"NO TEXT WITHOUT CONTEXT: HABACUC GUILLERMO VARGAS'S *EXPOSITION #1*"

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I. *Text: eres lo que lees*

For half a decade, a global public has condemned the art of the Costa Rican conceptual artist Habacuc [Guillermo Vargas]; questioned his authenticity as an artist; and denounced his moral and ethical stance as a human being. He has received countless death threats by the public both in and outside international art communities. Worldwide blogs dedicated to his defamation exist in English, Spanish, Turkish, German, French, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, Greek, Bulgarian, Danish, Romanian, and many other languages.[1] In addition to the written word, vitriolic manifestations towards the artist appeared in various visual forms and performances. Together with the online petition composed of four million signatures, protestors demanded the artist's removal as a participant in the 2008 Central American Biennial held in Honduras. Similarly, any local art professionals who spoke in defense of the artist – or any foreign institutions that economically supported art spaces exhibiting Habacuc's art – were not spared scrutiny or threats.[2] What could provoke such international outcry that, beyond criticism, sought complete expulsion of a Central American artist from his own artistic context?

Habacuc's installation *Exposition #*1 (2007), exhibited in Nicaragua at the Gallery Codice of Managua, is at the center of the controversy. The work is often referred to as "*eres lo que lees*" [you are what you read], but it is popularly identified with the vulgar phrase "starving dog art." Habacuc's careful construction of his installation consisted of the following symbolic elements: 1) the sound of a Sandinista hymn played in reverse; 2) an incense burner, burning 175 rocks of crack cocaine and an ounce of marijuana; 3) a sick dog from the streets, tied to a short leash inside the gallery; 4) instructions not to feed or free the dog that the artist named "Natividad"; 5) the text "*eres lo que lees*" written on the gallery wall in dry dog food; 6) and responses to the exhibition that accumulated (from mass media communications systems, including television, newspapers, Internet blogs, cell phones, texting, YouTube, etc) during the three-day installation.

Following the close of the exhibition, reports of the dog's death circulated internationally and global outrage was palpable. Animal right activists and others denounced the artist for cruelty to a defenseless dog; for exploiting the animal's deteriorating state; for inflicting torture on Natividad by holding him captive; for forbidding the public to intervene; for using the animal's misery for shock value under the guise of art; and for creating a spectacle with the aim of furthering his artistic career. The public also attacked Gallery Codice for supporting "animal abuse" in the name of art, even though Juanita Bermudez, the gallery owner, explained that Natividad was cared for and fed by the artist, and that the dog had been restrained only during the hours of the exhibition, then set free in the gallery yard until it escaped.[3] Habacuc, however, refused to confirm Bermudez's defense, and would only state that Natividad had "died." His oblique statement fueled uncertainty and speculation about the dog's death. Meanwhile, the reception of the artwork in the art international community divided: some supporters defended the art's autonomy, and others questioned Habacuc's artistic credibility, his ethics, and the morality of contemporary art. This debate raises the question of why a conceptual work of art, produced in a region historically marginalized by the international art world, ignited absolute condemnation rather than critical investigation and analysis.

II. *Animals and Art*

The history of art has witnessed the presentation of animals since the 1960s, all practices rooted in protest and controversy. Notorious among these is the example of *Shot Dog Film* (1977) by the U.S. artist Tom Otterness, who chained a dog to a pipe in his backyard and shot it twice: once with a camera "so that it may live forever," and a second time with a gun – clearly using the filmic document to exploit his action in the media.[4] Other notorious uses of animals in gallery spaces include *I Like America and America Likes Me* (1972) in which the German artist Joseph Beuys, describing himself as the leader of animals, lived during the day in the René Block Gallery in New York with a wild coyote. Beuys' equally historic performance *How to describe pictures to a dead hare* (1965) had the artist whispering the meaning of his art to the dead animal cradled in his arms, and that Beuys identified as his alternate persona. In 1969

amidst much public protest, Greek artist Jannis Kounellis stabled eleven horses in the Galleria L'Attico in Rome in an installation titled *Cavalli*, a powerful commentary on the common description of "a stable of artists" belonging to a gallery, and on the treatment of artists in the art system. Moreover, artists have used taxidermied animals for at least the last fifty years, from Robert Rauschenberg, who famously put a stuffed goat in the middle of his autobiographical combine *Monogram* (1955-1959), and English artist Damien Hirst, who framed a shark in a tank of formaldehyde, to Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, who in *Novecento* (1997) – a reference to Bernardo Bertolucci's film *1900* (1976) film – hung a stuffed and saddled horse like a chandelier in the baroque salon at the Castello di Rivoli museum in Turin, Italy, for fifteen days. The most infamous use of animals in art, however, is the Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch, who in his 1998 *6-Play of the Orgies Mystery Theater*, included the slaughter of three live steers every other day, using their viscera and blood in the performance and serving their meat to the audience/participants during the twenty-four hour events over six days.

