for this type of analysis, maintaining an organic relationship between the method and the problem.

Regarding the cases, the target population of this study includes artistic collectives engaged in the creation, research, and production of cultural and artistic projects. These collectives are characterized by their emphasis on interdisciplinarity, experimentation, and collaboration in their artistic practices. Additionally, the study considers local collectives operating in diverse contexts and employing varied approaches to knowledge production and cultural mediation.

⁴ I take up Deleuze's concept to describe research as a series of layers or levels that interweave continuously. From this, the fold emerges as a continuous process of interrelation and transformation, so that research is not understood as a static state, but as an ongoing process of self-differentiation and reconfiguration. Research as an entity always in becoming, always folding upon itself to create new forms and structures.

⁵ Understood as the force or principle that keeps the different parts of a multiplicity in constant becoming together.

The selection of projects and collectives for this research represents a diversity of approaches, from the promotion of research and processes in art + education to the circulation and production of cultural goods in various artistic areas. Each selected project, whether performative lectures, informal training programs, or digital publications, offers a unique context to explore the intersection between art, culture, and society. Performative lectures, for example, seek to challenge conventional academic formats and promote active audience participation, while informal training programs like MovimientoBOG provide a space to reflect on movement practices in different artistic and social contexts.

Due to their focus on methodological experimentation and critical reflection, these collectives provide a platform to explore how contemporary artistic practices contribute to knowledge construction, social transformation, and the generation of new ways of thinking. Additionally, the selection took into account the geographical diversity of the collectives to ensure a variety of cultural and social contexts, thereby analyzing how these practices intertwine with local and global realities and how they contribute to intercultural dialogue and the construction of collective identities.

Data collection instruments

The interviews conducted in this study follow a semi-structured approach proposed by Burges (1982) as "conversation with a purpose" (Webb & Webb cited by Burges, 1982, pp. 164). Mixing elements of structured and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews are characterized by a predefined set of questions while also offering space for open responses and exploration. (Longhurst, 2010). This approach fosters a conversational and informal tone, conducive to delving deeper into the research topic (Bogner et al., 2009). As a result, this method allowed participants to speak about their experiences more naturally and freely, enabling them to speak in their own terms. Although a framework of questions was established prior to the interview, it was important to maintain a certain flexibility and remain open to possible deviations, aiming not to impose one's language or conceptions into the conversation.

On the other hand, both written documents and photographs, videos, and social media posts were collected, which provided a deeper approach concerning the themes and projects discussed during the interviews. For their part, photographs and videos allowed for a visual and contextual understanding of the projects, graphically illustrating the results and the

conditions in which the analyzed activities were developed. On the other hand, social media posts, including platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, offered a more up-to-date perspective on community interaction with the projects and topics discussed. Lastly, although not all collectives had a corpus of written research, the texts recovered digitally allowed delving into the theoretical foundations of some of the collectives.

The views presented here reflect the perceptions and stances of some members and leaders of the analyzed collectives, although they do not aim to homogenize perspectives or reduce them to a single voice. It is important to highlight that the results also respond to the analysis and approach of the projects developed by the collectives, which reveal how their processes were constructed. When the leaders and members of the collectives explain their ways of working, they emphasize that many of the creation stages arise from open discussions, the practice of collective creation, and the commitment to horizontality in their internal dynamics. This approach does not privilege a univocal narrative from a leader's voice but prioritizes a shared voice distributed among different members.

The collectives and their projects

1. *Red de Artes Vivas*

Red de Artes Vivas is an independent platform founded in 2011 in Bogotá, which promotes the creation, research, and circulation of Live Arts. Its mission is to position this interdisciplinary field as a space for dialogue and confrontation between diverse knowledge systems and artistic and academic practices. It emerged in the context of the first cohort of the Interdisciplinary Master's Degree in Theater and Live Arts at the National University of Colombia, under the direction of Rolf Abderhalden and the Mapa Teatro team. This convergence of interdisciplinary artists marked a starting point for projects that integrate creation, pedagogy, and community.

The collective formalized as a nonprofit entity after organizing festivals and artistic seasons in spaces like La Factoría L'Explose and has developed key projects such as the Pliegues y Despliegues festival, connecting Latin American artists with diverse audiences, and MovimientoBOG, a platform for critical dance research. Their practices have addressed ecological themes, community projects in priority municipalities, and performance days to explore emerging creative processes. The core team includes interdisciplinary artists with backgrounds in theater, live arts, visual arts, literature, and music, who are also faculty members at prestigious Colombian universities.

1.1 Project Description: MovimientoBOG

MovimientoBOG is an informal training program in Critical Dance Studies, developed by the Red de Artes Vivas since 2018. This program aims to promote reflection, writing, and research on movement practices both on and off artistic stages. Theoretical-practical methodological strategies integrating the analysis and practice of movement are employed. MovimientoBOG has had four editions to date: Cartografías de la Danza (2018), Coreografías Urbanas (2019), Coreo-ecologías (2021), and Reverdecer (2022). Throughout these editions, performative research methodologies have been used to foster collective reflection on the relationship between the body and the city, public space appropriation, and the creation of dissident citizenships related to new forms of habitability. The project has been carried out with a group of dancers, choreographers, students, and trainers interested in investigating, writing, and researching in the field of Critical Dance Studies.

2. *Colectivo.co*

Colectivo.co was born in Manizales as a response to the lack of artistic circuits in intermediate cities of Colombia. Founded by two university collaborators, the collective seeks to re-signify the local through self-management, co-creation, and an alternative curation that centers the voices and practices of emerging artists and communities. This approach challenges traditional curation by prioritizing active participation and the collective construction of cultural narratives.

In its early stages, the collective worked to make visible the practices of artists in circuits outside of major cultural centers. Currently, it is dedicated to promoting collaborative processes that question the hierarchical dynamics of art production and circulation, fostering critical interventions to reimagine the local contemporary art scene. Its members are trained in visual arts and cultural management, with experience in artistic mediation, museology, and the editing of independent projects. Colectivo.co represents a commitment to imagining and building more inclusive and accessible meeting spaces.

2.1 Project Description: Redes Intertextuales

Redes Intertextuales is a series of virtual exchanges and dialogues based on key questions developed by the participating artists themselves. This project, conducted between December 2020 and February 2021, consisted of eight sessions bringing together individuals and projects selected through on.act calls, grouped according to their

methodologies and themes. The goal was to foster dialogue among emerging artists, enabling moments of connection and intersection between the selected proposals.

During these sessions, diverse topics such as the legitimacy of the terms “museum” and “heritage” or memory from personal, conflictual, historical, and material perspectives were addressed. This project facilitated interaction and idea exchange among emerging artists, creating a support and collaboration network.

2.2 Project Description: Nuevo Oro

Nuevo Oro is a digital self-publication that serves as an archive of interventions by Latin American artists (Chile, Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina) responding to the social manifestations that swept across the southern continent in 2019. The initiative emerged as a response to the impulsive actions of collective manifestations characterized by chaos and word-of-mouth communication, with various individuals working in networks. This publication invited artists from different Latin American locations to submit interventions derived from their readings and actions concerning current contexts and issues. The responses encompass multiple languages and cross values and systems, positioning themselves as a direct response to the social situations of our geographies and societies.

3. *Circuito Liquen*

Circuito Liquen was founded in 2003 in Mexico as a theater group but quickly evolved into an interdisciplinary collective integrating performing arts, cultural management, and research-creation. Throughout its nomadic journey, which includes stages in Mexico, Argentina, Spain, and Colombia, Circuito Liquen has explored collective and community-based possibilities as anchor points for its artistic practice.

Since 2015, the collective has been based in Colombia, combining its performative approach with self-built cultural management. Inspired by the idea of practice as work, its projects integrate writing, movement, and performance, critically reflecting on dominant methodologies in cultural management and adapting them to local contexts. Circuito Liquen is characterized by its ability to learn from experience and generate new ways of working, always prioritizing a horizontal relationship with the communities they engage.

3.1 Project Description:

In 2020, Circuito Liquen developed, in collaboration with the Goethe Institute, a diploma in performative practices that has now seen four iterations. The diploma emerged as a

pedagogical space for artists interested in performativity and research/thought/knowledge processes.

The Diploma in Performative Practices (DPP) is a pedagogical space developed by Circuito Liquen, inviting active creators and thinkers to develop a personal project over ten weeks under the guidance of an international team of tutors. The program focuses on each participant's artistic practice, exploring how they conceive and express their worldview and boundaries. The project promotes simultaneous exploration of diverse forms of thought and artistic practices, fostering research models and devices. Through learning experiences in expanded theater and transdisciplinarity, the diploma aims to construct new maps of thought in South America, addressing contemporary issues. The DPP has had four editions, each with a specific thematic focus: *The Body as a Political Space* (2020), *The Body as a Sustainable Territory* (2021), *Memory and Disappearance* (2022), and *#transcinemáticx: Archives & Affective Curatorships* (2023).

4. *El Cuerpo Habla*

El Cuerpo Habla was born in 2006 as a complementary workshop at the University of Antioquia, inspired by the text "Los gritos de Cuerpo" by Juan David Nasio. What began as a university pedagogical initiative became, in 2009, an independent collective articulating art, the body, and the city to explore concepts such as resistance, representation, and fabulation.

The collective operates as a research incubator, having conducted six institutional-supported investigative projects on topics like body pedagogy, performance, and the intersections of art and politics. Based in Medellín, the collective adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, integrating psychology, visual arts, and theater knowledge. Its work has transcended academic and museum spaces, bringing art to the streets to create inclusive aesthetic experiences that challenge social structures and democratize access to knowledge.

4.1 Project Description:

The project *Fabulation: Action and Conceptualization in the Art and Pedagogy Relationship* by *El Cuerpo Habla* (2016–2018) examines the intersection of art and pedagogy by creating events that mobilize devices and agencies. It focuses on creating spaces for ethical acts and joint resistance, energizing community relationships and desires. This project transitions from performance and the body as a production stage to a philosophical framework that expands contemporary concepts of art, aesthetics, body, and community.

Emphasizing experience as central to research and creative processes, it dissolves boundaries between artist-researcher and the field of study, enabling participants' narratives to emerge. It also serves as documentation of the collective's workshops.

Research phases

Taking up the notion of folds, this study proposes to explore the complexities and nuances of the practices and narratives of various artistic collectives without intending to refer to an essence but to an operative function. Thus, to understand the ways of folding these collectives, a constant movement between inside and outside is necessary, where each element, though singular, is part of a broader continuum. This image of the fold that folds back on itself serves to establish and organize the relational layers of the methodology, between the projects, between the collectives and the broader social contexts, between systems, and between collectives. In this way, the folds appear here as a series of inseparable processes that result in a methodology to understand multiplicities and variations.

As a result, this research is developed in a series of phases, each representing a fold that contributes to a comprehensive and dynamic understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Design and foundation fold

In this first phase, the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research were established, identifying tools and strategies useful for designing a concrete research proposal. At this stage, a review of relevant literature was conducted to identify theoretical and methodological approaches. Likewise, key concepts such as performative research and the notion of knowledge were identified. Finally, data collection tools, such as semi-structured interviews, were identified, and methodological strategies and the design of collection instruments were defined.

Selection and Contextualization Fold

In this phase, criteria for the selection of collectives and projects were defined based on their relevance to the research question, diversity in artistic practices, and representativeness in terms of geography and focus. Using online archives, documents, publications, or multimedia content about each collective and project were compiled. Finally, each collective was contextualized within its historical and cultural environment, providing a deeper

understanding of their evolution and impact. This documentary analysis allowed recurring themes to be identified, as well as situating each collective within a broader sociocultural panorama.

Exploration and Narrative Capture Fold

This phase focuses on the direct collection of data through qualitative methods, capturing the voices and experiences of the members of the collectives. A semi-structured interview guide was designed with open-ended questions to explore the experiences, motivations, and perspectives of participants. Key members of the collectives were identified and contacted to participate in these interviews, which were conducted virtually, recorded, and transcribed for further analysis.

During the interviews, audio recording devices were used to enable full participation in the interaction without the distraction of note-taking. This method facilitated a more natural and engaged interaction with the participants. For research purposes, the interviews began by collecting basic information about the origin and mission of the art collective and the interviewees. The motivations leading to the formation of these collectives were explored, along with their main philosophy or focus concerning artistic production and research.

Next, specific projects undertaken by the collectives were examined. Participants described one or several specific projects, including the initial inspiration, set objectives, and methodologies employed to integrate creative practice with research.

In the section on understanding knowledge production, the discussions revolved around how the collectives perceive the generation of knowledge through the arts. Topics such as the role of the body, sensory experience, and subjectivity in these processes were addressed, along with how they differ from traditional approaches to knowledge production. Interviewees shared specific examples of works that have contributed to knowledge in their field.

Subsequently, the interviews centered on the articulation of creative practice and research, discussing methodologies used to investigate and document their creative processes, the selection and development of themes or concepts, and how their artistic practice challenges or complements conventional research methodologies. Limitations and challenges faced in the projects, along with strategies to overcome them, were also explored.

The interviewees commented on criticisms or resistance encountered in academic circles and other artistic spaces regarding their projects. At the end of the interviews, participants were invited to add any additional comments about their experience in the collective and

their approach to knowledge production through the arts, ensuring that all relevant aspects of their practice were covered.

At the conclusion of each interview, the general tone, key themes, and any notable ideas or impressions were documented. These initial notes served as a preliminary form of data analysis, capturing the essence of the interaction and guiding subsequent analysis. The interviews were transcribed using the "clean read" or "soft verbatim" style identified by Mayring (2014), omitting filler words and decorative phrases to produce a coherent representation of the original conversation.

Synthesis and Reflection Fold

In the final phase, the collected data was integrated to analyze the narratives, practices, and experiences of the studied collectives. The interviews were analyzed to create a database using the qualitative data analysis platform Atlas.ti. Through thematic analysis, patterns and common themes among the collectives and projects were identified. Findings were contrasted across the different collectives, highlighting similarities and differences in their practices and approaches. Finally, reflections on the scope of the findings for art research, their implications in the Latin American context, and their position relative to knowledge-building practices were carried out.

Coding was done inductively, meaning the categories emerged from the interviews, allowing the most relevant concepts and patterns to arise from the practices and discourses of the artistic collectives themselves. Initially, a detailed reading of all the collected material was conducted, identifying recurring themes, key ideas, and practices that repeated across the different collectives. These initial observations gave rise to preliminary codes, which were adjusted and refined as the analysis progressed. The resulting categories were grouped into five main thematic areas:

- ★ **Research-Creation Methodologies:** Included codes related to how collectives approach research from their artistic practice, such as archives and memory, co-creation, activism, and ecology of knowledge.
- ★ **Research Practices in the Arts:** Grouped codes referring to specific techniques and strategies employed in research-creation, such as performance, performative writing, public space work, and self-publishing.
- ★ **Body and Subjectivity:** This category emerged to capture reflections on the body as an agent and medium of expression, exploring codes like political body, subjectivity and autobiography, and bodily becoming.

- ★ **Knowledge and Epistemology:** Focused on notions of knowledge production, democratization of art, and alternative epistemologies such as that of affect, in dialogue with forms of sensitive knowledge.
- ★ **Traditional Research Methodologies:** This category arose as an antagonistic category to research-creation methodologies to account for the dialogue and tension present with the colonality of knowledge.
- ★ **Cultural System:** Included codes addressing the broader context in which the collectives operate, such as extractivism in art, cultural precarization, and the tensions between art and capitalism, also exploring center-periphery relations and the political implications of social conflict in Colombia.

The use of these categories not only allowed for the organization and systematization of the collected material but also helped illuminate connections between artistic practices and the epistemological, political, and social tensions underlying how these collectives generate knowledge.

First, some context

Research-creation or investigative art in Colombia has been influenced by a context of social and political crisis, particularly marked by internal armed conflict⁶, structural violence, and social inequality (González and Molinares 2010, 355-357). For decades, the country has witnessed resistance movements that found in the arts a means of denunciation, memory, and social reconstruction. The emergence of these practices also responds to a series of events such as the peace process with the FARC in 2016⁷, the social mobilizations of 2019 and 2021⁸, the rise of social movements, and the economic crisis and precariousness of the artistic sector⁹.

⁶ The armed conflict in Colombia, which began in the 1960s, involved clashes between insurgent groups, paramilitaries, and the State, resulting in mass displacement, systematic violence, and human rights violations.

⁷ The peace agreement signed between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2016 ended more than 50 years of armed conflict, aiming for the reintegration of ex-combatants and the reparation of victims.

⁸ The social mobilizations of 2019 and 2021 in Colombia were driven by demands against corruption, inequality, tax reforms, and state violence, becoming key spaces for resistance and cultural expression.

⁹ The artistic sector in Colombia faces challenges such as a lack of funding, labor instability, and limited access to resources for the creation and dissemination of works, a situation worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be further developed at the end of the chapter.

criticizing or judging these artists who sought validation for their professions in Europe, it is important to recognize the systemic framework that made Europe a set of cultural, social, and aesthetic values, the standard for producing art. Second, there are artists who, in Marta Traba's words, put "a voluntary distance between themselves and the project, recognizing the scam, distortion, and liquidation of the art that was being programmed." (1975, 1).

