Activism, Textuality, and Feedback in *La nueva banda de la terraza*'s Graffiti- Projections

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Abstract

In the social mobilizations (2020-2022) during and after the COVID-19 lockdown in Colombia, the graffiti- projections produced, projected, and published by *La nueva banda de la terraza* played an essential role in visualizing, nurturing, and accompanying the social protests and the demands. As part of an unparalleled visual activism in Colombia, the graffiti-projections, which began in Medellín and soon expanded to other cities and beyond the country's borders, created an expanded para-cinema of protests, played an essential role in a complex web of actions and practices that made it possible, for the first time in the republican history of Colombia, to create a comprehensive, multivocal, and diverse social movement. The present analysis discusses how the graffiti- projections catalyzed engagement and dialogue and strengthened the democratization of the public sphere by developing an expanded para-cinema that involved textuality and social media, reenergized graffiti, street art, and communal Do-It-With-Others, and developed emancipatory strategies and networks.

Keywords
Social mobilization, graffiti, street art, *estallido social*, expanded cinema, para-cinema.

1. Introduction

Breaking from the lack of a tradition of social protest in Colombia, where the judicial system uses criminal law to discourage social mobilization, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in most cities and towns on November 21, 2019, during the first National Strike since 1977. The Strike was preceded by several demonstrations the same year. In January, the *Marcha de las antorchas* (Lantern March) re-edited a historical demonstration from 1948 known as *La marcha silenciosa* (The Silent March), denounced the wave of assassinations of social leaders and the impunity of the Colombian justice system and called for the resignation of the Nation's Attorney General due to alleged connections with the Odebrecht corruption case. In June, *La marcha por la vida* (The March for Life) denounced the assassinations of social leaders and the government's lack of action against those crimes again. Increasingly, individuals and collectives from different social, economic, and political backgrounds and with diverse interests joined new demonstrations and, in November, rallied together against income inequality, the assassination of indigenous and social leaders, police brutality, the Iván Duque Márquez Administration's commitment to the destruction of the 2016 Peace Accord between the Colombian State and the FARC, and his interest in controlling and even criminalizing social protest, among many other interrelated social and economic reasons.

The protests continued until December 23 and returned in early January until March 2020, when the national government imposed a lockdown (March 24th–May 11th) to control the spread of COVID-19 and the social protests. In fact, during that period, Ivan Duque's Administration invested, as never seen before, millions of dollars in anti-demonstration guns and artifacts instead of strengthening the health system as required. It is also known that while people in working-class neighborhoods protested in the streets and began to hang red pieces of cloth as signs announcing they had nothing to eat at home, the local and national government sent the Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron (ESMAD for its initials in Spanish) instead of food (See Figure 3, right). In addition, people in the social elite

and business circles of Antioquia and other departments in Colombia thanked the "corona-friend" that came to erase the protests (Mora 2019).

After the lockdown ended, social mobilization resumed and reached a new high point in September due to the Police brutality against the law student and worker Javier Ordoñez. In 2021, protests reemerged and reached their highest peak ever under the *estallido social* (Social Outbreak), which consisted of a wide-reaching series of multifactorial demonstrations catalyzed by the Duque Administration's announcement of new taxes that placed the burden on low and middle classes again. The multifaceted and widespread social mobilizations from the National Strike to the *estallido* have been the most widespread protests in the country's republican history and faced a never-seen disproportionate and unlawful use of force by the Colombian Armed Forces.

In the social mobilizations during and after the lockdown, the graffiti-projections—as I call them—produced, projected, and published by *La nueva banda de la terraza* (The New Terraza Band) played an important role in visualizing, nurturing, and accompanying the social protests and the demands. The graffiti-projections began in Medellín (Antioquia department) in April 2020 and soon expanded to other cities as part of an unparalleled visual activism in Colombia. Like the demonstrations, they reached their first peak during the lockdown, had a new rise in late 2020, reached their highest peak in 2021 during the *estallido*, and lasted until mid-2022 when the Presidential election took place. In this article, I offer a first insight into how the graffiti-projections catalyzed engagement and dialogue and strengthened the democratization of the public sphere in Colombia by developing a para-cinema of protests that involved textuality and networks, reenergized graffiti and communal Do-It-With-Others, enacted feedback, and transformed the neighborhoods into reformulated informational territories of emancipation.

2. From a 'Film Club' to Graffiti-Projections

One evening, during the first days of the lockdown and after coming back home from one of the last demonstrations in Medellín before the police control and repression exacerbated under the guise of disciplinary power (severe mobility restrictions, forced confinement at home, criminalization of one's presence in the streets) and biopower (prohibition of meetings, restriction on gatherings, forced mask-wearing, observance of distance between individuals, hand washing and temperature check) (Mhazo and Maponga 2022), filmmaker Laura Mora and two of her friends decided to watch a film on her building's *terraza* (i.e., flat top roof). In the context of the incipient lockdown, and while preparing the equipment, Mora (2019) envisioned this projection as what could become an unexpected—and perhaps unwanted— "film club" that, freely screening at night, eventually showed stories related to some of the issues raised in the protests and could virtually get together (watching from their windows or *terrazas*) the elusive neighbors of the conservative area of the city where she lived.

After installing the video projector and laptop and when the three were about to select a film, a gust of wind knocked the screen down, breaking its metal support. The friends found themselves looking at an image projected on a *culata* (Lit. rear, butt) of a nearby building, which is what we call the type of end wall adjoining a building, usually architecturally marginalized and without 'function,' and at times painted black when having no stucco on it. Realizing the impossibility of perceiving the film images on the wall, the three friends decided to use the video projector and play with PowerPoint.