These are but a few contemporary art examples incorporating the use of animals, dead or alive, as a form of commentary on the role of animals in history, on the animal as a metaphor for society, on the treatment and consideration of animals, and on the art world and its institutions, among a host of other topics. My intention, however, is not to place Habacuc's work in this context, which might be confused for an effort to justify *Exposition #1* by reference to U.S. and European avant-garde art. On the contrary, *Exposition* #1 must be understood within the Central American art and historical context, conscious of the fact that the emergence and function of conceptual art in Latin America differs from that of the U.S. and Europe.[5] Understanding the context of Habacuc's *Exposition #1* will reveal the complexity of the work that extends beyond "starving dog art." This essay explores how *Exposition* #1 is simultaneously all of the following: a commentary on cruelty to animals; an astute observation of the simplicity and hypocrisy of viewer response; a critique of the international art world, its institutions, and hunger for and promotion of sensation; an analysis of media manipulation and its ability to bury socio-political issues in spectacle on both a local and global scale; and a visualization of the operations of the spectacle itself. At the same time, the meaning and implications of *Exposition* #1 extend beyond even these dense and interlocking observations to a veritable study of the historical racism existing between Costa Rica, where Habacuc was born, and Nicaragua, where he exhibited this work. For Habacuc intentionally targeted the racism existing between these two Central American countries. I shall argue that such racism and xenophobia is rooted in a traumatic colonial wound and preserved in the coloniality of power that suppresses the real issues underlining injustice, suffering, and human inequality.[6]

III. *Context: Natividad Leopoldo Canda Mairena*

Word of the exhibition ignited the Internet, with bloggers suggesting that Habacuc used Natividad as a vehicle to create public controversy in order to comment on the social neglect of homeless and starving animals. Despite an apparently clear understanding of one aspect of Habacuc's intentions, to this day the public continues to denounce him for putatively permitting the dog to die. The primary argument is that an "authentic" artist should be creative enough to communicate his position without perpetuating the suffering of an animal.[7] However, by returning to the original source of the work, the installation's social critique shifts from animal to human suffering, and how media spectacle clouds reasoned discussion of the artist's critical analysis of an unjust human and political condition. Given these facts, let me begin by grounding *Exposition #1* in the social context that inspired Habacuc's installation, a history and specific situation that has been completely ignored in the hysteria over the controversy.[8]

Habacuc intentionally named the dog Natividad to refer to the notorious case of Natividad Leopoldo Canda Mairena, who was born in Nicaragua were he lived with his parents and six siblings in humble surroundings. At the age of thirteen, following his father's death, Natividad abandoned school and immigrated to Costa Rica in pursuit of work to provide his family with better living conditions. However, once in Costa Rica, only further poverty and discrimination confronted him, and his attempts to secure a job and transcend Costa Rica's hostile anti-immigrant environment failed. Without a job and money, he began living under a bridge, became addicted to crack cocaine, stole for survival, and accrued a criminal record for petty theft.[9] Then, around midnight, on the night of November 10, 2005, Natividad jumped over a wall and entered the Taller Romero (warehouse) with the supposed intentions of stealing goods that he could sell. According to reports, the security guard, Luis Hernandez Quezado, who knew Natividad, released two Rottweilers that immediately began to attack the young man.[10] As Nativada's screams echoed in the night, a growing crowd of neighbors quickly arrived at the scene, followed by the police and the media. Rather than intervening, and following the owner's orders not to shoot the dogs, the police and all the spectators simply watched as the two Rottweilers devoured Natividad Canda for an entire hour. The attack finally ceased when the fire department used a water pressure hose to distance the dogs long enough to remove Natividad, who was then limp, semi-conscious, and immobile. Taken to a hospital, doctors diagnosed Natividad as suffering from multiple loss of skin, muscle, tendons, arteries, veins, and nerves. His testicles had been ripped off, and he had severe blood loss due to the over 200 bite wounds covering his body. Natividad Canda, 25 years of age, died shortly after his arrival in the hospital.[11]

