

# Juliana Vargas Zapata

Portfolio  
academy:square / art KARLSRUHE 2026



**Juliana Vargas Zapata** (1997, Cali, Colombia) is a multidisciplinary artist and designer based in Karlsruhe, Germany.

Her practice combines archival methods, artistic research, and object/image making to explore the intersections of popular culture, material culture, and Latin American vernacular design. Through the act of collecting and recontextualizing images, she builds personal archives that become both tools and subjects of her work, reflecting on how visual languages shape identity and memory. Her work has been exhibited in Germany, Colombia, Mexico, and the United States, engaging with contexts that bridge design, art, and cultural research.

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# In Defense of *Mis Caprichos*

(Proposed for exhibition at academy:square, art KARLSRUHE 2026)



## In Defense of *Mis Caprichos*

(Proposed for exhibition at academy:square, art KARLSRUHE 2026)

In Defense of *Mis Caprichos* is a multimedia exhibition based in a self-curated archive of 140 found and self-produced images that reflect the vernacular visual language of Latin America. These images—ranging from memes and personal photographs to screenshots—carry a distinct sensibility: one that resists explanation and instead unfolds through mood, tone, and repetition. Often low in resolution due to constant digital circulation, the images reflect the visual texture of the internet. Many celebrate vernacular and informal gestures, circulating quickly across digital platforms to form a visual language that is intimate, layered, unstable, and often humorous.

The work draws on Hal Foster's An Archival Impulse, where archiving is seen as an artistic practice and a preference for fragmentation over coherence reflects a deliberate artistic strategy.

From this archive, ten objects were developed, each guided by a specific premise. Some take the form of replicas, others of performances or hybrid assemblages. These objects operate as attempts to “grasp” the underlying sensibility of the archive. Their logic often draws on the aesthetics of appropriation, copying, and transformation—resonating with Byung-Chul Han's Shanzhai: Deconstruction in Chinese, where copying and sampling are understood as creative strategies capable of generating new meaning.

A second core component of the exhibition is a video slideshow that presents the full image archive in a loop. The video has no beginning and no end, as it is conceived as a work in progress—the archive is constantly evolving. Each image is accompanied by 1–2 lines of text drawn from diverse sources: academic texts, social media posts, and personal writings. The arrangement is not explanatory but atmospheric, evoking how Susan Sontag, in Notes on Camp, approaches a sensibility not through linear explanation but through curation and juxtaposition.

In Defense of *Mis Caprichos* does not seek resolution or synthesis. Instead, it inhabits a space of connection without hierarchy. It is an argument for intuition, for playful seriousness, and for honoring the seemingly trivial gestures we encounter every day.





Why not transporting a pool through Karlsruhe on a motorcycle?

*Video performance on inflatable pool*



Dreamcatcher.  
Hanging mobile made of metal ring and textiles



Alvaro Uribe didn't go into the water just once, but three times.  
Installation with textile, garden lounger, and pink Crocs



INSEGURIDAD. En español.  
*Silkscreen on textile*



When someone says you can't do it.  
Do it twice, and take pictures.  
*Rhinestone appliqués on textile*



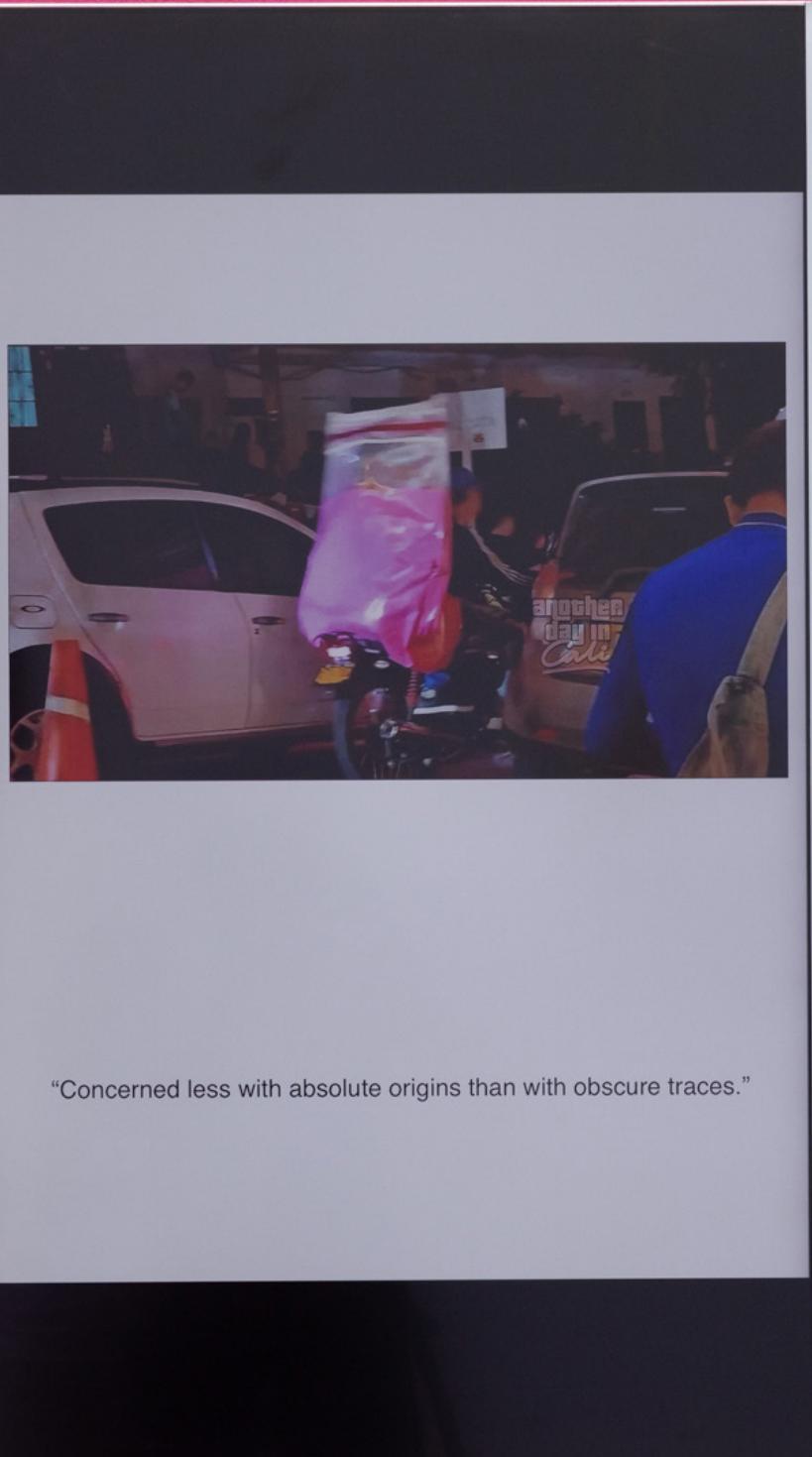
Oscar de Protagonistas de Nuestra Tele,  
not Oscar Wilde.  
*Silkscreen on textile*



Would García Márquez like this?