Keeping on the mood of the demonstrations, which was undoubtedly a conversation theme people had at home, by phone, and on social media, they began to write short phrases such as "*Todo está muy raro*" (Everything is rare/strange) and "*Salud pública para todos*" (Public Health for everyone) (see Figure 1). Fascinated by this precarious cinema's possibilities, they registered and published pictures of the projections on social media. After the first posts, friends and strangers encouraged them to continue, and others decided to join or do similar projections from their homes. Soon, every Sunday during and after the

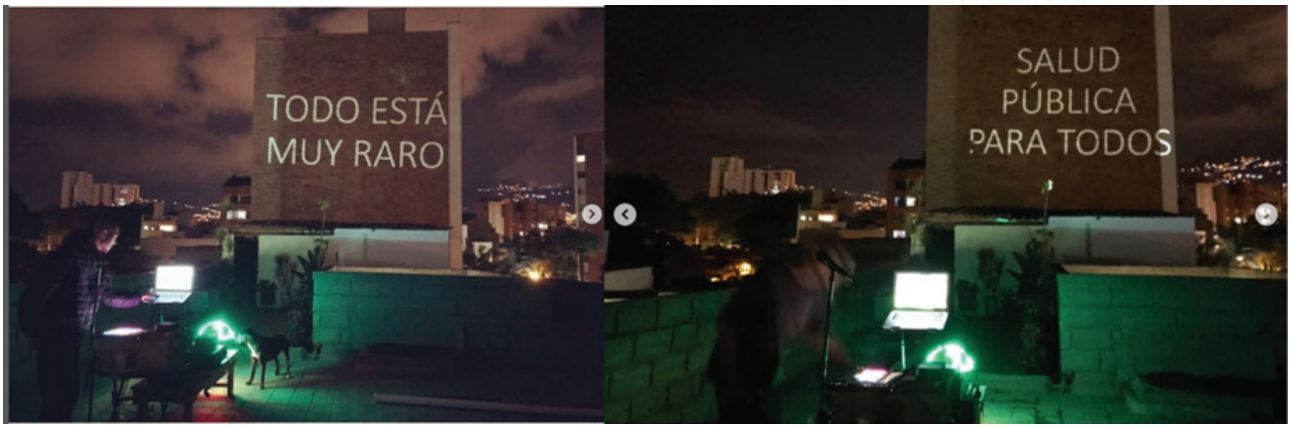

Figure 1. "*Todo está muy raro*" and "*Salud pública para todos*". Graffiti-projections in Medellín by *La nueva banda de la terraza*, published on April 27, 2020. Source: @lanuevabandadelaterraza (Instagram). Credits to @lanuevabandadelaterraza.

long Covid-lockdown, more than ten groups of Colombian artists, musicians, writers, designers (Yepes Cuartas 2021), and other people interested and living in cities such as Medellín, Bogotá, and Cali as well as abroad in Mexico City and Berlin, started to meet and replicate the idea, posting images with the tags such as #aisladosperonocallados (#isolatedbutnotsilent) while unexpectedly becoming part of what one of Mora's friend spontaneously called *La nueva banda de la terraza*; a name I will return to later.

Projections such as "*[¡]Renta básica universal Ya[!]*" (Universal Basic Income Now[!]) celebrated and expanded the demonstration's slogans, sentiments, and demands. They also evoked graffiti as an ephemeral art of resistance and transient registers of those demands and contestation. For obvious reasons, there are critical aspects to consider that help us to understand the particularity of these projections as graffiti-projections in contrast to traditional graffiti. The latter "designates its context [by] marking a spatial entity with the individual trace" (Chmielewska 2007). As traditionally believed, graffiti and tags are traces and marks that emphasize the writer's body and presence. Graffiti may testify from the mere 'having been here' to the more complex success of accessing a highly restricted place. Graffiti marks the placement and emphasizes the physicality and temporality of the site and action. It also tends to intervene and designate "streets, walls surrounding buildings, universities, churches and squares of cities" as spaces "regulated by property and commercial regimes for controlled visibility" (Irvine 2012) as well as social, cultural, physical, or police regimes of visibility, bio-politics, necro-politics, and existence. Like the graffiti painted –and later erased by the right-wing radicals and the police– at the corner in Downtown Bogotá, where the high school student Dilan Cruz was intentionally shot in the head and killed by riot police while running away unarmed in a demonstration of high education students in late 2019 in Bogotá (Forensic Architecture 2023), or like the Al Qeyada square in Khartoum, an emblematic site of a planned and State-backed massacre during the Sudanese Revolution the same year, graffiti may also mark places where significant events happened while also serving as a temporal register and memory of the development of those protests and the reasons and dynamics behind them. Graffiti marks the site and, not without contradictions, records the temporality and history of the protest.