Natividad Canda's death was met with a media storm. Allegations emerging from Nicaragua – against the owner of the warehouse, the guard who released the dogs, and the police who did not intervene – claimed that

Natividad Canda was permitted to die a slow torturous death despite the multiple instances when intervention by the police and witnesses could have prevented it. The video documenting the attack became the basis of the claim, promoted by Natividad's mother, that Costa Rican discrimination against Nicaraguans caused her son's death. Natividad's case brought to light the history of racial and class tension between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, which had begun in the influx of undocumented Nicaraguan immigrants into the country. The historical roots of the tension, however, date back to Spanish colonization, post independence, and border disputes over the San Juan River.[12]

In his blog, Habacuc documented the subsequent reactions in the Costa Rican media to Natividad's death in order to convey the xenophobia of Costa Ricans, and how they used the tragedy as an excuse to perpetuate already existing historical tensions between the two countries. Moreover, the Costa Rican media presented the Rottweilers as heroes, applauding the dogs for "effectively" eliminating the "Nicaraguan problem."[13] Commercials advertised Rottweilers for half price, offering to throw in a free *Nica* (the appellative given too Nicaraguans) in order to test the dog's efficiency. Some even proposed replacing the Costa Rican border patrols with Rottweilers, as they proved more capable of eliminating immigrants than the border guards. Others proposed that the Rottweiler be celebrated as the new national hero and that historical monuments of Juan Santamaria (the country's official national hero) be replaced with statues of Rottweilers. Dog food was advertised as "Nica food."[14]

Placing this highly conceptual installation within the context of the explosive Natividad case highlights Habacuc's many references to the tragedy, as well as his intellectual and moral concerns, and offers a reading that extends from animal cruelty to the technological amplification of racism and xenophobia. The parallels Habacuc drew between *Exposition #1* and the Natividad case were intentional and preconceived in planning his exhibition, as Natividad (the dog) is a metonymy for Natividad (the man), who lived "vida de perro" (a dog's life) and died from the wounds of dogs. As a social outcast forced to endure a dog's life, Natividad, the man, like Natividad, the dog in Habacuc's installation, belonged nowhere, had no roots in Costa Rica, the foreign land he came to in order to work and send money home to his family in Nicaragua. The man, like the dog, was an invisible nomad subsisting by scavenging, stealing, and living hungry and homeless on the street, a way of surviving visible to all, accepted by all, but suppressed in social consciousness so as to ignore the need to respond and offer the man a better living.

In both cases, the media provided a variety of technological witnesses to the slow and violent death of the man and the metaphorical death of the dog, proving that both deaths were preventable with intervention. Everyone's failure to intervene transformed the public and the media from witnesses into participants and perpetrators. Through his installation and the meticulous and thorough record he kept of its reception on his website, Habacuc proves how media images illustrate its own and the public's complicity through inaction. Moreover not only the media, but also social and legal conventions were responsible for the death of the man and the neglect and possible death of the dog. For example, the police were instructed not to shoot the Rottweilers, and they followed penal code protocol prohibiting firing a weapon without direct threat to the policemen. Similarly, gallery viewers were compliant with Habacuc's orders not to assist, feed, or free the starving dog. Despite whatever discomfort or feelings the public experienced or expressed to each other in the gallery and in the presence of the starving dog, not one person disobeyed the artist's order to not save the animal but rather stood around drinking wine and chatting. The public's failure to act is another instance of culturally sanctioned behavior that Habacuc sought to illuminate in this conceptual piece: when faced with a work of art and an artist's instruction – "do not feed or release the dog" – the public responds with institutionalized conformity and nonintervention. Conceptual art raised related issues in the 1960s and, since its development in installation and performance art, these conventions have rarely been questioned. Habacuc, fully cognizant of such predictable behavior, took great advantage of it in constructing his piece.

