Imperial Spatio-Temporal Disarrangements. Beatriz Santiago Muñoz’s Performative Documentary and the Emancipative Unseen

CARLOS GARRIDO CASTELLANO

ABSTRACT
This paper approaches the production of Puerto Rican artist Beatriz Santiago Muñoz in order to frame the connections between specialized mobility, labor, and ideology. Focusing on several projects of performative documentary, I aim to locate Santiago Muñoz’s practice within a horizon permeated by emancipation and temporal non-linearity. In that sense, I submit that Santiago Muñoz’s work largely operates by uncovering the presence of imperial conflicts and by opening those up to alternative possibilities. [Key words: Caribbean, curatorship, documentary, ideology, Beatriz Santiago, visual arts]

The author (cgc@campus.ul.pt) is FCT Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Center of Comparative Studies of the University of Lisbon (Portugal). His research interests focus on Caribbean art and cultural politics. He has authored two books on ontemporary Caribbean art and has curated exhibitions of Caribbean artists. He is member of AICA South Caribbean. Currently he is PI of the research project “Comparing We’s. Cosmopolitanism, Emancipation, Postcoloniality.”
“The ‘zero level’ of ideology consists in (mis)perceiving a discursive formation as an extra-discursive fact.” (Žižek 1994: 10)

“Las comunidades más cómplices, de hecho, no se forman en última instancia a través del conocimiento de su pasado, ni por el hábito de sus costumbres, sino por la sospecha de que comparten los mismos fantasmas, el mismo ruido residual de una marca que no acaba de cifrarse en la experiencia.” (Ríos Ávila 2002: 24)

*It is striking how the presence of theoretical configurations on empire and imperialism has exponentially increased in our days.* Strongly contested and partial as it is, Toni Negri and Michael Hardt’s asseveration that empire practices are nowadays more visible and ubiquitous than ever (2009), somehow responded to the poignancy derived from the persistence of imperial horizons within our present. What is important beyond the questioned and questionable position of Negri and Hardt’s contribution (see, for example, Amin 2005), is how the visibility and the concealment of imperial configurations has been reframed and brought back within the last years (Belting 2013; Demos 2013; Downey 2014; Jay and Ramaswamy 2014; Mirzoeff 2011; Pereen 2014). This process implies not only recognizing the open-endedness of contemporary political and ideological frameworks, but also that those frameworks are somehow infused with a disorganized sense of temporality, one in which the mechanism regulating the ways we remember, construct, and imagine our pasts and futures are neither unstable nor self-evident. Indeed, the expectations of our present seem to be permeated by a sense of unawareness, which propels us to conceive those expectations from a conflicting logic, where the cancelation of past and future potentialities (be these named socialism, emancipation, nationalism, etc.) under the excuse of its total defeat arises to a great extent as questioned and problematic.

Linked to those debates, the coming back of issues related to utopia and futurities (Agamben 2007; Jameson 2005), agency and productivity (Lazzaratto 2012; Virno 2004), or collectivism and participative agendas (Laclau 2005) within the horizon of radical politics may not seem awkward. This concern with the ways (heterogeneous temporal and spatial forms
of) imperial power manifests itself not so much in a transparent manner, but under a more concealed, contested logic, shaping our post-Fordist, postcolonial present, have opened up a whole terrain for critical and creative inquiry that is being explored by social theorist, political analysts, and creators alike. Particularly, those debates have had the virtue of evidencing the heterogeneity of the (re)articulations and intertwining of imperial and emancipative agendas (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), leading us to conceive past and present forms of imperialism as something exceeding the conditions of a passive landscape against which human forces stand out. Rather, W.J.T. Mitchell’s consideration (2002: 10) of imperial landscape as an ambivalent terrain fitted with its own agency, conceived “[...] as something like the “dreamwork” of imperialism, unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance,” seems to describe way better the conflicting nature of our present than any allusion to eccentric and totalizing transnational configurations.

In trying to engage with those debates, here I will analyze the documentary production of Beatriz Santiago Muñoz. I will argue that the strategies undertaken by the artist—the dislocation of temporality, the blurring of her authorial voice and her own position within the production of truth, and her “dialogic” and “performative” engagements with deferred-yet-latent political anti-colonial agendas—are specially eloquent in revealing the perseverance of conflict in our supposedly post-ideological present, while opening up a possibility for emancipation. In order to do that, I will try to frame her work around what I call the emancipative unseen. By that, I want to show how the potential of emancipation and the relation between esthetics and antagonism are placed not so much in evident and visible maneuvers, in the choosing of certain topics and locations or of the alignment of the artist with certain social causes. Rather, it will lay in the conscious concealment of a non-representable nucleus that, by its reclusion, by its resistance to be captured and represented, locates Santiago Muñoz’s work in a privileged standpoint to gauge the political potentiality of documentary esthetics. The possibility of emancipation is always attuned to potentiality, or more exactly the installation of this potentiality within a disarticulated, non-absolute and non-linear present. This potentiality has to do not so much with its capacity to “represent emancipation,” that is, to capture and impel existing “future projects” deposited in the past, but with
how the image itself can channel an emancipative potential by identifying and surfacing the concealed nucleus of ideology and, by doing that, to yield to temporality the capacity of being permeated by political possibility.

In Santiago Muñoz’s documentary, there is a constant tension between what is seen and what is concealed, between “reality” and what the artist displays by requesting the performance of the actors participating in each documentary.

The documentary projects of Beatriz Santiago Muñoz arise from the overlapping of the seemingly colliding logics of documentary fiction and performative intervention. The result of this process lays not so much in evincing the contradictory appetite for truth of the first and its distancing from historical reason; rather, through attaching a “doing” dimension to that of “seeing” and “recording,” Santiago Muñoz opens up, I argue, a dramatic space where alternative articulations, and thus alternative endings, of sociopolitical projects are foreseen as possible. In Santiago Muñoz’s documentary, there is a constant tension between what is seen and what is concealed, between “reality” and what the artist displays by requesting the performance of the actors participating in each documentary. In her practice, Santiago Muñoz asks the filmed persons to perform different attitudes and situations that later on would be recorded. Those situations could be related to everyday activities or be part of imaginary aspirations or issues. In both cases, what the artist records is the performance of reality, not reality itself. The final work, the filmed scenes, is but a part of a longer process that implies fieldwork research, conviviality, and engagement. Often this chain obeys to the logic of intertwining “real” productive processes—that is, processes implying not only the production of meaning, but also labor processes, related to the production of commodities or the transformation of reality—with immaterial, subjective, affective practices that are acted and thus embedded within the logic of the commodification of action. However, what is seen is but a part of this chain, a result that, despite its incompleteness, reveals and makes evident that a part is missing, and that a distance has been introduced between action, representation, and contemplation. As will be seen, it is precisely this recognition of the critical possibilities of the unseen, this interest of jeopardizing the stability of reality and truth, that inscribes
Santiago Muñoz’s experiences of mobility and engagement within the realm of the critique of ideology. For it is this multiple deferral of reality through its mediation by performative practices that grants her projects a critical potential, directed at understanding how alternative discursive formations are precluded or made possible within different representative frameworks. It is the “zero level” of ideology mentioned in the quote opening this article, the conditions allowing or forbidding alternatives, that our artist intends to address, borrowing Žižek’s asseveration that ideology “is always, by definition, ideology of ideology” (1994: 19).