*Digital print on stuffed textile*

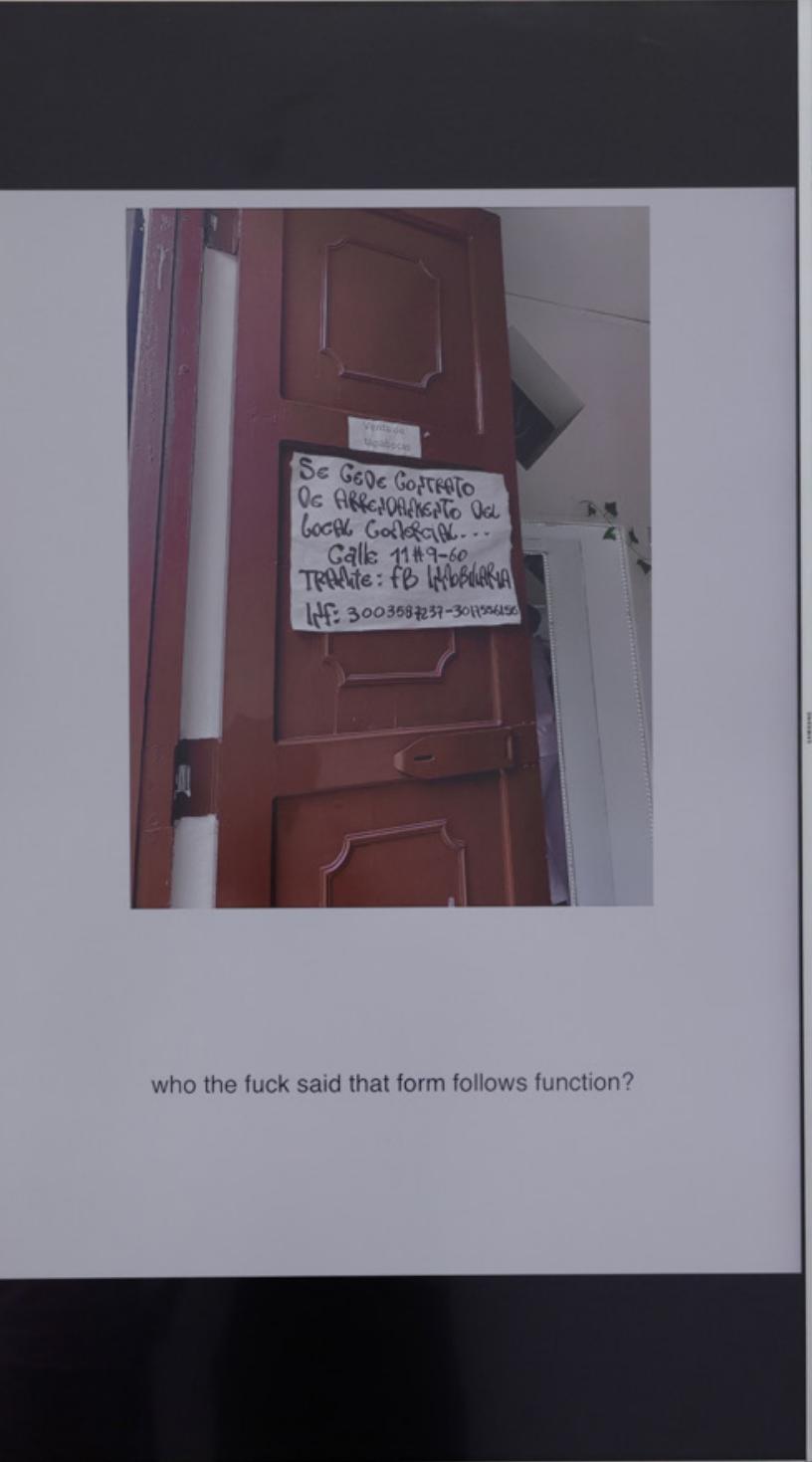
140 x 50 cm



"Concerned less with absolute origins than with obscure traces."

In no particular order

In no particular order  
Video (stills), 23 min



who the fuck said that form follows function?

In no particular order



*Juliana give me a chance.*  
Digital print on PVC banner  
2,50 x 80 m



Luna Sontag

*Installation with bows, tape, and images on cables and power plugs*



VolDEMOrt has a talent for dancing to reggaetón, regional mexicano, merengue, RKT, baile funk, edm and pop.

*Video installation with tablet, textile-covered chair, helium balloons, and confetti*



Sorry comrade, I want to buy things.

*Laser engraving on wood with fuchsia thread*

# INTERNET

42 textiles, sewn together

8 m x 1.82 m

2024



## THE LAW

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ZEITEN

Zimmer

—**THE THREE LITTLE PIGS**—

二  
三  
四  
五

272

# THE HARVEST

— 12 —

—THE END—

111

# THE WORLD

100

—

MIRE SIN COMPROMISO

19/42

JULIANA VARGAS ZAPATA

La internet es una red de telecomunicaciones que transmite y recibe información, normalmente en forma de código. Se ha venido utilizando desde su desarrollo para permitir la comunicación a distancia entre las personas. Es uno de los dispositivos (aparatos) más extendidos en el mundo desarrollado. Permite la transmisión de archivos de cualquier tipo en forma de texto codificados mediante líneas alámbricas o cables submarinos. Este cable a veces se enmaraña y hace que las personas dejen de tener comunicación por un instante, pero la solución es que se corta y se vuelve a pegar con cinta aislante o goma de percha. Hay cientos de kilómetros de cable en desuso flotando en el mar.