Habacuc's underlying evaluation of social hypocrisy exposed the public and the media as the culprits lacking in responsibility that resulted in an animal's suffering and a man's death. Habacuc's installation also visualized how art institutions cultivate and maintain submissive viewers. Rather than act to change a situation, fear of breaching gallery conventions, passivity, apathy, and a callous lack of concern enabled inaction and delayed reaction. So-called protest and activism on behalf of the two Natividad's only materialized at the safe distance of virtual space: in the media where protest immediately transmogrified into a spectacle of self-righteous blame and accusation against the artist, all of which detracted from individual culpability. Moreover, and more importantly for the context of art, Habacuc's powerful concepts and cultural criticism were entirely ignored; his exposure of antiquated aesthetic conventions regarding the autonomy of art, at the expense of a dog, were overlooked; his condemnation of the public and the police for not intervening in the death of a man were disregarded; and his analysis of how the public and Internet users uniformly respond with unthinking hysteria to media reports were unnoticed. Indeed, the public performed exactly as Habacuc's predicted in his incisive wall text: "eres lo que lees" / "you are what you read." This phrase captured how credulous acceptance and consumption of what one reads reduces the individual to becoming one with the crowd and failing to exercise critical judgment. The textual record that Habacuc kept of all these events underscored how spectators themselves became the diversion, distracting attention from moral and ethical social issues to justify their own inaction. The public's rage against the artist, who exposed their culpability, protected

Habacuc Guillermo Vargas. *Exposition #1* (detail, dog food, view from entryway), 2007.

the international mob from recognition of their own guilt. Few even bothered to consider the enormity and significance of the issues Habacuc's art raised and no one responded appropriately by saving the dog or the man.

Finally, not only did the public fail to consider the meaning of the wall text or have the courage to release the dog, viewers also ignored the incense burner smoldering with crack cocaine. Who considered its allusion to Natividad's drug addiction? Neither did anyone seem to have pondered the meaning of the Sandinista hymn playing in reverse, or it's innuendo that the revolutionary Nicaraguan government had failed to provide economic resources for its people, who – like Natividad – then sought support by migrating to foreign countries for work. Furthermore, mass media systems failed to communicate any of the substance of the situation, airing on global networks the most shallow and sensational "information" about the events. Only a handful of intellectuals around the world attended to the meaning of Habacuc's blogs, which display both his conceptual formations and foundations of his work juxtaposed with the hyperbole and frenzy of the public.[15] Habacuc drew out, even played on, the public's automatic response to inflammatory incidents, knowing that rather than investigate the content of the event(s) and their circumstance(s), it would erupt in thoughtless and meaningless excitement. As such, Habacuc exhibited not "starving dog art," but "starving spectacle art," namely a public hungering for constant sensation and thrill. As such, the artist stood virtually alone in his meditation on *Exposition #1*.

IV. *Conceptualism*

In *Exposition #1,* Habacuc transformed the gallery space through the arrangement of objects suggesting specific references that together evoke the social context of Natividad Canda's death. However, as I have argued, the premise of the work both includes and extends beyond the specific Natividad case to the *idea* of spectacle and viewer complicity to colonialist structures and institutions. The text "eres lo que lees" underlines the main concept of the work, which Habacuc communicated through the two Natividad's stories. In this way, while categorized as an "installation," Habacuc's profound critique of society and the media is better understood in the context of conceptual art, and makes an important contribution to and enriches the scholarly dialogue developing about conceptualism in Latin America that has only begun to include Central American artists.

More recently, Habacuc has created two additional installations – *Dos Nombres* [Two Names] (2010) and *camisETA* [T-shirt] (2010) – that further exhibit his strategic conceptualism. Exhibited during the 2010 Central American Biennial held in Managua, *Dos Nombres* consisted of two iconic names written on the wall in contrasting scales and color. The larger name measured 10 meters in length and in black letters read, "Augusto Nicolás Calderon Sandino," the full name of the national hero who led the Nicaraguan resistance against U.S. military occupation from 1927 to 1933. Adjacent, in white letters measuring 10 centimeters,

was the name "José Daniel Ortega Saavedra," the man who has held presidential office in Nicaragua since 2007, and who stirred controversy for his attempts to change the constitution in order to facilitate his reelection. Both of the names are easily recognized by any Nicaraguan, and most Central Americans in general, the former as a national revolutionary hero and martyr after whom the party was named, and the latter was the party's prominent leader during the revolution over three decades ago. The artist's stylistic choice of presenting the two in hierarchical scale, however, denotes a clear distinction in importance between the two names: José Daniel Ortega Saavedra's name is considerably smaller in comparison, and the lack of color in the name makes it nearly invisible. Only through close observation can a viewer actually make out the latter's name as part of the work. Once again Habacuc uses text to incorporate the historical context of Nicaraguan political history to convey meaning and a specific idea. In this case, he provokes viewers to reconsider the notion of national hero, differentiating between actual revolutionaries and self-interested politicians, and the contradictions between one, who was killed for the revolutionary cause, and the other, who lives the presidential life.

