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No matter how much you love me, I do not want to belong to you

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Presentation

I can only introduce myself as an impostor.

An impostor inside any institutional body, an impostor who gains meaning, courage and strength only from outside the institution, only from outside the system.

Outside and not inside.
Not from within the art gallery,
Not from within the institution,
Not from within acceptance,
Not from within legitimacy,
Not from within the system.

Because the system is not everything.

Because the system is not the reality that surrounds us. It is not even a significant part of the reality that surrounds us, which envelops and develops us.

It is outside where I find and gain a sense of reality.

And even if it sounds like a teenage fantasy, I dare to affirm: outside the system there is no emptiness (the emptiness with which they threaten us). Outside the system there is no vacuous state. Their threats are about expelling us from legitimacy and towards that emptiness, where nothing of what we do, say, feel or dream counts or has any value.

It is precisely this threat that we aim to challenge by positioning ourselves outside and not inside the system. If we did not:

Where, then, would it be possible to locate all that exists outside a system of privileges?

Or is it perhaps that the system has already swallowed it all?

Or is there anything that lies outside the administrative system of violence and reputations?

The outside certainly exists somewhere. We hope for that and we live for that. We search for it in everything that, at the centre of its own interests, the system considers as inefficient, non productive, crazy and unpleasant, uncomfortable; that which is ugly, dirty and suspicious or dangerous.

These are qualities that we accept as ours. These are fears and desires that are slowly imposed and instilled upon us through our senses without a chance for distancing or reflection.

And we live numbed by these fears. We, men and women, feel driven by those fears, by those categorizations and manipulations that we have had to live through.

That is why we have decided to place ourselves outside and not inside.

However, where does the outside lie? The outside does not lie at the margins of, and neither consists of a marginality of society or of history.

What lies outside the system is all that which the system has not yet been able to subsume.

I am no mediator for anyone, because I cannot even mediate the voices of the women from Mujeres Creando. Their voices are complex and direct, expressive by themselves. They accept no mediation.

We can only speak in the first person. We are neither interpreters nor spokeswomen of each other's practices and actions. We do not speak in the name of one another because I am 'the other' when I express what I believe in and feel, within a scenario that was never given or borrowed.

I do not voice what the Indigenous woman thinks and feels.

I do not voice what the prostitute thinks and feels.

I do not voice what the lesbian feels and thinks.

Each constructs their own language and speaks by themself. Their voices are direct, expressive voices. They are words full of life, a life full of expression, which is their own and not borrowed.

We stand outside that scenario, outside that system, and at our centre rest the sensitivities of our society. This centre has allowed us to build, not castles in the air, or an illusion with revolutionary tinges, but a key referent of rebellion and transgression for those

that are called prostitutes, or crazy women, or indigenous women, for the girls and youngsters or for the elderly women that reject and fight against their tiredness, for the lesbians and for all the women that are rebellious. Along the lines of what these women have to claim we are constructing infinite complexities.

Our discovered treasures are those unique and yet prohibited alliances that we have made.

By destroying all possible preconceived scripts, we offer these unique alliances with an unprecedented originality in order to be able to embrace each other and to make compromises with one another.

We offer these unique alliances as a revolutionary proposal and against those preconceived scripts attributed to us as fossilized and objectified identities. These identities which have been turned into walls which separate and divide love, loved ones and skins. [1]

Strategies without license

Our strategies are alien to the art world,
Our strategies are illiterate and anonymous,
Our strategies are unambiguous and outside of legality,
These strategies our own and many other's,
Our strategies are like children that learnt their skills from others,
In this sense we recreate strategies,
Strategies multiply.

Our strategies come incessantly from the streets, the city, from the world outside. They come from the survival skills of women working at market stalls in the centre of the city, their shelters

forming a barricade raised against the sun and the heat, and against the encroachment of globalisation.

These women are professional forgers of labels such as Reebok, Nike, Benetton, Sony or Microsoft. They build and work in an alternative market.

These are strategies that are alive only within spontaneous street markets, they become a blending of appropriations and desires forged under a resistance that neither the politicians, nor the police forces or the IMF can control. Falsification and disobedience are the main traits of this market.

We are inspired by the skills of men and women who shrewedly subvert the frontiers and the states of the North. Despite their fear, their poverty and the colour of their skin they develop strategies that are forbidden and illegal.

These strategies inspire us and many others and they multiply. These strategies appear detached and alien to 'art' and to the 'heroic act'.