The distance introduced between action, representation, and reality allows Santiago Muñoz to evince the capacity of documentary practice to surface the troublesome nature of engagement and testimony, adopting a critical position toward the filmic object, but also toward her own mobile position. In that sense, by focusing on Beatriz Santiago Muñoz’s documentary I want to analyze how recent Puerto Rican visual practices offer a privileged standpoint to understand this predicament. Strongly attached for a long time to debates and notions of national identity and identification (Traba 1971; Báez and Torres Martínó 1998) or to celebrations of transnationalism, the experiences of Puerto Rican artists cannot be subsumed any longer within a stable territorial and temporal demarcation. A quick view of the curricula of artists from the last generations of Puerto Rican artists will present the entanglement of heterogeneous places and references. Their activity is produced under the logic of ever-changing displacements and negotiations addressing the disputed condition of place and heritage. As a perfect resemblance of post-Fordist distribution of labor, nowadays to work in one place with referents from another one and with the intention of displaying the results of this work in a third one is a current among visual creators, including Puerto Ricans. Nevertheless, a celebratory reading of this nomadic process has somehow occluded the contradictions implicit in changing the terms of the debate from a territorial/nation-based point of view to a transnational one. If the artist has become a special kind of post-Gordist mobile and specialized worker, with a strong capacity and “affective independence” to choose her/his projects and locations, what would be the spatial politics in play if her/his position is conceived as that of a transnational “specialist” (Virno 2004)? At this point, Juan Flores’ insights on the ambivalence and permeability characterizing processes of mobility and transnationalism expressed in The Diaspora Strikes Back seem particularly tuned up with this predicament. When discussing the
ways in which the presence of the “re-asporicans” is reshaping stable, territory-based notions of Puerto Rican nationalism, Flores is concerned with providing a tone of caution to his analysis of diaspora and transnationalism. Diasporic and transnational landscapes cannot be considered as stable, unidirectional, and straightforward realities, but as overlapping, confused ones, serving as a platform for “the seeds of change, some covert and reluctant, some vocal and quite public” (Flores 2008:3). Being not “re-asporicans” my case-study here, I cannot but recognize a profound empathy between my aims in this article and the ambivalence that Flores detects in the visual framework of the retournées, whose presence “all too often spurs resentment, ridicule and fear, and even disdain and social discrimination with clear racial and class undertones. Yet at the same time, their presence also elicits fascination, engagement, and change” (2008:5). For I think that somehow this ambivalence permeates not only the visual imagery of “re-asporicans,” but also the trajectories of a Puerto Rican “migrant” image (Demos 2013) in a moment of imperial resilience and temporal disorganization.1

**Inventario**

*Inventario* is a good example of what I have advanced so far. In this project, developed after a long stay in Chiapas in 2006, Santiago Muñoz asked the inhabitants of the village of Frontera Corozal in Mexico to draw an inventory of all their possessions, including imagined and natural elements. This task adopted the form of a collective assembly: eighteen community leaders, all of them male, were gathered and asked to constitute this inventory. Later on, the relation of goods was heard throughout the village as a loudspeaker message, the main communicational system of the community. The documentary shows the process of decision, the disagreement between the members of the community, and finally the loud voice of the megaphone drawing the limits of the communal space.

*Inventario* retakes a long tradition of objectification of the American reality. By its reference to inventory systems, Santiago Muñoz’s project echoes stages of dispossession, subjection, and capture. It replies Guamán Poma’s chronicles, in which Poma addressed the Spanish Emperor Philip the Second in order to give note of his American possessions. However, as Mignolo has pointed out (2009), Guaman Poma’s voice is a clear testimony of the emancipative power of imagination. His testimony reveals the logic of colonialism implicit in modernity, but also aims to open critical ways out of the colonial complex.
Inventario is dominated by such an ambivalent logic: whereas it portrays the “untranslatability” of the distribution of meaning of a Chiapas community (Maharat 2001), at the same time this process is troubled by the inscription of the artist herself as the active agent initiating the inventory, as well as by the incarnation of the symbolic act of naming and organizing reality within its performance in front of the camera. What can be seen (the configuration of the inventory and its posterior narration) is complemented by an unseen logic (which includes the performance of this action, the inscription of the “transnational” artist as authorial reference, or the unquestioned configuration of the deliberative assembly) that is not defied or addressed directly, but that emerges and, by doing so, allows a possibility for criticism and confers an emancipative condition to the filmic image.

Many of the contexts chosen by the artist are marked by the overlapping of many conflicting and sediment temporalities.

Inventario also reveals another pair of concepts that guide my interpretation of Santiago Muñoz’s work in this article: temporality and production. By temporality I will understand, with David Scott, “the lived experience of time passing—the social relation, more precisely, between past (the time of memory), present (the time of conscious awareness), and future (the time of anticipation)” (Scott 2014: 1). That is, instead of conceiving time as
grounded in history, in a progressive, linear logic, my analysis of temporality will turn toward the “out-of-jointness” of time, to its non-linear, colluding character.² For its part, labor and productivity have also been widely addressed in recent critical theory, and I will touch briefly those debates later on. Many of the contexts chosen by the artist are marked by the overlapping of many conflicting and sediment temporalities. Those often present a resilient and ambivalent character: they precipitate the past into the present, but they do so in conflictive, not always evident ways. In the analyzed project, the colonial activity of enumerating the possessions of the community, the Inventario, is evoked, but at the same time ascribed within a context of emancipation and communal empowerment. It is important to note, however, than none of both “temporalties” is just presented or recreated: rather, it is performed, produced. This production adopts in this case the form of a deliberation that does not hide the pervasiveness of structures of domination that manifest in the restrictive composition of the “chief board” of the village that ultimately decides what the possessions of the community are. It can be said, then, that this act of production takes place in contradictory terms, arising from the contingencies of the chosen context. Santiago Muñoz’s project never expects to transform drastically the conditions under which the production of the common is undertaken; in the case of Inventario, the artist does not adopt a meta-voice criticizing the restrictions and the exclusions that determine the communitarian Weltbild she finds, of the productive logic undergoing in the narration and production of the inventory.