Internet es una pieza de obra que se presenta como indefinible e indeterminable, sin límite o precisión alguna, pues es un conjunto de cosas guardadas y acumuladas, actos registrados y forma. Hay una constipación que nos quiere hacer creer que las islas de plásticos en el océano y el microplástico presente en todos los cuerpos de agua son plásticos, botellas y bolsas que botamos a la basura. Pero recordemos que son siempre pedazos de cubierta de cable que quedan de

MIRE SIN COMPROMISO

18/42

JULIANA VARGAS ZAPATA

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Policroma





me immediately after crying:

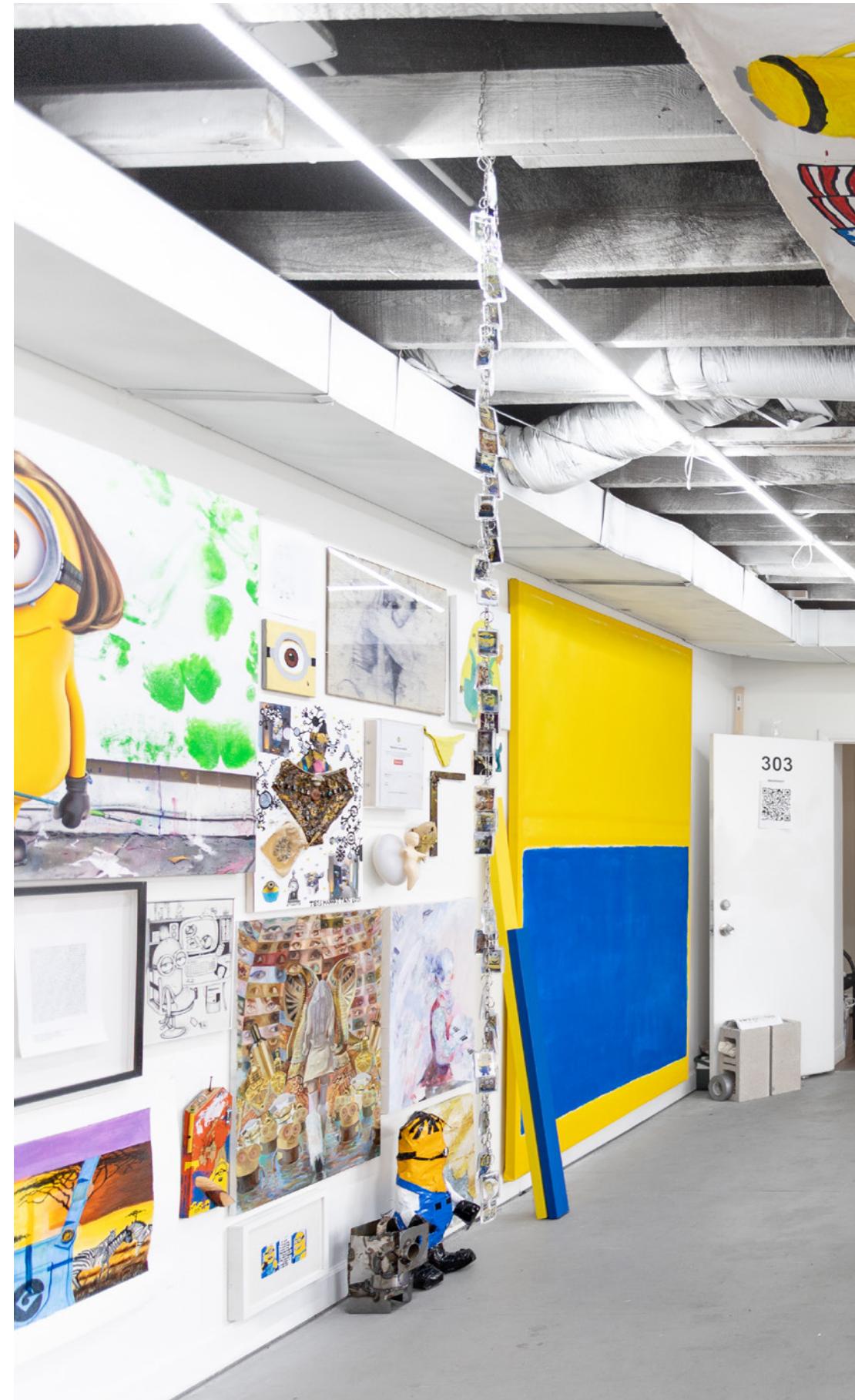
*Hanging assemblage of 50 keychains on metal chain*

Variable dimensions

2024







# LA CURADURÍA RURAL INFORMA

Installation with digital print on PVC banner, hanging above lake

2 m x 3 m

2024







Tendedero de Cucos

*Metal sculpture accompanied by audio work*

31 cm x 45 cm

2023





\*

When I was very little, I was taught to wash my underwear under the shower, but it was very important to not hang or forget it in the bathroom, since people could see it. I had to bring mis cucos to the more or less hidden section in the house where all the clothes would hang for them to dry.

Some women claim washing los cucos under the shower is practical and good for the delicate material, some claim its hygienic (which I doubt), some claim no one should see a dirty woman's underwear other than the woman herself since its an intimate and (redundantly) dirty object.

I always washed my cucos reluctantly, I didn't understand why women have to do it and men don't. Sometimes I would not do it because I was lazy, but I think the real reason was that I didn't like the fact of having to do something only because I am a woman. When I wouldn't wash my underwear, my mom and grandmas would yell at me.

As I grew up I did it eeeevery day, it became something like a ritual instead of a punishment. When I moved to this side of the world, I kept doing it because it reminded me of where I come from. Here, I realized I don't want to hide this practice anymore.

Instead,

I want mi tendedero de cucos to decorate the space I inhabit,  
I want to display what is usually hidden,  
I want to celebrate ser una chica.

