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Abstract Proposal for Paper Presentation

AR@K 2026: Reclaiming art!

Creative expression as a building block in our social foundations

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“A language they do not understand”:

Embodying the counter-archive

Revisiting Regina José Galindo’s performance *¿Quién puede borrar las huellas? (Who can erase the traces?)*, Guatemala City, 2003), this contribution aims to re-examine the modes of embodied performative acts as practices of resistance, amid an ongoing authoritarian turn. During the examined performance, Galindo walked from the Constitutional Court to the National Palace in Guatemala City carrying a basin of human blood, intermittently pressing her bare feet into it, leaving a trail of bloody footprints across the urban fabric. This investigation treats the footprint as a public counter-archive: a text that resists state erasure, while explicitly refusing conventional protest tactics, in order to materialise *other* possibilities of public narratives. I argue Galindo’s exact strategic recourse to the poetic as “a language they do not understand” (Galindo, 2014), as a critical element of the intervention, securing circumvention of policing and enabling the production of a counter-narrative of resistance within public space. Focusing on materiality and semiology of the text, as well as tactics of visibility/illegibility, the study draws attention to the post-capitalistic potentialities materialised through performance and highlights the emancipating possibilities within the search of an embodied language of the poetic.

Keywords: performance, counter-archive, embodiment

Disciplinary field: Performance

(Word count: 189)

Bio

Dimitra Kordomenou (she/her) is an architect (Dipl. Arch. ATh 2015) specialising in Theory of Knowledge in Architecture (MSc. NTUA 2021). She has worked on the design of residential, commercial, hospitality and office buildings of various scales and provided supplementary teaching work at the Department of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens. Her research focuses on the study of institutionally inaccessible expressions of the contemporary urban condition through the approach of performative art practices. Her methods include both theoretical analysis and performative art interventions in public space, promoting an embodied understanding of the public sphere and its spatial connotations.

(Word count: 100)