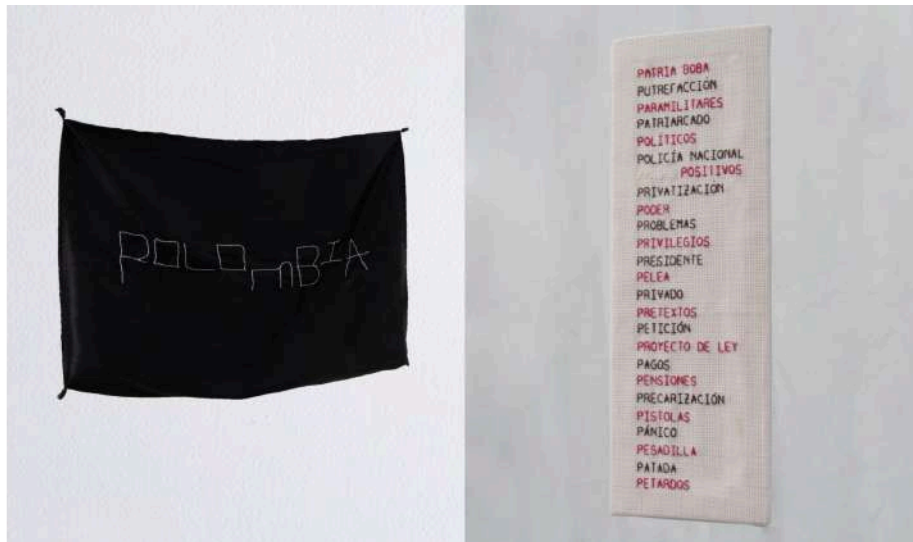
For the latter, grouped by Traba under a culture of resistance (1975, 2), artistic production meant the abandonment of Eurocentric art history as a model to be followed in Latin America. (Olmedo 2017, 12). This change promoted the idea that artists should get involved in political struggle and act in their social reality, proposing as an ideal the fusion of art and life. In particular, in the visual arts and theater, the arts offered a field of 'controlled utopia', where artists could carry out their political project. (Olmedo 2017, 12), (Cedeño 2014, 2010). Again, the question of heterogeneity and the formation of a collective political project that unified Latin America was one of the most intense debates among artists and intellectuals of the 1970s. (Cedeño 2014, 209). Strongly influenced by the Cuban revolutionary process and the Latin American boom, artists set out to make art a meeting point between culture and politics, where the path of "anti-imperialist Latin Americanism" became the common horizon for artistic practice. (Cedeño 2014, 205).



James Marín. Manizales, Colombia. Taken from Nuevo Oro, Colectivo.co

In this context, the figure of the Latin American artist became a symbol of resistance to cultural domination. (Olmedo 2017, 13). Luis Camnitzer, Uruguayan artist and critic, characterizes this alliance between art and politics as the unique particularity that distinguishes Latin American art from European or North American art, particularly in Latin

American conceptualism. Camnitzer identifies a transnational theoretical-plastic language whose goal is to bring the issues of the Latin American context into the art sphere and, at the same time, integrate art into that social environment. (Olmedo 2017, 14). In this way, conceptualism appears to Camnitzer as an active tool of resistance and social change, challenging dominant structures and proposing new narratives and meanings. (Olmedo 2017, 16-17).

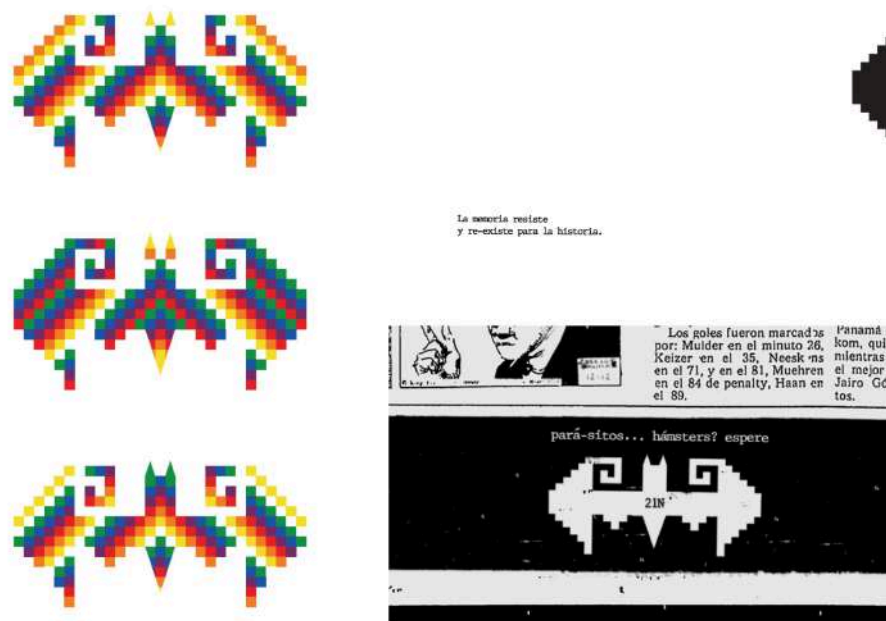


Jennifer Rubio. Armenia, Colombia. Taken from Nuevo Oro, Colectivo.co

Therefore, for Camnitzer, writing a new history of art for Latin America would require abandoning the division between "inside" and "outside" of art, and recognizing the persistence of this separation as a way of keeping the political and social aspects apart from art. This new history should recognize the connection of various social and artistic struggles (Olmedo 2017, 16). Thus, Camnitzer suggests a process of cultural decolonization that includes understanding the process of colonization of artistic education, abandoning the Eurocentric perspective of Latin American art, and overcoming the limits imposed by academic discourse (Olmedo 2017, 17). Camnitzer identifies in conceptualism a culture of resistance, where art is capable of questioning the existence of a discourse parallel to the capitalist globalization of Latin American art (Olmedo 2017, 17). For the author, the shift of artistic hegemony from Paris to New York after World War II did not eliminate the dynamics of Eurocentric domination, but updated it with new formal justifications (Olmedo 2017, 17), (Traba 1956, 476).

The character of the Latin American artist that emerged in the 1960s is, therefore, for Camnitzer, primarily defined by their ability to break with 19th-century culture and promote an experimental attitude in opposition to academic art, rejecting the Fine Arts and criticizing

modern institutionalism as a "straitjacket" (Olmedo 2017, 14). This stance did not defend a disciplinary view of art, but rather questioned the political autonomy of Latin American art, advocating for its institutional overflow and highlighting the social connections that allow it to survive (Olmedo 2017, 15). Similarly, Cedeño identifies, in the field of performing arts, a need to maintain autonomous spaces for artistic creation and experimentation that were not mediated by state institutions. (2014, 205). Thanks to the North American interventionism that promoted a formalist perspective of the arts in the region through the promotion of the neo-avant-garde in universities (Olmedo 2017, 17) and the scarcity of resources allocated to cultural policies (Cedeño 2014, 209), many artists were expelled from academic centers; as a consequence, various artistic collectives emerged as spaces that would guarantee independence in creation.



John Melo. Bogotá, Colombia. Taken from Nuevo Oro, Colectivo.co

In the Colombian case, these artistic collectives, primarily dedicated to theater, quickly began to become centers for artistic practice. (Cedeño 2014, 199). The self-reflective capacity that these collectives proposed, initially related to creation, became spaces for debate and meeting for intellectuals, artists, and later, students and workers. Although these collectives were initially perceived as foreignizing and snobbish (Cedeño 2014, 196), they eventually focused their efforts on making theater a non-elitist art that reached all sectors of the country. Collectives like El Búho or La Casa Cultural (later Teatro de La Candelaria) understood the need to reach other audiences beyond the intellectual elites, and moved to cultural centers and schools in the periphery. Their objectives included the development of political art that reflected the social reality of the country and addressed the situation of the

general population that had been marginalized for a long time, either by disinterest or by the impossibility of accessing cultural goods (Cedeño 2014, 209).

Despite these collectives' vision of not separating art and society, the support they found was ephemeral. (Cedeño 2014, 210). The greatest challenges were two fundamental aspects: the ability to gather resources from agents and groups, both private and public, and the need to form an audience that not only contributed economically but also critically with their perception of the art that was needed and desired to be built. In an analysis of Camnitzer's perspective, Olmedo warns that the efforts of the 1960s and 1970s to raise the question about the social role in artistic practice meant more a horizon of utopian desire and a space of agglutination rather than a completed project or a normative axis. (Olmedo 2017, 15). It would then be worth talking about art from Latin America, rather than Latin American art.



Manuel Velez. Manizales, Colombia. Taken from Nuevo Oro, Colectivo.co

Tracing a trans-historical thread to the social protests that took place in Latin America in 2019, art played a crucial role, not only as a means of cultural expression but also, echoing mid-20th-century projects, as a tool of protest and resistance. (Sequeira 2021, 305). In that year, in countries like Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia, citizens took to the streets to express their discontent with economic, political, and social issues. These protests, primarily recorded through social media, highlighted disproportionate state repression and a neoconservative advance. (Sequeira 2021, 302). According to Sequeira, constant censorship and state repression made art appear as an alternative form of public manifestation. (2021, 305). In Chile, for example, the collective Lastesis created the song

"Un violador en tu camino", a performance that became a symbol of feminist protest and denunciation of state violence. In Colombia, artistic interventions such as "Un país que siembra cuerpos" emerged, where four artists in Medellín, hanging naked and bloodied, denounced the high levels of violence in the country.



Un país que siembra cuerpos. Colombia. December 22, 2019. Author: Reuters Published: 23/12/2019

Just as in past decades, contemporary art in Colombia in 2019 maintained a close relationship with the social and political (Cedeño 2014, 199), it should be clarified that in this context, the political aspect goes beyond partisan issues and appears as a tool for protest and visibility in the region. Furthermore, it is worth noting that contemporary artistic manifestations in Colombia also go beyond the notion of art exclusively tied to an exhibition system linked to institutions, museums, or galleries. Additionally, performance and installation became central, with the body and interaction as their main foundations. (Sequeira 2021, 309).



Nicolás Ordoñez. Bogotá, Colombia. Taken from *Nuevo Oro*, Colectivo.co

Funding for artistic practices in Colombia

Funding for the arts in Colombia is primarily carried out through a set of mechanisms and programs promoted by the government and, to a lesser extent, by private and mixed entities. At the national level, the Ministry of Culture is the main government institution responsible for promoting and financing artistic and cultural activities in Colombia. Through various programs and calls, the ministry provides financial resources to support artists, collectives, and cultural projects. Every year, through a stimulus program, the ministry offers public calls in various artistic areas, each with five lines of work: creation, training, circulation, research, and sustainability.

However, the resources allocated to the cultural sector are limited compared to other sectors of the national budget. In the General Budget of the Nation for 2023, the Ministry of Culture received 701 billion pesos¹⁰ (approximately 159,462 USD), which represents only 0.19% of the total budget. For 2024, although the budget for culture saw an 84% increase compared to the previous year, reaching 1.4 trillion pesos¹¹ (approximately 318,404 USD), the

¹⁰ Brayan Xavier Becerra, "Presupuesto del nuevo Ministerio de Cultura será de \$701.000 millones el próximo año," *La República*, 24 de octubre de 2022, <https://www.larepublica.co/economia/presupuesto-del-nuevo-ministerio-de-cultura-sera-de-701-000-millones-el-proximo-ano-3475784>

¹¹ Colombia, Chamber of Representatives, "Response from the Sixth Commission of the Chamber of Representatives," file number, August 2023. <https://www.camara.gov.co/sites/default/files/2023-08/Rtas%20Min%20Culturaprop0112023.pdf>

percentage in relation to the national budget remains small, representing just 0.27%. This amount sharply contrasts with the resources allocated to sectors such as defense, which receives 10.8%¹², reflecting a significant disparity in the country's budgetary priorities.

At the regional level, public funding is primarily provided through the cultural secretariats of each department, which follow guidelines very similar to those of the Ministry of Culture. However, there is a noticeable disparity in access to funding between more developed regions and the more remote or rural areas. Main cities, such as Bogota and Medellin, receive most of the support, while less urbanized regions are left behind with insufficient resources to sustain their cultural programs. Although there are cultural houses and community centers in several municipalities, many of them face problems of poor infrastructure and lack of qualified human resources. This limits the quality and variety of artistic activities they can offer.

As a result, many cultural institutions and artists rely heavily on government funding, making them vulnerable to changes in administration and public policies. This dependence also means that, in times of economic crisis, the budget allocated to culture is often one of the first areas to be cut. This has led to working collectively to access broader funds and, on the other hand, to developing models closer to self-management and the construction of international support networks. This is where institutions like the Goethe-Institut and the Alliance Française¹³ come in. In addition to these international programs, collectives often turn to other mechanisms such as creation grants from the Ministry of Culture¹⁴, regional stimulus programs, and international cooperation platforms like Iberescena¹⁵ or the National Arts Fund's Artistic Residency Program¹⁶. Partnerships and collaborations with non-governmental organizations, such as the Prince Claus Fund¹⁷, which finances projects with social and cultural impact, also stand out.

El Colombiano, "Aprobado el presupuesto más alto de la historia para el Ministerio de Cultura," 20 de octubre de 2023,

<https://www.elcolombiano.com/cultura/aprobado-el-presupuesto-mas-alto-de-la-historia-para-el-ministerio-de-cultura-IH22707528>

¹² Erich Saumeth, "Presupuesto de Defensa vs la realidad colombiana en materia de seguridad," *InfoDefensa*, 14 de diciembre de 2022, <https://www.techworld.com/ai-avances>.

¹³ The Goethe-Institut and the Alliance Française are two of the main international cultural institutions operating in Colombia, promoting artistic exchanges, residencies, and scholarship programs for local and international artists.

¹⁴ At the local level, the Ministry of Culture of Colombia has a National Stimulus Program, which offers grants and resources in areas such as creation, research, and artistic training.

¹⁵ Iberescena is an international cooperation program that supports the performing arts in Ibero-America through funding for co-productions, residencies, and festivals.

¹⁶ The National Arts Fund offers artistic residencies aimed at fostering interdisciplinary creation in diverse contexts, facilitating cultural exchanges between countries.

¹⁷ The Prince Claus Fund is a Dutch organization that supports cultural projects with a focus on social justice, particularly in contexts of conflict and inequality.

In 2020, freshly graduated from university and in the midst of the health crisis, I also decided to create an artistic collective with other recently graduated peers. Without knowledge of private funding entities, we quickly had to start looking for funding through national and regional calls, which are usually available to emerging and inexperienced actors. Even more quickly, we realized that the calls in the creation line were the most competitive and, therefore, the least likely to be awarded. This led us to focus on the area of research-creation, hoping to more easily secure money to practice our professions. We were not wrong. Within a year and a half, we received five grants for the development of research projects. Naturally, the financial processes that led the selected collectives to opt for research-creation are beyond the scope of this research, but what is clear is that, as artists in Colombia, it is necessary to seek various strategies for the economic sustainability of their actors and projects.

Precarization of Art

In a survey conducted via Instagram by Esfera Pública¹⁸, a Colombian digital magazine about artistic practices, it was found that the most common form of commercial relationship in the Colombian cultural industry between artists and gallerists or curators is the exchange of their work for "visibility" without financial compensation¹⁹ (Sanguino 2020). This, coupled with low wages, the lack of labor agreements to ensure rights for employees, and ambiguities in labor relationships, has resulted, on the one hand, in the concentration of wealth for some actors, and on the other, in the precarization of the artistic profession in Colombia.

Regarding this precarious situation, Sanguino identifies in the current system of contemporary Colombian art an extractivist logic that takes advantage of the effort and energy of all its participants to concentrate the benefits in the hands of a few (Sanguino 2020). In fact, rather than speaking of labor precariousness, Sanguino prefers to speak of "extraction" and "monopoly" when referring to systemic practices within the commercial activities between individuals in the art field (Sanguino 2020). For Sanguino, to talk about precariousness, it is necessary to address these extractivist processes of art as well as the labor injustices that stem from them (Sanguino 2020). Furthermore, Sanguino identifies two narratives that permeate discussions in the current cultural industry: the narrative of genius and the narrative of the free market (Sanguino 2024).

¹⁸ Refer to <https://esferapublica.org/>

¹⁹ All the testimonials and survey results from the "precarization" highlights in the Esfera Pública Instagram profile: <https://www.instagram.com/esferapublica>

On the one hand, the narrative of "genius" that pervades the art world justifies the concentration of resources by assuming that those who achieve success are qualitatively superior to those other, less fortunate artists (2024). According to Sanguino, this idea has prevailed in Colombia, preventing the development of critiques that relate the "genius" to their material and historical conditions to uncover the causal relationships in the career of a "successful" artist (Sanguino 2024). Sanguino argues that it is necessary to "ask ourselves how to establish narratives beyond that of the artistic genius, which make visible other historical and social processes that explain the commercial success of an artist and the precarization of the majority" (Sanguino 2024). Only then could the concept of the artist be demystified to analyze the economic and social conditions that influence an artist's career.

On the other hand, the narrative of the free market has institutionalized the figure of the artist as an "entrepreneur" or "businessperson" (Sanguino 2024). This conception also assumes that there are certain strategies or paths that lead to the commercial success of the artist. Here, Sanguino identifies the rise of workshops that aim to teach artists how to sell their work, from what formats they should use, themes, and color palettes, to recommendations for managing social media (Sanguino 2024). However, Sanguino points out that this perspective, which suggests that knowledge and the application of certain strategies can lead to commercial success and, therefore, to escaping precariousness, is also limited and does not address the underlying causes of labor injustice in the art field (Sanguino 2020). As a result, the persistence of these two narratives, the artist as "genius" or as "entrepreneur," has affected discussions about art and precariousness, distracting them from investigating the true causes of these inequalities. In this labor situation in the Colombian cultural industry, only those who have external economic resources to continue self-precarization and sustain it for a long time will be able to be artists (Sanguino 2020).