Rather, what the spectator perceives watching the video is a collapse of temporality understood in a linear way, and of action understood as a material, productive process. Both categories are put into question: Time is fractured by the historical burden of colonialism and modernity, which codified the totality regulating common life inaugurating the “inventory,” by a present that appears to be open and partially freed from history and narration, but intrinsically conflated by the social conditions determining it; and by an emancipative future that nevertheless is blurred between the “performance of action” that all the members enact in front of Santiago Muñoz’s camera and the possibilities that the enumeration of human and material resources seems to open. Action, at its time, emerges in equally contradictory terms: a first overlapping is framed by the confluence of the “real” productive forces and resources and the “symbolic capital” of the community. Second, the affective dimension of conforming the totality of the “we” and delimitating the frontiers of the Weltbild is presented
in deliberative terms, as a space for discussion and articulation of divergent demands and aspirations and thus as a totality subjected to be captured in conflictive terms. Finally, action takes the form of a ghostly performance of “real” action, one that nevertheless implies a reincorporation of a transformative potentiality within the discursive filmic narration.

Those three elements: 1) the troubling of the inscription of the position of the transnational, travelling artist as authorial voice; 2) Santiago Muñoz’s ability to make the concealed ideological nucleus of reality evident, consequently inscribing her documentary practice within the critique of ideology; and 3) the overlapping of temporalities—are present throughout Santiago Muñoz’s work, and will lead us along this article.

However, I believe that somehow those issues are more than useful terms to categorize and classify the documentary production of our artist. I think that they are at the center of the predicament about engagement and location that I outlined at the beginning of this article, and more than so, that they reveal in particularly eloquent and nuanced ways the ability of artistic practices to explore the persistence and the entanglement of practices and situations of colonial dominance concealed under “transnational,” post-ideological, or postcolonial frameworks. In this sense, what my text intends to do through the examination of Santiago Muñoz’s documentary practice is to set out an analysis of Puerto Rican imageries taking place within a transnational context of mobility and cultural negotiations. However, let’s start by addressing the three above-mentioned elements through the analysis of some of Santiago Muñoz’s projects.

1) Position: Unforeseen Approximations
One of the major concerns present in the critical readings of Santiago Muñoz’s work has to do with her ability to make her own position problematic within her documentary practice. A quick answer to that question could be to ascribe Santiago Muñoz to the category of performative documentary, one of the six modes of documentary established by Bill Nichols in a classic work (2010). However, as the spectator can guess from Inventario, this ascription is not that easy. From our analysis of Inventario, the reader already knows some of the features that this position can adopt: her role appears to be placed somewhere in between of that of the ethnographer, the dramaturge, the community leader, the productivist cinema-maker, the contemplator and the socially engaged activist. The result of this process is a production of totality,
an inventory, that nevertheless never stop being contingent, dependent.\(^4\) More than that, it can be known how this information has been constructed, because the spectator has witnessed this process of construction. What is not so clear is the role each actor has played in it: starting from Santiago Muñoz, her evident presence comes along with an intervention that implies arriving at Chiapas, living with the chosen community, asking them to produce the inventory, witnessing (without participating) the deliberations of the assembly and the synthesis of those deliberations through the megaphone voice, and finally documenting everything. In this example, then, at least two voices can be detected, one that is conscious of its capacity to alter reality and to produce meaning, showing empathy and engaging with the protagonists of the video; and another one that intends to confer some degree of autonomy to external actions, limiting to film.

That division roughly coincides with the distinction between productivism and factography that Hito Steyerl confers to some examples of documentary practice. That has to do with how documentary truth is produced. Productivism, she argues, locates truth within external productive, labor contexts, being the cinematic objective related with the transformation of the conditions regulating the production of meaning itself. That is, productivist practices implies recognizing an essential “truth” behind “real” productive acts; if the conditions under which the lens is capturing those acts are correctly addressed, then the filmmaker will be dealing directly with, and consequently intervening, reality. On the contrary, factography concedes art the capacity of creating facts and consequently of discerning about truth. How can both positions be conciliated? Steyerl begins asking this question by recognizing an excess in productivist, realist, documentaries. Wanting to deal with reality, they confront us from “[a] realism, which clearly exceeds the limits of its own system of truth production, the boundaries of its acceptable meanings” (2009). The key, then, lies in what remains covered, unseen: whereas the “real” image wants to tell us a story, in fact what it tells us is what is excluded from that story. It is that excess that allows us to close the gap between both modes of documentary. From that position, the potential of the genre would lie in its capacity to produce a break with the context where images were produced, to dismount the logic regulating that context. For Steyerl, the result is a truth that “is not produced. It cannot be calculated, manufactured or anticipated. It becomes a factum verum, a true fact precisely by being unmade, so to speak, by happening, being contingent and uncountable” (2009).
Indeed, Inventario has to do more with what the images does not show, does not tell, than with what they do.

Now, coming back to Inventario, I think that the overlapping of positions adopted by Santiago Muñoz can be understood from that perspective. By inscribing her action in two different roles, the artist generates a contradiction that cannot be solved: the force and the meaning of the images cannot be identified with pure, external truth, neither with the empathy shown by the artist. Santiago Muñoz’s documentaries are in the antipodes of informative documentaries. Her objective, as it soon becomes evident, is not to portray a sense of unquestionable truth. But, at the same time, she is not either “committed” with the communities, with the protagonists, appearing in each of her videos. It is only by making the conflict between those two positions evident that Santiago Muñoz’s project operates. There is no attempt to solve that contradiction in Inventario. Ripped from their original context (since the beginning of the video, the spectator knows that what she/he is seeing is not “reality,” but a performative action coordinated by Santiago Muñoz), the documentary images integrating this project are because of that estranged from any pretension of revealing truth. Indeed, Inventario has to do more with what the images does not show, does not tell, than what they do. There are elements that cannot be contained in any narrative, dealt with from any single position; one can, I suggest, identify in them the idea of an emancipative unseen that gives shape to this article. It is the questioning of those elements, their troubling presence, more than any clear explanation, that emerges in Inventario.