They are, however evident, invisible strategies, and are made invisible, anonymous and illiterate. They are irreverent, courageous and persistent in order for a society like Bolivia or any other region or country from the "first world" with similar characteristics to live and to survive.

These strategies are a rupture of control. They enable the survival of thousands of jobless people within an economy that only generates serfdom and unemployment and which offers no opportunities for education, healthcare or housing.

It is these strategies that enliven us and inspire us.

These strategies, alien to any form of social recognition, have in common the capacity to generate long chains of information and of resistance. They are clandestine activities within public spaces, within symbolic and economic spaces. That is why they are alien to the art world, that is, a world that includes only that which is allowed.

These strategies belong only to life and society. They are not "artful" devices, and neither do they belong to a world of simulacra. They spring from conviction and have the power to transform one thing into something else.

We are the apprentices of those market-stall women who, long before us, made forgeries of brand-name goods. We learned from them that the street is a space for participation, a vital place for our society, our own political scenario, our own lines of communication.

Creativity as a tool for social change and social change as a creative act

Is identity our shelter, a barricade for resistance?

Within the system, your sex, the colour of your skin, your age, your social status, your culture of origin or your sexuality can be bought or sold, traded. Your nose, your mouth, the shape of your face, the size of your underwear, your pleasure and your skills, your suffering, everything can be packed, sold and consumed.

It is the system that deals with it all. The system generates, lives on this process of commodification and breathes through it.

It is, however, in the interstices of this globalised patriarchy that spaces of resistance are built: we create our own symbolic manifestations, our political identities, our social awareness.

Wherever we are and live, the supermarket[2] prevails as the aesthetic, cultural and political model.

The Supermarket is the space and mechanism that transforms difference into variety. It turns freedom of choice and the capacity for decision-making only into acts of consumerism.

Within this aesthetic model and thanks to its 'well managed' variety, our existential and social identities turn themselves into mere objects, into appearances with no real meaning.

The Supermarket is the place for that variety with no limits.

It is the place for an organised, classified and properly packed 'variety'.

It is a hygienic and clean place.

It is a place for security measures.

The Supermarket is a place of light and vibrant colour.

The Supermarket is the aesthetic, cultural and social model for the system, a metaphor of our condition. This is a model that operates through impersonal mechanisms and a space where neither our responsibilities nor our desires and mediations are self-evident. Neither does it enter into discussion or mediation with them. It simply happens, and functions, this being what seems most convenient within and for reality. Its capacity for adding up 'variety' and packing it operates beyond its own ethical, political and aesthetic limits.

Inside this space we only come across ambiguous and confusing relations. It becomes a state of exception, a space contingent upon the desires of the system. There are possibilities for everything and for everyone, men and women. The ground is slippery.

As part of a consumerist routine, this model holds the capacity to consume 'variety' and to keep it in captivity and within the logic of the system: it subsumes its cultural and social identities co-opts its anti-establishment struggles.

The space of the Supermarket does not know ethical, political or aesthetic thresholds.

It translates difference into variety in order to reify domination.

It creates an unreachable illusion of variety.

This arrogant totality seeks to annihilates the possibility of creating, feeling, living and acting beyond the logic of the system, outside the models of the Supermarket system.

This arrogant totality leaves us only with one option: to search for and to desire a place within an orderly system, without even having the possibility to risk looking outside that logic. And we, women, learn only how to imagine:

That beyond the domains of the system there is only a void.

That beyond its parameters there exists only craziness and the absurd, solitude, anonymity and invisibility.

That outside the system there is only a dangerous place, from where one's voice would not be heard.

That outside the system there is only a place from where one would scream and cry in vain.

And this place would offer no home or shelter.

It is when we only imagine in this way that we accept our place in society, in isolation, a place "on the shelf":

One resting next to the other,

Lined up,

Classified,

In orderly arrangement,

Numbered.

Each product alienated from itself.

One next to another.

One on top of the other.

One below another.

One without mixing with the other.

One instead of the other.

It subtly but effectively colonizes and commodifies identities.

At a higher or a lower intensity, these colonized identities slowly and imperceptibly begin turning into appearances; they stop being an identity. These identities become, in turn, decadent and outdated appearances. As appearances, they become cultural and

social stereotypes fully devitalized, consumed and destroyed. They have suffered from a process of legitimacy and consumption.

Making them feel uncomfortable

Appearance replaces and takes over an identity when identity loses its content, when it renounces its own expression, when it ceases to upset the system and when it ceases to get into conflict with it. Appearance replaces identity when identity stops being itself and when it becomes an innocuous and decorative element totally incorporated within the system.