New practices, such as the luminous projections, have developed in a partially similar way. Think, for instance, of the projection of the "99%" on the façade of the Verizon building during the Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011 in New York City and the projection of the word *Hambre* (Hunger) on the facade of Telefonica Tower, the highest building in Santiago de Chile in 2020. These two cases

can be considered examples of Enrique Klaus's (2014) concepts of graffiti's "ostentation spots," such as banks, private corporations, and governmental institutions, and "iconic spots, "such as outstanding edifications and sites representative of the city, and also exemplified the interest—especially since the 1990s—within graffiti art for selecting sites and buildings characterized by their economic, perceptual or symbolic visibility in the city, and/or for the fact that they give graffiti a particular meaning. In a related and perhaps more art-historical fashion, that includes Krzysztof Wodiczko's paradigmatic project proposed in 1986, Andrea Escobar's visual projections on the grotesque colossal head of the fascist and former president Laureano Gómez (1889–1953) in 2002, and Julián Santana's collaborative *Postmonumenta* in 2023 as a reflection on the Misak's toppling of several sculptures in the country, artists have also used luminous projections of texts and images on monuments and statues which have been traditionally granted the role of representation and configuration of social, public, or collective memory.

For its part, *La nueva banda de la terraza*'s low-tech graffiti-projections were not interested in intervening in ostentation and iconic spots or confronting the institutions and memory hosted or embodied in buildings, monuments, and sculptures. They are not shows of technology using lasers, potent projectors, and complex imagery and narrative that have become fashionable in festivals and among urbanist scholars and architects as examples of "soft 'medi(a)rchitecture'" interested in creating four-dimensional architectural surfaces (Işıkkaya 2023) and part of the Global North's technophilia. Nurtured instead by the red pieces of cloth in the windows of working-class neighborhoods and the experience of precarity, and influenced by from the vitality of the subversive 1970s graffiti (and cartel) conceived as a text aiming at a "second orality" (Ong 1971)—here understood as an oral culture of the protest and the word of mouth influenced by the written and printed word and the news and even the social media—and an utter written on a wall addressing the passerby (including police officers) and neighbors (and not always the governmental offices), the graffiti-projections appeared on facades and *culatas* of houses and buildings (see Figure 2).

However, while the graffiti may be interpreted as a specific (hi)story of protest and contestation where it takes place and a way of disturbing and deterritorializing that place (Halsey and Perderick 2010), the graffiti-projections offered a different and nuanced approach that, in a sense, also deterritorialized graffiti's linkages to a place and a maker. The video projectors could be moved and oriented towards different walls, and the same slide was shared and projected somewhere else in the same neighborhood, another neighborhood, or another city. In addition, the graffiti-projections neither suggested the elaboration of the artist's hand nor the sophistication of a designer's work, now standard in highly commercialized street art and mapping worldwide.

More importantly, the graffiti-projections show that street art can be re-energized after becoming a tool for place branding and gentrification, that street art can strike back at neoliberalism and destabilize its commodification by becoming a catalyst for information and discussion on social justice to nurture a democratic social system in the neighborhoods. The graffiti-projections not only made the walls temporal screens but also transformed the neighborhoods into 'conference rooms' of reflection, conversation, and potential discussion (even if from the save distance of the windows, balconies, and *Terrazas* during the lockdown) and media space for intergenerational and pluri-classist alliances.

At the time of the pandemic and military and police repression, at the time of a sense of 'radical uncertainty' when *todo está muy raro* and the government's policies further disrupted the expectations of dignity and future, the projections floating in the middle of the night invoked a different sense of locality, virtuality, trust, collaboration, visibility, hope, and present of graffiti and a humble take on the neighborhoods transforming them into informational territories of generation and circulation of digital information in the intersection "between the urban space and cyberspace" (Lemos 2010). Informational territories of activist and mutual care: "*En tiempos de pandemia y miedo*, *nos organizamos*, *nos cuidamos*" (In times of pandemic and fear, we plan/organize ourselves, we take care of each other) as pertinently affirmed a projection on the streets.

Figure 2. [Top left] "*El derecho a la vida es inviolable*" (The right to life is inviolable), [Top right] "*No más líderes sociales asesinados*" (No more murdered social leaders), "*Nos matan, nos maltratan, luego nos vuelven un hashtag*" (They kill us, they mistreat us, then they turn us into a hashtag). Graffiti-projections in the south of the Valle del Cauca department, designed by Circundantes, and published on May 17, 2020, and shared by La nueva banda on May 25. [Bottom] Graffiti-projection in Cali, designed by @coloresmari, and posted on June 21, 2020, by La nueva banda. Sources: @lanuevabandadelaterraza (Instagram). Credits to IG: @circundantes, @coloresmari, and @lanuevabandadelaterraza.

3. Textualities and (Popular) Poetry

A first aspect of those urban spaces as informational territories are the texts (sometimes accompanied by images), which played the leading role in communication and the rapid dissemination of protest exigencies and denunciations by word of mouth and social media. As suggested, the graffiti-projections reproduced slogans, placards, news, information, and social demands stated before as well as during the social mobilization in the country and beyond, often keeping the words concise and straightforward as in "*El pueblo no se rinde carajo*" (The people don't fucking give up) or "*Vivas nos queremos*" (We [women] want/love ourselves to be/being alive). In this sense, intertextuality, entextualization, and recontextualization played a central role in an assemblage of terms, words, statements, and slides, allowing the protesters to connect the current demands with history and culture as well as other so-to-speak social texts that have accrued cultural relevance and serve as both criticism and communal identifiers.