J

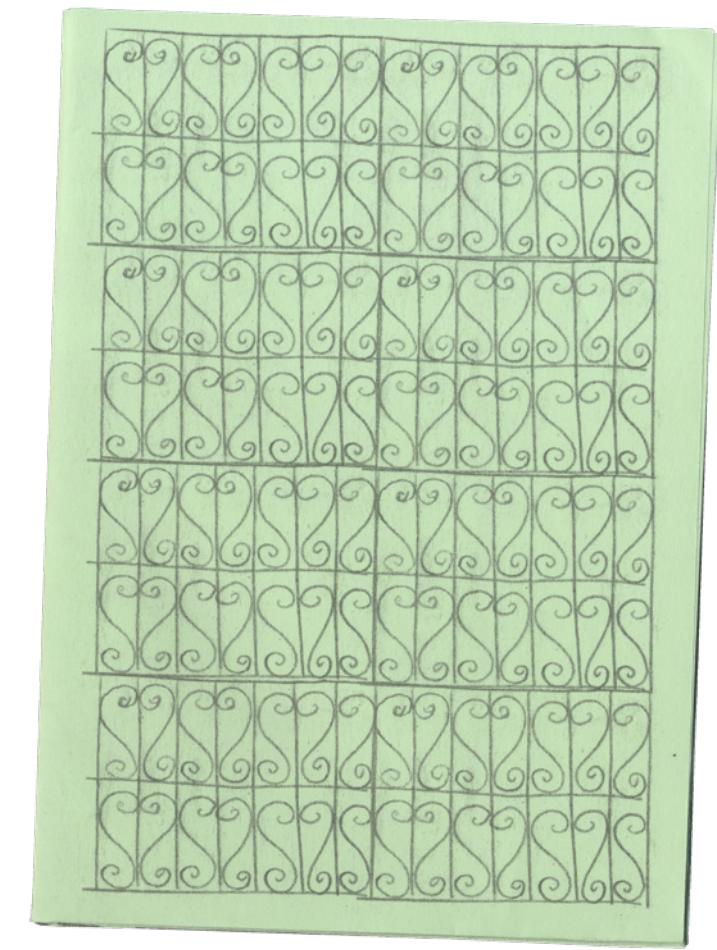
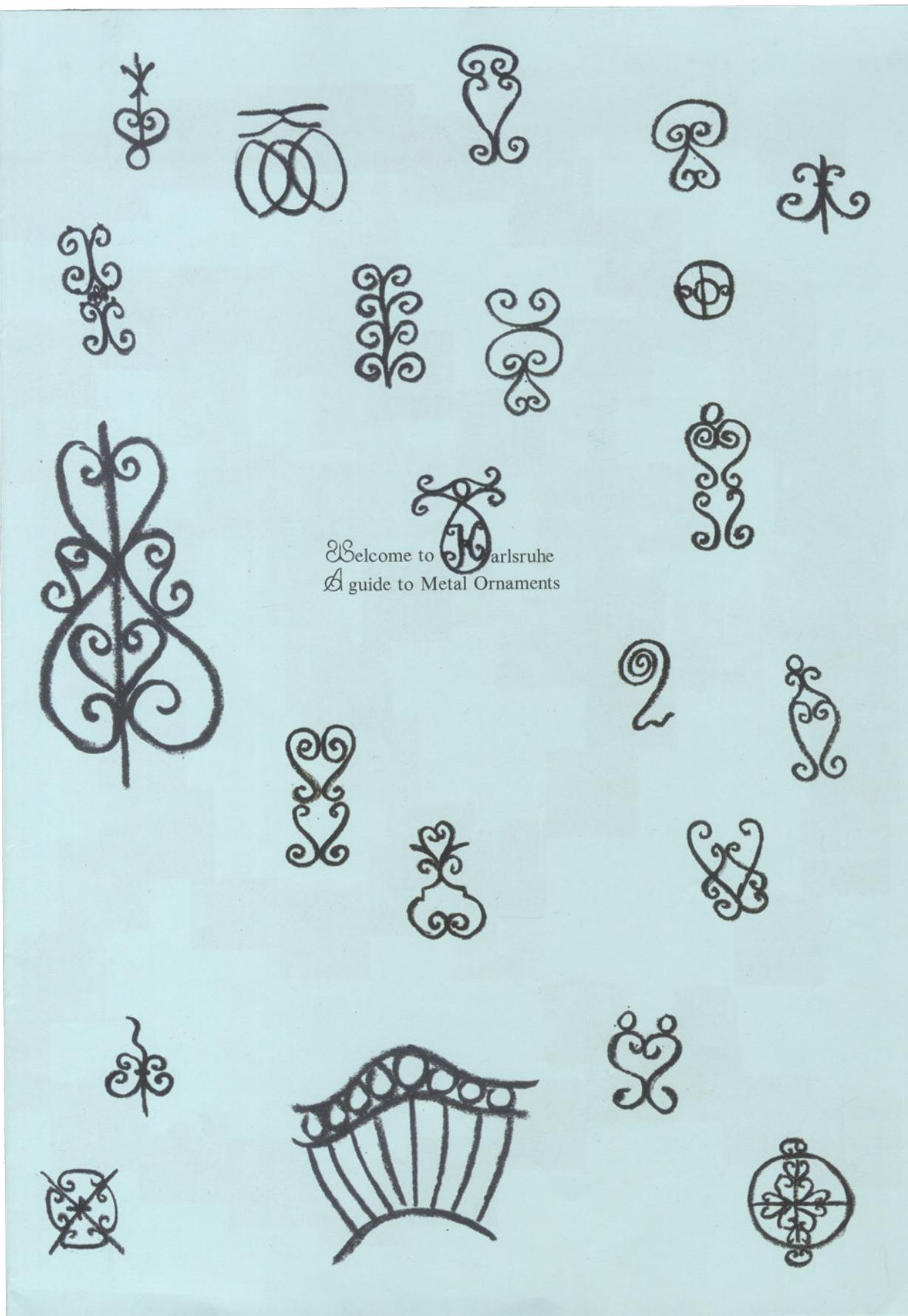
# Trapitos al Sol

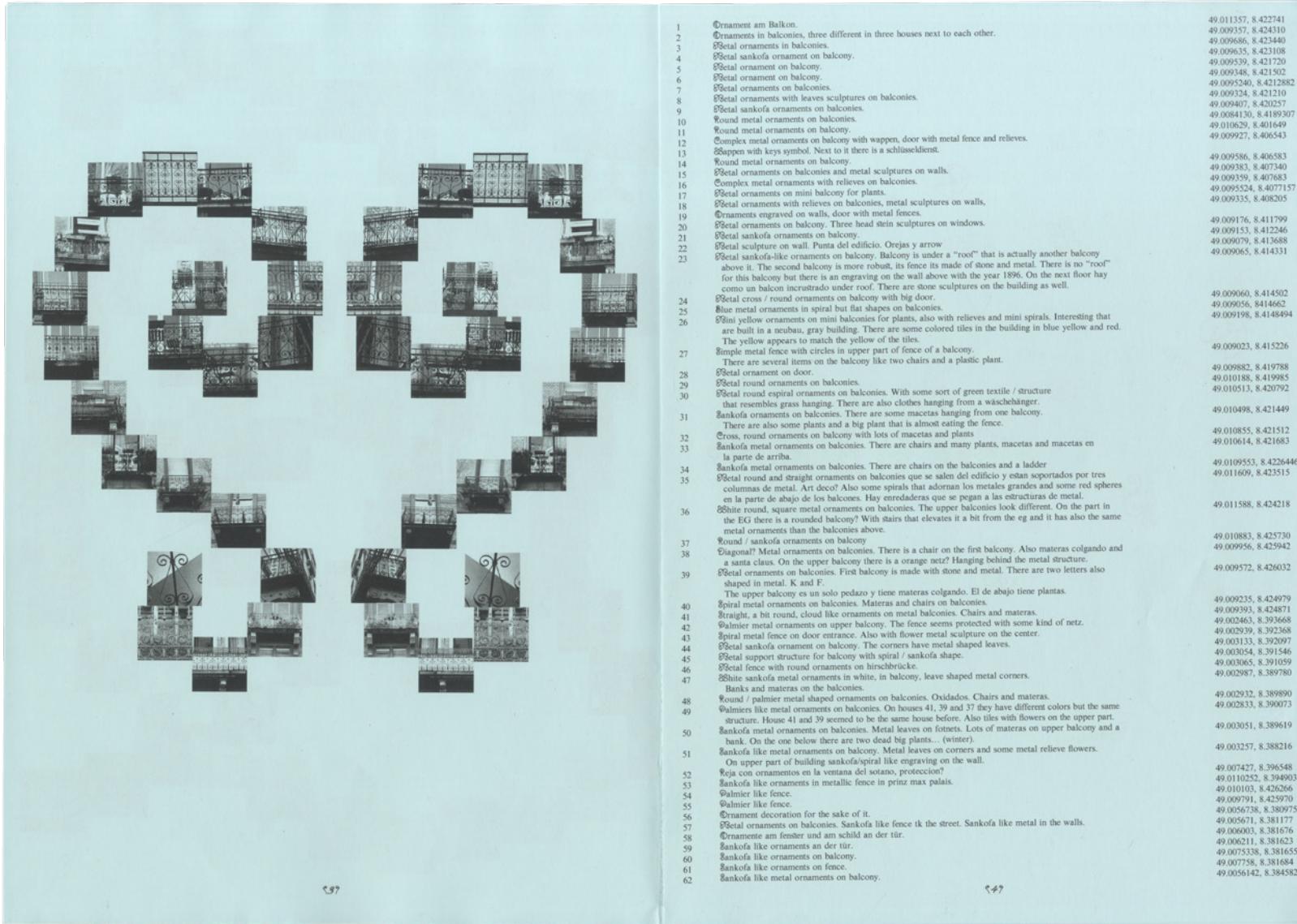
*Performance and installation with  
bleached textiles, booklets, and  
baked cookies*

