

## **NÚMERO CUATRO // 01 MAYO 2017**

### **What moves us together**

What you are about to read are statements from 3 Puerto Rican individuals, collaborators and friends and how we are addressing our own praxis, questioning the systems of cultural production in which they exist or are immersed.

Movement improvisation, space and memory are the three thematic pillars explored by each artist. We are bonded by the blurring of boundaries between our fields of practice and beyond, our day to day interactions and response abilities.

We want to situate from our latitudes and points of view, what is taking shape in Puerto Rico beyond the debt. On April 5, 2017, an indefinite systematic strike was set in motion by the students of the University of Puerto Rico and its eleven precincts facing the austerity measures that the neoliberal government, together with the Fiscal Control Board, imposed on us Puerto Rican citizens. Under these circumstances we are forced to reflect and take decisive actions and measures.

Our practices have always been on the margins of contemporary art production, its paradigms, behaviors and education process. We consciously don't want to reproduce the capitalist / patriarchal models. Here we share about the processes we carry in personal and collective spheres in order to understand what makes us connect and how we continue to grow, evolve and strengthen these interconnecting and interdependent fields, inquiries and collaborations in a commitment to the process in alliance.

### **Lo que nos mueve a colaborar**

Aquí compartimos tres entradas como individuos, colaboradores y amigos puertorriqueños y cómo nos relacionamos con nuestras praxis, cuestionando los sistemas de producción cultural en los que existen o están inmersos.

La improvisación del movimiento, el espacio y la memoria son los tres pilares temáticos explorados por cada artista. Desdibujamos o desestabilizamos los límites entre nuestros campos de práctica, nuestras interacciones y nuestra capacidad de respuesta ante las situaciones que encontramos a diario.

Queremos situar desde nuestras latitudes y puntos de vista, lo que anda cobrando forma en Puerto Rico más allá de la deuda. El miércoles 5 de abril 2017 se decidió una huelga sistemática indefinida de la Universidad de Puerto Rico y sus once recintos encarando las medidas de austeridad que el gobierno neoliberal, junto a la Junta de Control Fiscal, nos impone en actualidad. Ante esta situación nos vemos obligadas y obligados a reflexionar y tomar acciones y medidas contundentes.

Nuestras prácticas siempre se han planteado desde el margen de los paradigmas contemporáneos de la producción del arte, entendiendo que desde hace tiempo no queremos reproducir el modelo capitalista/patriarcal. Queremos con nuestras voces y la acciones que llevamos a cabo en nuestras prácticas personales y colectivas hacer evidente aquello nos hace converger y colaborar, y cómo podemos fortalecer estas coyunturas en compromiso a procesos y transformaciones en alianza a largo plazo.

-Noemí Segarra Ramírez, Andrea Bauzá and Félix Rodríguez-Rosa

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><i>We Belong; Collective Learning in Times of Crisis</i></b> by Andrea Bauzá.....	3
<b><i>Adentro/Afuera: de lo personal a lo colectivo</i></b> by Félix Rodríguez-Roza	
Version en español .....	8
English version (translated by Sabrina Ramos-Rubén).....	17
<b><i>Si No Puedo Bailar No Es Mi Revolución</i></b> by Noemí Segarra Ramírez.....	26



## **We Belong; Collective Learning in Times of Crisis.**

“What we are dealing with is not a design problem - it’s a relationship problem.” *R. Lowe, CONSUMPTION a Project on Pearl Street, Philadelphia.*

I am a Puerto Rican female citizen based in Río Piedras, San Juan, with a background in architecture interested in joining the conversation (invited by Noemi Segarra) of how we are addressing new ways of working/collaborating inside and out of our professional fields in the ongoing crisis context we are living in. By examining our collaborations since 2013, I acknowledge how our experience has always appointed to a collective learning process instead of individual recognition, which commonly is an ulterior goal many architects pursue.

The way architecture is practiced in Puerto Rico and in the World in general, perpetuates the power structures that we can clearly identify as failed human relations. Architecture is perceived as a luxury, only the few can afford. It is still mostly white male dominated and capitalism’s perfect tool for the colonization of territory. The way it is taught does not pay enough attention to the sociopolitical impact a building has in our environment. Let’s not even talk about sustainability, since it is more of an added value to built structures than a reality we must adapt to. Architecture has been reduced to the process of designing material structures and its recognition/validation comes from the construction of permanent buildings.

In that sense I have always felt that I do not belong to that sphere or dimension of Architecture. Granted we have a vast human built environment, what is lacking is human interaction in it. What is maybe the single biggest consumer of materials?, the built environment, which uses about half of all raw material extracts. We need to stop building and devouring our earth, taking advantage of what already exists. In that sense, my interest has always been to question what is the social impact of a design/space and how? coming from Architecture, can I put my practice to the service of others, in order for me to do this I must also learn from others.

### **3 projects: Desayuno Calle, Iluminación, DIO Urbanism.**

Aside from other jobs/projects I have done, these three projects have been in essence, what I truly consider my praxis. They also have a very similar mode of production to Noemi’s approach with her practice as well in *Cuerpo y Ciudad* and *Piso Proyecto*. These projects consist of an exercise of human interaction with the built (and unbuilt) environment to learn from new experiences that can transform our daily isolated and disconnected habits and rituals. We engaged in an ephemeral experimentation in public space brought forward from a collective democratic effort. In this way, we built social interaction, in a happening nature, reinforcing the sense of community, long lost in many areas by the way our city works.

1. *Desayuno Calle* is an ongoing tool for exchange of many sorts in diverse public spaces. Since November of 2008, we have been inviting people, groups and communities to gather and bring food to share, among other things. At the beginning it started as an action of occupying. In very simplified terms San Juan, mostly all Puerto Rico cities are car oriented, thus we have many unused and unattended public space. There is also a lack of consistent public life in our cities, mixed with a lack of mobility (efficient public transportation is almost inexistent), which results in an unclaimed, deteriorated territory. Our invitation was more than just to share food, conversations, books, plants and other stuff but to raise questions of what is public space? who does it belong to? and what can we do with it?

Another realization is that by provoking these encounters we were building relationships, not only from one person with another, but by putting a moving body in a space, bridges were being built between people, the environment and relevant causes to us.



Desayuno Calle #17, 2010. Public breakfast in front of the University of Puerto Rico gates in solidarity to the student strike movement against budget cuts and an increase in tuition fees.

2. *Illuminacion* was part of an open call workshop for citizens to study the limits of public space. Each participant expressed their worries and together we voted to attend one personal concern. We choose the lack of proper illumination of a street in Rio Piedras. As an action we worked along with fellow neighbors of the area to have a self made light

festival. A petition was made and signs were gathered the night of the event. Two weeks after we submitted the petition, the light posts were lit.