That same year, 2010, Habacuc was invited to participate in the XXXI Biennial of Pontevedra, in Spain, with two video installations: *Johnny Leyendo y Explicando un Texto* [Johnny reading and explaining a Text] (2008) and *Persona sin Educación Formal Caminando en Zancos Hechos con Libros Apilados* [A person without formal education walks on stilts and stacked books] (2010). Both video installations address the theme of reading and interpreting a text, specifically as a critique of the educational system in Costa Rica. However, *camisETA* was the conceptual work that completed and united the two videos. During the public ceremony for the inauguration, the artist wore a black t-shirt with the word "camisETA" on the front in white capital letters. Using the Spanish word for 't-shirt' (*camiseta*), Habacuc made the last three letters much larger, such that from a distance only the three letters – ETA – were visible. He did this to emphasize the fact that ETA is the acronym for the group "Euskadi a askatasuna," or "Basque Homeland and Freedom," which originated in the late 1950s as a radical student group opposed to General Francisco Franco's repression of Basque language, culture, and intellectuals. Since that time, ETA (notorious in Spain) has been labeled as an armed terrorist group in the country and accused of major killings, kidnappings, extortions, and attacks on citizens, all in an effort to promote its cause.

During the official inauguration ceremony, the security team warned Habacuc (still wearing his camisETA t-shirt) to move out of sight of officials. Rather than move, instead the artist positioned himself closer to the official guest speakers, making himself visible to both other attendants and media reporters. As a result, he was photographed next to prominent art and political figures with ETA highly visible on his shirt, intentionally provoking discomfort for viewers, security, and biennial staff. The result was that officials of the Biennale removed Habacuc's two videos from the exhibition under the pretense that they needed to make last minute adjustments, and the promised reimbursement for his hotel room was cancelled as well. According to Habacuc, for whom there is no "text without context," he aimed to challenge textual reception and interpretation of texts, and his *camisETA* t-shirt was aimed to compliment the two videos selected for the biennial. Clearly, Habacuc intentionally provoked the biennale officials, resulting in his censorship, by self-consciously bringing attention to a longstanding political and social concern in Spain. Moreover, he knowingly posed himself as if a security risk.

Just as in *Dos Nombres* and *camisETA*, the text in *Exposition #1* (eres los que lees) encompasses the artist's main concern and the central idea behind his work. In each case, he addressed a socio-political context, but incorporated an ideological and political concept for debate. Yet while Habacuc's work follows some of the major distinctions Latin American scholars have made for conceptual art in Latin America, he simultaneously challenges those assertions. One of the dividing factors, noted by curator Mari Carmen Ramirez, has been related to Lucy Lippard and John Chandler's 1968 theory of the dematerialization of the object in conceptual art, a notion that was hotly debated already in 1969 by many artists practicing conceptual art, but none more eloquently than the Art and Language group. In Latin America, where the materiality of the object has always been an important factor in the emergence of conceptualism, the notion of dematerialization was rejected.[16] "eres los que lees," written in dog food, conveys the importance of materiality and further ascribes political meaning to the work. Furthermore, Habacuc's emphasis on "no text without context" reinforces the importance of "context" in Latin American conceptualism, as argued by Luis Camnitzer who has suggested the term "contextual art" as a better fit to understand its function in Latin America.[17]

Habacuc simultaneously follows and challenges some of the major distinctions that Latin American scholars have made for Latin American conceptual art in the Southern Cone, particularly in the context of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. Conceptual art in Central America became prominent after the wars and revolutionary period of the 1970 and into the 1990s. These wars were not the same military regimes as in the 1960s in South America, but rather products of U.S. imperialist interventions and the Cold War rhetoric that led to neoliberal policies such as the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).[18] Its geopolitical position and politics provide a different context that, while sharing similarities with a general Latin America context, are also unique it in own terms. As I argue, the primary concept in *Exposition #1* extends beyond state politics to coloniality as a uniting context in both Habacuc's criticism of art institutions and their viewers, along with the racist logic of the anti-immigrant sentiment in Costa Rica, itself a hybrid of coloniality.