Appearance replaces identity when it has become legitimized and neutralized, when its capacity for subversion and interpellation is lost and when it adopts an agreeable attitude. Appearance replaces and takes over identity when, once its languages and ethics have been mutilated, it becomes part of the system.

Within the System:

Indigenous women and indigenous men are part of the national folklore.

Lesbians and gay men talk about sex, AIDS prevention and marriage.

Women claim their payments within the system.

Supporters of 'third world' ideologies discuss development and international cooperation.

Difference appears as banal,

difference appears at the centre of an interchange that annihilates it.

Our attempts are intended to break with a consumerist routine and with the colonization of our identities. That is why, for us, creativity is not an obsessive search for what is new or a novelty, but a strategy for struggle that lies in our hands and that is part of our lives.

Creativity is not about searching for form and content.

Creativity for us begins from the skin, with which we touch and we explore the most sensitive and erogenous layers of our society.

It is this creative stance that fills the space, the streets our body, and our collective memory, because we have learnt how to stimulate, enhance and to bring out these areas. We have learnt how to caress them, give them affection and bring them back to life.

Our strategy for struggle is creativity and our space of action is society's embodied sensitivity.

And that is how, intuitively, we can dismantle social hierarchies and binary spatial relations of inside and outside, of what lies above and below, north and south.

Unique and prohibited alliances

Announcing and voicing our differences does not suffice:

I am woman,
I am lesbian,

I am an indigenous woman,
I am mother,
I am whore,
I am old,
I am young,
I am disabled,
I am white,
I am dark,
I am poor.

We do not formulate our differences because it is not within our interests to reflect on their significance within the system.

Neither do we limit ourselves to announcing them because living through them and uncovering them is only our starting point and beginning.

In order to form identities and subversive heterogeneities, I need to create a ground for ambiguity. I need to confuse, mix up, and supplement my differences, my histories, my fears, my talent and skills with another's, which are different from mine.

This action makes my difference dangerous for the system since, instead of the system absorbing my difference, my difference threatens the system by joining that which the system prohibits me to join.

That is how difference and identity should be experienced and lived through, as a fragment.

Living and experiencing difference and identity as a fragment that is in a constant state of transformation allows me to move beyond those identity scripts assigned to me by the system. It equally allows me to move beyond being simply a victim. Instead, wherever

I am and whoever I become, I become myself a threat to the system, because in this way of life, my identity urges me only to form alliances and solidarities. It urges me to construct complex and challenging voices.

Departing from and taking into full consideration what I want to become also allows me to generate social disorder. We have been able to weave this together. This is what we, together, wanted to be and become. The platform from which we operate is a challenging provocation and it constitutes our identity in a constant process of transformation. This is a new and fresh identity that refuses closure and resists simplification. It does not end in a non-pluralist and fixed discourse. It is unique because it operates beyond what is legitimate and it is creative because it is capable of disturbing social hierarchies.

Unexpected Choreographies

Our actions dismantle the power games that before used to silence us. Visually and performatively we forget who is supposed to be above and below, so that we are able to set up a space for contestation and hence we are able to subvert all forms of oppression and domination. We place ourselves next to one another, back to back, one in front of the other, according to the necessities of each specific struggle.

Our choreography alters the order of what is believed as acceptable. It is a circular choreography that belongs to all or to no-one. In the choreographies that we create the cardinal referents have lost orientation and inverted their interests. In them now the north looks south and subversion is the centre of all social relations.

We state and place our intentions.

We intuitively design our degree of provocation,

We choose our own words,

We choose the topics,

We choose the place and the time according to our own agendas of

love and struggle.

And at the same time as we do all this, psychiatrists, judges, doctors, civil servants, mediators and technocrats redesign, manipulate and construct a reality according to their own expectations. However, unexpectedly and beyond their own calculations, this initiative remains on our side and in our own hands.

This initiative, which is our treasure, requires our own dreams and horizons. It demands acrobatics, juggling and unforeseeable flexibilities in order to perform each day a new, different, unexpected and subversive choreography.

Although a literal translation is not possible, we have attempted to retain the meaning and feel of the original Spanish text.

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[1] Translator's note: 'Pieles' is translated here as skins. The word 'pieles' has a connotation deeply rooted in a Latin American context of hybridity. It is difficult to find an English word that would translate its depth of metaphoriacal meaning.

[2] The Supermarket is understood here metaphorically as the dominant or powerful mechanism within the system. The Supermarket is not the common ground from which it is possible to operate, as referred to earlier in the text.