*Iluminación. Self organized community light festival to bring awareness of Río Piedra's poorly lighted streets.*

3. *DI Ourselves Urbanism* is an elective course I am teaching in the School of Architecture of The University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus.<sup>1</sup> This course's objective is to expose the student to a collective learning process by putting them in collaboration between themselves and other communities. Aside from discussing Lefebvre's *The Right to The City* and the history of bottom-up city planning, I push them outside their comfort (isolated) relationship of designing something, into a direct palpable experience where they discover the path of try/fail/learn from each other that interdisciplinary collaboration brings forth. This semester exercise is to co-create a new *Piso* or a new platform for movement in a remanent space of The UPR's Gender Studies Program with Noemí's class.

---

<sup>1</sup> I've been a faculty member for the past 6 years and have always been swimming against the Academic tide by bringing forward contemporary debates that question the profession power structures and system.



*Awareness exercise on site, front of the University of Puerto Rico Women and Gender Studies Program with students from both our classes in the space of intervention.*

**We have and still are creating a realm where we belong.**

What joins me to Noemi's work, first, we are drawn to each other by our common interest to dissolve or deconstruct physical, emotional and psychological boundaries between our fields in relationship with others. We are women taking part in deconstructing patriarchal structures of doing inside and outside the academic field. We both embrace the spontaneous/improvisational nature of our practices as a root because it guides us to openness in new ways of doing, always in search of improving our relationship with ourselves, the environment and with others.

By confronting the limits of the profession we are formed in, we discover we do not belong. In order to re-conceptualize any practice, the first moments of recognition have to do with recognizing oneself as radically other, not of this system, not of the normalized way of being. That conceptual shift allows one to consider praxis as particular to one's embodied standpoint, – there is no way for me/you/us to step outside of my/your/our body/bodies to create anything. We may develop tools for all of us to use, methods, codes, programs to help us practice – but what gets coded or institutionalized, what gets marked as knowledge, for what type of normative body, all that should be questioned.

We must now more than ever stand strong to embrace our praxis and ways of doing that have always fought against the oppressive structures of the neoliberal/male dominated/capitalist forces. The colonizing powers have always been there but now become more evident and in our face with the Trump regime and in our case with the Junta de Control Fiscal. It is the moment to speak out, come out of the shadows of comfort or individualism and understand that every single effort people and communities have historically made to fight against the feeling of not belonging must come forward to share, act and empower. We belong to ourselves.



Piso Móvil reinstalled in front of UPR's Gender Studies Program. Piso Móvil is a platform designed and built by architecture students in 2013/14 in collaboration with Piso Proyecto. It has traveled along way through different spaces. It is in pretty bad shape now. As a conscious decision we have determined it will perish in this space, were a new Piso will arise as part of the collaboration between our students.

Andrea Bauzá . 3/22/2017

Professor at UPR's School of Architecture

[andreabauza.info](mailto:andreabauza.info) / [urbanoactivo.com](http://urbanoactivo.com)

## **Adentro/Afuera: de lo personal a lo colectivo.**

Félix Rodríguez-Rosa

### **Microcontexto biográfico**

- A los dos años tuve una caída y con ella desarrollé tres condiciones de la vista que han sido progresivas: astigmatismo, estrabismo e hipermetropía.
- A los cinco años no me gustaba ver fotos familiares. Solía preguntarme:
- "¿Por qué se congela el tiempo? ¿Qué pasa con esos cuerpos convertidos en imagen?".
- A los catorce años entré al Programa de Comercio de la Escuela Superior Dr. Agustín Stahl en Bayamón. Quería prepararme para 'el mundo del trabajo' y estudié Contabilidad.
- A los diecisiete años entré a la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. Fui aceptado en un programa que no marqué en las opciones de la solicitud de ingreso: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales con concentración en Antropología.
- A los veinte años solicité un cambio para la Facultad de Humanidades. Fui aceptado en el Departamento de Bellas Artes con énfasis en Fotografía.
- A los veintitrés años conocí a Andrea Bauzá en el Desayuno Calle #18.
- A los veinticuatro años completé el grado de Bachillerato.
- A los veinticinco años asistí a una presentación de PISO proyecto y conocí a Noemí Segarra.
- A los veintinueve años escuché una conversación telefónica de mi madre y su tía Nydia. La tía preguntó: "¿Por qué Felito se puso a estudiar eso de fotografía si él tiene todas esas condiciones de la vista?".

### **(auto)definición**

Un día José "Pepe" Álvarez -artista, profesor e investigador de danza, teatro, performance y multimedia- me presentó ante un grupo de colegas como "un artista operacional". [Le hice varias preguntas sobre el término pero mi memoria no tiene bien registrada esa conversación].

Yo, Félix Rodríguez-Rosa, con frecuencia me defino como artista visual interdisciplinario y peatón.

### **¿Por qué camino?**

Caminar me permite explorar el entorno cotidiano y (re)descubrir territorios (des)conocidos. Camino porque me (re)conozco moviéndome y me habito. Camino porque entro en contacto



con personas con las que no me relacionaría por otro motivo; cada una me enseña que su realidad es distinta a la mía. Camino porque me sensibilizo; puedo canalizar ideas e identificar tareas. Camino porque aprendo a improvisar y a entender esta práctica como ejercicio de tomar decisiones. Camino porque, como dice Joanie Carlisle, "Walking is a good dancing."

## **Declaración de Artista**

Asumo la práctica artística desde la experiencia cotidiana y desde los objetos que se relacionan con el cuerpo, el espacio, la arquitectura y la memoria. Ocupo y me ocupo de espacios (domésticos-abandonados-públicos) para explorar el habitar, las coincidencias en el tránsito y el desperdicio como resultado de la actividad humana.

## **Proyectos formativos**

Cuando entré al Departamento de Bellas Artes, en el 2007, tenía claro que no solo quería mirar por el visor de la cámara y pulsar el botón obturador. Desde entonces, para cada proyecto, tomo como punto de partida la utilización del cuerpo, el espacio y la memoria.

Considero que son tres los proyectos, durante mis años de formación, los que sentaron la base del tipo de trabajo que me interesa: *espacio (a)dentro-(a)fuera*, *Flores para el Muerto* y *Espacios muertos*.

El primer proyecto se llamó *espacio (a)dentro-(a)fuera*. Durante un semestre me limité a trabajar en una esquina del estudio fotográfico con una cámara formato 4x5" (10x12cm). Fue un ejercicio de azar y presencia. Para crear cada imagen hacía variaciones en la apertura del lente, en la velocidad del obturador y tomaba varias exposiciones por placa. Quería minimizar la inmensidad del espacio y habitarlo; concretar el mundo de un ser, su atmósfera, sus movimientos.

El proceso no solo representaba una práctica para dominar una técnica, sino



que se convirtió en un espacio subjetivo para descubrir y descubrirme.

Desde el 2009 trabajo *Flores para el Muerto*. Escogí una tumba al azar en el Cementerio Santa María Magdalena de Pazzi del Viejo San Juan. En cada visita le doy mantenimiento y le entrego flores.

Para el nuevo el año académico (agosto-diciembre 2010) decidí retomar el proyecto pero agregándole un componente investigativo. Me interesaba conocer quién era la persona allí enterrada y explorar la repetición de acciones como proceso creativo. Creé un blog para llevar una bitácora de cada visita; en ella incluía fotos, video, textos y documentos. En el transcurso se acercaron personas interesadas en colaborar: a ellas les delegaba la documentación.