Research-Creation in Colombia

Research-creation in Colombia dates back, at least at an institutional level, to the collective efforts of some faculties of art, architecture, and design (AAD) to legitimize artistic creation as a valid form of knowledge production. These efforts culminated in the incorporation of research-creation into Colciencias²⁰ measurement model in 2014. Starting with Call 693, artistic products were recognized for the first time as contributions to knowledge production, framing their evaluation and measurement within validation instances such as visibility and

²⁰ Colciencias was the government entity in Colombia responsible for promoting scientific research through the funding of projects, the training of researchers, and the design of policies to strengthen science, technology, and innovation. In 2019, it was transformed into the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MinCiencias) to expand its impact.

audience impact. This raises the question of the criteria under which art research can be evaluated, especially when even attempts to recognize artistic practice as a legitimate form of knowledge tend to be conditioned by evaluation frameworks that replicate traditional approaches.

According to Bonilla et al., this model arose from a negotiation between academic associations and Colciencias, seeking to integrate creative dynamics into the system without losing their specificity (2019, 679-680). Thus, a framework was developed that would allow the evaluation of the rigor of creative processes without reducing them to traditional scientific parameters. From this system, the different faculties sought to legitimize artistic creation through parameters that would highlight its impact on the cultural and social development of the country. From a transdisciplinary approach, the Colombian model of research-creation is distinguished by its emphasis on the production of sensory devices and its insistence on the public valuation of these creative processes (Bonilla et al., 2019, 700). The latter translates into the demand that works, events, or processes derived from research-creation be validated in visible and recognized settings.

Nevertheless, the development of research-creation in Colombia lies between the tensions of the need for institutional legitimation and the preservation of its disruptive character. As Ballesteros and Beltrán-Luengas state, research can only be considered research-creation if it is carried out within the framework of a university or an academic institution (2018, 28). Although its inclusion in the SNCTI²¹ represents a significant step toward the recognition of alternative epistemologies, it raises a question about the audiences who have access to such institutions and the possible normalization of a practice that is inherently diverse.

Unlike traditional scientific research, research-creation does not seek answers to pre-established problems, but rather opens spaces for new questions and research paths. In this sense, Delgado et al. point out that research-creation should not be reduced to meeting institutional demands, but must maintain its transformative potential (2015, 13). This would involve continuously questioning the boundaries imposed by measurement systems and advocating for the diversity of approaches and outcomes.

Beyond discussions about its validation, research-creation has proven to be a fertile field for the generation of knowledge in complex contexts. In Colombia, its impact is reflected not only in the academic sphere but also in the strengthening of the creative and cultural

²¹ The National System of Science, Technology, and Innovation is the institution that coordinates and promotes scientific, technological, and innovation activities, fostering their integration between the public, private, and academic sectors. Its main objective is to strengthen research, innovation, and sustainable development in the country.

industries. According to Gil et al., these practices have driven innovation by linking artistic creation with social, technological, and economic issues (2013, 6). In fact, the results of Call 737 from 2015, one year after its institutional validation, show exponential growth in the registered creation products (Vásquez & Beltrán, 2020, 250), demonstrating the relevance of this approach in the national landscape. This event also raises the question about the motivations behind expanding scientific measurement guidelines to increase Colombia's scientific production index and position the country within international frameworks.

In conclusion, research-creation in Colombia stands at a crossroads between institutionalization and resistance. Its development reflects both the challenges and opportunities of integrating artistic practices into broader knowledge systems. In the words of Vásquez & Beltrán, research-creation does not simply seek to fill a gap in measurement systems, but opens possibilities to think about knowledge from sensitivity, experience, and imagination (2020, 253). In the Colombian context, this perspective is especially significant, as it opens the possibility to address local issues from creative and diverse approaches. Connecting with the problem posed at the beginning of the text, these practices respond to the need to question the hegemonic epistemological frameworks that have limited the production of knowledge to the Western scientific paradigm. In this sense, research-creation in Colombia addresses local challenges, while opening a broader debate on how knowledge can be constructed from the situated, the affective, and the relational, offering alternatives to dominant narratives.

The time and place

Research-based artistic practices in Colombia emerge and consolidate from a specific perspective of social, political, and economic crisis that has deeply marked the national context. Investigative art thus arises as a tool of resistance and reflection in a country that has faced decades of armed conflict, inequality, and structural violence. The signing of the peace process with the FARC in 2016 and the social mobilizations of 2019 are recent events that have fueled a collective movement in which the arts become a vehicle for denunciation, memory, and social reconstruction.

From a historical perspective, the relationship between art and politics in Latin America has been marked by resistance to hegemonic impositions and the search for an identity that reflects the shared realities of the region. From debates on Latin American identity in the 19th century to the critical conceptualism of the 20th century, artists in Colombia and the region have used art as a means to question and challenge dominant paradigms. This tradition of merging art and activism is updated in the new generations of artists who, faced

with the economic crisis and precariousness in the sector, find in research-creation not only a means of expression but also a strategy for sustainability and self-management.

The growing dependence on state funding and the difficulty in accessing resources have encouraged the formation of collectives that operate under a collaborative and self-management model. These collectives, although facing significant challenges in terms of sustainability, have managed to keep diverse artistic practices alive. The contemporary situation of protests, political changes, and global crises positions research-creation practices as responses not only artistic but essentially political and social, in an attempt to create art that dialogues with its context and responds to the needs of the community in which it is embedded.

The truth games

"Since reason became an instrument of domination over human and non-human nature, its own intention of discovering the truth has been frustrated."

-Max Horkheimer, Critique of Instrumental Reason

I would like to begin, then, with the epistemological question. What is it that we understand by knowledge? Is knowledge something accumulative, complete in itself under the premise of its uniqueness, deterritorialized, and immutable? What are the institutions responsible for imparting it, and which are tasked with discovering it? Here unfolds a series of questions about knowledge that echoes the perspectives shared by the collectives. Where in my body is knowledge located? Is it in the head? In the brain? What is the container of the mind? In what language is knowledge produced? How many forms of knowledge, if more than one exists, are there? Is knowledge what emanates from books and scientific articles?

When I think of Knowledge, the adjectives that come to mind are neutrality, coldness, rationality, and control. Undoubtedly, this corresponds to a type of knowledge resulting from scientific research. Within the positivist paradigm, knowledge is conceived as something already given, already completed, that rests in reality awaiting decipherment by the human cognitive apparatus. Similar to a camera, research merely reveals a series of external conditions completely independent of the observing subject. Influenced by Newtonian conceptions and Cartesian thought, this knowledge must set in motion a system of homogeneous rules through which verifications are conducted and theories are developed.

Thus, the knowable is that which can be measured and subjected to objective analysis, using mathematical and numerical language as the sole discourse of "true" knowledge.

Based on this premise, the hypothetico-deductive method becomes the only path to discovering the universal laws that govern both natural and social phenomena. Knowledge here appears as essentially objective and therefore external to the human condition. Thus, body and mind, reason and world, are ontologically separated. In Lander's words, this rupture means that the world is explicitly dead, de-spiritualized, if you will, in which its essence can be captured by concepts and representations constructed by reason (2020, 5). For the author, it is based on these separations, in which the body is emptied of meaning, that a conception of disembodied and decontextualized knowledge emerges, radically subjectivizing the mind and establishing an instrumental posture toward the body/world (2020, 5).

This type of knowledge, de-subjectivized, with claims of universality and neutrality, also separates the world into the general population and the world of scientists or experts (Lander 2020, 5). Only some, the specialists, are capable of accessing the logics of reality. It is then that science, deified, appears as the sole source of legitimate knowledge. As if we had all agreed that there is only one very clear truth, positivist thought declares a single path and specific methodological strategies to discover it. Knowledge, therefore, becomes something to which only some have access or the capacity to understand.

Although positivism is a paradigm that emerged at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the same collectives acknowledge its prevalence in academic research spaces. Red de Artes Vivas points out that within the university, "we remain attached to the paradigm of the scientific method,"²² describing it as a linear path that involves hypotheses, tests, and verifiable conclusions. Similarly, Colectivo.co raises the question of the supports for scientific research and the apparatuses sanctioned for the transmission of knowledge, noting how these "are really based on a more academic product, be it a text, a book, or a patent."²³ This observation highlights the demand hidden within the scientific method to transform knowledge into tangible and verifiable products, which diminishes the value of other forms of expression and understanding that do not fit within these formal schemes.

²² Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

²³ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

Positivist thought, with its emphasis on the separation between mind and body and on the pursuit of an universal and objective truth through scientific methods, thus proposes that valid knowledge is that which is acquired through a series of specific, replicable, and verifiable procedures, as seen in the logic of the scientific method: formulating a hypothesis, bringing it to a laboratory or controlled context, conducting tests, drawing conclusions, and publishing them for refutation. According to positivism, this path is seen as the only valid way to access a single truth.

However, as I will develop in Chapter 4, beneath the notion of knowledge lies a series of interruptions, displacements, and historical conditions that make the conception of knowledge possible. As Mignolo points out, knowledge, far from being abstract and de-localized, is geo-historically marked (Mignolo 2002, 1). In this sense, there are no neutral epistemologies, notions, or ideas outside the political and social conditions of the place in which they are produced (Sousa Santos and Meneses 2014, 5). As Sousa Santos and Meneses recognize, any notion of knowledge is contextual, both culturally and politically (2014, 7). This approach challenges the claim to universality that has characterized modern science, arguing that such universality is a construction that was only made possible through the force of colonialism and capitalism (Mignolo 2005, 30).

Ecology of knowledges

There are things we do not know, cannot know, do not yet understand, and perhaps never will.

Moving away from this traditional notion of knowledge, this research follows the proposal of Sousa Santos and Meneses to conceive alternative epistemic frameworks that recognize and value other forms of knowing. In a diverse and multifaceted world, an ecology of knowledges implies renouncing any general epistemology, knowing full well that a “complete and integral version is impossible” (Sousa Santos and Meneses 2014, 16). In this sense, the proposed notion of knowledge is aware of its own limitations and its inevitable incompleteness. For the authors, this implies embracing the plurality of knowledges beyond scientific knowledge and its monoculture of knowing, moving instead toward a notion of knowledge closer to “non-knowledge,” insofar as it is incapable of offering a truth that encompasses or is common to all.

Rather than proposing a new hegemonic epistemological paradigm, Sousa Santos and Meneses present the idea of a counter-epistemology that promotes interaction between scientific and non-scientific knowledges (Sousa Santos and Meneses 2014, 43). For the authors, it is not about devaluing scientific research but advocating for the creation of a space where multiple forms of knowledge can coexist and complement each other. Ceasing to pretend to encompass all of reality on its own involves, from the perspective of an ecology of knowledges, recognizing the idea that "knowledge is interknowledge" (Sousa Santos and Meneses 2014, 41). This means that different types of knowledge should be seen as interconnected and dynamic rather than hierarchical and static, highlighting the intrinsic incompleteness of all knowledge (Sousa Santos and Meneses 2014, 41).

In this co-presence of knowledges, *El Cuerpo Habla* offers another notion: the Rhizome. Under this concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the collective proposes a non-hierarchical system devoid of a single center or predetermined direction to refer to knowledge (Chaverra 2018, 13). Without a root or central trunk, the rhizome spreads, driven by different concerns, while keeping its various branches avidly interconnected (Chaverra 2018, 13). Based on this idea, all sciences or practices connect with each other without implying a point of origin, hierarchy, or linear development. Connected to the horizontal and dynamic linkage between different forms of knowledge proposed by Sousa Santos and Meneses, in a rhizome, scientific, local, and popular knowledges are interconnected, and each contributes something essential to a more comprehensive understanding of reality. Thus, the rhizome does not aim to unify or gather multiplicities to form a whole but rather maintains the autonomy and heterogeneity of its elements.

Following this epistemological pluralism, one idea repeated throughout interviews with the collectives is the rejection of the notion that knowledge can arise from a single perspective or individuality. Instead, they suggest that knowledge is what emerges through collaboration and encounters with people of diverse perspectives and experiences. *Colectivo.co*, for example, affirms that no knowledge can be approached in isolation but "must be through working with others, relating to others, and understanding how those relationships nurture different knowledges."²⁴ Along similar lines, *Red de Artes Vivas* emphasizes that knowledges are not only multidimensional but that their approaches are equally multiple and diverse.

²⁴ Andrea Ospina from *Colectivo.co*, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

This methodological diversity responds, for the collectives, to “the urgency and authenticity”²⁵ of the questions that arise in the creative/investigative process. “I don’t believe that methodology builds the research or creative project; rather, it sets a guideline, a transversal path to that question and the urgency of recognizing what it is you truly want to say.”²⁶ This responds to the collectives’ need to work from the contexts and people with whom they collaborate. Rather than constructing a predetermined methodology, these artistic collectives understand that knowledges do not arise exclusively from a single truth but that there are multiple pathways to access them.

In this sense, the collectives do not consider methodologies to be rigid or deterministic but instead see them as tools to open pathways within their projects. This approach recognizes that the processes of creation and research are not linear but are constantly evolving. As we will explore further in Chapter 6, the methodologies used by the artistic collectives are fluid and respond to the needs and specificities of the context, allowing collective knowledge to follow unexpected and adaptive routes. “This has also led us, in research, to have very different projects... research is not about imposing our needs on those we work with, but quite the opposite.”²⁷ Thus, the knowledge and methodologies that accompany it emerge organically from the group and the environment, becoming a process of openness and collective creation.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that this rhizome or ecology of knowledges does not propose substituting one type of knowledge with another universal one but rather a more equitable distribution of knowledge. For Sousa Santos and Meneses, this is not about abandoning scientific research but advocating for the creation of a space where multiple forms of knowledge can coexist and complement each other. In the authors’ words, “the battle for global social justice must therefore also be a battle for global cognitive justice” (Sousa Santos and Meneses 2014, 44). This post-abyssal²⁸ perspective does not imply discrediting modern science but using it in a counter-hegemonic way. Consequently, this means that the value of knowledge should be measured by its capacity to intervene in and transform reality rather than its conformity to an abstract model of truth (Gomes 2014, 418).

²⁵ Saeed Pezeshki from Circuito Liquen, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

²⁸ The concept of the post-abyssal, developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, refers to overcoming the “abyssal lines” that Western modernity created to divide the world into a “civilized” zone and a “subhuman” or invisible one, inhabited by colonized and marginalized peoples. The post-abyssal approach seeks to dismantle these divisions by recognizing and valuing the knowledge, cultures, and ways of life that have been subalternized.

Oh my body, never stop asking me something

It is not up to philosophers to separate the soul from the body [...]. We are not thinking frogs, nor are we devices of objectification and recording without guts; we must continually give birth to our thoughts from the depths of our pains and maternally provide them with all that is in our blood, heart, desire, passion, torment, conscience, destiny, fatality [...]. I am not one of those who have ideas among books—I am used to thinking outdoors, walking, jumping, climbing, dancing, especially in solitary mountains or very close to the sea.

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science²⁹

What do we truly have if not a body? Do we have a body, or are we a body? Returning to Antonin Artaud: if I have a body, who then is the I that has the body? The question of the body in research-creation permeates methodologies, inquiries, starting points, and points of enunciation for the collectives. The body is the transversal axis, intimately tied to the production of knowledge through the recognition of a sensitive knowledge rooted in subjectivity and autobiography. Moreover, the question of the body, in some of the collectives, becomes ineffable or a category that overflows itself. For Red de Artes Vivas, the body "is the starting point, it is the endpoint... it is the cosmos."³⁰ In this metaphor, the body is described as a cosmos, something vast and full of potential, where the body is equated with galaxies and universes. For El Cuerpo Habla, the body fades to give way to living flesh and a bodily becoming that departs from transcendence.

In this sense, the body detaches from a Cartesian notion of the subject, proposing "becoming-body" as a form of fluid and non-hierarchical existence. From this perspective, bodies are neither neutral nor empty. The body is filled with other bodies, its own body, and foreign bodies. This thinking and embodied body is not an object of study or mere accessory to human experience. Nor is it the result of a sociocultural construction imposing significances on the body. The body IS the very act of human existence (Nancy 2011, 36-37; De Jesus 2018, 4) and, as such, is a constitutive element of subjects. Instead of viewing the body as a property or object, it is understood as something in constant process, a

²⁹ Nietzsche cited by Citro (2009, 43)

³⁰ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

"becoming" that dismantles hierarchies between mind and body, material and transcendental.

In this regard, the mere act of speaking about and revaluing the body in the context of a rationalist culture that has dismissed it constitutes, in itself, for De Jesus, a counter-hegemonic act (2018, 4). Hence, authors like Fanon place the body at the center of anti-colonial struggles, as the locus where positionality, Eurocentrism, plutocratic structures, and other colonial frameworks (Villegas 2021) engage in a battlefield. From this perspective, focusing on the corporeal enables not only new forms of knowledge but also projects of independence and the formation of political cultures that “do not incubate colonial imaginaries, racist imaginaries, structures, and logics of colonial positionality” (Villegas 2021).