V. *Conclusion: Art, intervention and a colonial wound*

The lack of inquiry into the social condition of anti-immigrant injustice, the decontextualized moral judgment used to condemn the artist, and the demand of his complete expulsion even from his own Central American artistic context, all convey an arrogant superiority that resonates with the history of imperial intervention in Central America. Clearly the united, uninform, global outcry was only self-righteousness rather than an interested engagement in constructive debate. The dog Natividad was instantaneously defended as the *universal* "man's best friend." But never did the man Natividad become the *universal* "economic refugee." Inquiries into either death receive neither considered moral or ethical analysis.

The unanswered question at the foundation of the emotional response to *Exposition #1* is: Did the dog die or not? Habacuc could have confirmed that the dog's death was a media myth, but did not. Some local critics excoriated him for not doing so and bringing the entire event and the attacks on him to a conclusion. But one must question what was the actual cause that angered the protestors. Was it the abuse of the street dog in an artwork, which possibly caused its death, or was it that the artist declined to explain the result of his actions? This question may be answered in part by Peter Bürger's description, in *Theory of the Avant-garde* (1984), of the public response to experimental or vanguard art:

> Refusal to provide meaning is experienced as shock by the recipient. And this is the intention of the avant-gardist artist, who hopes that such a withdrawal of meaning will direct the reader's attention to the fact that the conduct of one's life is questionable and that it is necessary to change it. Shock is aimed for as a stimulus to change one's conduct of life; it is the means to break through aesthetic immanence and to usher in (initiate) a change in the recipient's life praxis.[19]

In this regard, Habacuc's withdrawal of explanation ignites discomfort for viewers that leads to shock even though the artist provides the tools with which viewers can create meaning—text and context. Similarly, Kristine Stiles noted in a lecture at TEOR/ética in San Jose, Costa Rica, "Habacuc's silence is the cultural, social, and political substance of this conceptual work."[20] She also argued that, "no artist has the responsibility to 'clarify' his or her work, but in refusing to do so must equally take responsibility for the public response: Habacuc did so in his refusal to demythologize the public's mystification of *Exposition #1*, perplexity that thereafter made the myth part of the substance of the work, which Habacuc rightly refused to change, responded to in silence, and continued to document."[21]

Such close reading of the work reveals the artist's extensive critical sensibility and his astute socio-political assessment of the underlying racism and colonial trauma in its narrative. In this regard, I have already mentioned that the work bears a "colonial wound," which is the consequence of internal racial and class prejudice perpetrated in modernist colonial nation-state building in Latin America (and throughout the world) and reinforced in the colonial imposition of borders between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.[22] Gloria Anzaldúa theorized such borders as an "open wound," a metaphoric and geographic space "where the third world grates against the first and bleeds."[23] I would argue that Habacuc could also be said to have extended this reference from a first/third world anti-immigrant context, to the logic of coloniality as it infiltrated and divided countries similarly categorized by imperial nations as "third world" or "underdeveloped." Habacuc's reference in *Exposition #1* to Natividad Canda as the "other" in Costa Rica points directly to how Costa Rica is figured as the "Switzerland of Central America" while Nicaragua remains the "third world," even and especially to Costa Ricans. This is not only a symptom, but also an example of the colonial wound inflicted by centuries of geo-racial classifications.

Exposition #1 raises such deep historical continuities, as well as many questions regarding art and social practices, the autonomy of art, and animal rights and human rights. Costa Rican scholar Sergio Villena has rightfully argued that Habacuc's work was an "epistemic catalyzer" in Central America with regard to socio-political issues. As a catalyst, Habacuc's work provoked and forced a critical debate in the region among artists, curators and scholars, those who defended and those who opposed the work, as well as those in between. Villena has written a comprehensive account of the varied positions and debates swirling around *Exposition #1* in Central America in *El Perro Está Más Vivio Que Nunca: Arte, Infamia Y Contracultura En La Aldea Global* (2011).[24] Unfortunately, Habacuc's detailed investigation was rarely encountered outside of Central America, either in scholarly or artistic discussions. Neither did anyone protest or organize an investigation into the Natividad Canda case to insure justice and compensation for his family. Instead, the uncertain death of a dog proved to be of more consequence than the death of a man, one of the "wretched of the earth," to quote Franz Fanon.[25]