Variable dimensions

2024







59

60

1	Ornament am Balkon.	49.011357, 8.422741
2	Ornaments in balconies, three different in three houses next to each other.	49.009357, 8.424310
3	Ornament in balconies.	49.009686, 8.423440
4	Ornament sankofa like on balcony.	49.009635, 8.423108
5	Ornament metal on balcony.	49.009539, 8.421720
6	Ornament on balcony.	49.009348, 8.421502
7	Ornament on balconies	49.009524, 8.421282
8	Ornament with leaves sculptures on balconies.	49.009234, 8.421210
9	Ornament sankofa on balconies.	49.009407, 8.420257
10	Round metal ornaments on balconies.	49.0084130, 8.4189307
11	Round metal ornaments on balcony.	49.010629, 8.401649
12	Complex metal ornaments on balcony with wappen, door with metal fence and relieves.	49.009927, 8.406543
13	Wappens with keys symbol. Next to it there is a schlüsseldienst.	
14	Complex metal ornaments on balcony.	
15	Complex metal ornaments with relieves on balconies.	
16	Ornament on mini balcony for plants.	
17	Ornament with relieves on balconies, metal sculptures on walls.	
18	Ornament engraved on walls, door with metal fences.	
19	Ornament on balcony. Three head Stein sculptures on windows.	
20	Ornament on balcony.	
21	Ornament sankofa on balcony.	
22	Ornament sculpture on wall. Puntas del edificio. Orejas y arrow	
23	Ornament sankofa-like ornaments on balcony. Balcony is under a "root" that is actually another balcony above it. The second balcony is more robust, its fence is made of stone and metal. There is no "root" for this balcony. The balcony is built on a wall above with the year 1896. On the next floor hay comes from the last balcony under roof. There are stone sculptures on the building as well.	
24	Ornament cross / round ornaments on balcony with big door.	49.009060, 8.414502
25	Blue metal ornaments in spiral but flat shapes on balconies.	49.009056, 8.414662
26	Yellow ornaments on mini balconies for plants, also with relieves and mini spirals. Interesting that are built in a neubau, gray building. There are some colored tiles in the building in blue yellow and red. The yellow appears to match the yellow of the tiles.	49.009198, 8.414849
27	Simple metal fence with circles in upper part of fence of a balcony.	49.009023, 8.415226
28	There are several items on the balcony like two chairs and a plastic plant.	49.009882, 8.419788
29	Ornament on door.	49.010188, 8.419985
30	Ornament round spiral ornaments on balconies. With some sort of green textile / structure that hangs like grass hanging. There are also clothes hanging from a wischhanger.	49.010292, 8.420792
31	Bankofa ornaments on balconies. There are some macetas hanging from one balcony. There are also some plants and a big plant that is almost eating the fence.	49.010498, 8.421449
32	Cross, round ornaments on balcony with lots of macetas and plants	49.010855, 8.421512
33	Bankofa metal ornaments on balconies. There are chairs and many plants, macetas and macetas en la parte de arriba.	49.010614, 8.421683
34	Bankofa metal ornaments on balconies. There are chairs on the balconies and a ladder	49.010953, 8.4226446
35	Ornament round and straight ornaments on balconies que se salen del edificio y estan sostenidos por tres columnas de metal. Art deco? Also some spirals that adorn the metales green and some red spheres en la parte de arriba.	49.011609, 8.423515
36	Bankofa metal ornaments on balconies. The upper balconies look different. On the part in the EG there is a rounded balcony? With stairs that elevates it a bit from the eg and it has also the same metal ornaments than the balconies above.	49.011588, 8.424218
37	Round / sankofa ornaments on balcony.	49.010883, 8.425730
38	Diagonal? Metal ornaments on balconies. There is a chair on the first balcony. Also maternas colgando and a santa claus. On the upper balcony there is an orange net? Hanging behind the metal structure.	49.009956, 8.425942
39	Ornament on balconies. First balcony is made with stone and metal. There are two letters also shaped in metal. K and F.	49.009572, 8.426032
40	The upper balcony es un solo pedazo y tiene maternas y tiles. El de abajo tiene plantas.	49.009235, 8.424979
41	Spiral metal ornaments on balconies. Maternas and chairs on balconies.	49.009391, 8.424871
42	Straight, a bit round, chairs and maternas on metal balconies. Chairs and maternas.	49.002465, 8.393668
43	Ornament metal on balconies on upper balcony. The fence seems protected with some kind of netz.	49.002939, 8.392368
44	Ornament metal fence on entrance. Also with flower metal sculptur on the center.	49.003133, 8.392097
45	Ornament sankofa ornament on balcony. The corners have metal shaped leaves.	49.003054, 8.391546
46	Ornament support structure for balcony with spiral / sankofa shape.	49.003065, 8.391059
47	Ornament fence with round ornaments on hirschbrücke.	49.002987, 8.389780
48	Shine sankofa metal ornaments in white, in balcony, leave shaped metal corners. Banks and maternas on the balconies.	49.002932, 8.389890
49	Round / palmer metal shaped ornaments on balconies. Oxidados. Chairs and maternas.	49.002833, 8.390073
50	Palmiers like metal ornaments on balconies. On houses 41, 39 and 37 they have different colors but the same structure. House 41 and 39 seemed to be the same balcony. Also tiles with flowers on the upper part.	49.003051, 8.389619
51	Bankofa like metal ornaments on balcony. Metal leaves on corners and some metal relieve flowers. On upper part of building sankofa/palmer like engraving on the wall.	49.003257, 8.388216
52	Ornament con ornamentos en la ventana del sotano, protección?	49.007427, 8.396548
53	Bankofa like ornaments in metallic fence in prinz max palais.	49.010252, 8.394903
54	Palmer like fence.	49.010100, 8.392566
55	Palmer like fence.	49.009791, 8.425970
56	Ornament decoration for the sake of it.	49.0056738, 8.3809758
57	Ornament ornaments on balconies. Sankofa like fence tk the street. Sankofa like metal in the walls.	49.006003, 8.381177
58	Ornament am fenster. Maternas and an der tur.	49.006211, 8.381623
59	Bankofa like ornaments an der tur.	49.0075338, 8.3816557
60	Bankofa like ornaments on balcony.	49.007758, 8.381684
61	Bankofa like ornaments on fence.	49.0056142, 8.3845820