Thus, for the collectives, the body becomes indivisible from the subjective and biographical experiences of artist-researchers. "Believing the body"—what does this idea, reinforced in several interviews, signify? Every individual, through their corporeality, unfolds the signs of a personal intensity (my body) that shapes realities through experiences it perceives, constructs, and adapts, creating new frameworks of reference (Pérez 2013, 435). Social forces acting in and through the body—such as notions of gender, sexuality, class, among others—are expressed in its very materiality as inseparable from its sentient and sensitive aspects (Citro 2020, 72). Inevitably, exploring the notion of the body brings us into a space where the body gains significant relevance as corporeality, capable of communicating and actively participating in the construction and reconstruction of social realities (De Jesus 2018, 5). The body is presented not only as a manifestation of artistic practice but also as an expression of the emotions, thoughts, or sensations traversing human beings.

Although three of the four collectives operate in one way or another within the fields of performing arts and movement, the body detaches itself from a choreographic character. Many of the coded quotes show how personal experiences, especially those related to physical changes, transform an individual's relationship with their body and their artistic practice. For example, for Saeed, the experience of cancer radically altered his perception of the body, no longer seen as an object for training or a vehicle to exhibit virtuosity but as a space where new urgencies and needs are inscribed. This experience leads to a rethinking of the body as potential beyond its physical capacities, utilizing these new perceptions as part of creative production.

This body-subjectivity relationship, clearly autobiographical, positions the body as the privileged site for the production of knowledge. It is where pain, pleasure, illness, and life are experienced, and where these experiences are processed, forming the starting point for creation and research. The body is thus the intersection of sensitive knowledge and autobiography. Personal and subjective experiences lived through the body are transformed into a form of knowledge that is both sensitive and autobiographical.

The body, then, is not a passive object that obeys a "controlling" mind but a sensitive entity that "knows" and can guide creation and reflection. This approach suggests a different epistemology, one that challenges traditional hierarchies between body and mind and opens pathways to think about knowledge from the sensitive, affective, and embodied. The quality of this knowledge is, as identified by Colectivo.co, "a knowledge based on experience and sensitivity, which is also knowledge."³¹ In this sense, the sensitive knowledge proposed by the collectives is an act of resistance against the extreme rationalization of knowledge, which has relegated other ways of understanding the world to the margins. From their artistic practices, the collectives generate reflections that stem from the body, emotion, and lived experience. As one interviewee mentions: "For me, it's about stopping thinking that all this poetic, sensitive, fictional stuff is opposed to knowledge."³²

The notion of resistance appears again.

El Cuerpo Habla reminds us that, even though the body is a common element of the existential aspect of human life (Citro 2001, 23), it remains a subject of cultural and political censorship. Angélica mentions how the body has historically been desensitized, subordinated, and relegated to a marginal position within certain social discourses. Specifically in Colombia, where Catholic religious beliefs permeate the very fabric of society, the body is a source of shame and taboo. Artistic (and non-artistic) expressions related to nudity or physical exposure are viewed as "in bad taste" and provoke discomfort. "We still think that people who take their clothes off do so because they have nothing better to do."³³

For El Cuerpo Habla, this control over the body is a manifestation of "civilizational barbarism," a concept describing how modernity has imposed ways of life that control and normalize individuals to fit into a political and economic system that precarizes existence (Chaverra 2018, 31). Through their research *Fabulaciones*, the collective analyzes how

³¹ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

³² Ibid.

³³ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

institutions and society dictate norms about the body: what to eat, how to behave, and how to align with specific beauty and health standards. In a critique of ideals of bodily perfection and the marginalization of what is considered abject or undesirable, *El Cuerpo Habla* emphasizes that our society promotes cleanliness and perfection while expressing disgust and repulsion toward everything that makes us “dirty” or “old” (Chaverra 2018, 32). The exposure of the body in its various forms thus becomes a way of saying “here we are,” creating a space where traditional morality and social control mechanisms are challenged.

In this context, for *El Cuerpo Habla*, the body is understood as a territory of struggle against social and cultural norms that seek to domesticate or censor it. In this sense, the body becomes a space of cultural resistance, aiming to reclaim its expressive freedom and its capacity to signify. Thus, bodily agency represents for the collective a locus of resistance and transformation, not only in response to personal physical experiences but also within a broader context related to the social and cultural systems that dictate bodily behavior. In this way, the body for *El Cuerpo Habla* transcends its autobiographical character and also becomes a political agent that resists its contexts.

The body is therefore a space of resistance and a reclamation of subjectivity.

The body is the stage where subjective, biographical, and political experiences are inscribed.

El Cuerpo Habla introduces here the concept of the political body to refer to a body that actively participates within its communities. Beyond any party or ideological position, the body transforms into an act of political significance in which physical presence carries a symbolic weight to denounce the structural violence in Colombia. In *Carga-montón*, for instance, one of their performances held in 2015, members of the collective stripped naked and remained motionless on a wooden cart, which was pushed approximately 6 kilometers from the National University of Colombia to Bolívar Square³⁴, the seat and symbol of the country’s judicial, legislative, and executive power. Making a direct reference to the

³⁴ The National University of Colombia is one of the country’s most important educational institutions and a symbol of critical thinking and intellectualism in Bogotá. Bolívar Square, on the other hand, serves as Colombia’s political and administrative epicenter, housing iconic buildings such as the Congress, the Palace of Justice, the National Capitol, and the Primatial Cathedral. This approximately 6-kilometer route connects two symbolic spaces of knowledge and power, imbued with historical and political significance, underscoring the critical intent of the performance as it physically traverses between them.

discovery of bodies in mass graves across the country³⁵, the collective sought to denounce the crimes committed as a result of Colombia's internal conflict.



El Cuerpo Habla. Carga-montón, Bogotá, Colombia 2015. Performance

The body, then, is not only a space for individual resistance, but its politicization necessitates the creation of community. According to El Cuerpo Habla, “approaching the political dimension of the body through art requires the call to a people” (Chaverra 2018, 38). Rather than preparing a body for the physical skills demanded by dance, the collective prepares the body to become a political body. This notion of preparation is associated with generating intense experiences in which its members aim to experience and make others experience, creating devices of change that are not simply intellectual but visceral and bodily. Thus, for the collective, the political lies in a body's capacity to affect another body, its own bodies, and the world (Chaverra 2018, 34). The bodily experience does not focus on artistic production but on processes that bring individuals together around a shared experience.

³⁵ Colombia's internal armed conflict, which lasted over five decades, left behind a significant number of victims, many of whom were buried in mass graves. Over time, various collectives and organizations have worked to identify these bodies and shed light on the crimes committed during the conflict. The discoveries in mass graves have become a symbol of the need to clarify the events that took place and acknowledge the suffering associated with these acts of violence.



El Cuerpo Habla. Carga-montón, Bogotá, Colombia 2015. Performance

This notion of resistance intertwined with art acts as a testimony to those personal and collective experiences that have been censored or marginalized. The shift from the private to the public through performance or autobiographical narration not only makes these bodies and experiences visible but also questions the boundaries between the intimate and the social. This act of making the personal public (bodies, emotions, stories) is not merely an aesthetic expression but a political act of resistance to confront established norms. In a context like Colombia, where bodies and subjectivities have been silenced, violated, abducted, and repressed by social and political structures, personal stories carry an inherent power of rebellion.

The geopolitics of knowledge

We have talked extensively about rebellion. The very title of the thesis refers to a certain insubordination by the collectives. It is therefore necessary to examine the broader power systems in which Colombian artists find themselves. As Lila Abu-Lughod questions in her article about the romanticization of resistance, there is a tendency in the social sciences to rescue and value forms of resistance that were previously devalued or overlooked without linking them to a deeper analysis of power itself (1990, 41-42). By focusing excessively on

identifying and explaining resistance, Abu-Lughod considers that researchers may overlook the implications inherent in the forms of resistance found (1990, 41-42).

Following Foucault's thinking, the author suggests that resistance should be used as a diagnostic of power because "where there is power, there is resistance" (Abu-Lughod 1990, 42). This statement not only implies that resistance is an inevitable response to power but also that power, as Foucault acknowledges, is not merely repressive. In this sense, where there is resistance, there are overlapping and intersecting systems of power whose effects vary greatly depending on historical and contextual circumstances (Abu-Lughod 2020, 42). Resisting, for example, in the artistic sphere may involve entering other levels of subjugation that take different forms and aspects from the one initially being resisted.

This brings us to the critical aspect pointed out by Abu-Lughod: the need to avoid the romantic perception of resistance. For the author, truly respecting different acts of resistance means not stopping at the heroism of the resisters but recognizing in such practices the multiple and intertwined manifestations of power structures (Abu-Lughod 2020, 53). Forms of resistance may even, as Abu-Lughod warns, contradict one another, collapse among themselves, or inadvertently reinforce the existing power system (1990, 47).

Thus, it becomes necessary to investigate the manifestations of power in which art and the production of knowledge in Colombia are updated and re-updated. One of the central points identified by Castro-Gómez in addressing the geopolitical context of Latin America is the Eurocentric vision of history and progress. Marx and Engels, despite recognizing the global impact of emerging capitalism, maintained a limited view regarding the development of the bourgeoisie in non-European societies (Castro-Gómez 2005, 14-19). This Eurocentric perspective is also reflected in Hegel, who considered that Latin America was "outside history" due to the absence of political and philosophical institutions, which he deemed necessary for progress toward freedom and modernity (Castro-Gómez 2005, 16).

Castro-Gómez, like several authors in the postcolonialism stream such as Dussel or Mignolo, criticizes this Eurocentric and teleological vision, emphasizing that colonialism is not only an economic and political phenomenon but also an epistemic one (2005, 26-27). For the author, European colonialism not only exploited resources and militarily subjugated the colonies but also imposed a system of knowledge and a worldview that delegitimized other ways of knowing (2005, 58). This epistemic imposition, which the author refers to as coloniality, has had a lasting impact on identity formation and knowledge production.

It is here that Aníbal Quijano introduces the idea of the coloniality of power, which refers to the continued presence of colonial structures in contemporary societies (1999, 138). This concept extends to the coloniality of knowledge (1999, 142), asserting that knowledge produced and validated by Western institutions is considered superior and universal, while other forms of knowledge are subordinated or outright discarded (1999, 142). Similarly, Walter Mignolo highlights that the history of knowledge is geo-historically marked and has a specific origin, usually linked to Western Europe (Mignolo 2002). During the Spanish *encomienda*, for example, European missionaries considered that the Aztecs or the Incas had no knowledge because they did not use writing, a criterion of Renaissance universities for defining what constituted knowledge (Mignolo 2002). This is just one illustration of how colonial difference, through various acts of delegitimization, has been used to justify the superiority of Western knowledge.

Thus, in this geopolitics of knowledge, knowledge is revealed as an instrument of colonization in which concepts and theories become universal categories for analyzing realities, as well as normative propositions defining ways of thinking for all cultures and peoples. In analogy with Foucault, Aníbal Quijano points out that the coloniality of power not only represses but also produces; this means that it not only refers to the exclusion and/or subalternization of non-European forms of subjectivity but also to the production of new forms that replaced them (1999, 142). As Darcy Ribeiro expressed, “the empire marches toward the colony with weapons, books, concepts, and preconceptions” (Ribeiro cited by Mignolo, 2010, p. 10). The coloniality of power is thus intertwined with the coloniality of knowledge, of doing, of thinking, or of understanding. This colonial matrix, sustained by three pillars—knowing, understanding, and feeling—is ultimately a system of beliefs through which action is rationalized while denying, excluding, and obscuring any possibility of difference (Mignolo 2010, 12).

Similarly, drawing on Said's reflections on Orientalism, Castro-Gómez emphasizes how the geopolitics of power is not only based on physical coercion but also on the construction of discourses that legitimize domination (2005, 19-20). This process of discursive construction created a dichotomy between “the West” and “the East,” where the former was seen as the bearer of rationality and progress, while the latter was represented as passive and pre-modern. For Castro-Gómez, Said's great insight was recognizing the role of the discourses of the human and social sciences in legitimizing the colonial world order, which in turn shaped the identities of colonizers and colonized (2005, 26). This division of the world appears in Sousa Santos' thought through the notion of abyssal thinking (2014, 11). This concept refers to a system of distinctions that creates a radical line between knowledges

considered valid and those relegated to epistemological nonexistence. For Sousa Santos, this line divides the world into a visible side, where modern science monopolizes the truth, and an invisible side, where other knowledges are dismissed as irrelevant or incomprehensible (2014, 22-23). This radical exclusion is constitutive of hegemonic practices and principles, both historically and today.

One of the essential characteristics of the coloniality of knowledge, according to Castro-Gómez, lies in the separation geographers made between the ethnic center and the geometric center of observation (2005, 62-63). With the conquest of America and the need to control and delineate the new territories, cartography adopted the mathematization of perspective, which implied a fixed and unique point of view—a sovereign gaze situated outside the representation (Castro-Gómez 2005, 62-63). This position of "zero point," identified by both Castro-Gómez and Mignolo, in which the observer is not part of what is observed, allowed for a worldview without the need to justify its legitimacy (Castro-Gómez 2005, 62-63; Mignolo 2005, 16). By providing an unquestionable and universal point of view on space, the modern paradigm helped construct the profile of the "normal" subject required by capitalism: white, male, property-owning, enlightened, and heterosexual (Castro-Gómez 2005, 67). This profile was constructed in opposition to the image of the colonial "other," situated outside European space.

As Sousa Santos and Meneses recognize, epistemology, like any notion of what is considered valid knowledge, underscores that this knowledge is always contextual, both culturally and politically (2014, 7). This approach challenges the claim of universality that has characterized modern science, arguing that such universality is a construction that was only made possible through the force of colonialism and capitalism (Mignolo 2005, 30). This imposition not only discredits but actively suppressed other forms of knowledge that did not align with colonial and capitalist interests, a process Sousa Santos and Meneses call "epistemicide."

Methodologies of research-creation

It is within this context that artistic collectives develop their own methodologies for investigative processes stemming from their practices. In many cases, there is no talk of fixed methodologies or predefined research routes; instead, the focus is on creative processes, explorations, ways of doing, encounters, or shared experiences. Moreover, the

objective of these projects is often not the production of knowledge or even the creation of artworks, but rather the generation of practices that escape the logics of uniformity and productivity typical of scientific research, prioritizing instead sensitivity, subjectivity, reflection, and dynamics of encounter. Rather than seeking absolute "truths" or fixed conclusions, the collectives implement methods that privilege experimentation, process, and collaboration, where knowledge is conceived as a multiple and ever-evolving construction nourished by the interaction of bodies, experiences, and subjectivities.

The visions collected in this work reflect the perspectives and positions expressed by some members and leaders of the analyzed collectives. However, they do not aim to homogenize the diverse opinions or reduce them to a single representative voice. It is worth highlighting that the internal dynamics of these collectives prioritize collective creation, open discussion, and horizontality, avoiding the centralization of decisions or the dominance of a single narrative. Similarly, the results reflect the analysis and approach of their projects, which also provide a glimpse into how they were constructed. Through methodologies such as self-publishing, movement workshops, and performative writing, these artistic collectives activate forms of knowledge that tread paths less explored in traditional academia.

The following chapter is organized around six main methodologies: (1) self-publishing and digital circulation, (2) performative writing, (3) creative sprouts and gestures, (4) movement workshops, (5) the use of triggers, and (6) encounter and intersubjectivity.

1. Self-Publishing and digital circulation

In analyzing the methodologies of self-publishing and digital circulation, the projects *Redes Intertextuales* and *Nuevo Oro* by Colectivo.co stand out as strategies responding to the need for independence in the production and dissemination of knowledge within the context of artistic collectives in Colombia. Both projects choose to create alternative and accessible routes for the circulation of ideas in local virtual contexts. For Colectivo.co, self-publishing is not just an act of editorial production but an affirmation of identity and creative autonomy. In a context dominated by institutional frameworks, self-publishing for them means being able to "believe" in their own work: "Self-publish, write ourselves, believe it a bit, circulate with it as well."³⁶

³⁶ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

Through self-publishing and digital circulation, the collective responds to a context where cultural policies do not always reflect the diversity of voices and perspectives emerging from peripheral or intermediate regions of Colombia, that is, places outside the centralized art circuit of Bogotá. In the case of *Redes Intertextuales*, the goal of Colectivo.co was to foster encounters among young and recently graduated artists who, due to physical distance or a lack of institutional networks, often lack access to artistic exchange circles in their localities. Confronted with these limitations, Colectivo.co opted for a digital format where participants “exchange information on various topics: archives, the city, according to each artist’s perspective.”³⁷ Thus, the “results” of this research project lie in the conversations themselves, with the method enabling connections that are only possible through digital platforms. Only later were fragments of these dialogues published on Instagram as an archive. Virtuality remains present, but in this case, the objective is not to generate a publication for social networks but to connect a community through the creation of networks.



Screenshots from Colectivo.co Instagram. *Redes intertextuales* 2021.

Thus, *Redes Intertextuales* emerges as a space for virtual encounters, rooted in the collective's critique of a traditional art circuit model where, for them, artists participate in mass events without a real sense of community or exchange. In the context of the pandemic, Colectivo.co questioned the logic of art calls where the artist's role is reduced to receiving a participation certificate. In the collective's words, in a call, “you might be with 200 international artists and never speak to anyone. Never exchange a word with anyone. What do you end up with? A certificate?”³⁸ For this reason, the collective conceived *Redes*

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

Intertextuales as a system of discussion and dialogue groups through WhatsApp and other virtual platforms, generating spaces to “meet a lot of people who are in the same situation”³⁹ and discover “how, with your tools as an artist, you are overcoming this chaos.”⁴⁰ In an effort to avoid the logic of productivity, Colectivo.co proposes to connect and make visible what is already happening. In this way, the process itself becomes the outcome of the research, proposing accessible routes of collaboration and visibility for artists in peripheral contexts.