La tumba sufría cambios constantes y se me hacía difícil identificarla; el florero era removido y la lápida de mármol se iba deshaciendo. Mi cuerpo trazó su propia ruta para llegar a ella. Poco a poco el mármol fue reemplazado por paneles viejos de madera expandida.

La investigación se complicaba porque la lápida solo tenía un nombre sin apellidos y una sola fecha:

*Amparo*

*Vivirás para siempre en nuestros corazones.*

*Recuerdo de tu mamá, de tu abuelita y tu padre político.*

*24 de marzo de 1920*



El Cementerio me negó información porque "...a las tumbas las protege algo como la Ley HIPPA" [una ley federal que establece las pautas para proteger la confidencialidad y privacidad de la información del paciente y sus datos médicos].

El mismo semestre el Departamento de Bellas Artes lanzó una convocatoria en la que seleccionarían a cuatro estudiantes para que desarrollan trabajo análogo y utilizaran los talleres de ampliación y revelado. Fui uno de los estudiantes seleccionados pero comenzó la huelga en la que la administración universitaria propondría un aumento de matrícula a \$800 pero haría cortes en los cursos de verano; negaba permanencias y plazas a profesores con contrato; negaba aumento de sueldo a catedráticos; disminución de cupo y secciones de clases; entre otros problemas.

Ante el cierre de la Universidad, la falta de equipo y espacio para revelar material análogo me lancé a la calle a producir/resolver de otra manera. Comencé a darme tareas específicas para ocupar(me) de espacios públicos o abandonados. El trabajo se convirtió en uno más efímero y documentaba con la cámara de mi celular o con texto.



Para el proyecto *Espacios muertos* comencé a identificar espacios en desuso, inhabitados o desprotegidos. Cuando lograba entrar en ellos, dibujaba mi silueta con los materiales que encontraba en el lugar. Quería darle 'corporalidad a lo muerto'.



Realizando estos tres proyectos reconocí que las formas o estructuras que me daba la academia no me satisfacían del todo. Estaba produciendo en base a mis necesidades y las carencias del Departamento de Bellas Artes. ¿Cómo hacer trabajo con y desde el cuerpo si no

me ofrecen cursos de anatomía para artistas o performance?

Es fundamental eliminar la idea de que la educación artística es solo para crear objetos bellos. También tiene que ver con producir experiencias transformadoras, aunque parezcan incómodas.

No solo se trata de expresión, adorno o embellecer un espacio, sino que es un vehículo para pensar y generar conocimiento. Si es cierto que necesitamos información en nuestra memoria, también es necesario cambiar el proceso por el que nos llega.

## **PISO proyecto**

El 29 de febrero del 2012 asistí a una presentación de Noemí Segarra sobre PISO "...un proyecto que desea establecer y desarrollar un laboratorio que permita la práctica experimental continua y rigurosa del cuerpo que toma decisiones, se observa, se piensa y se mueve en el presente". En el transcurso de la presentación reconocí que Noemí y yo compartimos intereses similares: ambos somos peatones, utilizamos el cuerpo para reactivar espacios públicos o abandonados, generamos experiencias efímeras y creamos documentación multimedia. Nos reunimos tres días después y desde entonces hemos estado colaborando.

Confiamos en el cuerpo y su conocimiento. Entendemos que el arte es un proceso complejo y requiere tiempo. Hemos sido insistentes en nuestras prácticas individuales y colectivas; nos retroalimentamos y compartimos herramientas. Creemos que otras prácticas y modelos de producción son posibles. Queremos generar una comunidad de aprendizaje donde todo el mundo aprenda de todo el mundo.



## Post academia

Producir fuera de la academia me obligó a pensar los nuevos proyectos como experiencias multidisciplinarias y participativas.

En el 2012 fui becado en La Práctica, un programa post académico en Beta Local. Desarrollé Los Amigos, un proyecto para reactivar el espacio de lo que fue la Cafetería Los Amigos en el Viejo San Juan. Lo dividí en tres fases: 1. Recopilación de memorias, basado en las experiencias de sus visitantes. 2. Conservación y restauración de la fachada. Convoqué a René Sandín [conservador de arte] y a Natalia Martínez Santiago [pintora de escenografías en la industria del cine] para hablar sobre ambos términos. De esta conversación crearía un plan de acción. 3. Festival Los Amigos, un evento público, propuesto como degustación de sándwiches, para activar el espacio y compartir las memorias recopiladas. La tercera fase no se pudo completar por procesos burocráticos.



Participé en Fuera de sala: exhibición de performance, curada por Sabrina Ramos Rubén en el Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte (MHAA) de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. Presenté la pieza *Pequeñas curas* y la propuse como un modelo de exhibición abierta, de proceso y participación; una acción “hágalo usted mismo”. La acción se generaba a base de instrucciones para el público e indicaciones para los coordinadores del evento. Fue un pretexto para repensar el papel social del MHAA y para visibilizar y problematizar su condición estructural.

*Instrucciones:*

- 1. La acción debe ser llevada a cabo por la comunidad general o el personal del museo. Ni los artistas participantes de la muestra ni yo estaremos involucrados en la realización.*
- 2. Camine en el entorno del Museo.*
- 3. Observe e identifique grietas. Cada grieta debe ser “curada” con la colocación de una tira adhesiva sanitaria o “curita”.*
- 4. Las curas son efímeras. Deben ser eliminadas únicamente por el tiempo.*

También me interesa trabajar el cuerpo como testigo del tiempo y objeto representativo de la vulnerabilidad. Lo íntimo puede ser privado y personal pero en mi proceso creativo lo he convertido en un ritual solitario compartido.



Desde el 2014, en el proyecto #TuesdayMorning, me tomo una foto al despertar todos los martes en mañana y las subo a Instagram (@ferodro). Me interesa llevar un registro de los espacios que habito y de los detalles que quizá no percibo en la cotidianidad: los que son evidentes con el paso del tiempo.

En el 2016, como parte del Laboratorio Cuerpo y Ciudad en la Casa de Cultura Dr. Bailey K. Ashford, desarrollé una serie de acciones llamada *Sprue*. La primera acción consistió en transcribir a maquinilla, durante una hora, un texto publicado en 1920 por el Dr. Ashford: *Dieta apropiada en el tratamiento del sprue*.



El texto incluye una sección titulada *Régimen dietético del sprue* y detalla los alimentos que pueden ingerirse para tratar la condición. Lo usé como guía para realizar el resto de las acciones: preparé un desayuno, un almuerzo y una cena en actividades propuestas por el resto de los participantes del Laboratorio.

Toda mi producción artística irrumpe desde ‘un lugar’. Las primeras exploraciones fueron de carácter personal y poco a poco han ido girando hacia la participación y colaboración social. En ellas la inclusión política ‘del/la otrx’ es crucial; son convidadxs a ser testigos y (co)participes. Trato de incitar e insistir en la presencia y el (con)tacto para experimentar la (co)habitación plural. ¿Cómo se habita una realidad compartida? ¿Cómo un encuentro puede modificar dos realidades de forma bilateral?