Santiago Muñoz’s documentaries reveal ambivalence toward her authorial position. Far from being something unresolved, it is this contradiction that justifies her documentaries. Those are related not so much to the production and explanation of reality or the construction of truth, as to an interest in complicating the adscription of reality and truth to a single paradigm or explanation. There is, I argue, an interest in locating documentary’s critical potential beyond any commitment with reality. Santiago Muñoz’s intention of transforming the filmic process into a “critique of critique” will allow us to analyze her work at the light of ideology.
2) Ideology: Ghostly Presences
The ambivalence resulting from the mixing of documentary practice, fieldwork research, and artistic intervention in Santiago Muñoz’s artistic practice will inevitably lead us to the notion of ideology, the second major standpoint in my discourse about the artist. Why ideology? Largely discredited as a remnant of the Cold War era, suspicious of propagandistic and utopian ends and consequently banned from post-ideological interpretations of the present, the critique of ideology was recuperated and revised during the Nineties against the backdrop of Fukuyama’s end of history and optimistic celebrations of economic globalization. Then, ideology became a troubling ghostly presence of a past whose conjuration appeared as necessary. It was Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning & the New International*, a book published in 1993, which opened way for a broad consideration of the vanishing of conflicting alternatives of future within the present. Against the dead of Marxism and communism and the proclaimed end of ideology after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Derrida recognized that there is no one single legacy of Marx and Marxism, but many, that of communism being only one of them, some of which have the capacity to haunt our present, to keep appearing in order to confront our actions. This ghostly presence has the ability to conjure a “new international,” that is, a political commonality and a collective responsibility concerning the spirit of Marx and its potential for emancipation. This responsibility is propelled towards an ontological future, that is, it is kept as an eternal promise entailing us, freed from its specific materialization into different political configurations such as Stalinism. Those, Derrida argues, are subjected to failure. But this failure does not imply the demise of Marxist inheritance.

Aiming at the same time to develop further and to criticize the spectral conjuration of ideology proposed by Derrida, Slavoj Žižek’s considerations expressed one year after Derrida’s book opened new possibilities for the critique of ideology. Since those are directly related to our adscription of the work of Beatriz Santiago Muñoz to the idea of an emancipative unseen, it will be worth developing them here succinctly. Žižek starts distancing ideology from two different conceptualizations: the first one seeks its representation within (false, subjective) political causes, doctrines, beliefs, and so on (what he calls “ideology “in itself” and identifies for example, with Habermas); the second one, in the functioning of state apparatuses (ideology “for-itself” is his term for this second manifestation, obviously exemplified in Althusser’s
Ideological State Apparatuses, but also in Foucault’s notion of micro-power). For him, ideological practices are not evident discursive manifestations. On the contrary, those appear in a spectral, “non-transparent way” (Žižek 1994: 8). The main condition of ideology lies, thus, in its capacity to camouflage itself: in this sense, for him, the most notorious ideological actions are those that can pass themselves off as non-ideological. From that logic, it is not enough to detect ideology within certain practices, neither to recognize it in the activity of certain powers and institutions. What is to be done, then, is to identify ideology from “what thereby comes into sight is a third continent of ideological phenomena: neither ideology qua explicit doctrine, articulated convictions on the nature of man, society and the universe, nor ideology in its material existence (institutions, rituals and practices that give body to it), but the elusive network of implicit, quasi-‘spontaneous’ presuppositions and attitudes that form an irreducible moment of the reproduction of ‘non-ideological’ (economic, legal, political, sexual…) practices” (1994: 15). Two consequences specially relevant for our analysis can be drawn from that gesture: first, the attention is moved from the identification of some issues and contexts as “ideological,” to the specific ways in which our dealing with those reveals itself as such. Second, related to that, the object of criticism is transferred from reality itself to what is repressed within it. For Žižek, that repression, that spectral other also present in Derrida, can only be identified within the realm of economy and class struggle; this point is what distances him from the latter.

From that viewpoint, I argue, it is possible to identify in Santiago Muñoz’s artistic practice an interest in exploring the potentiality of ideology in elaborating a critique of concealed logics of domination and apparently post-ideological configurations. I have argued already that the concern with the limitations of the authorial position and with the ways in which it occludes the ideological logic implicit in the construction of reality is present in Santiago Muñoz’s self-questioning of the role she plays in her projects. In her documentary practice, her objective is not to capture reality, nor to position herself within a position supportive of any marginalized or excluded group. Rather, I suggest, what can be found in Santiago Muñoz’s projects is an interest in making evident the causes and the consequences determining that reality. Like this, she points at how that logic regulating the real is sometimes concealed by its non-conflictive and naturalized appearance. Again Žižek: “Although no clear line of demarcation separates ideology from reality, although ideology is
already at work in everything we experience as ‘reality’, we must none the less maintain the tension that keeps the critique of ideology alive” (1994: 17). It is by conjuring this unseen structure that a meta-critical questioning of reality, but also of documentary narration, arises as a possible activity.

Now, what is our artist telling us about ideology? *Folk Industrial*, a project developed in Caxias, Brazil, provides a good point to start thinking this question. In a reenactment that echoes Lumière brothers’ *Workers leaving the Lumière factory* (1895), the spectator witnesses the workers of a mega-factory leaving the working space. The continuous flux of persons reveals how, more than a century later, the pre-Fordist situation captured by the Lumière has evolved into a post-Fordist one, in which the time of work never ends and consequently the spaces of labor and of the private are indistinguishable. The action of *Folk Industrial* is divided into two terms. I have just described the first one; the second one takes the form of a concern. Santiago Muñoz asked a group of local musicians to compose a “soundtrack” for the filmed scenes, and both music and video gave shape to two improvised concerts in which those musicians responded to the images he recorded.

*Folk Industrial* is related in many ways with Lumière Brothers’ film. In both cases, an interest in “naturalizing” a fictional scene is produced. What the spectator witnesses appear as a non-altered reality being carrying out by non-actors (McLane 2012: 301); however, in fact, the scene is pre-configured by the filmmakers. Moreover, both films intend to maintain the sense of actuality and spontaneity: in Lumière’s film, it is this apparent indifference of the workers, its condition of non-actors, that allows the event to account for a specific representation of reality, a “sociological account” of a particular moment. Something similar occurs in Santiago Muñoz’s video, for this interest is communicated by in “comparing” both “contexts” at the project base. It is not, then, with reality itself that both projects are committed, but with the production of a certain image of reality intended to have historical significance. There are, nevertheless, differences: whereas Lumière’s scene acts as a threshold, separating the space of work—and alienation—from the space of “life,” this distinction is foreclosed in Santiago Muñoz’s film. In this case, the factory activity seems to capture all the temporal horizon of the action.