Screenshots from Colectivo.co Instagram. *Redes intertextuales* 2021.

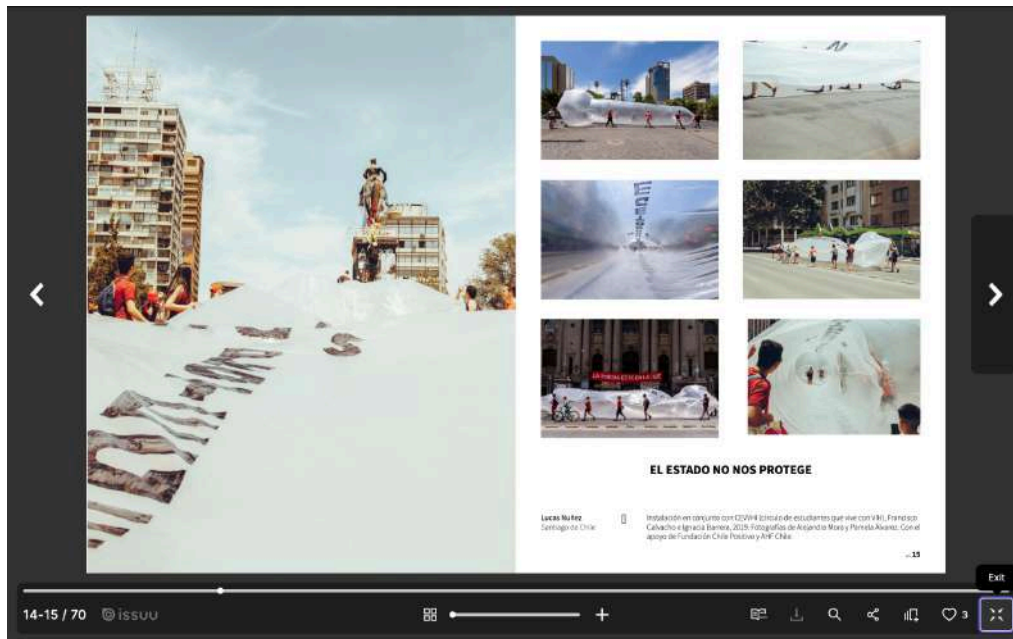
Similarly, for *Nuevo Oro*, the collective joined forces with other artists from Colombia, Argentina, and Chile to collect and document aesthetic and resistant experiences in response to the social protests that erupted across Latin America at the end of 2019. “What we do is try to talk to them and gather different sensitive and poetic forms of addressing these situations of violence.”⁴¹ The publication, which is freely available online⁴², aims to create a transnational and accessible community, fostering a sense of horizontality that enables the exchange of artistic perspectives and practices. Moreover, the use of digital circulation reveals an ethical, social, and political dimension of self-publishing, understood not only as a communication process but also as an act of resistance and cultural and community reaffirmation.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² https://issuu.com/colectivo.co/docs/nuevo_oro_-_digital



Screenshot from Colectivo.co Nuevo Oro 2019

Beyond merely disseminating content, these projects transform self-publishing and digital circulation into a methodological practice of identity affirmation and self-determination. As such, these methodologies are not only tools for visibility and artistic exchange but also a means of resistance against the hegemonic systems of cultural production. In the words of the collective, it is an effort to strengthen communities and the sense of belonging among young artists who feel isolated in their contexts. In this sense, self-publishing and digital circulation represent a methodology that integrates research and creation with a social commitment to democratizing access to artistic knowledge and including voices that would otherwise lack a platform within the art circuit.

2. Performative writing

How to register what has happened in the body?

How to document the relationships and connections that were created?

How to remember a sprout?

-Red de Artes Vivas⁴³

In the projects of Red de Artes Vivas and Circuito Liquen, performative writing becomes a creative and experimental act, where writing is not the end goal but a means of exploration. For the collectives, performative writing is employed to deepen the aesthetic and political experience of the body, creating spaces of experimentation and revelation. This analysis

⁴³ <https://redartsvivas.wixsite.com/micelioreverdece/micelio>

focuses on two key projects: *Movimiento BOG* by Red de Artes Vivas and the *Diplomado en Prácticas Performativas (DPP)* by Circuito Liquen. In this context, poetic narration and performative writing become tools for communicating and making visible their investigative processes.

For Circuito Liquen, performative writing is constructed through cycles of physical and textual expression. According to Saeed, this process involves “automatic writing that translates into gesture through symbolic interpretation, and after experiencing it in the body, it returns to writing.”⁴⁴ This cycle—writing-body-writing—creates a dynamic interaction where the text is shaped by the body and vice versa, blurring the illustrative relationship between the two elements. In this way, Circuito Liquen views writing as an initial step that allows, as Saeed puts it, “vomiting ideas,” or more specifically, letting the creative flow emerge without rational or intellectual filters. For this reason, within their investigative processes, automatic writing represents the ability to capture a creative “urgency” or impulse that can later be transformed into performative action or gesture. “All those writing spaces then had the mandate to be transformed into gesture.”⁴⁵ In this sense, writing is essential insofar as it undergoes a process of translation into the body, even if that means abandoning the text produced during the sessions.

For its part, Red de Artes Vivas also uses performative writing as a means of sensory and spiritual connection with the environment. Under the premise of an ecological paradigm, the collective proposes writing exercises in *MovimientoBOG* that invite participants to connect with the natural space around them. In one of the participant’s memoirs, the text suggests a meditative encounter with the earth, inviting the imagined reader to place their hands in the soil and imagine themselves as roots: “Close your eyes. Gently place your hands in the soil. Notice the temperature changes, the textures. Imagine yourself as a root. Be a root. Merge with the earth.”⁴⁶

This type of performative writing proposed by Red de Artes Vivas seeks to integrate the environment as a fundamental part of the research-creation process. Here, writing is not a formal and objective record of experiences; it actively participates in them, making the environment and the body inseparable elements of the writing. Consequently, for Red de Artes Vivas, performative writing emerges as inherently subjective, giving rise to a reflective

⁴⁴ Saeed Pezeshki from Circuito Liquen, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Red de Artes Vivas, 2022. <https://redartsvivas.wixsite.com/micelioreverdece/micelio>

practice in which “deep sensitivity to the environment”⁴⁷ drives the investigative experience. From the collective’s perspective, writing becomes an act of social and community connection, inviting participants to interact through intuition and emotion. According to De Jesus, the use of these writing modalities responds to a concern for the embodiment of the researcher (Hernández 2008, 105), where the text is revealed as testimony that invites readers to become co-participants in the experience of meaning-making (De Jesus 2018, 6). Similar to Circuito Liquen, the text transcends its role as a document and becomes in *MovimientoBOG* a memory of the experiences lived during the program.

Viewed in this way, performative writing in these projects by Circuito Liquen and Red de Artes Vivas emerges as a method that transcends the documentary or academic function of writing to become a space for both personal and collective experimentation and exploration. Both collectives use performative writing to explore a form of knowledge that deviates from conventional intellectual and academic structures, integrating the body and the environment as sources of reflection and creation. According to De Jesus, this perspective is essential for subverting the privileged place granted to academic language in cognitive processes, which has rendered the body invisible in the act of research (2018, 5). Through poetic narration and performative writing, research-creation seeks to construct narratives from art, thereby rethinking how we understand the creation of meaning and opening subjectivity as an inherent and engaged component of research methodologies.

*“Quisiera acariciar con la voz, poder abrazar con mi garganta, ofrecer ecos para
estar
Desearía que se pudieran recostar en mis cuerdas vocales, se sostuvieran en
ellas y se quedaran dormidos
Tener una boca mas grande para que todos los sonidos del mundo pudieran entrar
y salir de mi cuerpo.
Y el paladar cual océano para salivar cada palabra cada deseo.
Sigo viva por esas voces, porque me acorruco en sus vocales, reboto en sus
exclamaciones y me duermo en sus risas.

Quisiera poder quedarme de por vida metida en la garganta de aquellos que
salivan para que yo pueda respirar.

Hoy solo quería mostrarles mis robos y la manera en la que me acaricio con estos

Yo estafo a la gente dándole banalidades, maricadas, simplezas de materia y la
gente en su inocencia me da su voz, su tiempo y su respiración para yo poder
moverme, para yo poder sentir y para poder acariciarme.*

⁴⁷ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

*Soy muy buena robando voces y estafando a la gente, pero nunca he podido robarle a mi abuela la llave de mi voz.*⁴⁸
-Gabriel Zúñiga, participant in MovimientoBOG 2022

3. Sprouts and creative gestures

The artist is the one who produces art. The artist produces works. Within the logic of productivity, every activity must have an end, a closure, a product, or a result. Moreover, it is not enough to simply produce; one must also be innovative and create original content. The sprouts and gestures developed respectively by Red de Artes Vivas and Circuito Liquen reject the premise that a creative practice must culminate in or consolidate into a definitive form, prioritizing instead the experience of research-creation as an organic and continuous process. This stance, reflected in the approaches of the four collectives, constitutes a form of resistance to the commodification of art and the instrumentalization of the artist as a producer of consumer objects. For these collectives, artistic creation is not reduced to the production of a complete and marketable work; rather, it is conceived as a space where processes, ephemeral moments, and the initial gestures of creation hold intrinsic value, without needing to consolidate into a closed or defined object.

Colectivo.co, for example, affirms that its interest does not lie in “creating works,” but in crafting spaces for reflection and encounter, distancing itself from the cycle of “creating and creating, new project after new project.”⁴⁹ Instead, through the creation of spaces for circulation and encounter, they propose a critical response to the relentless pace of production, where creative projects follow one another without allowing for reflection on the processes already underway. Similarly, El Cuerpo Habla emphasizes the importance of abandoning a productivity mindset in its workshops, promoting a focus on the experience itself, on “wandering through the city, seeking other drifts.”⁵⁰ However, while Circuito Liquen states that the goal of its *DPP* is not “to have a finished work. Not even the goal is to build a

⁴⁸ I wish I could caress with my voice, embrace with my throat, offer echoes as a way to be. I wish they could rest on my vocal cords, lean on them, and fall asleep. To have a mouth wide enough for all the sounds of the world to enter and leave my body. And a palate like an ocean, salivating each word, each desire. I stay alive because of those voices, because I curl up in their vowels, bounce off their exclamations, and fall asleep in their laughter. I wish I could stay forever inside the throat of those who salivate so that I may breathe. Today, I just wanted to show you my thefts and the way I caress myself with them. I swindle people by offering trivialities, nonsense, simple material things, and people, in their innocence, give me their voice, their time, their breath, so I can move, so I can feel, so I can caress myself. I'm very good at stealing voices and swindling people, but I've never been able to steal from my grandmother the key to my voice.

⁴⁹ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁵⁰ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

work,⁵¹ all the artists in the three editions held so far have ended up creating a work by the end of the process.

This relentless need for production contrasts with the methodologies proposed by Red de Artes Vivas and Circuito Liquen. With an emphasis on processes and the “first babblings” of creativity, sprouts and gestures emerge as a way to avoid the pressure or necessity of arriving at a finished or completed product. In this approach, the process itself becomes the central element of the research-creation practice, questioning the productivist paradigm by highlighting the value of intermediate states and incomplete expressions.

In the concept of sprouts proposed by Red de Artes Vivas, there is an emphasis on care and attention to the initial and vulnerable stages of an idea or creation. According to the collective, sprouts are those incipient and fragile manifestations of creativity, “a little beyond the seed, which are not necessarily destined to become “trees” or grand final works”⁵². Through a methodology that seeks to honor and care for this initial moment, sprouts speak to a way of research-creation in which ideas can flourish at their own pace and remain incomplete if needed. This preference for the ephemeral and the unfinished translates into an experimental approach to creation, where moments of invention and transformation are as significant as any final product. When asked how these sprouts are cared for, Eloísa’s response was simple: “Well, we give them a place. We name them, we give them a collective space, we allow them to exist, and we keep them well, well tucked away.”⁵³ This methodological decision contrasts with the tendency to transform every creative process into a final, evaluable product. Here, sprouts represent a state of potentiality and freedom without the pressures of continuity. Similarly, the collective emphasizes attentive care and “just the right amount” for these sprouts, avoiding stifling the creative process with external or internal expectations.

Similarly, the concept of gestures proposed by Circuito Liquen complements the approach of sprouts by valuing spontaneous action and expressiveness in creative processes. Starting from autobiographical, physical, and/or sensory triggers, gestures consist of concrete and repeatable movements (such as walking, sitting, looking in a specific direction), always with a clear intention. These gestures do not aim to represent the participants’ emotions through a “as if” something were happening to them; instead, they are physical actions that, performed with defined intention, serve as a bridge to connect internal sensations with the

⁵¹ Saeed Pezeshki from Circuito Liquen, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁵² Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁵³ Ibid.

moving body. Taking the trigger of “collapse” proposed by Circuito Liquen as an example, the intention is not for participants to directly represent a narrative but to capture the emotional and physical atmosphere of the event. Thus, rather than abstractly expressing anguish, a participant might tear a sheet of paper into increasingly smaller pieces. These gestures arise from a clear context: what is causing the collapse? The collective’s intention is that, by performing these gestures, participants connect organically and genuinely with the emotional experience of the collapse.

In this way, gestures are understood by the collective as bodily or symbolic expressions that capture the essence of a process without the need to consolidate into a final work. This methodology focuses on movement and performativity as meaningful experiences in themselves, without imposing the obligation for each gesture to develop into a concrete work. Thus, the gesture methodology allows participants to explore and document research through temporary expressions that reflect their immediate emotions, thoughts, and sensory responses to the environment or the stimuli of the process. Like sprouts, gestures exist in an unfinished state and serve as a reminder that the artistic process can be both an end in itself and a means of expressing a search.



Red de Artes Vivas. Memories from MovimientoBOG 2021.

Both the sprouts of Red de Artes Vivas and the gestures of Circuito Liquen offer a methodology without a predetermined direction that privileges culmination over processes. These concepts present an alternative in which research-creation is seen as an open and constantly transforming process, allowing creativity to express itself without the pressures of completion or concretization. The concept of sprouts, with its fragility and need for care,

stands as resistance to contexts that “quickly crush creative sprouts”⁵⁴ and seek secure and familiar answers. Hence, this methodology serves as a critique of traditional ways of knowing, which tend to discard or undervalue emerging ideas and expressions that have yet to mature. Similarly, the gestures of Circuito Liquen represent a commitment to valuing moments of improvisation and exploration as valid and complete components of artistic and investigative practice.

On the other hand, the focus on the fragility and transience of these processes introduces a political dimension by rejecting the idea of accelerated cultural production driven by consumption. In a cultural system that demands relentless motion, both sprouts and gestures offer a space for pause, reflection, and vulnerability. The incomplete, the ephemeral, the unfinished, are proposed by the collectives as a methodology without expectations or promises, celebrating the existence of ideas in their most embryonic and fragile state. From this perspective, sprouts and gestures remain in a constant openness to new questions and possibilities, enabling research-creation to become a tool for imagining possible worlds, moving away from the imperative of achieving a concrete final result. In Eloísa’s words, research-creation “is always opening you up... it doesn’t close us to arrive at a single truth but opens up a spectrum.”⁵⁵

4. Movement workshops

In this chapter, we will explore what El Cuerpo Habla has defined as one of its main and distinctive methodological proposals within the framework of research-creation in Colombia. Operating as laboratories, the exercises developed in the workshops seek, through various experiences, to sensitize the body, enable contact and relationships with other bodies, and foster an environment of collective listening and reflection (Chaverra 2018, 60). Specifically, the workshops do not follow a set syllabus and include exercises as varied as carrying a piece of rotting chicken, kissing one’s own naked body, shaking for 45 minutes, or navigating the city blindfolded (Chaverra 2018, 69-70-84).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.



El Cuerpo Habla. Fabulaciones: un recorrido a través del arte, la investigación y la pedagogía por el cuerpo habla.

These workshops, which go beyond movement exercises, serve both pedagogical and political functions for the collective, aiming to generate dialogues with the social environment and the community. Just as dancers prepare their bodies through dance classes and athletes through physical conditioning, the members of El Cuerpo Habla prepare for research by training a politically oriented body through the workshops. Here again, politics exceeds partisanship and speaks to active participation that reflects on the social conditions framing a Colombian body.

This is where a profound relationship emerges between the research and Colombia's social and political conflict. In one of the workshops referenced by Chaverra, the members of the collective were given a chicken breast, neatly packaged in a Ziploc bag. The only initial instruction was to carry that piece of chicken for eight days, all day long. Chaverra recounts how, despite the decomposition process, she took it everywhere—even sleeping with it. The bag inflated, and the chicken became slimy. By the third day, she recalls starting to “lose her mind.”⁵⁶ It was then that the group gathered with the collective and buried the chicken pieces. At this point, as they covered the pieces with dirt, the person who proposed the workshop read a text describing how “paramilitaries⁵⁷ were forced to carry pieces of human bodies to get used to the smell of death.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁵⁷ Paramilitarism in Colombia traces its origins back to the 1960s, when peasant self-defense groups were established in the context of the Cold War. Law 48 of 1968 authorized the creation of “armed civilian groups” to collaborate with military forces in combating guerrilla movements. However, these structures evolved, and by the 1980s, they had solidified into illegal armed groups with strong ties to economic, political, and criminal sectors, significantly expanding their influence in the Colombian conflict. Among their tactics were practices aimed at emotionally desensitizing their members to violence, which became part of an adaptation process to the conflict's dynamics.