### **¿Por qué seguir trabajando como artista en tiempos tan inciertos?**

Prefiero no hablar de precariedad para no hablar desde el fracaso. Nosotrxs lxs artistas somos el modelo perfecto para el sistema. Trabajamos a tiempo completo, aunque mucha de nuestra labor sea invisible y no remunerada, o la mayoría del tiempo la hacemos de forma voluntaria. Vivir -y ser artista- requiere cierta incertidumbre. Tenemos que aprender a decirle ‘no’ al Sistema, preguntar y pedir lo que corresponde.

Hago arte porque a través de él me conozco. Hago arte porque es mi profesión. Hago arte porque me apasiona. Hago arte porque me presenta posibilidades y salgo de mi zona de confort. Hago arte como proceso curativo; no buscando desaparecer los problemas pero sí, a través del proceso creativo, aprender a hacerle frente. Hago arte porque en él, como aprendí de Elizam Escobar, se practica la libertad.

Lista de imágenes (por orden de aparición):

1. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2008). espacio (a)dentro-(a)fuera. Fotografía análoga en blanco y negro.
2. Gumbe, P. J. (2013). Flores para el Muerto. Documentación de performance duracional.
3. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2010). Espacios muertos. Documentación de intervención y dibujo.
4. Segarra, N. (2012). PISO proyecto. Documentación de intervención en espacio público.
5. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2013). Los Amigos. Documentación de intervención en el espacio público.
6. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2017). #TuesdayMorning. Fotografía digital.
7. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2016). Sprue. Documentación de acción duracional.

[ferodro@gmail.com](mailto:ferodro@gmail.com)

<http://cargocollective.com/felixrodriguezrosa>

(marzo 2017)



## **Inside/Out: From the Personal to the Collective.**

Félix Rodríguez-Rosa

Translation: Sabrina Ramos-Rubén

### **Biographic Micro-context**

- At 2 years old, I had a fall. With it, I developed three progressive eyesight conditions: astigmatism, strabismus, and far-sightedness.
- At 5 years old, I didn't like to see familiar photographs. I used to wonder "Why does time stand still? What happens to those bodies that are transformed into images?"
- At 14 years old, I entered the Commerce Program in the Dr. Agustín Stahl High School in Bayamón. I wanted to prepare myself for the 'world of work' and I studied Accounting.
- At 17 years old, I entered the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. I was accepted in a program that I didn't mark in the options of the bachelor's degree application: The Faculty of Social Sciences with a major in Anthropology.
- At 20 years old, I applied for a transfer to the Faculty of Humanities. I was accepted in the Department of Fine Arts with an emphasis in Photography.
- At 23 years old, I met Andrea Bauzá in the Desayuno Calle #18.
- At 24 years old, I completed my bachelor's degree.
- At 25 years old, I went to a PISO Proyecto presentation and met Noemí Segarra.
- At 29 years old, I listened to a telephone conversation between my mother and her aunt Nydia. The aunt asked: "Why did Felito study photography when he has all those eyesight conditions?"

### **(Auto)Definition**

One day, José 'Pepe' Álvarez –artist, professor, and dance, performance theatre, and multimedia investigator- presented me to a group of colleagues as an 'operational artist'.

I, Félix Rodríguez-Rosa, frequently define myself as an interdisciplinary visual artist and pedestrian.

### **Why do I walk?**

Walking allows me to explore my daily surroundings and to (re)discover unknown territories. I walk because I identify me moving and I inhabit myself. I walk because I get in contact with people who I wouldn't usually connect with for any reason; each shows me that their reality is different from mine. I walk because it makes me aware: I can channel ideas and identify tasks. I walk because I learn how to improvise and understand this practice as an exercise in making

decisions. I walk because, like Joan Carlisle says, "Walking is good dancing."

## Artist Statement

I assume the artistic practice from daily experiences and from objects that relate to the body, space, architecture, and memory. I occupy and occupy myself with domestic-abandoned-public spaces for exploring inhabitation, coincidences in transit and waste as a result of human activity.

## Formative Projects

When I entered the Department of Fine Arts in 2007, it was clear to me that I didn't only want to look through the camera's viewfinder and press the shutter. Since then, for each project I take as a starting point the use of the body, space and memory.

I consider that three projects of my forming years laid the foundations for the kind of work that I'm interested in: (in)side-out space, Flowers for the Dead, and Dead Spaces.

During the semester, I limited myself to work in a corner of the photographic studio with a 4x5" (10x12cm) format camera. It was an exercise of chance and presence. To create each image, I would do variations in the lens opening, in the shutter speed, and would take many exposures per plate. I wanted to minimize the vastness of space while inhabiting it: to solidify a being's world, its atmosphere, its movements. This process did not only represent a practice for mastering a technique, but it also became a subjective space for (self) discovery.



Since 2009, I've been working on Flowers for the Dead. I chose a random grave in the Santa María de Pazzi Cemetery in Old San Juan. During each visit, I care for and place flowers on the gravestone.

In what was the new academic year (August-December 2010), I decided to retake the Project, but added a new research element. I was interested in knowing who the person was that was buried there and in exploring action and repetition as a creative process. I created a blog to keep a log of each visit. In it, I included pictures, texts, and documents. Eventually, I was approached by people who wanted to collaborate: to them I delegated the task of documentation.

The grave suffered constant changes and became hard to identify. The flower vase was removed and the gravestone was undone. My body drew its own route to get there. Little by little, the marble was replaced by old, expanded wooden boards.

The investigation was made difficult because the gravestone only had a first name with no last names and one date:

*Amparo*  
*You will forever live in our hearts*  
*Memories from your mother, your granny and your stepfather.*  
*March 24, 1920*



The Cemetery denied me information because “graves are protected by something like the HIPAA”, a law that protects the confidentiality and privacy of patients and their medical data.

That same semester the Department of Fine Arts made an open call in which 4 students would be selected for using the enlargement and exposure workshops to develop an analogue photography work. I was one of the selected students, but a strike, in which the university administration proposed a \$800 increase in the enrollment fees, began. They would also cut summer classes, deny tenure to contract hired professors, deny salary increases to tenured professors, decrease capacity and sections of courses, among other issues.

In the face of the University’s closing, the lack of equipment, and space to expose analogue material, I threw myself to the streets to produce/solve in another way. I began to give myself specific tasks to occupy public or abandoned spaces. My work became more ephemeral. I documented it with a cellphone camera.

For the project Dead Spaces, I started to identify unused, empty or unprotected spaces. When I managed to get in them, I would draw the outline of my body with materials I found in the place. I wanted to give ‘corporeality to the dead’.



Doing these three projects, I acknowledged that shapes or structures that were given to me by academia did not satisfy me at all. I was producing based on my necessities and lacks in the Department of Fine Arts. How to do a work with and from the body if I wasn't offered courses in performance or anatomy for artists?



It's fundamental to eliminate the idea that artistic education is only for producing beautiful objects. It also is the production of transformative experiences, even if they can seem uncomfortable.