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In Santiago Muñoz’s video, transformation is allowed, even though it appears immersed within the cyclical logic of post-Fordist capitalism.
In *Folc Industrial*, action is deferred into various levels: the artist organizes the concert and films the workers; those exit the labor space; the musicians play and interpret a representation of that last scene. What is important here is that each dimension appears absent of sense without the others: Santiago Muñoz’s interest in re-enacting Lumière’s scene would have appeared as a mere curiosity without the performance; it would not have been produced without the presence of the workers. That presence, finally, cannot be identified with “reality.” This channeled dimension of action puts transformation at the center of the project. In Santiago Muñoz’s video, transformation is allowed, even though it appears immersed within the cyclical logic of post-Fordist capitalism. Of course, one might think, it is not “real” transformation that I am talking about here. Nor is that Santiago Muñoz’s intention.

Would it be possible, then, to understand *Folc Industrial* as a rehearsal, as a post-Fordist update, of the Fordist scene captured by the Lumière? Is Santiago Muñoz “explaining [to] us” how labor has changed within the last century? Jacques Rancière’s frequently quoted asseveration on the distance between documentary and fiction seems to support this view. For Rancière, “Isn’t that documentary sides with the real against the inventions of fiction, it’s just that the documentary instead of treating the real as an effect to be produced, treats it as a fact to be understood” (2006: 158). However, I think that something else is present in *Folc Industrial*. That something else has to do with how Santiago Muñoz mixes documentary and performance. Through this measure, any

*FIGURE 3: Folc Industrial (2011).*
possibility of “understanding” how reality is constructed becomes foreclosed by the deferral and fragmentation of transformative action into different practices. In other words, there is “no single reality,” “nothing to be explained,” to be understood. Something similar occurs in *Inventario*: there, “what we get” is not an explanation of how a specific *Weltbild* is constructed; rather, the video generates a concern on how this project of construction is permeated by ideology, not so much in what it includes, but in what it excluded from that image of the world. What is to be found, then, is not an “explanation” of how reality is constructed, but the attempt “to conjure the real, to gentrify the spectre that is the Other” that Žižek attaches precisely to the performative (1994: 32). The opening up of a space for action and transformation within the present will center the last section of my article, which will focus on several projects taking place in Puerto Rico.

3) Temporality. Sounding the Future
Our mentioning of ghosts propels us inevitably to consider temporality. From what temporal background are Santiago Muñoz’s projects confronting us? When I interviewed Beatriz Santiago Muñoz on that matter, she mentioned that in many of her projects some concerns with temporality are present,
mostly of them dealing with imagining the inscription of the future in the present. Then she mentioned that one of her major interests had to do with assessing the potentiality of what it is possible only in the imagination in our everyday contexts. Finally, she added that although this interest is present all thorough her work, the way each project deals with futurity differs, something that can be observed in the examples I have analyzed so far. I have also pointed out that it is not only future, but also divergent and pervasive past presences, that shape Santiago Muñoz’s temporal injunctions. As I advanced in the introduction, a sense of temporal dislocation dominates the documentary practice of our artist. This, as has been shown, opens paths for alternative endings, and disclose our certainty in a stable, undisputed present, revealing, unraveling instead the “non-contemporaneity with itself” of the living present” (Derrida 1994: xix).

Many strategies would become particularly salient among Santiago Muñoz’s experiments with temporality. I will, however, consider here only two: that of anticipation, that is, the bringing of the future within the present; and that of emergence, that is, the arising of new possibilities even from discarded landscapes. In some ways, anticipation can be understood from a behavioral perspective as the direct consequence of internalized patterns. After recognizing a sequence of events, a spectator will be able to predict what will follow, and in that way she/he will act in consequence. There is, nevertheless, a possibility of understanding anticipation from a more complex background. Under this logic, it will bear a preparatory condition: anticipation will be, then, a sort of waiting in the present for a time to come in which alternative closures emerge as possible. Under this light, anticipation will be in direct touch with utopian longings, with recognizing our face in the deferred, unrealizable—yet thinkable—designed futures. That is, despite having its basis on imagination and longing, anticipation—as utopia—has the potential of drawing our attention to what Frederic Jameson has called critical negativity, that is, the way it makes us more aware of what is not merely unrealizable, but also unthinkable, in our temporal and political configurations (Jameson 2005: 211). From that viewpoint, the reversal of anticipation will be not so much originality, but skepticism and wandering contemplation.

In Conscripts of Modernity, David Scott warned us of the critical potential of anticipation, but also of the evading and fragile condition of emancipative alternatives. Borrowing from Reinhardt Koselleck’s pairing of experience and “horizons of expectations” and from Raymond Williams’ well-known warning
about the “slowly setting loss of any acceptable future,” Scott urges us to confront our postcolonial present from a discursive model different from linear, totalizing narrative closures and concatenated temporalities. Instead, he suggests, the temporal overlapping and the open of action to contingency arises as a better way of considering the presence of future potentiality in a post-utopian, post-Bandung, post-socialist world. The tragic, he argues, “has a more respectful attitude to the contingencies of the past in the present, to the uncanny ways in which its remains come back to usurp our hopes and subvert our ambitions” (Scott 2004: 220). If tragedy cannot assure incoming revolutionary and emancipative endings, at least it can propel us away from the certainty represented by the temporal suspension of post-ideological presents (2004: 29). The connection with the ghostly injunctions of ideology elaborated by Derrida and Žižek, which centered the last section, is not present in Scott’s book. However, I see an affinity in the way the three authors insist on considering future beyond the political and ideological aftermath of socialism (and anti-colonial struggle, in the case of Scott). I would not seek to elaborate here on whether or not the temporal insights of such readings can be conciliated; instead, I will just borrow for my purposes here the attempt, common in Scott, Derrida, and Žižek, of inscribing experience and change within determinate “horizons of expectation”. This is when anticipation enters as a useful task to reassess the horizon the temporal disjunction of the present.

A good example of that potential, I suggest, is present in some of Santiago Muñoz’s documentary projects. Let us consider Fábrica Inútil, an early project taking place in Puerto Rico within an industrial context like the one found in Folc Industrial. Fábrica Inútil was the first of a series of short videos based on the performance of anticipation. Película de desastre, where a group of street salesman from México DF “act out” possible responses to different natural catastrophes, and Todo lleva a nada (2003), a more intimate story in which some Puerto Rican schoolgirls anticipate escape plans and alternatives when the bridge connecting their locality to the rest of the island collapses, follow a similar structure, in which the filmic action portrays imaginative actions, breaking the sense of skepticism and contemplation of a present without expectations. Because of the connections with other projects discussed here and in the interest of my analysis, I will focus my examination on anticipation only on Fábrica Inútil.