⁵⁸ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

This performativity—perhaps extreme, perhaps transgressive—is an example of how the collective seeks, through its workshops, to connect the body with the violent realities of the country. Evoking the collective trauma of armed violence in Colombia, the workshop explores how social realities are inscribed on bodies and communities. Personally, I never had to live in the flesh the events of violence and, even so, I am aware of the abysmal contrasts of the country where I was born and how death is so naturalized. So much so that the flesh becomes desensitized and takes for abstract every time the subject is discussed. In this workshop, the participants' bodies become vehicles of memory, exposing them not only to a sensory experience that evokes death and decomposition but also transferring that experience to the political realm by explicitly connecting it to dehumanizing practices imposed by paramilitary groups.



El Cuerpo Habla. Fabulaciones: un recorrido a través del arte, la investigación y la pedagogía por el cuerpo habla.

This idea of “preparing a body for what’s to come”⁵⁹ refers not to physical preparation but to a metaphorical resilience needed to inhabit and resist in a conflict-laden environment. This approach seeks to integrate performative practices that highlight the body’s vulnerability as a starting point for empathy, where the workshops become a means of shedding the emotional anesthesia that constant violence can produce. This methodology connects with the idea that the political body is one that feels, reacts, resonates, or resists the historical and present experience of Colombia. Disgust, the abject, and the marginalized within sensory experience become tools for El Cuerpo Habla to politicize and sensitize research-creation.

The critical question here, of course, is to what extent these practices manage to subvert cultural expectations. While it is true that the workshops promote an immediate experience

⁵⁹ Ibid.

of confronting the abject, how do these encounters translate into a real shift in perception? Naturally, it would be presumptuous to attempt to answer this question based on a single interview. However, from a pedagogical standpoint, the workshops of El Cuerpo Habla open a space for questioning how transgressive methodologies can be used for education and training. As Chaverra affirms, the collective “does not seek to homogenize or soothe”⁶⁰ but to sensitize. It is in the insistence on the corporeal that a space emerges where memory, pain, and resistance are activated through the body, generating a reflection on the impact of one’s realities and those that surround us.

5. Triggers

*Tonight all the inspiration in the world is in your body.
Nicomedes, the fourth, is still rushing to leave the house.
All the thirst that harms the throat and the mornings with broken arms.
Tonight all the inspiration in the world is in your body.
It's me. And I do not find the quick way out,
body of offering.*
– Saeed Pezeshki, ERASTÉS Y ERÓMENOS

The use of triggers employed by Circuito Liquen presents itself as an approach that seeks to transcend conscious intellectual creation, delving into autobiography as a source for research-creation. This methodology consists of creating initial stimuli, or detonants, that trigger writing and performative creation processes based on personal memories, atmospheres, and sensory experiences. The goal is, therefore, to stimulate creative production without the traditional reliance on reasoning, through intimate and sensory evocations.

These stimuli or triggers are varied in nature and can include different elements. One example mentioned by Saeed asks participants to reflect on a “collapse” in their biography. The collapse, as a metaphor for a breaking point or significant change, becomes the trigger for gesture and writing. This approach acknowledges the importance of individual experiences in the production of knowledge and confronts the positivist view of knowledge, which often excludes subjectivity. In this way, the experience becomes the engine of research.

Another example mentioned was the night as a trigger. For three weeks, from 11 PM to 5 AM, a small group of actors gathered to conduct a writing workshop. Through nudity and simple actions such as “waiting, being, walking,” the detonant of the night was used to

⁶⁰ Ibid.

trigger a physical and emotional reaction, which was later translated into writing and performative gestures. For the collective, this trigger opens other forms of openness for writing and enables a reflection from sensitive experimentation about ways of inhabiting the night. In the body-writing-body cycle, the texts created had the task of becoming a gesture, then returning to writing. Once the workshop was completed, the participants had a physical, bodily, and material research corpus.

Thus, the use of triggers refers not only to an act of memory or autobiographical remembrance but also to a kind of perceptual destabilization that could be seen as an attempt to liberate the creator-researcher from the constraints of the known and the predictable. This approach seeks to change the way participants relate to their immediate environment, turning their own body and personal experience into a space for discovery and rediscovery. Precisely, the idea of triggers and the imagery of the night are connected in this methodology, which focuses on the unconscious or symbolic, in a process that explores subjectivity in research-creation. In this context, trigger aim to deepen self-knowledge and connection with the environment from both a transgressive and empathetic perspective.

6. Encounter and intersubjectivity



Red de Artes Vivas. Memories from MovimientoBOG 2022.

The methodology of encounter and intersubjectivity is a central approach in the practice of the artistic collectives. This method involves creating spaces and dynamics where interaction and collaboration between people are prioritized, both in an artistic and research sense. Intersubjectivity is conceived as a form of shared knowledge, in which meaning is co-constructed through the participation of multiple subjects and their perspectives. This

methodology turns the collectives themselves into spaces of encounter where people can interact, share perspectives, and build collective knowledge from shared experience.

In the context of Colectivo.co, intersubjectivity is described as a vital element in artistic research and creation. Instead of focusing on individual subjectivity, the collective advocates for knowledge that emerges from the intersection of multiple perspectives: "This is not subjective, this is intersubjective, this is about sitting with others and sitting with the environment to see what happens."⁶¹ In their project *Redes Intertextuales*, for example, spaces for conversation and discussion were developed for young artists. These meetings, organized around shared interests, functioned as spaces for collective reflection where artists had the opportunity to question artistic practices in their contexts as well as their daily lives and points of enunciation. Discussions arose about animal cartographies, migration, the place of publication in the era of social media, the place of the archive, and so on... these issues were traversing them as young people starting their professional lives as artists and encountering fear.

For this project, references to recognized philosophers or experts in Latin American artistic fields were unnecessary. The collective provided a space for generating knowledge that does not pass through academic filters but instead responds to the experiences and expectations of the participants and their confluence with their peers. Using togetherness as methodology, the collective turns the everyday into part of the research practice, where mutual observation and human interactions become both the source and result of knowledge generation. For Colectivo.co, the encounter thus becomes a field of research in itself.

From this methodology, the results of artistic research and creation are fluid and depend on the collective process: "that final result, that creative result, is very changing depending on the research we do with the other, depending on that conversation about what we really need."⁶² The flexibility in objectives and openness to change in the process allow the projects to adapt to the emerging needs of the participants and the context in which they develop. Thus, conceiving encounter and intersubjectivity as methodology also implies that the focus of the research is not on "finding answers or providing solutions, but on embodying a journey of experimentation and transformation"⁶³.

⁶¹ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Following a similar approach, in the latest versions of *MovimientoBOG* by Red de Artes Vivas, the processes have focused on generating spaces of coexistence among people participating in the residency. In the 2022 version, they held a retreat on the outskirts of the city as an immersive laboratory. During a weekend, participants lived together while collectively sharing their questions and research. This research path, where co-presence is necessary, is undoubtedly different from the image of the scientist working alone in their laboratory. For El Cuerpo Habla, for example, conducting a research process requires seeking to awaken a sense of collectivity in order to decentralize the production of knowledge, allowing it to emerge from a web of interactions and shared experiences.

Still, it is necessary to question at this point the thin line that separates genuine community participation from a form of cultural extractivism. Although the collaboration of the community and collective creation is sought, the question arises about the use and appropriation of knowledge, expressions, and work from communities without fair compensation or consideration of the impact on those contributing. Here, a tension emerges between the intention to create an inclusive space and the risk of reproducing models of symbolic and material exploitation in the arts. How is the concept of community defined, and who defines it in these artistic projects?

Colectivo.co offers a critical perspective on this, pointing out the risk of extractivism in community projects and raising questions about how communities are involved and what benefits they gain from these projects. This aesthetics of inclusion, so trendy in galleries and official spaces of the art market, hides unequal dynamics of power and compensation. While some projects present themselves as collaborative, the participation of communities becomes a resource to be exploited for obtaining funding, visibility, or prestige for the artists, without real and proportional benefit for the participants. This reflection is evident when the collective asks, "Communities are not objects, where is the compensation for the other, what is the justice in the incentives? I mean, I win a 10-million grant, and what do I give the other? An exhibition? What does that have to do with it?"⁶⁴ Here, the need to rethink the notions of participation to closely examine the dynamics underlying such relationships is exposed.

⁶⁴ Ibid.



Screenshot from Colectivo.co Instagram. Decalogue for working with others 2022.

The concept of community itself refers, in artistic discourses, to a “people we consider inferior,”⁶⁵ and therefore, the intervention of the artist as a civilizing axis becomes necessary. This narrative of the artist helping the community can hide the trauma of the white savior, which reinforces implicit hierarchies and a paternalistic vision that perpetuates the idea of the artist's superiority over the other actors involved. Therefore, it is necessary to ask whether these spaces of encounter truly provide a platform for the agency of the participants or if they end up being tools that perpetuate a one-sided approach where control over the final narrative remains in the hands of the facilitators or artists, under the guise of collaboration.

This questioning highlights the need for an ethics of collaborative work that goes beyond the current aesthetics. For collectives, working with the community has also been about rethinking the very notion of community. Is community understood as a resource or an object of intervention? Both Colectivo.co and Red de Artes Vivas have found it essential to ask which community they are seeking and addressing through their projects. For them, the community also consists of the people around them, who in their case are art students or emerging artists. Speaking of a methodology of encounter and intersubjectivity then implies understanding the community as an active and equivalent agent in the processes of creation and research. Only in this way is it possible to create a true interweaving that fosters

⁶⁵ Ibid.

horizontal exchange, where both the members of the collectives and the participants in their projects engage in an equitable and transformative process at its core.

Performance is not a stable reference

I wanted to dedicate a separate chapter to performance as a method, device, or investigative pathway that permeates each of the collectives. Situated at the intersection of creation and politics, performance emerges as a practice that positions the body as a central axis, often presented as the site of production, resistance, and social transformation. The actions proposed by these collectives are not rooted in theatricality; instead, they are live acts deeply embedded in the social and political realities that frame them. For the collectives, working through performance means opening spaces to rethink the relationships between art, politics, daily life, and collectivity.

Performance, through its unwavering alliance with the body, occupies a central place in the processes and exhibitions of the collectives. El Cuerpo Habla, Circuito Lique, and Red de Artes Vivas all converge on this practice as the manifestation of their investigations. As interdisciplinary collectives devoted to the performing arts, their research begins with bodily exploration, culminating in a series of performances that serve as process exhibitions. Particularly in El Cuerpo Habla, all projects culminate in performances because they are understood as processes integrating reflection and action, erasing the boundaries between research and creation. This approach emphasizes the processual nature of their work, which is not necessarily oriented toward a final product, challenging productivity-centered logics.

In performances such as *Estrías* by El Cuerpo Habla, where participants wore wide linen skirts that concealed their torsos and faces, exposing only their genitals and legs as a liquid thread trickled down their legs, performance becomes a disruptive medium. This investigation into historical violence against women and the impossibility of conceiving of difference reveals performance's disruptive character. Through nudity, the exposure of the body, and vulnerability, performance is for El Cuerpo Habla an essential tool of denunciation at the intersection of the political and the poetic. In this case, the naked body articulates the particularities of a context while affirming agency and resistance.



El Cuerpo Habla. Estrías, Medellín Colombia 2011. Performance

Since the 20th century, performance's adoption as a tool for denunciation and agency has reflected the social and political tensions permeating the region. In this sense, performance is not merely a vehicle of expression but also a space of dialogue with society, where collective memories, marginalized identities, and political struggles find representation and agency. For the three collectives mentioned, there is something particularly noteworthy: performance often occurs outside the confines of theaters or galleries. Located in public spaces, the collectives take to the streets, parks, and squares in response to local contexts. Here, Colectivo.co notes that, by not fully integrating into certain art circuits, performance finds in smaller cities a space for innovation and disruption, making it a vehicle for critical reflection in less institutionalized environments.

The protests of 2019 were interrupted by the lockdowns brought on by the pandemic in 2020. The arts, in turn, were among the most affected fields (Sequeira 2021, 305). With museums, fairs, and biennials closed, and possibilities for gathering limited, artists—whose work situations are predominantly precarious (Sequeira 2021, 305; Sanguino 2020)—found in performance a way to maintain connections and forms of gathering. After all, as Taylor and Fuentes assert, for performance, the artist “only” needs their body and imagination to express themselves (2011, 8). The authors thus identify performance as a specific art form with the potential to “break institutional and economic ties that excluded artists without access to theaters, galleries, and official or commercial art spaces” (Taylor and Fuentes 2011, 8). Performance thus emerges as a series of practices that enable the intertwining of interpretative-comprehensive threads between acts—though staged—and the internal worlds of creators and researchers, phenomena, and realities (De Jesus 2018, 6).



El Cuerpo Habla. Vadear, Medellín, Colombia 2011. Performance

At this juncture, it is worth further developing the notion of performance, which, through its recurrence across various fields and disciplines, results in an ambiguous conceptualization. In the context of production, performance refers to the ratio between the result obtained and the means used—i.e., efficiency. Simultaneously, it can be used as a verb to denote the action of presenting, executing, acting, or interpreting in the context of a staged presentation. In the visual arts, performance is an artistic discipline whose work requires the presence and action of the artist.

Particularly in Latin America, where the term "performance" lacks a direct equivalent in Spanish, the concept manifests in multiple ways. While the word is indeed a loanword and represents, for some, a form of colonialism (Taylor and Fuentes 2011, 8), it has been presented as a sociopolitical tool of resistance to censorship. In the words of Taylor and Fuentes, performance is a zone of conflict that has arisen during moments of dictatorship as a civic tool for agency and local force to express positions (2011, 11). Thus, in Latin America, performance as a discipline alludes to practices that transcend the artistic, where the political, economic, and social are indivisible. For Taylor and Fuentes, performance is an act that lends itself to anticolonialist projects, transforming into a provocation and a political act of rupture and defiance rather than an ideological or dogmatic stance (2011, 8). This “mutant sponge,” as theorized by Mexican scholar Antonio Prieto Stambaugh and highlighted by Taylor and Fuentes, absorbs ideas from various disciplines and practices to reconceptualize surrounding realities (2011, 28).



Red de Artes Vivas. Memories from MovimientoBOG 2022.

Performance is thus recognized as a fundamentally unstable reference point (Taylor and Fuentes 2011, 9). Instead, it is essentially ephemeral. According to Phelan, performance is defined by its irreproducibility, its resistance to documentation, and its vitality as the ultimate act in the present (2003, 146–148). The body, for performance, is a site of evidence that extends as a multiple dialogue between present presence and the circulating memory expressed through gestures, dances, movements we produce and reproduce. Understood as “twice-behaved behavior” (Schechner 2013, 28), performances function as vital acts of transfer (Taylor and Fuentes 2011, 20), transmitting knowledge, identities, and collective memories through actions repeated over time.

This ephemerality is seen by collectives as a source of creative power because, by not stabilizing into objects or closed formats, it opens up to multiple meanings and experiences. Its potential lies precisely in its incapacity to become a finished structure, allowing the territorial and relational to emerge as conditions. “The only life of performance is in the present. The being of performance becomes itself through disappearance” (Lepecki cited by Chaverra 2018, 29). Thus, it gains relevance as an artistic language that transcends the boundaries of the stage to engage with the political, social, and everyday, as well as its capacity to foster encounters.

Performance is “inherently unstable, resisting and rejecting all fixed definitions; it is unfinished, open, multivocal, and self-contradictory” (Schechner cited by Chaverra 2012, 3).

However, far from being a utopian embodiment in Latin America with the power to end artists' precariousness, performance has indeed been a recurring tool partly due to this very precariousness. The ephemeral and accessible nature of performance has enabled artists to express their denunciations and resistances without requiring significant resources, often out of reach due to their precarious working conditions. Still, this vision of performance as a tool of resistance and transformation, breaking away from Eurocentric narratives of art as a

consumable object, risks becoming ensnared in a romantic discourse of resistance if its impact limits are not questioned.

While performance allows marginalized voices to find a space for expression, its impact may be limited by its ephemeral nature and, at times, its disconnection from structures of long-term change. Furthermore, although performance allows for engaging diverse audiences, its experimental character may limit its ability to foster inclusive and accessible dialogue with communities less familiar with this practice. How can these performative actions transcend their momentary character to become sustainable catalysts for social transformation? As Taylor and Fuentes assert, performance has the potential to break with the economic and commercial logics of art, but its effectiveness depends on how it connects with other mechanisms of resistance and transformation (2011, 8). Ultimately, the challenge of performance is not to address the spectator but to construct sustainable spaces of collective transformation that transcend the performative act and engage with the political and social contexts informing it.



Circuito Liquen. Azul Bogotá, Colombia 2022. Photographed by Francesco Corbellea

Performance thus emerges in this chapter as a central axis in the research-creation practices of the collectives. More than a defined artistic discipline, it unfolds as a fluid and expansive language that traverses the political, the poetic, and the everyday, integrating reflection and action in a space of resistance and social transformation. For the collectives,

performance is not an end in itself but a relational and experiential process that foregrounds the body as a site of enunciation, memory, and agency.

From a historical perspective, performance in Latin America has become a key tool to resist and denounce the multiple forms of cultural, economic, and political colonialism that persist in the region. As Taylor and Fuentes note, performance in our context cannot be separated from its sociopolitical roots: it is a “mutant sponge” that absorbs elements from various disciplines and practices to confront local realities. In this sense, Colombian collectives align with a genealogy that understands performance as a political act of rupture and defiance rather than an artistic product. The ephemeral and accessible nature of performance has enabled collectives to explore its potential for resistance in the face of the labor precariousness and institutional restrictions faced by artists in Colombia.