It's not only about expression, ornament or beautifying a space: it's a

vehicle for thought and generating knowledge. If it's true that we need information in our memory, it's also necessary to change the process by which it arrives to us.

## **PISO proyecto**

On February 29th, 2012, I went to a presentation by Noemí Segarra on PISO “a project that wishes to establish and develop a lab which permits the continuous and rigorous experimental practice of a body that takes decisions, observes itself, thinks itself, and moves in the present.” During the course of the presentation, I became aware of the fact that me and Noemí share similar interests: we're both pedestrians, we use the body to reactivate public or abandoned spaces, we generate ephemeral experiences and we create multimedia documentation. We met three days later and, since then, we've been collaborating.

We trust in the body and its knowledge. We understand that art is complex process and requires time. We have been insistent in our individual and collective practices. We give each other feedback and share tools. We believe other practices and models of production are possible. We want to generate a learning community in which everybody learns from everyone.



## **Post academia**

Producing out of the academia forced me to think of new projects as multidisciplinary and participatory experiences.

In 2012, I was part of La Práctica at Beta Local, an interdisciplinary program for cultural research and production. I developed Los Amigos, a project to reactivate the space of what was the Los Amigos Café in Old San Juan. I divided it in three phases: 1. The gathering of memories, based on visitors' experiences. 2. Conservation and restoration of the façade. I brought together René Sandín, art conservator, and Natalia Martínez Santiago, a scenography painter of the film industry. From a conversation with both, I would create a plan of action. 3. Los Amigos Festival, a public event proposed as a sandwich tasting. The purpose of the Festival would be to activate the space and share memories. The third phase wasn't completed due to bureaucratic processes.



I participated in Fuera de sala, a performance exhibition, curated by Sabrina Ramos Rubén in the Museum of History, Anthropology and Art (MHAA) of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. I presented the piece Small Cures and proposed it as a model for an open process, participatory exhibition: a 'do it yourself' action. The action was based on directions for

the public and indications for the event's organizers. It was an excuse to rethink the social role of the MHAA and to question and give visibility to its structural condition.

*Instructions:*

- 1. The action must be done by the community or museum personnel. Neither the participating artists of the exhibition nor me will be involved in its execution.*
- 2. Walk the Museum's surroundings.*
- 3. Observe and identify cracks. Each crack must be 'cured' with the placing of a band-aid or a curita.*
- 4. The band-aids are ephemeral. They must only be eliminated by time.*

I'm also interested in working with the body as a witness of time and as a representative object of vulnerability. The intimate is personal, but in my creative process I have changed it into a shared solitary ritual.



Since 2014, I have been working on the project #TuesdayMorning. I take a picture when I wake up every Tuesday morning and I upload them to Instagram (@ferodro). I'm interested in keeping a register of all the spaces that I inhabit and the details that I may not perceive in the everyday: those that are evident with time's passing.

In 2016, as a part of the Laboratorio Cuerpo y Ciudad in the Casa de Cultura Dr. Bailey K. Ashford, I developed a series of actions called Sprue. The first action consists of transcribing with a typewriter during an hour a text published in 1920 by Dr. Ashford: Appropriate Diet for the Treatment of Sprue.



The text includes a section titled “Dietary Regimen of Sprue”, which details the foods that can be ingested to treat the condition. I used it as a guide for the rest of my actions: I prepared a breakfast, a lunch, and dinner during activities proposed by the rest of participants of the Lab.

All my artistic production comes from a place. My first explorations were of a personal nature and, little by little, they have been turning to participation and social collaboration. In them, political inclusion of ‘the other’ is key: they are invited to be witnesses and co-participants. I try to initiate and insist in the presence and the (con)tact to experiment plural (co)habitation. How do you inhabit a shared reality? How can an encounter modify two realities in a bilateral way?



## Why keep working as an artist in these uncertain times?

I rather not talk of scarcity. Us artists are the perfect model for the system: we work full-time, even if most of our labor is invisible, unpaid or voluntary. Living - and being an artist - requires certain uncertainty. We must learn to say 'no' to the system, to ask questions and request what is owed.

I do art because through it I know myself. I do art because it's my profession. I do art because it's my passion. I do art because it shows me probabilities and takes me out of my comfort zone. I do art as a healing process: not looking to make problems disappear, but, through the creative process, face them. I do art because in it, as I learned from Elizam Escobar, freedom is practiced.

Image list (in order of appearance):

1. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2008). (in)side-out space. Analogue photography in black and white.
2. Gumbe, P.J. (2013). Flowers for the Dead. Photographic documentation of durational performance.
3. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2010). Dead Spaces. Photographic documentation of intervention and drawing.
4. Segarra, N. (2012). PISO proyecto. Photographic documentation of a public intervention in public space.
5. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2013). Los Amigos. Photographic documentation of a public intervention in public space.
6. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2017). #TuesdayMorning. Digital photography
7. Rodríguez-Rosa, F. (2016). Sprue. Photographic documentation of durational performance.

[ferodro@gmail.com](mailto:ferodro@gmail.com)

<http://cargocollective.com/felixrodriguezrosa>

(marzo 2017)

## **SI NO PUEDO BAILAR NO ES MI REVOLUCIÓN.**

If I can't dance, then its not my revolution.

by Noemi Segarra Ramirez

I am allowing this entry to take shape in several languages: intersecting, colliding, complementing, tangling and untangling. This entry will allow references and allusions to I / we, here / there, inside / out descriptions and realities. We would like the reader to experience viscerally what displacement might bring forth and to allow a brooding in ambiguity / cavilación en la ambigüedad.

Perhaps there is no follow through in linear mindset or way. El movimiento es mi primer idioma, por eso mi praxis y acercamiento a todo abraza la interdisciplinariedad, la colaboración en el ahora a cuerpo entero (Movement is my first language. My praxis and approach to everything embraces interdisciplinarity, collaboration in the now wholeheartedly and with the whole bodymind. )