The context of Fábrica Inútil is one of economic stagnation and post-Fordist blurring of the time of work and free time. In this case, Santiago
Muñoz analyzed the “usefulness” of labor within a packing factory, whose final productive result is dispensable and dependent of other industrial activity (in fact, that context can function as a metaphor of the economic stagnation and colonial dependence of Puerto Rican industry, although no further allusion to the establishment of specialized and satellite industries is made whatsoever). After developing conversations for months with the factory workers and managers, Santiago Muñoz proposed to perform “useless” activities based on their demands. Those activities, contravening the logic of productivity, included the fabrication of objects for personal use, the coordination of leisure activities such as collective lunches, a marathon, a dance session or a wrestling contest within the space-time of labor. In all the cases, the plastic waste of industrial production was turned into useful objects serving the “useless” ends of those activities. The experience ended with the anticipation of the closure of the factory and the firing of part of the workers. This part, recorded in an amateur-like fashion, adopts a structure similar to the assembly in Inventarios; both parts expose their arguments, make questions, and tend to approach positions faced with a (likely) irresoluble eventuality.

Anticipation operates in two ways in Fábrica Inútil. The most evident has to do with how it propels workers and managers alike to face the (imaginary) collapse of the factory’s productive system. Facing the worst eventuality, both sectors try to approach positions. As in other projects, Santiago Muñoz’s

FIGURE 5: Fábrica Inútil (2002).
position is ambivalent here: whereas she shows a direct empathy with the workers, providing help in the accomplishment of their requests, at other moments she disappears, acting as a witness of the discussion. It is worth noting that no moral predicament can be deduced from that final meeting: there is “no end,” no conclusion overcoming the bitter sensation deriving from the fictive closing of the factory. Although she does not intervene, Santiago Muñoz’s presence cannot be ignored: the camera approaches the interlocutors denoting the subjective interest of the person filming. But there is a second dimension, materialized through the sketching of a different distribution of productive and unproductive activity, a framing of a possibility of encompassing the inclusion of free time and subjectivity demands within the time of labor in imaginative ways. Under that logic, the use of time and material aims to portray alternative orderings of labor and human relations within the factory that are not possible within the present, but whose imagination helps reframing the lack of sense of the actual distribution of work of the packing factory, where the action takes place, revealing how “the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed if it is to be effective” (Žižek 1994: 8). That is, instead of simply denouncing the conditions of the workers or the “uselessness” of the productive system, Fábrica Inútil makes evident how considering that logic as the only possible alternative enables it to become naturalized, ignoring its ideological condition.

![Figure 6: Película de Desastre (2003).](image-url)
The anticipation of another framework for labor and action arises, then, not so much as a competing alternative for a post-Fordist present, as a critique of its pretensions of “absolutism” and uniqueness. In that sense, anticipation points here to the “force of law” to naturalize itself. The performance of the worker’s requests, and the imagination of the factory closure, operates here as a critical rupture with the pretensions of exclusivity of the regulative ordnung of labor, echoing Derrida’s outlining of “the originary performativity that does not conform to preexisting conventions, unlike all the performativities analyzed by the theoreticians of speech acts, but whose force of rupture produces the institution or the constitution, the law itself, which is to say also the meaning that appears to, that ought to, or that appears to have to guarantee it in return” (Derrida 1994: 31).

It is important to mention that all the action takes place within the industrial space. Both in Fábrica Inútil and Folec Industrial, Santiago Muñoz seems to act as a “relational artist,” mediating among two collectives and using art to articulate their demands. Those demands are not merely enunciated, but also materialized, transformed into effective productive actions. In Fábrica Inútil, the material nature of work is never occluded by the filmic presence, nor by the final performance of the factory closure. In this way, the performance has, as in Folec Industrial, the effect of contrasting the symbolic realm from the everydayness of the labor activity. This opposition would be manifested by the workers withdrawal from productive activities and their integration within more “tactical” and “playful” maneuvers, namely, the “production of nothing” in the first case and the participation in the concert in Folec Industrial. If those actions are interpreted as initiatives of withdrawal from the institutional logic of capitalism, it would be logical to read both videos from an anti-work framework of withdrawal and “immaterial labor” (Lazzaratto 1996). It is that what Santiago Muñoz is proposing?

Indeed, the space and time of labor is never abandoned, nor excluded by the incorporation of the imaginative and performative actions present in both in Fábrica Inútil and Folec Industrial.

In my view, both videos are far from institutional withdrawal and immaterial labor. The alternatives discerned through the performance of anticipation are not situated outside, but within labor. Indeed, the space and time of labor
is never abandoned, nor excluded by the incorporation of the imaginative and performative actions present in both in *Fábrica Inútil* and *Folk Industrial*. It is true that both videos overlap the realm of production with the one of fictive or immaterial actions represented by the performance and by the filmic activity of Santiago Muñoz itself. However, this overlapping does not imply an abandonment of the institutional logic. In *Fábrica Inútil*, the realization of the workers demands does not intend to be an estrangement from productivity and labor. Rather, as the title suggests, the result of the performative actions is a consideration on the uselessness of the specific industrial dynamic where the action takes place and, above all, a revealing of the frailty of a present *ordnung* unable to render any alternative thinkable.

Unlike the projects I have just analyzed, in which anticipation regulates the coexistence of multiple temporalities and the frailty of the aspirations of an indisputable present, in *Otros Usos* and *Post-Military Cinema*, the two pieces shot in Puerto Rico, the place of action seems to be emptied or displaced; apparently, “nothing happens” and “nothing will happen” in any of those two videos. This will not mean an absence of conflicting temporalities, for, as I will argue, this distance from human action will be decisive in playing down the straightforwardness and triumphalism of emancipative actions.
 Otros Usos begins with a fractal view of a maritime landscape dominated by an industrial complex. As the video evolves, the island of Vieques arises, followed by a person wandering the horizon. The passivity of this figure is broken when the spectator realizes that she/he is contemplating a fisherman, whose slow activity gives notice of the passing of time and the arriving of the nightfall, which signifies the end of the video. In this case, the placid action of the fisherman continues, and somehow responds to, the standstill of the abandoned industrial space that only through the explanation of the artist can be identified as an old dock used to supply US battleships. The derelict and discarded space shows not so much the interruption of an economic logic and its dialectic replacement by another; rather, the grandiloquence of the industrial complex is not to be contested by the placid activity of the fisherman. There is no “triumphalism” in other words, in this substitution. The image of the dock and that of the fisherman do not compete; in fact, without having read the information identifying the scenario, the spectator will have the impression of contemplating a placid fishing day by the sea.