Epistemology of affection

I fervently believe that art will save us from ourselves. Perhaps, for some, this statement might seem overly impetuous to begin a paragraph—dramatic, even. Still, I stand by it, and, hopefully, I can convey to the reader the reason behind my assertion. As I mentioned at the outset—though it now feels like a long time ago—I studied performing arts at university. When somatics was introduced to my pedagogical processes, it initiated a journey of self-understanding in which the body and movement provided a tangible framework for concepts that might otherwise have seemed abstract. Inevitably, working with the body involves engaging with vulnerabilities, which necessitates developing a logic of both self-care and collective care. After all, the “product” of the performing arts is the body-being itself.

This somatic lens transformed the way I view art, human and non-human relationships, my connection with my own body, and, consequently, my realities and life experiences. Feeling alongside another human being seems to me a vital manifestation that, in my case, occurred through the study of dance. Somatics, at its core, is about inhabiting the body from within. It recognizes that each of us experiences the world from a first-person perspective, and that this experience is as valid and real as any other. What initially seemed deeply personal inevitably expanded into the collective and is now inseparable from my way of creating and understanding my place on this planet. The transformation brought about by art may not occur at a macro-utopian-Hollywood level, but it certainly manifests on a profoundly human

and everyday scale, where small gestures of connection and care have the power to reconfigure our relationships—with ourselves, with others, and with the world we inhabit.

Dialing down my revolutionary fervor for a moment, it is true that I cannot guarantee this way of inhabiting and creating will transform the entire world. However, I do believe it can transform the spaces we share and the ways in which we allow ourselves to be present. In this regard, I recognize that something emerges from the methodologies and processes of collectives. Without being explicitly mentioned in every interview, an epistemology of affect arises within their perspectives. Beyond being a demarcated category, affect appears as a primary tool for connecting with others, with the environment, and with the creative process itself. This approach foregrounds individual and collective vulnerabilities, where collectives become generators of investigative spaces permeated by affect as both a source and methodology, creating a logic of care that enables work rooted in empathy and intersubjectivity.

This epistemology of affect presents itself as an ethical and political response to a contemporary context in crisis that has long called for a turn toward vulnerability and emotional ecology. I believe collectives work from a relational ontology where care, interdependence, and sensitivity are central, and where affect traverses the corporeal, the collective, and the ecological. Here, care is not a personal virtue, a private act, or a moral boundary, but a political framework that redefines interdependence and justice (Tronto, 1993, p. 158). Care, as Tronto points out, allows us to reconsider the divisions between the public and private spheres, questioning structures that have traditionally relegated care to the feminine and, therefore, to a devalued and unrecognized domain (1993, p. 54).

Here, an epistemology of affect is identified as an act of co-responsibility that makes the construction of collectivity possible. For *El Cuerpo Habla*, a politics of care is explicit in their methodology and considered a fundamental component of their pedagogical and artistic approach. For them, “collectivity cannot be built if the other is not respected, valued, and engaged with.”⁶⁶ Thus, care emerges as an act of collective responsibility that enables the construction of sharedness, which cannot exist without an active recognition of the other and the tensions that arise in collaborative spaces. This vision, resonating with Tronto’s idea that good care entails an ethical commitment to the well-being of the other (1993, p. 169), finds practical expression in these collectives through their workshops, performances, and work methodologies.

⁶⁶ Ángela Chaverra from *El Cuerpo Habla*, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

Without adopting a paternalistic or maternalistic stance, these politics of care speak to the creation of conditions necessary for the other to flourish in their singularity. This is evident in the notion of sprouts embraced by Red de Artes Vivas, where care is linked to creative and affective growth through the metaphor of sprouts. Here, affect is not merely a shared experience but an ontological condition for creation and inquiry. These sprouts, described as fragile and tentative, represent ideas or processes that require a balance of support and autonomy to develop. They must be watered—but not so much that they drown.

This care extends beyond emotional accompaniment, involving an active commitment to the other's well-being, their processes, and their rhythms, avoiding instrumentalization or "emotional extractivism." While care and affect are tools for building ethical and sustainable relationships, they are not exempt from being instrumentalized under neoliberal logics. Tronto warns that care, in its current form, is devalued and confined to the private sphere, reinforcing power imbalances between caregivers and those who are cared for (1993, p. 124). In this sense, the practice of collectives in valuing and protecting creative sprouts can be interpreted as an act of resistance against the emotional extractivism often characterizing contemporary work and creative dynamics.

The example of sprouts is ideal for addressing the ecological paradigm proposed by Red de Artes Vivas as a framework rejecting dichotomous and hierarchical logics in favor of a network of interconnected relationships. In the practices of these collectives, affect extends beyond human relationships to include the more-than-human, recognizing the interdependence among humans, animals, plants, and environmental elements. By decentering the individual as the unit of analysis, this paradigm breaks with hierarchies and dichotomies separating human from non-human, artistic from everyday, and private from public (Tronto, 1993, p. 178). Thus, the ecological paradigm proposed by Red de Artes Vivas expands the notion of affect into an ethical relationship with the environment. The question of "re-wilding" or "re-silvification" is not merely metaphorical but a call to reimagine relationships with the non-human from a place of respect and reciprocity.

Nancy's concept of being-in-common—the life-being that is any other being, as any living or non-living being—recognizes in the constant exposure to the other a radical coexistence where there is no ownership or appropriation, only an openness to relation (Nancy, 2001, p. 167). This paradigm not only redefines relationships between humans and non-humans but also raises fundamental questions about how we conceive of creation and knowledge. For these collectives, the body is a medium that navigates not only physical territories but also

affective, ethical, and political ones. Embracing the ecological paradigm within the framework of an epistemology of affect involves valuing the relational, the processual, and the multispecies in a collective approach that accepts vulnerability and interdependence as essential conditions of life.

In this way, understood as a political framework, care has the potential to make democratic societies fairer and more attentive to the needs of their citizens. In the practices of the collectives, affect and care function as tools for building collectivity and fostering participatory democracy in everyday life. Still, this work with affect within these collectives does not seek to eliminate conflict or differences but to manage them with a logic of respect and co-responsibility. This resonates with Tronto's assertion that "care does not require plural groups to merge into unity, but to coexist justly and respectfully" (1993, p. 168).

Care emerges then as an organizing principle that guides not only the internal dynamics of the collective but also their relationship with participants and the context. The epistemology of affect proposed by these collectives is not just a methodology but a form of resistance against the extractivist logics that dominate both art and society at large. In a context where art is often instrumentalized to produce outputs or meet predefined objectives, working from affect subverts these logics and prioritizes processes, relationships, and connections. For Nancy, affect and community are not predicates of being but inherent conditions of existence itself (2001, p. 168). This vision resonates with the practices of the collectives, which insist on the importance of working from vulnerability, interdependence, and connection.

Without intending to turn these reflections into prescriptions for world transformation, I pause before the possibility of something smaller, closer. Among the methodologies of the collectives analyzed in this chapter, there lies an invitation: an epistemology of affect that, linked to the ecological paradigm, also opens pathways to new ways of being. By prioritizing care, interdependence, and mutual respect, the collectives analyzed propose ways to rethink connections between humans and non-humans, between the individual and the collective, and between art and the social contexts it inhabits. Even so, care and affect cannot remain symbolic or isolated gestures—they must become political tools capable of generating structural changes and challenging the hierarchies that perpetuate inequality and exploitation. While I am tempted to call for utopia, this epistemology is not an idealistic call but a concrete proposal for building a more just, sustainable, and humane world.

In the words of Red de Artes Vivas, this is a world “so in need of care” yet stubbornly persisting in “very strange logics.”⁶⁷ These logics, which divide disciplines, fragment care, and dissociate mind and body, are what the collectives question—not through theoretical postulates but through practices deeply engaged with the reality they inhabit. In this context, the collectives’ proposals function as small gestures that broaden the possibility of a politics of care. For Red de Artes Vivas, for instance, care extends beyond human relationships to include the environments we inhabit. “What does it mean to regenerate in life?” they ask, proposing an ethics that recognizes the body and the environment as parts of a broader relational system. This expansion of care to the non-human engages with the ethical pluralism proposed by the ecology of affect, where recognizing interconnections invites us to restore more just and sustainable bonds.

What would it mean to place care and affect at the center of our decisions—not just artistic, but also political and social?

Only deep sensitivity to the environment can collectively guide us out of the dense jungle

Research-creation, far from being a homogeneous term or a rigid methodology, emerges in the practices of the analyzed collectives as an intersectional space between art, thought, and experimentation. It is a practice that expands into multiplicity, process, and lived experience, allowing knowledge to unfold from and through artistic creation. In the words of El Cuerpo Habla, research-creation does not “record and organize a way of doing,” but rather “leans into becoming, chaos, the encounter with new meanings.”⁶⁸ Moreover, it represents a way of centering artistic creation as both the goal and the process itself, breaking the dichotomy between theory and practice.

Situated in a fluid relationship between two terms that do not subordinate one another—research and creation—the hyphen (-) that separates them acts as the interval leading to a horizontal relationship, a dynamic thinking process that resides between multiple forms of knowing. As Gómez asserts, research-creation is a relational category that promotes connection and exchange rather than hierarchies (2019, 252). Art does not

⁶⁷ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁶⁸ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

become submissive to research seeking academic results, nor does it serve as a mere tool to complement research. Art is the core of the investigative process and the axis of knowledge production. Similarly, research opens itself to the exploration of processes, moves away from productivity-driven logic, and embraces the multiplicity of meanings without seeking closed answers.

Thus, within the collectives, there is no talk of stable methodologies for their investigative processes but rather of routes or ways of doing that function as mobile containers of practices varying according to circumstances. In this sense, the collectives do not limit themselves to a single field of action; instead, they foster openness to diverse forms of knowledge, asserting that "specificities are not so necessary in the field of the arts."⁶⁹ Consequently, research-creation proposes a displacement of categories and disciplinary boundaries, where transdisciplinarity, more than a technical resource, becomes a response to a complex world where social, political, and environmental issues require broad, interconnected perspectives. Red de Artes Vivas summarizes this idea in a way that, in my view, is deeply moving: "With these needs to think ourselves from so many and so different places, in this world so in need of care, we continue with such very strange logics."⁷⁰

Although the collectives have established a sort of formal focus regarding how they share their processes (Colectivo.co, for example, is closer to visual arts, while Red de Artes Vivas aligns with performing arts), they all agree that their practices overflow the margins of fine arts, theater, and dance. Circuito Liquen identifies this even in the ordinary when festivals or calls for submissions struggle to classify their processes: "When I started to detach myself a bit from theater and generate an expanded scene [...] festivals suddenly said, 'We don't know whether to place you in the dance slot or the theater slot.'"⁷¹ Similarly, El Cuerpo Habla acknowledges that within their practices, "the boundaries between theater, visual arts, dance, and literature blur" (Chaverra 2018, 30). This perspective reflects ways of doing that move between pre-established frameworks, creating a hybrid and transitory space for artistic creation.

This commitment to transdisciplinarity also speaks of a need to move away from the fragmenting logic of knowledge proposed by scientific research. El Cuerpo Habla recognizes in a rhizomatic system an essential attitude for research-creation, one that moves toward

⁶⁹ Saeed Pezeshki from Circuito Liquen, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁷⁰ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁷¹ Saeed Pezeshki from Circuito Liquen, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

modes promoting "critical attitudes toward their context."⁷² Moreover, it also escapes the field of arts, opening as an inter- and transdisciplinary space responding to contemporary issues (Gómez 2020, 66). According to Ballesteros and Beltrán-Luengas, research-creation is experiential and practical, implying constant interaction with techniques and materials not exclusively belonging to art (2018, 23).

Thought-creation, feeling-thinking, listening, and connectivity.

Research-creation differs from traditional research in its objectives and methodology. Instead of focusing on representing reality, it emphasizes experience as a vehicle for new perspectives on the relationship between humans and their environment. According to Ballesteros and Beltrán-Luengas, the knowledge produced "is not found in representation but in the experience of a new perspective on the human relationship with its context" (2018, 35). This knowledge does not aim to explain the world but to transform it in an act of creation rooted in the practice itself. It is a space where "you find yourself in an extraordinarily rare possibility in our world because the goal is not a product, a result, or a truth that closes,"⁷³ but instead opens new possible worlds. For Red de Artes Vivas, the speculative and experimental nature of art enables the blueprinting of possible worlds, imagining forms and pathways that appear nowhere else. These practices allow for multiple, non-replicable paths that open up new questions and possibilities.

"Research in the arts is always opening. Opening, opening, opening possibilities."⁷⁴

This approach distances itself from traditional expectations of productivity to prioritize the journey, exploration, and speculation as central values. In the words of El Cuerpo Habla, art does not aspire to singular truths but rather to "the presence of multiple incompatible presents [...] a constant transformation that allows for becoming."⁷⁵ This idea resonates with Gómez's view, who describes artistic creation as "thought in a sensitive form, an accumulation of sensations that escape regularities and repetitive methodologies" (2020, 76). Thus, art is not just a tool for interpreting the world but a way of transforming it by opening up new perspectives and possibilities. Research-creation proposes a redefinition of art as a means to think, feel, and transform the world. From this perspective, knowledge is not a fixed goal but a dynamic journey connecting body, mind, and environment.

⁷² Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁷³ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

Hence, research-creation is rooted in experience and affect. Unlike other investigative perspectives, research-creation offers a space where senses, emotions, and intellect converge simultaneously, enabling a holistic approach to experience (Fernandes 2014, 78). As Hernández suggests, following Eisner's thought, knowledge can also derive from experience; in this sense, it is in creative practice that this takes on meaning (2008, 90). Thus, the author argues that artistic processes are fundamental to making sense of our experiences as they reveal aspects of reality that sequential language and numbers cannot capture (2008, 90). Artistic experience, therefore, becomes memorable as it demands our sensory, emotional, and intellectual attention, making its impact deeper and more enduring than many written texts.

In this sense, the body emerges as a central axis, being the site of experience and affect. By deepening embodied reflexivity as an alternative form of knowledge favoring collectivity, research-creation highlights various perceptual and affective modes traditionally overshadowed by scientific research. Grounded in the body as scaffolding for inquiry, the knowledge these collectives pursue is fragmented, consisting of infinite relations where each piece constitutes a manifestation of multiple presences (De Jesus 2018, 5). Instead of providing "answers," research-creation opens new forms of sociability, production, and circulation of knowledge, where the body, movement, gestures, and silences appear as sources for thought, feeling, and experience (De Jesus 2018, 7). Privileging experience, participation, and corporeality, research-creation demands from the investigative act a vulnerable attitude that not only allows for imagining micro-transformative politics (Citro et al., 2020, 23) but also "embodying—even if only in the constrained space-time of performance—another possible existence" (Citro et al., 2020, 23).

Research-creation connects body and reflection, makes them flesh. (Chaverra 2018, 52).

These body-centered approaches open a territory guided by multi-method processes, where practice plays a privileged role within the research. With a procedural and multidirectional nature (Pérez 2013, 435), the collectives highlight the body's capacity to question, critique, and express realities through active intervention. (De Jesus 2018, 5). Rather than designating specific methods (performative or not) for research, research-creation focuses special attention on the epistemological processes guiding the practices of scientific knowledge production. (Lorente, cited by Revelles et al., 2016, 192). The focus thus shifts from "what is thought" to "how it is thought," as well as to the contribution of artistic practices as ontological references for research.

As Hernández acknowledges, this performative perspective within research-creation is helping to reevaluate the meaning of research in the artistic field and in artistic practices themselves. (2008, 105). After all, performance originally emerged as a political provocation to disrupt and challenge institutions and systems of production (Taylor and Fuentes 2011, 11). The notion of the subject in performance is thus transgressive (Hernández 2008, 105; Taylor and Fuentes 2011, 11; De Jesus 2018, 5), constructed in a decentralized manner and returning to itself as a form of self-ethnographic narration. In this way, the research-creation practitioner rediscovers themselves in a collaborative, collective, and dynamic terrain between investigating and being investigated, moving and being moved. Particularly in this method, the researcher-artist is not an expert imparting knowledge but a facilitator of multiple relationships that may span various disciplinary nuclei. (Fernandes 2014, 86-87).

It is in this process of recognizing experience, sensitivity, and the body as legitimate sources of knowledge that research-creation reveals itself as a challenge to traditional hierarchies of knowledge production. Thus, the processes of El Cuerpo Habla, Red de Artes Vivas, and Circuito Liquen manifest through performance, “embodying an experience and reflection rather than a static product”⁷⁶. Colectivo.co also emphasizes that these practices enable knowledge based on experience and sensitivity, rejecting the notion that the poetic or the sensitive is opposed to knowledge. For them, knowledge emerges from encounters, experimentation, and shared care. Artistic creation, then, is conceived not as an end but as a journey without linear progression, capable of leading to paradoxes, contradictions, and turns.