-----

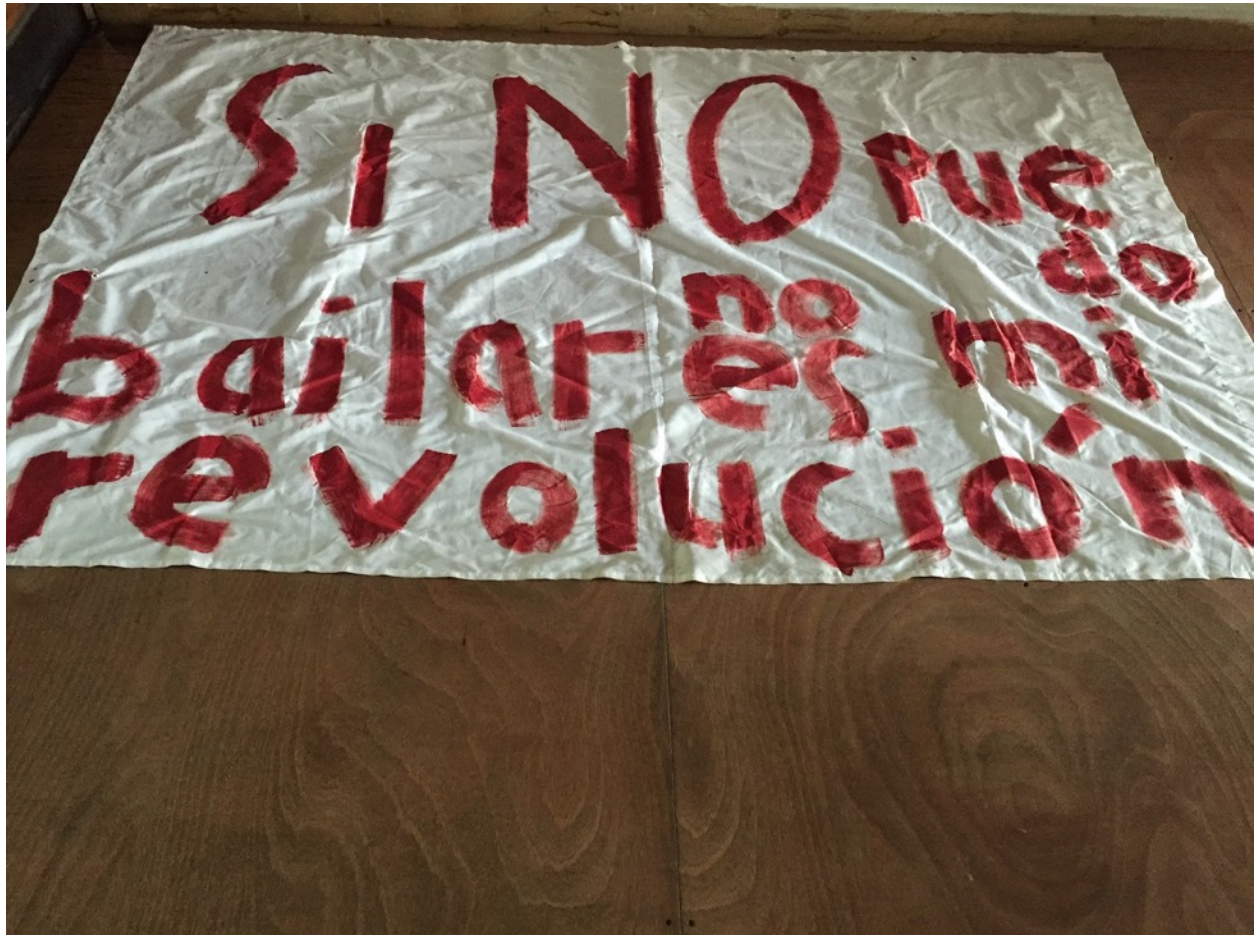
I sense that many "urgent dances" / manifestations, direct actions, placements are taking place at present no matter where I / we happen to be. We are taking active steps and situating ourselves a cuerpo entero in the face of White Supremacy, Neoliberalism, Colonialism, Patriarchy, Racism, Xenophobia, and many forms of oppression. This time we are telling OUR story -instead of HIStory. We, who are considered minorities, are more in numbers at this point in this story of humanity. We do not need men speaking up for us, continuing their protagonic roles in writing and defining history and privilege. It is time we speak up in our own voice and bodies: women, transgender, bisexual, lesbian, queer, not North American, instead other minorities. We do not need patronizing or paternalistic heroes, slogans or saviors. This time we are taking it in our own hands, feet, bodies to face lo que nos silencia, invalida, repudia y hace vivir en austeridad y precariedad, en continua violencia (that which silences, invalidates, repudiates and makes us live in austerity and precariousness - or worse, that which makes us die or live in violence).



8 marzo 2017, Paro de Mujeres Puerto Rico, #ParodeMujeresPR #nosotrasparamos convocado organizado por Colectiva Feminista en Construcción y Coalición 8 de marzo



Placing one's body insistently in the public space and sphere is a practice that claims time / space for other values, ethics, behaviors, possible social choreographies or unprecedented improvisations. Being receptive, aware and identifying my / our privileges, recognizing there are many living beings in conditions or circumstances other than those known or available to me, is a gift that improvisation in public and unexpected placements and spheres allows. Improvisation teaches me / we all about transculturation, diversity of opinion and different kinds of agency in the face of uncertainty and the unknown.



*marzo 2017. en preparación al #ParodeMujeresPR autogestión y documentación en PISO Calle Estrella. Banner reads "Si no puedo bailar no es mi revolución" which stands for: If I cannot dance it is not my revolution. If it is not feminist and intersectional it is not my revolution*

In the dance world at large, not only in Puerto Rico, White Supremacy, Eurocentrism hand in hand with Imperialism, Patriarchy, Capitalism, and Colonialism prevail -- dictating forms, norms, politics, ethics and aesthetics. In Puerto Rico, visual and musical forms take over production modes and international exchange in which working structures (patriarchal, colonial, neoliberal, etc.) remain unquestioned and untouched.

In the performance and dance world at large, regardless of whether it is classical, contemporary or experimental, male choreographers, performers and directors are more visible - please, do a Google search - even when we, women, are the majority in numbers, bodies, administrative labor and force. Before we can go on about post-colonialism, could we please take a close look at who are still minorities and why, when it is evident we are ample in numbers? Then again, who is we? Where are we? Who gets to map, identify, name, structure, organize? Maybe it is time we take in our own hands and engage in making communities with our sense of ethics, values, motions, principles organized and visible, voicing viewpoints other. Our task is to destabilize status quo so that the world becomes more like us.

-----

*"El mundo no es. El mundo está siendo."* - Paulo Freire

As part of the Puerto Rican collective identity, I am / we are hybrid, not "either / or" but both, or all of the above.

Puerto Rico is a queer nation. When I state this I am not referring to sexual orientation or identification, but to the politics of being - an unincorporated territory, a governance with lack of sovereignty / autonomy. As an Estado Libre Asociado / Commonwealth of Puerto Rico - colonia, por favor: ¡llamemos las cosas por sus nombres y apellidos! (As a Commonwealth of Puerto Rico - colony, please: let's call things by their names!) - we are second class citizens, not able to vote for the US president nor sovereign to make decisions on our own as part of a greater whole of the Caribe y Latino America. Forever infantilized, we are told how to take care of our impending debt. That's why we now have PROMESA, an Oversight Control Board making decisions regarding "our" debt directly affecting citizens from and in Puerto Rico. Could this be related to "The Coloniality of Power / Descolonialidad del Poder" as Aníbal Quijano presents us in his writing?



14 febrero 207. #cuerpoyciudad #géneroyciudad documentación Paseo De Diego, Río Piedras, Puerto Rico. The tag reads: "No white or rich man represents us."

I am not a "choreographer" this is a conscious choice. My commitment to movement improvisation reflects resistance in motion, the diasporic, Afro Caribbean nature of my culture, heritage and of who I am. My praxis and way of life is in between spaces and places: nomadic, ambiguous, not yet defined, always evolving and anchored in the present in an open refusal to settle. Non conforming, I find myself searching for freedom within definitions and structures, remaining grounded in the now, dealing and wrestling with what is hard to capture in words - the ephemeral. In an active tension with borders and de-limitations, seeking action, integration and interdependence braiding elements: all important and contributing to a greater whole and process.