Toni Maraini  
General Observations on Popular Art

(...) To use the term "popular art" to describe that set of creations accessible in everyday collective life, produced in a continuing tradition, that expresses by means of a set of iconographic signs, forms and shapes, the psychological content (myths and beliefs), tastes and the ideal of beauty specific to each group, and the practical needs of the rural or urban community in which the craftsman lives and for which he works.

From the practical point of view, it is this utilitarian aspect that characterizes the work; however, the craftspeople have always devoted themselves to the aesthetic function of the object in order to arrive at a synthesis of the idea, form and function. At the same time, they have envisaged and resolved the problem of the multiplication of quality (beauty in several examples), in other words, they have reproduced or created, as the case may be, a complete, pleasing prototype that is loved in its multiple copies by the people who buy them.

These two aspects – the functional solving of the idea and the collective sharing of the individual creation – are closely akin to a number of problems in contemporary art, while at the same time they are totally opposed to the classical principle of beauty as a luxury creation that serves no useful purpose and is produced as a unique object.

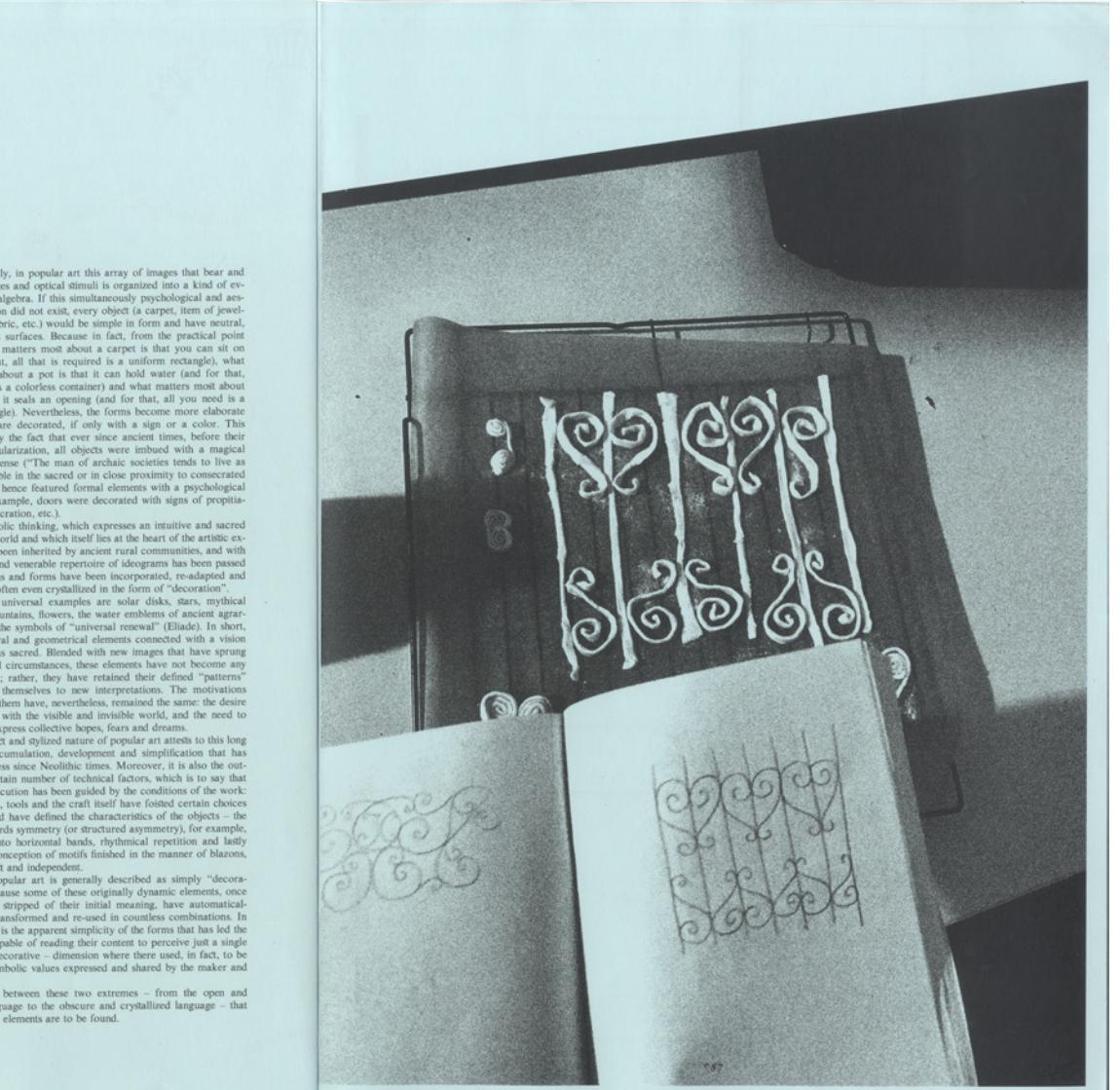
This symbolic thinking, which expresses an intuitive and sacred vision of the world and which itself lies at the heart of the artistic experience, has been inherited by ancient rural communities, and with it an ancient and venerable repertoire of ideograms has been passed on. These signs and forms have been incorporated, re-adapted and transformed, often even crystallized in the form of "decoration".

The most universal examples are solar disks, stars, mythical beasts and mountains, flowers, the water emblems of ancient agrarian cults and the symbols of "universal renewal" (Eros). In short, all those natural and geometrical elements associated with the idea of the world as sacred. Blended with new images that have sprung from history, these elements have not become any less important; rather, they have retained their defined "patterns" while lending themselves to new interpretations. The motivations that underpin them have, nevertheless, remained the same: the desire to forge links with the visible and invisible world, and the need to channel and express collective hopes, fears and dreams.