That was, for instance, the case of slides using old slogans commonly found in leftist demonstrations since the 1970s, such as "*Ni Perdón, Ni Olvido por nuestros desaparecidos*" (Neither forgiveness nor oblivion, for our *desaparecidos*) or Rodolfo Walsh's famous statement "*Las paredes son la imprenta de los pueblos*" (The walls are the printing press of the people); both identifiable in registers, on social media, of protests taking place at the time in the continent. Other slides engaged with the National Amry's extrajudicial executions of more than 6042 poor Colombians under Uribe Velez's already perverse national security policy between 2002 and 2008, which the mainstream TV media reluctantly informed about and commented on. The slides also appropriated images and data about those executions denounced in the mural *Quién dio la orden?* (Who gave the order?) censored by the Army and tremendously replicated on social media and on the streets, as I discuss and analyze elsewhere.[1] Other slides echoed or re-wrote slogans of the protests as in "*Este no es un gobierno, es una banda de asaltantes. Decimos NO a su reforma tributaria*" (This is not a government but a gang of robbers. We say NO to the tax reform) while emphasizing in intersectional aspects of the social protests that include corruption and social and racial discrimination and marginalization, for instance.

Working as a sort of informational opportunity, a significant group of slides, as has happened with graffiti produced during social protests in other contexts, were designed to inform about other realities the national and local governments tried to hide: from unemployment rates and corruption indexes to implemented policies, insecurity, and assassination of protesters, social leaders, and students. As communicational venues, the graffiti-projections also reappropriated phrases and slogans used by dominant authorities to repress or demonize dissent, self-expression, and demonstrations. In some cases, the reappropriation recontextualized them to reveal the perverse logic behind them and, in others, distorted statements to opposite messages or offer critical turns.

Three remarkable examples are worth mentioning. The first described the social situation and educated about the deformation of reality in the media and the government: it stated that "*El Estado es una máquina de Guerra*" (The State is a war machine) as a direct and widely replicated response to the Minister of Defense, Diego Molano, who on TV described as "war machines" the minor(s) who the guerrilla forcibly recruited, lived in the guerrilla camp he ordered to bomb, and died because of the explosion or were finished off by the soldier who later arrived to the place. A second slide said "*Paro Armado ¡Ajua!*" (Armed Strike, Ajua!), pointing out the collusion of Eduardo Zapateiro, the Chief of the National Army, and the Gulf Cartel from Mexico. It is worth reminding that when the protesters blocked highways during the *estallido* in the city of Cali, the National Army immediately sent hundreds of soldiers, created a laboratory to impose a local coup d'état to repress the social protest violently and deadly, and Zapateiro exclaimed "Ajua" as a war cry on TV news. Later, when the Gulf Cartel enacted an

1 - I discuss this case in my chapter "Liminality, Publicity, and Resistance: The Mural(s) of Extrajudicial Executions in Colombia" in the forthcoming book Dust, Scratch, Paint: Street Art in the Global South, edited by Cynthia Gabay and Tom Penfold. Publisher to be announced.

armed strike controlling a large area of the national territory and blocking highways, Zapateiro looked the other way, the National Army did not react for days, and the mainstream media and newspapers did not take a critical stance against such silence and omissions. The third, stated "*Convivir con el Estado*" and pointed to the connivance of the State and the paramilitary forces during the late 1990s and the twenty-first century; forces euphemistically called *Convivir* (i.e., 'Live/be together') during Urive Velez's administration as Governor of Antioquia (1995–1998) and current leader of the euphemistically-called Democratic Center Party ruling at the time of the protests.

The graffiti-projections also emphasized the use of slang and linguistic or semiotic creativity to produce and introduce, for instance, insulting phrases, caricatures, and comic turns as in "*Gobierno carechimba*" (Dickhead Government) and "*Narcotrá Fico*." In the latter, the phrase pointed out the collusion between drug trafficking ("*narcotráfico*") and *Fico*, the nickname of the former Medellin Major and at-the-time Democratic Center Party's de facto presidential candidate Federico Gutiérrez. Interestingly and significantly, the pun was reproduced in memes vastly shared online appropriating billboards produced by Gutiérrez's presidential campaign. Many slides intentionally played with popular poetry's lack of elitist anxieties and, like traditional graffiti, recalled oral literariness.

In addition, working as a form of social memory, many graffiti-projections included anti-elegies that exposed structural patriarchy, classism, and racism in Colombia and beyond, or intended to give dignity to social leaders, human rights workers, and protesters who the media and right-wing politicians ridiculously portrayed as puppets of foreign powers (Venezuela and Russia) and antidemocratic interests: "*Somos líderes sociales. Nos están asesinando*" (see Figure 3, left), "*Muchas mujeres se levantan día a día a reinvidicar sus derechos y escribir de nuevo sus historias*," "*Cada persona asesinada es un ser amado*," "*En todo el mundo una de cada tres mujeres han sufrido violencia sexual*," "*Que el aborto seguro no sea un privilegio de clase*," "*No pregunte por qué fueron asesinados. Nada justifica el homicidio y el feminicidio #NadaJustifica*," y "*Ni normalizo las violencias ni me quedo callada*" ("We are [black] social leaders. We are being assassinated," "Many women wake up day after day to reclaim their rights and write their stories again", "Every person murdered is a loved one," "Worldwide, one in three women has suffered sexual violence," "Safe abortion should not be a class privilege," "Do not ask why [they] were killed. Nothing justifies homicide and feminicide #NothingJustifies", and "I neither normalize violence nor remain silent"). Of great importance in the graffiti-projections and the protests was the presence and the echoes of the antipatriarchal, feminist, Black Lives Matter, and Anti-police brutality movements in the Americas.

Slides also pointed to a culture of violence since the 1980s. For instance, one stated, "*En Medellín el homicidio sigue siendo el atajo #Nadajustifica*" (In Medellin, homicide continues to be the shortcut #Nothingjustifies), and a second simply reused a picture of a graffito written by the owner of an empty lot prohibiting the disposal of corpses and threatening with corresponding penalties for doing so. In this way, the graffiti-projections supported and linked the protests and *estallido* with international, national, and local histories and contexts, unfolded and re-actualized a complex web of interests and memories, and critically pointed to a society that had become immune to violence and nonetheless was waking up.