With disciplinary boundaries blurred and the body and sensitivity placed at the center, research-creation becomes intrinsically linked to ethical and political dimensions inseparable from its processes. According to Gómez, this practice does not relinquish the critical and social dimensions of knowledge but instead amplifies them to “unmask and denounce neoliberal sciences and arts while promoting communal life horizons” (2017, 10). This approach, aligned with the horizon of the decoloniality of knowledge, unfolds in a “horizontal, ethical, and creative relationship” (Gómez 2020, 70), where relationships between people and between people and nature are not understood as forms of domination but as sources of creation and coexistence. This perspective rejects the extractivist and utilitarian vision of knowledge, privileging nonviolent modes of interaction based on listening, collaboration, and mutual respect.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

It is not about violently interrogating, constraining, or dominating so-called objects of study. When we speak of research, it is rather a matter of "thinking-with" in an act of co-creation that illuminates new forms of coexistence and healing. To avoid the epistemic violence exerted against the global South, research-creation seeks to restore the connections that modernity has fractured between humans and the world they inhabit. In Colombia, this approach acquires particular relevance as it allows for rethinking knowledge beyond Eurocentric molds. Red de Artes Vivas asserts that it "takes you away from the logic of productivity and invites you to imagine world possibilities."⁷⁷ This resonates with Gómez's idea that creative arts are "aesthetic manifestations that configure a universe where many worlds fit" (2017, 10).

Similarly, for Manning, each creative practice activates a movement of thought that exceeds pre-existing categories and creates unexpected worlds (2019, 82). This act of invention is not merely aesthetic but essentially political, challenging the norms that determine what is considered valuable, legitimate, or possible in terms of knowledge and creation. Through this approach, research-creation opposes the notion of art as a consumer product or a means of social distinction, instead seeking to root creative practices in the needs and contexts of communities. Emphasizing its capacity to inhabit interstices and activate transformative processes in spaces marginalized or neglected by hegemonic models, the approaches proposed by the collectives present not only a critical stance toward cultural hegemonies but also an act of constructing alternatives.

In its political dimension, research-creation is thus configured as a space of resistance against the hegemonic structures of art, academia, and society. El Cuerpo Habla affirms that "art creates, and in creating, it resists,"⁷⁸ recognizing in these practices challenges to forms of epistemic and material subordination. Similarly, they propose a critical distance from the positivist and structuralist tradition of knowledge, opting for epistemologies connected with the political and ethical concerns of those who investigate. For Circuito Liquen, the processes do not aim to construct finished works but instead orient themselves toward creating meaningful experiences that dialogue with social and political realities. For Colectivo.co, this approach represents "a commitment to stepping out of the margins,"⁷⁹ questioning imposed roles both within and outside institutions.

⁷⁷ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁷⁸ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁷⁹ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

The coloniality of knowledge identified by Quijano, widely discussed in previous chapters, manifests in the subordination of local and popular knowledge to the universal narratives of modernity, privileging a small group of knowing subjects while marginalizing and silencing others. In this context, research-creation acts as a relational and differential category that facilitates horizontal encounters between creation and research, allowing subaltern voices to find space to express and co-create (Gómez 2019, 253). In line with Sousa de Santos's ecology of knowledges, Gómez recognizes that knowledge cannot be reduced to an exclusive singularity.

On the other hand, the relationship between research-creation and nature is also central to its decolonial dimension. As proposed by Red de Artes Vivas in alignment with Gómez, the decolonial is not limited to the human realm, where nature is not seen as a passive object or a resource source but as a "body-world-thinking-feeling" (Gómez 2020, 70), a subject with rights and agency. Research-creation, in this sense, not only promotes an ethical relationship with nature but also challenges modern dichotomies between nature and culture, subject and object. This act of reconnection is fundamental to what Gómez calls the decolonization of being, power, and knowledge (2020, 78), as it reconfigures relationships between humans and the natural world in terms of reciprocity and care.

Ultimately, research-creation is not just a methodology but an ethical and political commitment to life. From both an epistemological and methodological standpoint, this practice seeks to question hegemonic ways of constructing knowledge and the application of methods aimed at revealing "truth" in reality. As Red de Artes Vivas states, it is a space where "only profound sensitivity to the environment can collectively lead us out of the dense jungle."⁸⁰ Through its ability to open possibilities, connect bodies, and generate situated knowledge, research-creation becomes a powerful tool for addressing the challenges of our time.

Research-creation thus operates in a borderland between artistic practices, academia, and everyday life. For the collectives analyzed, this approach enables the generation of proposals that challenge both institutional logics and hegemonic narratives of art and knowledge. From El Cuerpo Habla's perspective, these practices necessarily engage with "life, the body, social issues, and the capacity to remain united through a joint commitment."⁸¹ Similarly, Colectivo.co describes these practices as "a knowledge that goes

⁸⁰ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁸¹ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

far beyond the academic, a knowledge based on popular culture” which often “does not want to be pigeonholed.”⁸² This capacity for constant transformation, evasion of categorization, and rejection of closed formulas is one of the primary strengths of this approach.

From this perspective, art that investigates not only inquires but transforms, appealing to the emotions and experiences of those who interact with it. It is a practice that rejects linearity, definitive answers, and singular purposes. Thus, rather than producing definitive results, its logic is oriented toward openness, uncertainty, and shared experience. It is a form of knowledge that challenges productivist and positivist logics, opening spaces to imagine other possible worlds. By blurring the boundaries between art, life, and knowledge, it allows the sensible, the poetic, and the political to intertwine in a joint pursuit.

Of course, questions and tensions regarding research-creation remain. How can the sustainability of these processes be ensured outside institutional and market logics? How can its speculative and open nature avoid being co-opted by the very structures it seeks to challenge? One of the primary tensions lies in the need for legitimization within a system that still privileges traditional scientific methods (Alba and Buenaventura 2020, 22). The precariousness of the artistic sector in the Colombian context, where research-creation heavily depends on self-management, underscores the tension between sustainability—and hence institutionalization—and independence. Moreover, another significant challenge identified by Gómez is the need to decolonize the arts and the knowledge underpinning them (2020, 78). This involves rethinking artistic creation beyond the aesthetic categories imposed by Western modernity and recognizing the multiple ways in which humans make sense of the world.

Even so, research-creation emerges as a dynamic field that reconfigures the relationships between knowledge, artistic creation, and society, proposing new ways of inhabiting and transforming the world. Like a small green leaf sprouting between two bricks, the arts appear serenely, calmly, and quietly, revealing unexpected possibilities for the world. In the words of the Red de Artes Vivas, it is about creating new words, new combinations, or new movements. As Ballesteros and Beltrán-Luengas note, it does not merely seek to represent or explain the world but to transform it (2018, 23). This approach invites the imagining of unexpected worlds, challenging hegemonic narratives and creating communal horizons of life that respond to the needs of our time.

⁸² Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

The knowledge that emerges from research-creation—deeply practical, experiential, and cognitive-affective—enables new forms of interaction between individuals, their communities, and their environments. By integrating techniques, emotions, and narratives, this practice reconfigures the relationships between individuals and their context, proposing a vision of knowledge that is not subordinated to the canons of positive science but finds its legitimacy in its capacity to generate new meanings and possibilities. In the end, as El Cuerpo Habla asserts, “the investigative process is nourished by the capacity to happen, explore, and become,”⁸³ reminding us that knowledge is not a destination but a path in constant motion.

In a world marked by civilizational, ecological, and epistemic crises, research-creation presents itself as a crucial tool for rethinking our ways of being, knowing, and coexisting. Its ability to imagine and build alternative worlds, its ethical commitment to relationality, and its resistance to colonial logics make it a space of hope and transformation. Thus, research-creation is more than a method or a practice; it is a movement toward a plural epistemology, an ethics of care, and a politics of the possible. It is an invitation to inhabit the interstices, to think and create from the margins, and to imagine a world where knowledge is not an instrument of power but a source of connection, transformation, and resistance. As Manning concludes, creation not only invents ways of knowing but activates modes of existence that make the world a more livable place (2019, 82).

“What if this world were like this? What if we invented this over here?”⁸⁴

Final reflections

When asked what I wanted with my master’s thesis, my response was: I want to make a political statement. Naïve in the face of the academia I encountered—with its series of pre-established “steps” to follow, its well-defined paths and methods—I felt the need to “return” to my artistic education and to recall some of the principles I have sought to adopt in my professional journey. This research, besides exploring in these collectives alternatives to hegemonic knowledge production, is also an affirmation of other possible forms of existence. It is an attempt to find ways of doing where people like me—who come from the so-called “south” and find themselves in the so-called “north”—can fit, at least temporarily or

⁸³ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

⁸⁴ Eloísa Jaramillo from Red de Artes Vivas, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

transitively. It is an effort to find reverberations in other parts of the world that open up, however small or contextual, possibilities for other ways of thinking, knowing, and perceiving.

This research process has led me to discover in knowledge and its modes of production a larger system of disparate relationships of which I was unaware until I left my center, which then became the south. It is also a process of self-recognition and seeking other voices and sensitive bodies. This implies transcending the dualisms we often encounter that aim to categorize everything into opposites: Western and non-Western, south and north, academic and non-academic, the sensible opposed to the rational, the "objectivity" of science versus the "sensitivity" of art. I do not, therefore, intend to establish a new antipode, as this work does not seek dichotomies but rather narrates a story of intersections. The same collectives, which explore diverse paths while receiving state (and, in some cases, European) subsidies, do not lose their legitimacy or the strength of their proposals, which aim to establish meaningful dialogues between our contexts, bodies, and knowledge, and those of others.

It is important to note here that the transformative capacity of artistic processes or research-creation as a category does not necessarily depend on their economic independence or their isolation from established institutions, but on how these practices address power structures, social systems, and political dynamics from their own critical perspective. I could not, in that case, talk about rebelliousness while studying at a German university. It is essential to note that collectives are not necessarily "co-opted" or "domesticated" by receiving funds from the state or foreign institutions. In fact, many collectives operate in a context of economic precarity, and external funding enables them to sustain their projects and broaden their reach. While the money may come from institutional sources, this does not imply that the collectives align themselves with the agendas of those funders. Often, these resources are seen as tools to make possible these seeds of resistance or to create new pathways for knowledge production.

The critique of collectives for receiving funds seems to stem from the notion that political and economic autonomy is a prerequisite for art to wield subversive power. Throughout history, many countercultural movements have operated within the very structures they critique. Indeed, one could identify in this contradiction an essential element of resistance. Thus, art and research-creation do not operate outside the system but develop within the very contradictions of the larger apparatus, revealing its flaws and internal struggles. These collectives are not exempt from censorship, of course, as is the case with El Cuerpo Habla at the University of Antioquia. However, as Colectivo.co notes, the relationship with

institutions does not necessarily entail submission or a loss of subversive power but rather a way of navigating the margins and tensions of these systems.

"...that cliché we often fight about academia—it's not all academies. The academies in small cities are not that. They are not a privileged child wanting to create art for galleries, which is what we think of art academies. This is a meeting place for people from all over Colombia. I have students from indigenous communities in Nariño, I have students from across the country studying here in my city, talking to me about art."

This passage tells us that rebellion also has nuances, and opposition does not manifest as outright rejection. As I have already mentioned, it is not about replacing positivism with the hegemony of Colombian research-creation. In the case of the collectives, their relationship with institutions like universities or foundations presents a challenge of sustainability. However, this does not mean that they cannot subvert the very frameworks from within, operating at the margins and amplifying their voices within institutional circuits.

Studying the research-creation processes of these collectives is not just an academic or theoretical exercise; it is a political necessity. In a global context where hegemonic epistemologies continue to reproduce colonial dynamics and exclude non-Western ways of knowing, these practices represent a concrete commitment to epistemological plurality. In the words of Sousa de Santos and Meneses, the world needs an ecology of knowledge, and the collectives studied here offer living examples of how this ecology can be enacted. They show us that knowledge need not obey the parameters imposed by positivist science, which has historically separated subject from object, reason from affect, body from thought. On the contrary, they propose ways of knowing that are embodied, relational, communal, and rooted in the social and political realities of their territories.

Art, understood as a space of resistance and the creation of possible worlds, plays a fundamental role here. The collectives remind us that their artistic practices are not an end in themselves but tools to question dominant narratives, create memory, and construct alternatives. I argue that the ways of doing proposed by the collectives represent, in themselves, a decolonial act, an attempt to reconfigure the terms by which we understand and validate knowledge. Recognizing art—and, more specifically, art produced in Latin American contexts—as a legitimate way of producing knowledge entails challenging centuries of epistemological exclusion that have reduced knowledge to what is quantifiable, measurable, and European.

In political terms, this research positions itself as a statement seeking to question the structures that perpetuate the coloniality of knowledge. Beyond describing the practices of these collectives, I aim to argue that they are necessary to create cracks in established investigative systems and propose fairer and more inclusive ways of inhabiting the world. While it is true that these practices are not a definitive solution to the problems of global inequity, they represent small acts of resistance that, at the very least, allow for imagining alternatives. I consider it vital to study these efforts for their potential to reconfigure our notions of the political and the epistemic. In a country like Colombia, where historical violence has shaped ways of doing and knowing, these practices open up a space to imagine a different future. It is not, therefore, only about validating the methodologies of the collectives; it is about recognizing that their very existence challenges traditional hierarchies of knowledge, contributing from what is sensitive, relational, and situated.

There are still many paths to develop that open up after this initial approach to the gnosological question and research-creation. This analysis focuses on a small group of collectives and does not aim to cover the complete diversity of experiences in Colombia or Latin America. Moreover, although it seeks to articulate the theoretical and practical dimensions of research-creation, it inevitably omits some specific nuances of each collective due to the limitations of the format and access to other members and materials.

The role of the body, for instance, as a generator of knowledge, is a vast field to observe in greater detail and with greater insistence from decolonial and feminist perspectives. Similarly, although the text focuses on the experiences of the collectives, the question remains as to how these practices affect the communities they interact with. How does the perception of knowledge change in communities when they become involved in research-creation processes? What dynamics of power, agency, and knowledge emerge when participants are not artists or academics but are instead key actors in the collective construction of knowledge? These questions lead to inquiries about the potential of research-creation to generate real social changes that transcend mere reflection.

Finally, is it possible to reconfigure knowledge to make room for diverse ways of knowing that do not conform to conventional scientific categories? What role could research-creation practices play in a traditionally hierarchical Colombian educational and scientific system?

From a broader perspective, collectives see art and creation as a privileged avenue for the production of knowledge. Red de Artes Vivas affirms that the act of creating opens up

possibilities in the world that cannot be found anywhere else. In their words, being in the energy of creation is about constantly opening possibilities. This ability to imagine and generate what does not yet exist, to view the world from new perspectives, transforms artistic creation into an epistemological act. For them, creation not only produces knowledge but reconfigures it, pushing us to question what we think we know and to imagine what we might come to know.

For Circuito Liquen, knowledge begins with observation. However, this observation is neither a passive action nor merely a technical exercise; it is a practice that involves reading the environment with an openness to perceiving the multiple meanings it offers. Beyond this, the collective places particular emphasis on autobiography as a valid source of knowledge. This approach, which whispers to processes practices that evoke the deeply human, reminds us that it is only by knowing ourselves—with all our contradictions and possibilities—that we can begin to build a perspective on the world. Circuito Liquen resonates here with introspection as the starting point for any form of knowing, but it extends this by situating it in a collective and relational context.

Colectivo.co, on the other hand, reminds us that knowledge is not an individual project. From their perspective, engaging with knowledge requires working with others, relating to them, and allowing those relationships to nourish and transform shared understandings. Challenging the idea of the "individual genius" as the central figure of knowledge, the collective proposes a model where interactions, often ephemeral and unexpected, become the core of learning. For them, knowledge is deeply sensitive, fictional, and experiential. Accepting this means, in the words of Colectivo.co, "stopping thinking that the poetic or the sensitive are opposed to knowledge"⁸⁵ and recognizing that these dimensions are, in fact, its foundation.

This is where the idea of movement appears as a metaphor. Knowledge is not fixed; it cannot be captured. As Colectivo.co describes, when it finally seems that we have understood something, that something has already changed and is no longer what it was. This notion implies abandoning the pretense that we can dominate the gnoseological and instead adopting a humble and open stance toward the epistemological diversity of the world.

⁸⁵ Andrea Ospina from Colectivo.co, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

El Cuerpo Habla amplifies these ideas by adopting a holistic and integral vision of knowledge. For them, knowing is more than accumulating information; it is a way of creating possibilities for thought and action in the world. This translates into a pedagogy that moves away from the traditional model of knowledge transfer. Instead of imposing truths or answers, they suggest that "learning should be about telling the other: you are the one who has to see or feel, and that is your problem, not mine."⁸⁶ This seemingly simple statement encompasses an ethical vision of learning as a process that respects the autonomy of others, leaving space for each person to construct their own path to knowledge.

Ultimately, all these collectives share a critical vision of the hegemonic structures that have traditionally defined what knowledge is and who has access to it. Circuito Liquen, for example, questions the exclusivity of museums and other official spaces as guardians of artistic knowledge, advocating for a democratization of access to art and the knowledge it produces. Similarly, El Cuerpo Habla proposes breaking with the limitations of art tied to galleries and exhibition halls to bring it to the streets, creating spaces where anyone can have an aesthetic experience and participate in the production of knowledge.

Thus, knowledge, according to these collectives, is not an object to be possessed or an achievement to be attained. It is a relationship, a process, a becoming. It arises from interaction with others, with the environment, and with oneself. It is nourished by sensitivity, creativity, and experience, and it unfolds in acts that transform both those who perform them and the contexts in which they occur. From this perspective, I believe these collectives become small diasporas of rebellion with the potential to expand, push, move, and transform our understanding of what it means to know, proposing slightly fairer and more inclusive ways of inhabiting the world.

⁸⁶ Ángela Chaverra from El Cuerpo Habla, interviewed by Natalia Vasco, transcription, ATLAS.ti, 2024

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