The abstract and stylized nature of popular art attests to this long process of accumulation, development and simplification that has been in progress since Neolithic times. Moreover, it is also the outcome of a collective and social development, in which the forms of expression have been guided by the conditions of the work: their materials, tools and the craft itself have foisted certain choices upon them and have defined the characteristics of the objects – the tendency towards symmetry (or structured asymmetry), for example, the division into horizontal bands, rhythmic repetition and lastly the heraldic conception of motifs finished in the manner of blazons, clean, compact and independent.

If popular art is generally described as simply "decorative", it is because some of these originally dynamic elements, once degraded and removed from their original meaning, have automatically transformed and re-used in countless combinations. In other cases, it is the apparent simplicity of the forms that has led the spectator incapable of reading their content to perceive just a single – seemingly decorative – dimension where there used, in fact, to be a series of symbolic values expressed and shared by the maker and their clients.

It is thus between these two extremes – from the open and evocative language to the obscure and crystallized language – that popular visual elements are to be found.



59

Gloria Anzaldúa

Speaking In Tongues:  
A Letter To 3rd World Women Writers

21 mayo 80

Dear mujeres de color, companions in writing ~

I sit here naked in the sun, typewriter against my knee trying to visualize you. Black woman huddles over a desk in the fifth floor of some New York tenement. Sitting on a porch in south Texas, a Chicana fanning away mosquitos and the hot air, trying to arouse the smouldering embers of writing. Indian woman walking to school or work lamenting the lack of time to weave writing into your life. Asian American, lesbian, single mother, tugged in all directions by children, lover or exhusband, and the writing.

It is not easy writing this letter. It began as a poem, a long poem. I tried to turn it into an essay but the result was wooden, cold. I have not yet unlearned the esoteric bullshit and pseudo-intellectualizing that school brainwashed into my writing.

Now to begin again. How to approximate the intimacy and immediacy I want. What form? A letter, of course.

My dear hermanas, the dangers we face as women writers of color are not the same as those of white women though we have many in common. We don't have as much to lose ~ we never had any privileges. I wanted to call the dangers "obstacles" but that would be a kind of lying. We can't transcend the dangers, can't rise above them. We must go through them and hope we won't have to repeat the performance.

Unlikely to be friends of people in high literary places, the beginning woman of color is invisible both in the white male mainstream world and in the white women's feminist world, though in the latter this is gradually changing. The lesbian of color is not only invisible, she doesn't even exist. Our speech, too, is inaudible. We speak in tongues like the outcast and the insane.

Because white eyes do not want to know us, they do not bother to learn our language, the language which reflects us, our culture, our spirit. The schools we attended or didn't attend did not give us the skills for writing nor the confidence that we were correct in using our class and ethnic languages. I, for one, became adept at, and majored in English to spite, to show up, the arrogant racist teachers who thought all Chicano children were dumb and dirty. And Spanish was not taught in grade school. And Spanish was not required in High School. And though now I write my poems in Spanish as well as English I feel the rip-off of my native tongue.

I lack imagination you say

No. I lack language.  
The language to clarify  
my resistance to the literate.  
Words are a war to me.  
They threaten my family.

To gain the word  
to describe the loss

I risk losing everything.  
I may create a monster  
the word's length and body  
swelling up colorful and thrilling  
looming over my mother, characterized.  
Her voice in the distance  
unintelligible illiterate.  
These are the monster's words.  
Cherríe Moraga

Who gave us permission to perform the act of writing? Why does writing seem so unnatural for me? I'll do anything to postpone it ~ empty the trash, answer the telephone. The voice recurs in me: Who am I, a poor Chicanita from the sticks, to think I could write? How dare I even consider becoming a writer as I stooped over the tomato fields bending, bending under the hot sun, hands broadened and calloused, not fit to hold the quill, numbed into an animal stupor by the heat.

How hard it is for us to think we can choose to become writers, much less feel and believe that we can. What have we to contribute, to give? Our own expectations condition us. Does not our class, our culture as well as the white man tell us writing is not for women such as us?

The white man speaks: Perhaps if you scrape the dark off of your face. Maybe if you bleach your bones. Stop speaking in tongues, stop writing left-handed. Don't cultivate your colored skins nor tongues of fire if you want to make it in a right-handed world.  
(...)

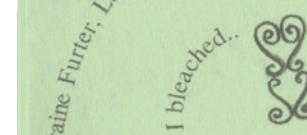
I think, yes, perhaps if we go to the university. Perhaps if we become male-women or as middleclass as we can. Perhaps if we give up loving women we will be worthy of having something to say worth saying. They convince us that we must cultivate art for art's sake. Bow down to the sacred bull, form. Put frames and metaframes around the writing. Achieve distance in order to win the coveted title "literary waiter" or "professional writer." Above all do not be simple, direct, nor immediate.

Why do they fight us? Because they think we are dangerous beasts? Why are we dangerous beasts? Because we shake and often break the white's comfortable stereotypic images they have of us: the Black domestic, the lumbering nanny with twelve babies sucking her tits, the slant-eyed Chinese with her expert hand ~ "They know how to treat a man in bed," the flat-faced Chicana or Indian, passively lying on her back, being fucked by the Man a la La Chingada.

The Third World woman revolts: We revoke, we erase your white male imprint. When you come knocking on our doors with your rubber stamps to brand our faces with DUMB, HYSTERICAL, PASSIVE PUTA, PERVERT when you come with your branding irons to burn MY PROPERTY on our buttocks, we will vomit the guilt, self-denial and race-hatred you have force-fed into us right back into your mouth. We are done being cushions for your projected fears. We are tired of being your sacrificial lambs and scapegoats.

I can write this and yet I realize that many of us women of color who have strung degrees, credentials and published books around our necks like pearls that we hang onto for dear life are in danger of contributing to the invisibility of our sister-writers. "La Vendida," the sell-out.

For reading while you wait for your laundry to sun-dry.  
This booklet contains the text "Speaking In Tongues: A Letter To 3rd World Women Writers", by Gloria Anzaldúa and a photograph of a textile I bleached against metal fences in order to document Sanjol's outremeries in Kartash.



This booklet is a reference to the color of the textile I bleached..

The type and material publication by Loraine Furtur, Lara Dautun and myself. The green paper is a reference to the color of the textile I bleached..

Agular Villalobos / David Diaz  
Mendez / Basurda Type and Material publication by Loraine Furtur, Lara Dautun and myself. The green paper is a reference to the color of the textile I bleached..