For its part, a similar sense of stillness permeates Post-Military Cinema. This case shows how nature has invaded an abandoned movie theater. The first stills
show the exuberance of nature from the out-of-its-hinges cinema door. Soon
the fertile landscape will enter the cinema space, projecting its shadow among
the seats and floor of the movie theater as if it were another film. Soon the
spectator will realize that we are into an abandoned space, a sense reinforced
by the capture of the natural soundscape of the place, dominated by the
bees’ buzz. It is not until the half of the video that the spectator is aware of
the change that has taken place: a beekeeper has used the abandoned cinema
of the Roosevelt Roads US Naval Base to create a small hive. All thorough
the video, however, the human presence is reduced at its minimum, and the
beekeeper only appears for less than a minute doing maintenance activities.
The rest of the video is featured by the “screening” of nature at dawn, and
by the immersive sonic and visual atmosphere of the environment. The last
scenes corroborate this natural predominance by showing the outer iron
structure of the theater overgrown by vegetation and therefore incorporated
into the realm of “things.” A glance of the signal situated out of the base, in
which can be read “Saliendo Zona de Peligro” (Leaving Dangerous Zone)
leads to the video end.

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The strength of both projects lies in the subtlety with which Santiago Muñoz threads the coordinates of imperial resilience, ruined spaces and of the emergence of new uses.

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In both cases, it can be witnessed how an imperial logic—the logic
determining the US presence in the island—has been condemned to oblivion
and decay and thus opened to an “afterlife” that would match what Ann Laura
Stoler calls “Ruination” (2013), which means the tenacious materialization
of discarded and cancelled futures within the present. Those futures seem
provided with a particularly fruitful resilience, imprinting their footprint
in the present through its uselessness. However, they are also contested:
what is assisted at in both videos, is providing new beginnings, and opening
possibilities that, in the form of fishing activity or natural regrowth, evince
the presence of competing logics and arising possibilities even within the
ruined landscape of Cold War discarded spaces. This is represented in both
videos by the reuse of military complexes by “primary” and “non-human”
ends, respectively. This is significant for two reasons: first, it releases the
present from the expression of heroic emancipative agendas. The transition
from discarded futures to emergent logics witnessed among the ruined spaces of industrial-military complexes is not bounded to grandiloquent, tragic gestures, but to the—almost—silent and discrete apparition of “new uses” of alternative spatial and temporal logics, be they human or natural. Second, related to that, it forces us to consider the consequences of political and spatial change and transitional temporalities as not always self-evident. Those consequences do not manifest in unpolluted, radically new beginnings; in both cases, the remains of imperialist logic are way more “visible and evident” than the subtle continuations emerging from them. Santiago Muñoz’s approach tends in no way to erase them, nor to diminish their ominous weight. Her intervention in this case, however, posits pointing out at the same time the “fractal-like” condition of imperial formations. Coming back to Stoler: “Rethinking imperial formations as polities of dislocation and deferral which cut through the nation-state by delimiting interior frontiers as well as exterior ones is one step in reordering our attention” (2013: 24).

This approach of the Puerto Rican-US relation through the spatial inscription in ruined landscapes of non-grandiloquent emergences and the consideration of superposed futurities is particularly fruitful in terms of capturing conflictive logics aside triumphalist romanticizations of emancipative gestures and pessimistic temporal standstills. The strength of both projects lies in the subtlety with which Santiago Muñoz threads the coordinates of imperial resilience, ruined spaces and of the emergence of new uses. Santiago Muñoz’s voice is not merely denouncing the use and the occupation of the Puerto Rican territory by US military and industrial ends, nor asserting the omnipotence of anti-imperial struggles against those forces. As in Inventario, the first project I analyzed, the landscape of emergence remains polluted by imperial abandoned expectations and frameworks. Even more, in this case the absence of any narrative impedes the demarcation of any master narrative that would encapsulate the temporal passing to a post-imperial present. Instead, what can be found in both videos is a firm interest in detaching emancipation from highly visible and “loud-mouthed” rhetorical elements. This is particularly evident in Otros Usos, where the conflict around the occupation of Vieques by the US Navy is addressed only by the momentary appearance of the US-built dock at the beginning of the video.9 Besides this short vision, which does not last more than a minute (0’55”-0’44”) out of the almost seven minutes of length of the video, no reference is made to any specific location or conflict. As the spectator does not have more information than the one provided by the artist
outside the video, she/he cannot identify the presence of the fisherman as a “victory” over the first landscape, as a celebration of any “humble” occupation of this space, nor lament the unevenness or the asymmetry between both activities. Rather, she/he is confronted with the passing of time in a way that rejects progress and linearity as the only forces inscribed in the present without excluding the eventuality of change and the emergence of new possible uses and a framework allowing transformation.

**Conclusions. Migrant Images and the Emancipative Unseen.**

In this article I have striven to categorize the artistic production of Beatriz Santiago Muñoz under the logic of what I have called the “emancipative unseen.” By that, I meant to refer how the core of her artistic production lies not so much in “explaining” the social order in which action takes place, nor in criticizing it, but in revealing the contradictions of reality, in making implicit that there is something missing, being excluded, from the appearance of totality of the real. It is this distance that allows Santiago Muñoz to deal with the presence of concealed and camouflaged conflictive imperial patterns shaping our postcolonial present. Santiago Muñoz’s performative documentary defies the way that present is framed as evident and stable. It does so, I have suggested, through the use of elements: an ambivalent position, a concern ideology, that is, an interest in analyzing the regulating nature of concealed political and social patterns; and finally recognition of the non-linear condition of temporality.

The first element has to do with conceiving her position as ambivalent along the filmic process. In all the analyzed projects, action is located into different dimensions (including ethnographical research, organizational tasks, performative activities, and documentary filming), which overlap within each film. That, I have shown, allows a distancing of Santiago Muñoz’s work from Nichols’ category of performative documentary. The adoption of an ambivalent position where performative interventions are granted a great significance was the key element of the first part of my discourse. Being important how our artist challenges documentary truth, I have shown how the conundrum of documentary medium and performative practice has a deeper impact. Fictive as they are, Santiago Muñoz’s interventions posit directly the question on how to conceive “real” action. In the case of *Inventario*, intervention embedded sketches and inheritance from the colonial past within a terrain of emancipative possibilities; in *Fole Industrial* and *Fábrica Inútil*, the projects taking
place in industrial locations, it allowed the immersion of immaterial longing and within the time of work, shifting the focus from a post-Fordist eternal present in which future and change are outlawed to a temporal configuration susceptible to admit expectation and anticipation. The main issue of all those projects lie, then, in the way those performative, “fake” interventions, delimit the “allowable” and the thinkable, disassembling the pretensions of univocal truth of linear accounts. The potential this performative action bears has to do with making evident concealed and covered argumentative and cognitive schemes, setting up the terrain those delimit for profound and urgent questions. The intervention of documentary register found in Santiago Muñoz’s practice appears, thus, provided with an acute critical potential, one, as I have tried to demonstrate, along this article, particularly suited for the examination of collapsing or camouflaged ideological agendas and for the configuration “hidden transcripts,” paralleling and opposing official discourses (Scott, 1990: 18). What is important here, I suggest, is how the filmic practice of Santiago Muñoz opens a space for those hidden transcripts to become visible and discussable, gaining social agency.