In addition to memory and critical assessment of the governmental actors and policies, the graffiti-projections called for reconciliation, in many cases supporting the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (i.e., the Peace Accord's mechanism for transitional justice). These cases included slides such as "*Per Dón*" (For give/gift), "*Toda bala es Perdida*" (Any bullet is stray) takes from a 2009 song by Colombian musician and peace activist César López, "*La verdad es una mirada sincera*" (Truth is a sincere look), "*La verdad es brújula norte y camino*" (Truth is compass, north, and path), "*La verdad abraza lo que el fuego arrasa*" (Truth embraces what fire destroys), "*Esta guerra no es un mito*" (This war is not a myth), and "*Ausencias que juntan*" (Absences that bring [us] together), "*Nos merecemos un país / A la altura de/ nuestros sueños*" (We deserve a country / living up to / our dreams). Popular poetry served as part of a diverse and multivocal effort to provide or invite people to conceive a

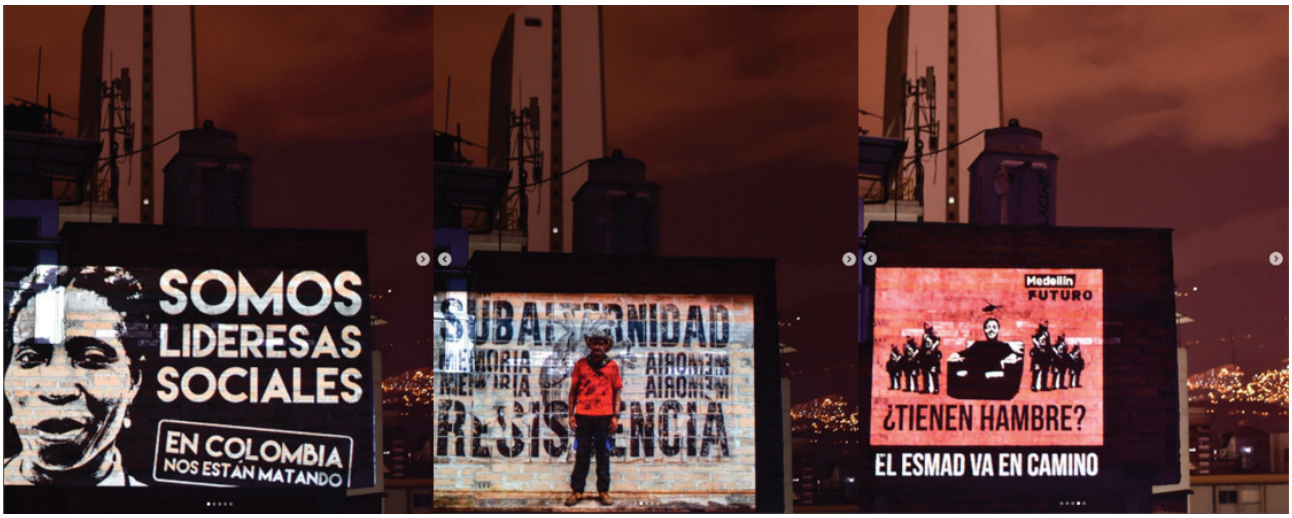

Figure 3. [Left] "*Somos lideresas sociales. En Colombia nos están matando*" (We are female social leaders. In Colombia we are assasinated), "*Subalternidad. Memoria. Memoria. Resistencia*" (Subalternity. Memory. Memory. Resistance), "*Medellín Futuro ¿Tienen hambre? El ESMAD va en camino*" (Medellín Future. Are you hungry? The Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron is on its way). Slides designed by IG @acciongrafica11. Graffiti-projections in Medellín by *La nueva banda de la terraza*. Source: @lanuevabandadelaterraza (Instagram), published on April 27, 2020. Credits to @acciongrafica11 and @ lanuevabandadelaterraza.

different value system where peace, solidarity, equity, and respect could emerge and consolidate.

Recalling Audre Lorde's understanding of—Black and feminist—poetry as a vital necessity from which ideas, language, and action might be wrought and change may "first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action" (1985), the very name *La nueva banda de la terraza* is also significant. While projecting for the first time, the musician Checho Parsons (one of Mora's friends) improvised a line describing their action of making graffiti-projections and sharing them from her *terraza* (Mora 2019). It appropriated the name of the *Banda la Terraza* or the Terraza Band, a crime structure based in Medellin, made up of about 300 hitmen, including ex-military officers, criminals, and ex-police officers, that was hired first by Pablo Escobar in the early 1990s, later by the Cali cartel and Los Pepes (those Persecuted by Pablo Escobar), and in the late 1990s by Castaño Clan founder of the Paramilitary forces. That structure, which carried out 'high profile tasks' commissioned by corrupt politicians, Army generals, heads of the cartels, and paramilitary groups, was the most feared in Colombia during the 1990s and is responsible for homicides, displacement, extortion, drug trafficking, and recruitment of minors among many other crimes.

Parsons' impromptu resounded immediately as a way of naming, envisioning, and bringing about a different and provocative textual and visual performance that emphasized the profound need for transforming the value system of violence, assassinations, marginalization, repression, and death into one of dignification and celebration of life, plurality, and difference. Into a different social system where not only "any bullet is stray," but also where the group of hitmen and their gun violence were replaced by social networks listening to music and talking while 'shooting' graffiti-projections on the actual walls of the city and the virtual walls of social media via pictures and videos, transforming urban spaces into informational territories of protest.