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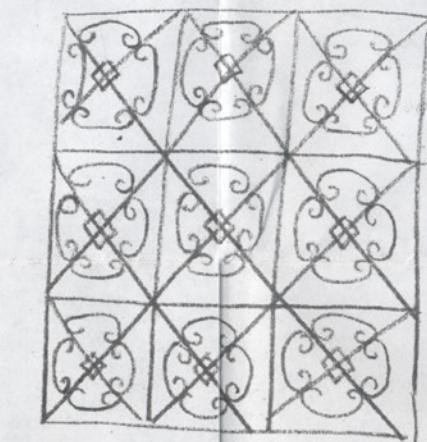
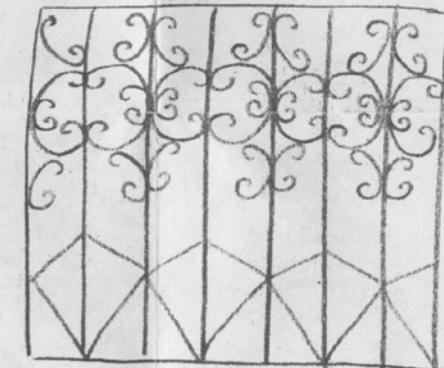
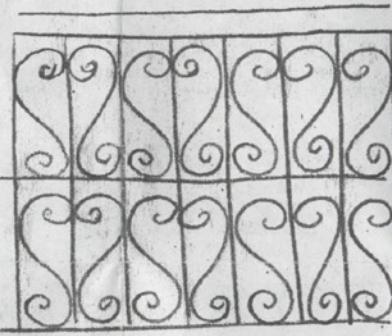
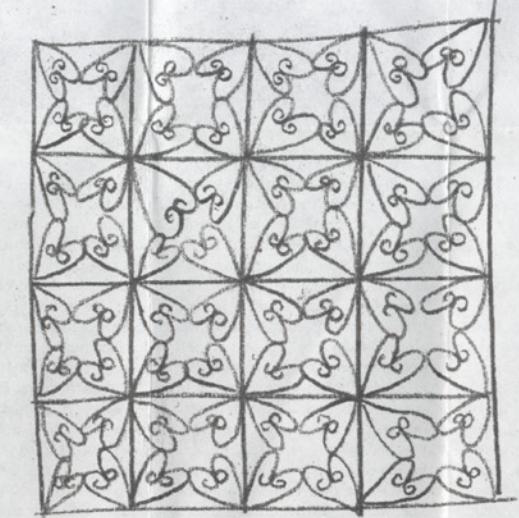
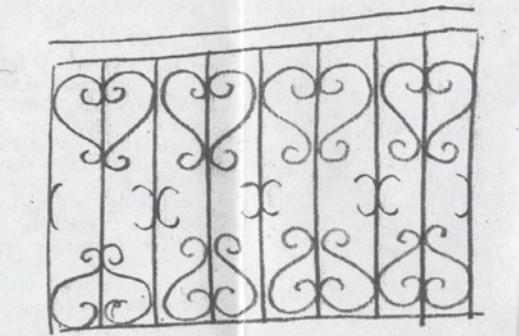
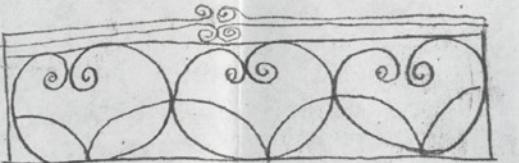
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Adornar  
Tuliana Castro Varón

When I was nine years old, I was playing with my cousins on my uncle's finca when I slipped and buried myself in a fence. It was the fence that divided our backyard from our neighbor's lot. Designed to keep thieves out, it was low enough for kids to climb. We were playing, going over the edge of the fence, and I, being the oldest, was showing off my moves. We were playing at being detectives when I fell, and the fence went right through me. The metal pole went through my

shirt, entering the side of my back at the right shoulder, coming out the other side, and back through my clothes. I was left with my feet dangling, hooked in the fence. All the kids ran away crying. They brought my uncle's wife. She unhooked me, carefully lifting me out over the top of the fence, trying not to tear my entire shoulder. She put a piece of cloth on me, a baby's T-shirt, to stop the blood. Then my mother arrived. She took me in her arms and put me in my uncle's car. My uncle drove hastily to the hospital, barefoot and shirtless, still wearing his bathing suit, wet from the pool. I cried



Sketches of fences that had textiles hanging from them in Marrakesh and Casablanca, November 2023.



Einen an der Waffel haben

*Installation with stacked ice cream cones*

2.5 m

2024





# Juliana Vargas Zapata

born in 1997 in Cali, Colombia.

Based in Germany since 2016.

## Education

2017–2025

Communication design

Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe

2022

Communication design

Estonian Academy of Arts Tallinn

## Awards & Nominations

2026

Nominated for the Giovanni Francesco Marchini–Preis  
(application in progress)

2025

Nominated for the Preis der Fördergesellschaft ZKM / HfG

2020

Winner of the DAAD Scholarship STIBET I

## Residencies

2024

Virreina Residency (San Gil, COL)

## Solo exhibitions

2025

*In Defense of Mis Caprichos*, Diploma exhibition, Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe (GER)

2024

*Mire sin Compromiso*, Cachorra (Bogotá, COL)

## Group exhibitions (selection)

2025

*Pensamiento, Palabra, Obra y Omisión*, hooogar (Guadalajara Art Week, MX)

*Miniotics*, Weatherproof (Chicago, USA) & Blankmag Books NYC (New York, USA)

The 60s, Pop Gun (New York)

2024

*School of Casablanca*, ifa-Galerie (Berlin, GER)

*Messy Bindings, Messy Reliures*, RoSa (Brussels, BEL)

*Aguardiente Amarillo*, Virreina (San Gil, COL)

*Sancocho, Policroma Galería* (Medellín, COL) & *Proyecto Binario* (Bogotá, COL)

*Dream, You Scream for Ice Cream*, TV HIFI (Karlsruhe, GER)

2023

*an invitation to an exhibition in a laundry*, Roonstr. (Karlsruhe, GER)

*Tras de Ledge*, Casa Rat Trap (Bogotá, COL)

2020

*Risquons-Tout, The Open School*, WIELS (Brussels, BEL)

*Glossary of Undisciplined Design*, GfZK (Leipzig, GER)

## Contributions

2025

*The 60s*, published by Pop Gun (USA)

2024

*BranD n.73*, published by BranD Magazine (HK)

*Pica 15pO*, published by Pica Magazine (CA)

*Phylactère 3*, published by Phylactère Magazine (FR)

2021

*Glossary of Undisciplined Design*, published by Spectorbooks (GER)

## Contact

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+49 17664621975