In Puerto Rico improvisation is often misunderstood and is given a pejorative connotation. It is thought that government presents last minute solutions, often with incomplete, not transparent or accessible communication to citizen participation.

We all problem solve on a daily basis in the tropics, it is part of our way of life and survival. The "call and response" format is a legacy of African culture in resistance, which implies a capacity to be open and build together in the now. In Puerto Rico we recognize call and response in afro-boricua musical forms as bomba y plena. Perhaps this notion does not extend to noticing the different ways we engage in call and response in everyday life. As a contemporary experimental female artist, recognizing the African legacy in the practice of movement improvisation and the everyday is claiming a study or other perspective of the archeology of our history.

Structured improvisation study and practice requires rigor, discipline, reflection and self-knowledge. It is perhaps easier to visualize jazz musicians (often men) who practice daily to achieve the freedom and mastery in which they express themselves. In the field of dance, mainly comprised of women or members of the LGBTQI communities, classic, traditional and heteronormative forms still dictate production, pedagogical, administrative modes, aesthetics and ethics. We can not measure, imagine, receive support and resources with these impositions or expectations as a point of measurement or departure, when we are a diverse community.

PISO proyecto's research is not at the service of the market economy. We aspire to decolonize the gaze of those we come in contact with, as well as our own. We desire to open an interstice or new doors to see ourselves in the everyday contributing to leave things as they are, or co creating movement towards change. Paulo Freire in his pedagogical philosophy proposes that both educator and educator meet and learn, are both transformed in an ongoing process. This

all points to what we call "personal practice," which is the point of departure to give ourselves tasks. Self-management or self-reliant projects (what we call autogestión in Puerto Rico ) can arise from giving ourselves tasks that we problem solve or develop by our own means often in collaboration with existing governing structures or institutions. Auto gestion seeks to ease process and allow autonomy in our colonial context.

*En Puerto Rico la improvisación tiene una connotación peyorativa o malentendida. Esto se debe a que existe la noción de que el gobierno "se saca de la manga" soluciones; muchas de estas no comunicadas adecuada, transparente o completamente a la ciudadanía.*

*Si reflexionamos, todxs resolvemos a diario. Es parte de nuestro legado y manera de sobrevivir en El Caribe. Mientras que el formato "call and response" / llamado y respuesta afro diaspórica es legado de la cultura africana en resistencia, lo que implica una capacidad a estar abierta y construir en conjunto y desde el ahora - este se relega y visualiza a formas musicales como la bomba y plena. ¿Porque no se amplía esa mirada? PISO reconoce el legado Africano en la práctica de la improvisación con sus estructuras móviles a estructurar en el momento. Este reconocimiento puede ser un rescate y un re contextualizar la arqueología de nuestra historia.*

*La buena improvisación estructurada requiere rigor, disciplina, práctica, reflexión y autoconocimiento. Se nos hace fácil visualizar a los músicos de jazz (hombres mayormente) practicando diariamente para lograr la libertad y maestría con la que se expresan. Pero en el ámbito del arte del movimiento o en la danza, la mayoría somos mujeres o miembrxs de la comunidad LGBTQI. En la danza formas tradicionales y heteronormativas imperan dictando modelos pedagógicos, de producción, estéticas y éticas a las que aspirar incluso en algunas prácticas que se denominan improvisatorias. No nos podemos medir, imaginar, recibir apoyo y recursos todxs con esas imposiciones o expectativas como punto de partida.*

*Nuestra investigación en PISO no está al servicio del mercado y busca descolonizar la mirada. Paulo Freire en su filosofía pedagógica propone que tanto educador como educando se encuentran y transforman ambxs, lo que se puede traspolar a la relación movedora - testigx o espectador. Se empieza en casa, con una misma. Todo esto apunta a lo que llamo "práctica personal" que es la base o el preámbulo a poder "darse o darnos tareas." De darse tareas puede surgir la autogestión - siempre compartida en un esfuerzo colectivo y en alianzas, en nuestra experiencia.*



We build through presence, doing, moving and generating social capital “off the grid,” seeking other kinds of infrastructures, relationships, allowing sustainability along with long term mobility or intersections which imply we are not to become dependent, instead if anything, interdependent in active solidarity exchange. Our viewpoint and presence is felt, seen, heard, acknowledged even when it defers. It is a two way street, if not: we stop.

*"Paramos, nosotras paramos, paramos por las condiciones de precariedad en nuestros hogares, la revolución será en todos los lugares."*

We stop, we stop, we stop because of precarious conditions in our homes, the revolution will be everywhere.

*"Estamos hartas del sistema, estamos puestas pa'l problema."*

We are fed up of the system, we are ready to problem solve / mobilize.

-consignas de Colectiva Feminista en Construcción #ParodeMujeresPR



8 marzo 2017. #cuerpoyciudad #mujeresyciudad documentación en Tren Urbano, Puerto Rico on the way to #ParodeMujeresPR colaboradora Andrea Bauzá y su hija Elena. Por ellxs luchamos en el ahora.