4. An Expanded Para-Cinema of Protest

It is significant that *La nueva banda de la terraza*'s emancipatory and informational option, when moving away from the spray can to the mouse and keyboard and from the place marked by the trace to the virtual-like nature of the projection, was initially found in PowerPoint.

Paraphrasing Lorde's approach to poetry, I understand the band's spontaneous use of PowerPoint as a response to the vital necessity of bringing public ideas, language, and action simply and comprehensively at the time of protests. And even if having access to a video projector meant a significant restriction, comparatively speaking, the use of PowerPoint pointed out a sense of availability and social precarity. Unsophisticated and low-tech when compared to Photoshop and other paid, complex software and applications used for illustration, design, video of luminous projection, and mapping, PowerPoint's growing importance in visual speech in contemporary culture at a popular and widespread level served to redirect and transform the orality and communication of graffiti.

PowerPoint's simple exhibition format and design allow people of different ages and basic familiarity with information technology to use it creatively. As designers have recognized—and many do this while also complaining—that big and small clients ask designers to make brochures and other promotional documents that work in PowerPoint so they can change it. What is a stake here is the fact that PowerPoint not only offers us a sort of DIY experience in design and visual narrative (I will come back to and refine this point later) but also a feeling of control of and participation in the rhetorical and informational powers of texts and images today; especially in a life increasingly familiar with and impacted by organizational aesthetics in publicity, advertisement, and social media.

In close connection to these two aspects is a third and significant one revealed by the social dynamics (conversations, discussion, etc.) around the graffiti-projections for understanding the importance of the spontaneous use of PowerPoint: the software's efficacy in allowing and enhancing one's performative and persuasive communication and information. When the art designers confess that designing for PowerPoint feels like making a play, they inadvertently recognize that, as Robert Gasking—the software creator—did (Davies 2016), PowerPoint's conceptual and aesthetic design was deeply inspired by the use of "theatrical performance" to approach and render how individuals present themselves and their activities and the information to others, and "guides and controls the impression others form" about the information and what the presenters do (Goffman1956).

Superficially approached, PowerPoint has been regarded just as a tool for creating simple bullet point presentations, but performatively understood, it allows us to create a play and experience a theater of interpersonal communication and informational performance that, in the graffiti-projections, served to enhance possibilities already present in traditional graffiti, such as its multimodal communication (which involves lettering, color, format, images, and architectural elements), and inaugurate others in the context of protest in and after the lockdown. In the latter case, the graffiti-projections emphasized the mobility of the texts (for instance, the same slide was projected in many different places) and the presence of the projectors—understood here as both the persons and the machines (i.e., video projectors). Even if the lockdown forced protesters to temporarily retreat from the streets and public spaces to their residences and private spaces, the slides projected using perceptible beams of light emphasized the projectors' performative and cinematic presence in the neighborhoods. Such a presence was a subversive sign and invitation for companionship and mutual care when the State and the police attack you instead of protecting and caring for you (see Figure 4).

In addition, each slide, at times accidentally or capriciously, and sometimes others thematically or conceptually situated within a particular sequence of slides, was part of montages—not always plotted nor equal—of written claims, slogans, reflections, and information from different social, economic, gender-related, cultural, nongovernmental, critical actors. A plurality of voices and actors (such as feminist, Afro-Colombian, LBGTI+, and art and design collectives, individuals, friends, and neighbors) searched for common ground by sharing ideas, feelings, fears, and hopes (see Figure 3).

In a sense, and I think here of some sensibility found in Dziga Vertov's Kino-Pravda series offering 'images' vividly distinct "from the more straightforwardly photographic mimeses of the world," and "immediately legible" (Mihailova and Kay 2014), the slides and sequences of slides make me think of silent and multimodal 'intertitles'

Figure 4. [Left] "*Sin Libertad sexual no hay Libertad política*" (Without sexual freedom, there is no political freedom"). On the wall, you can read: Burn it all, the *tombo* (a derisive work for a policeman) does not protect you. [Right] "The Police kill." Graffiti-projections in Medellín and Popayán by La nueva banda de la terraza and Colectivo Amapola, published on June 20 and May 18, 2020, respectively. Source and Credits to: @lanuevabandadelaterraza and @colectivoamapola.

of a so-to-speak silent, agitating, and reflective 'film.' In the graffiti-projections I also sense a force found in Guy Debord's *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* (1952), initially presented in a film club in Paris. This film offers a white screen when different voices speak (we hear a long list of poems plus a Letterist chorus with background cries and whistles, glossolalia, and screams) and a dark screen with no sound, inviting the audience to comment, respond, and discuss on the audio. The graffiti-projections offered a 'film' made of slides that intended to 'break the mainstream media siege,' and where the actor, actions, and events, most of the time photographically absent from the slides (see Figure 2) but also sometimes suggested (see Figure 3)), are to be (re-)imagined at night as an emancipatory way of "dreaming with our eyes wide open in dark times" as one graffiti-projection suggested.