In order to deal with those, I analyzed Folk Industrial. Because it is impossible to “transform the system,” to address directly the causes of capital domination, the video explores how an option arises in trying to “keep the critique of ideology alive.” Enacting Lumière Brothers’ Workers leaving the Lumière factory, Folk Industrial revealed how the ghost of class struggle and labor keeps haunting our post-Fordist reality. The project also examined the difficulty arising when trying to “speak for” a group or a class. This difficulty is represented in the workers leaving the factory, the video’s protagonists. In this example, I argued, Santiago Muñoz is not “trying to understand or explain a determinate reality” or to “empathize” with a collective. The result of the conjuncture of the filmic action and the improvisational concert interpreting the images is a sense of fracture and indeterminacy of transformation. This sense, I suggested, nevertheless does not exclude critical approaches to it, and does not foreclose the imagination of alternative endings.

What is found in Fábrica Inútil, Otros Usos and Post-Military Cinema is not any kind of claim against imperialism or US; instead, the three videos points at the complex entanglements between different imperial and emancipative temporalities and aspirations.
The last section of this article dealt with those endings. Its object was the future, or more exactly the anticipation of future time within the present. I chose three examples located in Puerto Rico: Fábrica Inútil, Otros Usos, and Post-Military Cinema. If all the projects examined throughout this article were in touch with imperial processes of “ruination,” it is in those three projects where the processes are made more evident. Having as backdrop the dependence and the crisis of Puerto Rican industrialization and the Vieques conflict, those matters are only addressed tangentially. What is found in Fábrica Inútil, Otros Usos and Post-Military Cinema is not any kind of claim against imperialism or US; instead, the three videos points at the complex entanglements between different imperial and emancipative temporalities and aspirations. Because of the relation of forces between asymmetrical powers, it reveals itself as contingent and open to possibility.

The use of performance and documentary and her interest in the spatio-temporal disorder associated to imperial formations places Beatriz Santiago Muñoz within a singular position within the panorama of recent contemporary Puerto Rican art. Detaching herself from the debate between “socially engaged” and “market-oriented” art, Santiago Muñoz has focused on dismounting the contradictions of discursive registers of transnational experiences of artistic mobility. At this point I have tried to show how Santiago Muñoz’s engagements with different (conflictive) contexts are shaped by the ambivalence and the contradictions that Flores detected within the imaginaries of diaspora and counterstreaming. Along this text, I aimed to understand how those elements have become a decisive part of the engagements and the experiences of Puerto Rican artists—no matter whether they are “diasporic” or not—within a transnational, postcolonial scenario. I think that the artistic projects analyzed here developed within and outside Puerto Rico, offer a good example of that. In Santiago Muñoz’s videos, the emergence of a new conception of labor, time, and experience can be witnessed. This conception, arising from the contradictions implicit in the expansion of capitalism and imperialism, creates “ruined spaces” that nevertheless are essential in order to ensure the maintenance of the whole system, are increasingly shaping the horizons and the expectations of our present. In that sense, they are neither the inheritance of “the South,” nor can they be located within the spatial-temporal delimitations a specific country or an undisputable present; on the contrary, as John and Jean Comaroff have shown, they underscore the path toward which the entire planet is evolving (2012). It is, I have argued, this engagement with
global currents, which enable us to talk about how (some of) the experiences of Puerto Rican artists are becoming increasingly eloquent about the reach of our expectations, our fears, our limitations, and our possibilities toward global transformations.
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NOTES
1 This disorganization has somehow permeated the Puerto Rican cultural debates of the last decade. The idea of a past coming back, haunting the present, and a future lacking in expectation, are manifest in the writing of Juan Duchesne Winter, Carlos Pabón, Rubén Ríos Ávila or Arturo Torrecilla, to name just a few. Acknowledging this debate, my intention here is to examine how that temporal disarrangement has also shaped great part of recent Puerto Rican visual practices, something much less considered.
2 Hamlet’s words found an intense utilization within the critical debates of the Nineties, as it became Derrida’s main motto in his rehabilitation of the specters of Marxism. In Specters of Marx we find it endlessly, in allusion to the disjuncture of historical temporality and the resilience of the specter of Marxism and Ideology (that is, of ideology and political action) taking place within the post-wall context of Fukuyama’s end of history. Since then, it became a common trade within critical readings about temporality and emancipation, and as recent as in 2014 it was David Scott who used it in his examination of the “tragedy” of the Grenada Revolution and the anti-colonial and socialist emancipative agendas.
3 The most recognizable examples of this kind would be Chris Marker (Steyerl’s and Rancière’s object of analysis) and Michael Moore.
4 Ríos Ávila’s warning against “any struggle too much situated in promissory futures” (2002: 247) is especially germane to Santiago Muñoz’s temporal injunctions. That can be applied not only to Inventario but, as we will see, to many other projects of our artist.
5 “To whom, finally, would an obligation of justice ever entail a commitment, one will say, and even be it beyond law and beyond the norm, to whom and to what if not to the life of a living being? Is there even justice, commitment of justice, or responsibility in general which has to answer for itself (for the living self) before anything other […] The objection seems irrefutable. But the irrefutable itself supposes that this justice carries life beyond present life or its actual being-there, its empirical or ontological actuality: not toward death but toward a living-on, namely, a trace of which life and death would themselves be but traces and traces of traces, a survival whose possibility in advance comes to disjoin or dis-adjust the identity to itself of the living present as well as of any effectivity [lícito]” (Derrida 1994: xx).
6 Personal interview (San Juan, 2013) and email conversation with Beatriz Santiago Muñoz.
7 For a sociological analysis on how future is “coordinated” in ambivalent, loose ways not free of “motion, ambiguities, and missteps”, see (Tavory and Eliasoph 2013).
8 The image of insects and more nature than that of nature spoiling historic remains and artifacts rotting is not germane to Caribbean and Puerto Rican creativity. Artists such as Charles Juhasz-Alvarado, Dhara Rivera, Antonio Martorell, Marcos Lora Read or Los Carpinteros, to name just a few, have dealt with those topics. I have reflected on them with Caribbean installation art in mind. See Garrido (2014).
9 It is worth noting that both videos were filmed in 2014, after the political struggles of the first decade of the 21st Century. This distancing would have served our artist to downplay the magnitude of the anti-
imperialist actions taking place in those years without dismissing its potentiality and transcendence.

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