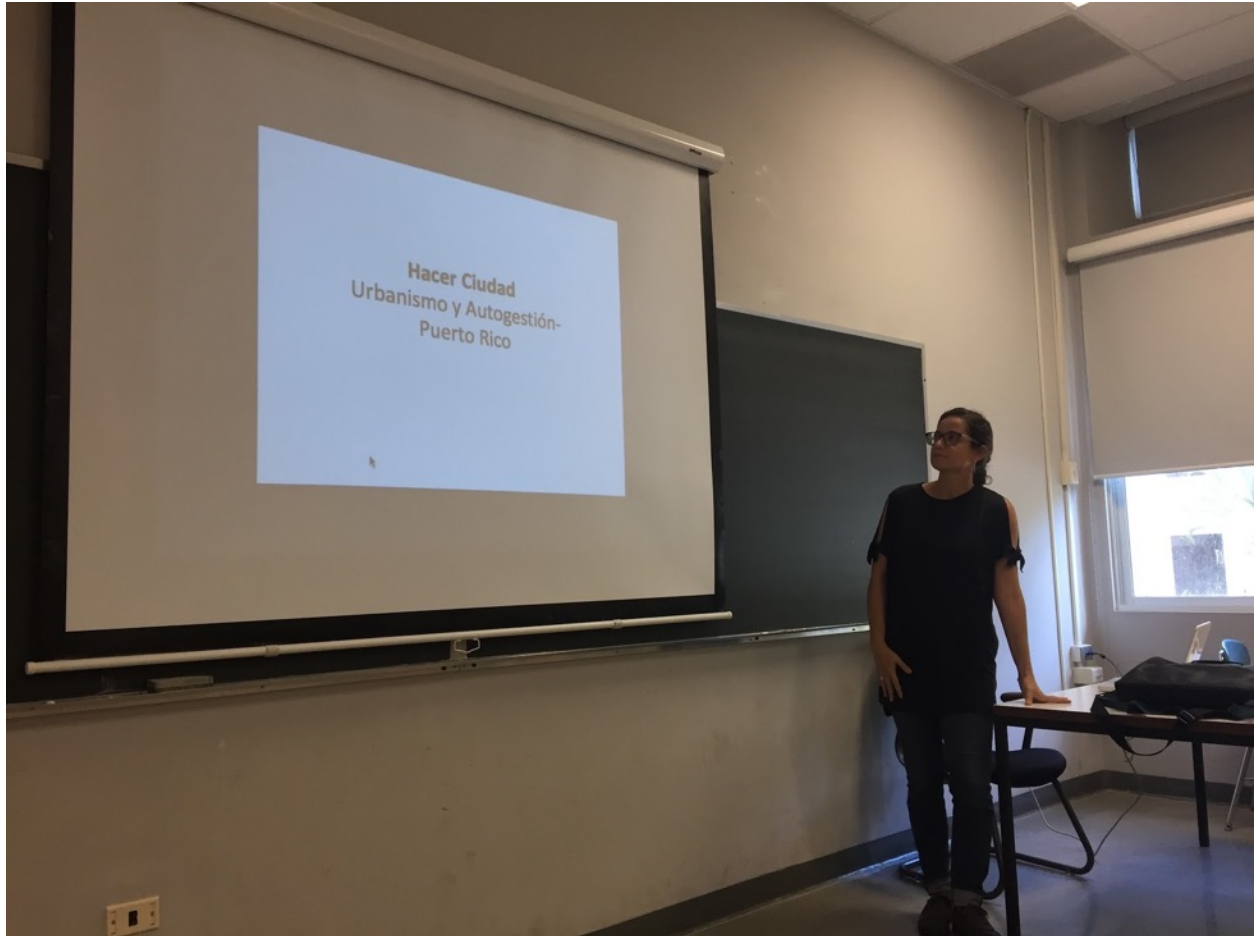
*16 marzo 2017. Practica de movimiento auténtico en PISO Calle Estrella, Santurce, Puerto Rico. in the picture: Alejandra Martorell, Yadira Tort.*



*15 marzo 2017. Documentación Prácticas del Cuerpo: Género y Cuerpo, clase en Programa de Mujer y Género, curso que colabora - course collaborating with Do It Ourselves Urbanism / Urbanismo de Autogestión de Profesora Andrea Bauzá, Departamento de Arquitectura, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras*

Returning to Puerto Rico, December 2009, was and is all about generating a space that does not yet exist as I envision it. PISO, PISO móvil and its many itinerant iterations is a space for experimentation, movement improvisation, somatic practice, social capital and justice - generating an ample and diverse community receptive to this line of work, interdisciplinary, intergenerational and committed to process and transformation - open ended / ongoing.

This line of work signals other modes of production that have nothing to do with passive or Capitalist consumption. instead with co-creation, collaboration, commitment to the process, allowing a sense of shared building or allowing something to unfold and reveal itself. This also nurtures relations and ethics that alter "reality" and propose another world to move or behave within, even if only ephemerally.



*15 marzo 2017. Clase Urbanismo de Autogestión, Profesora Andrea Bauzá : "Hacer Ciudad. Urbanismo y Autogestión, Puerto Rico"*

There are plenty of self initiated projects, what we call autogestión, en Puerto Rico. While autogestión generates new spaces and with it new policies, ways of being other within what exists, without the connection to existing institutions, norms, and laws, I sense we are just "paving a way" instead of forcing and tensing the structures that govern us. It is here, in the tension and struggle that improvisation - leaping into the unknown and opening instertices to possibility that new ways of doing and being can truly take place.

-----

When will we regain a sense of balance and justice? I do not see it happening anytime soon. I think we have to take it, make and change it from the root. The time is now.

Quizás vamos a ser unxs pocxs, no una mayoría en consenso. Los espacios de cultura, arte, salud, educación, bienes en común y tantos otros deben ser politizados de manera abierta y frontal: llamando las cosas por sus nombres y apellidos, haciendo los reclamos que por tantos años hemos callado por las razones que sean. Tener a la Colectiva liderando como ejemplo me / nos da fuerzas para arriesgar aún más, perteneciendo a una comunidad que sí nos representa. Sí no es Feminista e interseccional no es mi / nuestra revolución.

Maybe we'll be just a few, not a consensus or majority. Spaces for culture / art, health, education among other having to do with basic needs being met by a vast majority must be politicized calling things by their names and making the claims that for so long have been silenced.

Having Colectiva Feminista en Construcción leading as an example gives me / us the strength to risk even more. Finally we belong to a community that does represent us. If it is not Feminist and intersectional is not my / our revolution.

For the time being: speak up, use all mediums and spaces possible, involve more, mobilize, organize, activate, agitate -- this is a process. Be very aware of your placement, self-identify instead of letting others tell you who you are (resistance in motion) and also identify the structures you are moving in vs. those you want to move in. Gather and connect, there is power in collective action and movement. DO things together in the public space. Support each other. Build common ground with those you do not agree with. Open up to dialogue. Let's build bridges, not walls. Show up and stand for what you want to see more in the world. The time is NOW. Love relentlessly.

¡NO a la colonia! ¡Fin al patriarcado! ¡Abajo al Capitalismo que mata la vida! Venga lo nuevo, que aún desconocemos, que no tiene nombre ni forma y que está en proceso.

-----

I am grateful for mentors Merián Soto, with her extensive corporeal improvisation methodology, her living example of mastery and commitment to artistic experimentation, and Jane Gabriels, my mentor in the writing / production realm with whom I have learned to give shape and structure to what is an idea or intangible. I apply this knowledge not just to art production, management and administration but it translates to the creative process of structuring improvisation and art making, also collaboration. Thank you teachers!

PISO would not exist without the support, time, energy and presence of collaborators Andrea Bauzá, Félix Rodríguez-Rosa, Alejandra Martorell, Marielys Burgos Meléndez, Marili Pizarro and others. Awilda Rodríguez Lora, and Yadira Tort.

Thanks to Colectiva Feminista en Construcción whose clarity of action, organization and discipline along with its open risk and clear intentions is teaching me to tell it like it is aligned and all that in service that moves through you. Thank you, comrades!

-----

March 2017, Santurce, Puerto Rico

Tags: #movimiento #social #colaborativo #politico #pedagogico #arte #arteefimero  
#interseccional #capitalsocial #proceso #interdisciplinar #cuerpo #sanacion #cuido  
#justiciasocial #construccion #autogestion #diy #urbanismo #publicspace #publicsphere  
#urbanism #pedagogy #collaboration #process #interdisciplinary #intersectional #placement  
#socialcapital #healing

#PISOproyecto #pisomovil #cuerpoyciudad #mujeresyciudad #GéneroyCiudad #bitácora  
#journal #documentation #archive

#PuertoRico #QueerNation #colonialism #colonialismo #ambiguity #ambiguedad  
#Commonwealth #EstadoLibreAsociado #autonomy #independence #interdependence

#ColectivaFeministaenConstruccion #ParodeMujeresPR #NosotrasParamos  
#PrimaveraFeminista