Considering the initial impulse of eventually creating a sort of "film club" on the *terraza*, the theatricality associated with PowerPoint, and the actual phenomenical experience of the diverse and fluid projections at night in different exterior spaces, I describe the graffiti-projections as transforming the urban spaces into informational territories through the creation of an expanded para-cinema of social and political protests. It was a para-cinema because the graffiti-projections departed from the reigning notions of aesthetic quality and narrative in film (Mathijs and Sexton 2011). It was an expanded para-cinema because, by breaking from conventional cinema's physical and technical restrictions (times, spaces, etc.), the graffiti-projections made of the social

protests, especially the *estallido*, an extended and virtual cinematic, communicational, and interactive experience of emancipation. An expanded and informational para-cinema that also offered textual and visual plasticity, allowing protesters to respond to and counter the mainstream media's foreclosed story of protesters' terrorism and vandalism and the false accusations repeated on mainstream media and social media of being "hate generators..." as @elkin_isaza tweeted in August 2020 or being accomplices of the guerrilla's violation of HHRR as @shalom1213 stated on the same date because the graffiti-projections denounced Uribe Velez's administration probed support of HHRR violations much worse than in the Southern Cone dictatorships.

The graffiti-projections reaffirmed the right to resist the bad governments and established control of digital information flow in the country. They did so through an informational and expanded para-cinematic space that nurtured the audience's active imagination and self-identification with and participation in conversations and discussions about voices, actors, and events. What was initially envisioned as a 'film club' that could eventually screen films representing stories of resistance, memory, political struggle, and power (think, for instance of *La Hora de los hornos* (1968), *Citizen Kane* (1941), *The Trial of the Chicago 7* (2020), *Hurlements*, and others usually screened in film clubs), became an expanded para-cinematic experience that opened a web of expanding possibilities for information, reflection, empathy, dialogue, criticism, denunciation, social transformation, and emancipation, and also for multiplication of the graffiti-projections' texts in the social media and digital world.

5. Feedback and Networks

The direct, effective, and highly performative communication of the graffiti-projections coincided with the use of social media. It is not only the case that many of the slides included hashtags and short texts that could be eventually tweeted or had been initially tweeted. The intertextuality and entextualization were reinforced by the visual experience of the graffiti-projections, which emphasized the 'virtuality' of the images projected on the walls and recalled 'posts' in the sequences as you slide, for instance, through Facebook walls, Twitter tweets, and Instagram stories. The projectors deliberately transformed or conceived the graffiti-projections as ways of further extending the expanded protest's para-cinema into social media while also extending social media in the city, transforming the latter into the real open place of the *estallido*'s expanded para-cinema (see Figure 5). In this way, protestors amplified their messages through different channels and created and nurtured a feedback loop interweaving the real and virtual worlds and spaces of social protest.

This multifaceted feedback is critical for the circulation of digital information between the urban space and cyberspace. Here, social media served to display the graffiti-projections and complement their ephemerality. This included the eventual remediation of a few graffiti-projections that ended up being reproduced as actual murals after the end of the lockdown. One of them was *Convivir con el Estado*, a more than 70-meter-long concrete wall running along a main avenue in Medellín (It was painted several times after being almost immediately erased by police and right-wing groups). On the other hand, and in a more repeated way, social media complemented the fleeting temporality through the accumulation of slides (which include the actual photo- and video-graphic registers of the slides as they were projected) in a sort of spreadable archives that were and can still be found and allocated via search engines, public albums, curated profiles and more open such as @lanuevabandadelaterraza in Instagram, tags, and hashtags, or images search and text/image recognition. From and through those formal and incidental archives, the slides were constantly retrieved and transferred by users who also became participants and content (re)creators and allowed graffiti-projections to acquire an extended temporality on social media, which, in turn, became part of the protest's extended para-cinema. In addition, social media enhanced the political and social power of graffiti-projections, not only because it served to indicate who was actively projecting graffiti in the streets but also and mostly who was active in the network of circulation since posting, linking, liking, and sharing are constitutive activities of Web 2.0 (John 2013). Activities that impacted other users' feeds, therefore boosting the visibility of the graffiti-projections,

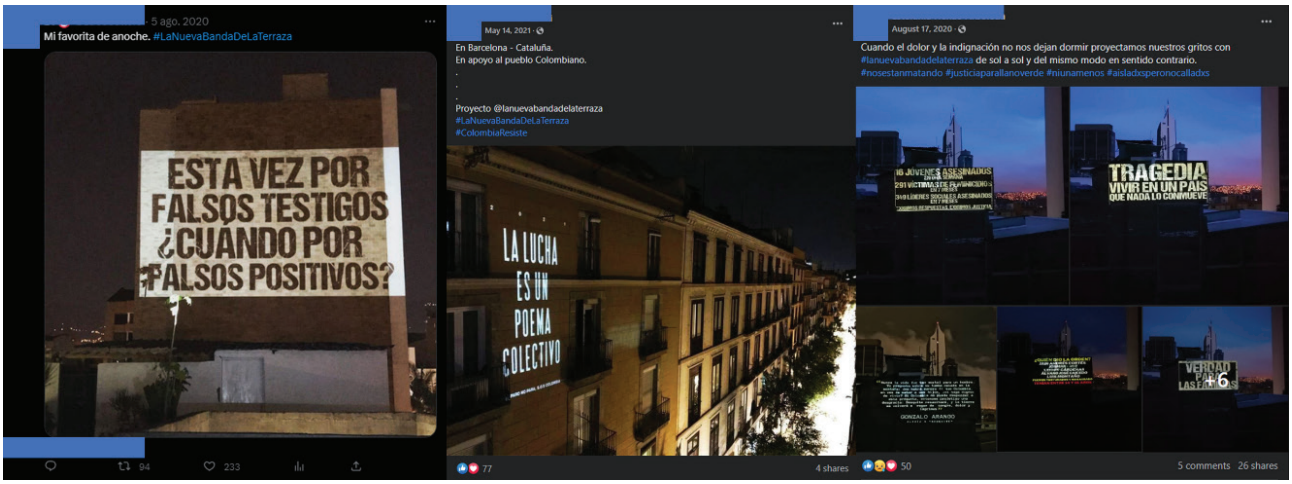

Figure 5. Posts and tweets. User's names and pictures have been covered to protect their identities. Graffiti-projections re-shared on social media in August and May 2020 and 2021. Source and Credits to the anonymous posters.