ENDNOTES

[1] See, Habacuc, "Habacuc GuillermoVargas," http://www.blogger.com/profile/17960886994184148250 (22 August 2012)
[2] See, Sergio Villena Fiengo. *El Perro Está Más Vivio Que Nunca: Arte, Infamia Y Contracultura En La Aldea Global* [in spanish]. (San Jose, Costa Rica: Editorial Arlekín, 2011).
[3] Ibid. , 120-121.
[4] See, David Little. "Collaborative Projects, Inc." (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2001), 118.
[5] See Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: The University of Texas Press Austin, 2007); and, Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-1980." *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin*, 19050s-1980s. (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 53-71.
[6] I do not refer to colonialism, but to its consequence, coloniality. Coloniality extends beyond the removal of previous colonial governments and administrations, and persists as an ideological and epistemic tool of domination embedded in systems of power brought by the history of colonization. See Anibal Quijano. "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality." *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (2007), 168-78.
[7] The well-known Argentinean artist Marta Minujín was quoted in the *La Nacional*, the Argentinean newspaper, as stating: "Art is life and energy. I am not in agreement with anything dying in an artwork. If the dog died, then it is horrific." (My translation) Habacuc, "Habacuc GuillermoVargas," http://www.blogger.com/profile/17960886994184148250 (9 February 2009) under "interviews."
[8] Recently, in one of the largest Art conferences in the Unites States, in a panel session titled "Beyond Censorship: Art and Ethics" Habacuc's *Exposition # 1* was discussed along with other artists whose controversial art has been censored. However, again, no social context of the work was conveyed aside the use of the animal and the nature of the global outcry via media technology. Dona Mora, "The influences of social media on Controversy and censorship in the work of Guillermo Vargas and Nuno Ramos" paper presented at annual conference of the College Arts Association, Los Angeles, California, United States, February 22-25, 2012.
[9] Habacuc, "Habacuc GuillermoVargas," http://www.blogger.com/profile/17960886994184148250 under "Caso Natividad Canda" (February 2009).
[10] The factual events as they occurred, as well as the public reaction was all documented by mass media, and the compiled by the artist in his blog, available for viewing. See Habacuc, "Habacuc GuillermoVargas," http://www.blogger.com/profile/17960886994184148250 under "Caso Natividad Canda" (9 February 2009).
[11] Ibid.
[12] For a history of the border disputes between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and its connection to immigration issues see: Allen Cordero, "Migraciones y medio ambiente, una relacion possible?: el caso de la cuenca del río San Juan," in *Revista CentroAmericana de Ciencias Sociales* 1, vol. 3. (Julio 2006). Also, for an understanding on how an otherwise lenient Costa Rican government began to change its immigration policies to restrict employment opportunities and benefits to Nicaragua refugees, see Elizabeth M. Larson "Costa Rican Government Policy on Refugee Employment and Integration, 1980-1990" *International Journal of Refugee Law* 3: 4 (1992), 326-342.
[13] Habacuc, "Habacuc GuillermoVargas," http://www.blogger.com/profile/17960886994184148250 under "Caso Natividad Canda" (9 February 2009).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America," in Waldo Rasmussen, Fatima Bercht and Elizabeth Ferrer (ed.), L*atin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* (exh. cat.), (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 156-67.
[17] Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).
[18] For more on CAFTA in a political context see John A. Booth, et al. *Understanding Central America: Global Forces, Rebellion, and Change, 5th edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010), 76-78, 234-235.
[19] Quoted in Brandon W. Joseph. *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo -Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2013), 13.
[20] Kristine Stiles in conversation with the author in 2008. Stiles compared the reception of Habacuc's *Exposition #1* to both that of Yves Klein's faked montage *Leap Into the Void* (1961) and to the willingness of the public to believe in the erroneous story that Rudolf Schwarzkogler died in a performance by severing his penis.
[21] Stiles in "Remembering the Long History of Performance," a lecture and panel for "Regina Galindo: Extensions," curated by Virginia Perez for TEOR/ética, San Jose, Costa Rica.
[22] See, Walter D. Mignolo. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[23] Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Book, 1999), 3.
[24] Sergio Villena Fiengo, *El Perro Está Más Vivio Que Nunca: Arte, Infamia Y Contracultura En La Aldea Global* (San Jose, Costa Rica: Editorial Arlekín, 2011), 161.
[25] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated from the French by Richard Philcox; introductions by Jean Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Grove Press, 2004).