which swarmed even if the social media companies censored a significant number of publications and interrupted the service in Cali following the order from the Government and Defense Ministry; an order that the Constitutional Court of Colombia has finally declared unconstitutional in late September 2023 (Karisma 2023).

As has happened in the demonstrations worldwide in the last ten years, protesters acknowledged that the state and the market have been authoritarian and that the only way of democratizing society is by enhancing widespread public participation and mobilization that confronts the neoliberal control of the urban space, cyberspace, and digital information flow in the country. Aware of shareveillance (i.e., being observed by the State when sharing data) and interested in countering the neoliberal logic of publicity and citizenship in traditional media and the city and the neoliberal logic in social media where the user is assumed as an agent "bolstering an algorithm for data analysis" (Birchall 2016), the protesters affirmed their real and virtual presences in the urban space and the cyberspace, opened dissenting and expansive informational territories while also creating horizontal and rhizomatic networks of feedback, solidarity, empathy, and affect for emancipation.

This expansive, spontaneous, but at times coordinated networks shared graffiti-projection most of the times devoid of marks of authorship, politicized the social media and the neighborhoods in many cities in the country, recognized and confirmed that "horizontal networks, both on the Internet and in the urban space, [may] create togetherness" as a way of overcoming fear, nurturing hope, and constructing alternative projects (Castells 2015). People and groups participating constantly or sporadically as part of or in connection with *La nueva banda de la terraza* or some similar networks joined forces (among them the management, action, and creation collective IG: @circundantes in the south of Valle del Cauca department, the Community Graphics Laboratories IG: @acciongrafica11 in Antioquia department) with artists and street art crews, such as and the graphic-street art collective IG: @colectivoamapola in Popayán and IG: @ purovenenofire in Bogotá, to design, project, and share content and, in some cases, video projectors, and created and shared a guide to making graffiti-projections as a way of potentiating the critical and creative use of technology for creating subversive informational territories.

As one slide stated "*La revolución será proyectada*" ("The Revolution will be projected). Whoever wanted to join the extended virtual and real networks, make slides, and do graffiti-projections did so, counting they had some access to a video projector. Here, the different groups also acknowledged that "*Tener un proyector es un privilegio de*

Figure 6. [Left] "*Tener un proyector es un privilegio de clase*" and [Right] instructions for making graffiti-projection at and from home. Graffiti-projections in Medellín by La nueva banda de la terraza, published on May 25 and November 8, 2020, respectively. Source and Credits to: @lanuevabandadelaterraza.

clase" (Having a projector is a class privilege) (see Figure 6), and in several cases, in spontaneous pluri-classist alliances, as it also happened in other spaces of the protests in Colombia (Linares Sánchez and Postigo Gómez 2023), video projectors were shared and transported to working-class neighborhoods or areas when no projections had taken place yet.

At the heart of these networks of emancipation was not the interest of intervening, interrupting, or 'hacking' a system or an informational territory but creating common platforms and subversive informational territories, among which *La nueva banda la terraza* played an important role. At stake is idea and practice strongly present in contemporary urban thinking from the Global South. A vision and practice that, instead of just calling for the individualistic DIY (Do it yourself), nurtured and deployed a collective DIWO (Do it with the others) and moved from the idea of digital citizenship limited to the use of technology and applications to practices of networked real and digital citizenships oriented towards and nurtured by collaborative actions between various parties and diverse ideologies, in a relatively similar fashion as it happened in Brazil (Beigelman 2021) while interweaving the real neighborhoods and the virtual spaces of social media.

The graffiti-projections not only consisted of projecting texts and sharing them online but also were a product of the social process and nurtured the process itself of transformation of citizenship and social and political participation. Contrary to traditional forms of activism focused on motivation and activism fighting for a specific ideology, as happened in the 1977 National Strike, the young protesters developed activism oriented to sharing information and feedback, generating empathy and conversations, "cultivating participation and connectedness" (Li and Prasad 2018), nurturing critical citizenships in the streets and cyber world, and mobilizing and experimenting different forms and possibilities of solidarity, emancipation, and creation of subversive informational territories. Significantly, the graffiti-projections that created an expanded para-cinema of protests played a crucial role in a complex web of actions and practices that made it possible, for the first time in the republican history of Colombia, to create a comprehensive, multivocal, and diverse social movement that was able to bring Francia Márquez, a humble black woman, artisanal

miner, and social leader, and Petro Urrego, a leftists politician of working-class origins and former M-19 guerrilla member, to the Vice-presidency and Presidency in 2022, respectively. For the first time in history, people from below had access to the country's power places, and the creation of subversive informational territories had a clear impact on the social and political realms of the country. Aware of that power, as many graffiti-projections promised and affirmed on the day of the celebrated Presidential Inauguration in August 2022 and have shown again in the last month of May 2023, people will be vigilant and critical of those elected and protect the changes they have fought for.

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