The Third Annual Symposium of Latin American Art

Vistas

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Super/Natural: Excess, Ecologies, and Art in the Americas

Edited by
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INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES ON LATIN AMERICAN ART

The Annual Symposium of Latin American Art brings together graduate students, emerging scholars, and artists to share and discuss the multitude of perspectives that inform the artistic production and discourses of the region, as well as of US Latino art. This two-day series of panels also features prominent keynote speakers who are shaping the understanding of Latin American art today. Established by the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) and The Institute of Fine Arts at New York University in 2016, the event takes place each spring and is organized and run by the graduate students at The Institute of Fine Arts and invited partner institutions such as The Graduate Center of The City University of New York and Columbia University.

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Foreword

Anna Indych-López

The third annual ISLAA symposium of Latin American Art in 2018, "Super/Natural: Excess, Ecologies, and Art in the Americas," began The Graduate Center (GC)/CUNY's partnership with The Institute of Fine Arts (IFA) in organizing and hosting this important initiative, an alliance that continues today. This forum represented an opportunity not only to formalize long-standing bonds among the programs, the students, and the faculty specializing in the art of the Americas, but also to bring that productive intellectual exchange to an international public while highlighting critical emerging scholarship in the region. As an alumna of the IFA and a mentee of Edward Sullivan (who almost single-handedly pioneered and has continued to move forward the field that was in an embryonic stage when I first took a class with him in 1990 as an undergraduate), I am keen to underscore the ways in which the students who have led these symposia draw on the tradition of historical inquiry that marked the beginnings of the field, but more importantly, how they continue to expand its methodological boundaries. Incorporating theoretical critiques, such as ecocriticism in the case of this symposium, they question assumptions about the very foundations of the discipline, implicated in the violence of European colonialism. Structured by the insights of decolonial thought and political activism, emerging scholarship reveals how the study of Latin American art can put pressure on dominant modes of thought, histories of violence, and exploitative practices. Collected and edited by Graduate Center alumna Danielle Stewart for this issue of *Vistas*, the three papers published here emerged from the two-day 2018 symposium organized by IFA students Brian Bentley, Madeline Murphy Turner, Julián Sánchez González, and Juanita Solano Roa, and GC students Horacio Ramos, Gillian Sneed, and Stewart. All of the symposium participants, including those whose papers could not be published here, showed the efforts of this new scholarship. In addition to ISLAA, we at The Graduate Center are grateful to the Rewald Endowment and The Center for Humanities for providing crucial funding.

Preface

Danielle Stewart

In January 2018, facing the dual threats of devolving nuclear and climate security, researchers from *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* set their metaphorical Doomsday Clock the closest to midnight it has ever been—11:58 p.m. My symposium co-organizers (Brian Bentley, Horacio Ramos, Madeline Murphy Turner, Juanita Solano Roa, Julián Sánchez González, and Gillian Sneed) and I had no way of knowing this chilling prognosis for 2018 when we started planning our conference in the fall of 2017. But as we witnessed in the news Hurricane Maria's devastation of Puerto Rico and the deadly earthquake in central Mexico, we sensed an intensification of the sorrow and anxiety brought on by climate change. In the wake of Donald Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement—a diplomatic and ecological tragedy that continues to play out as I write this introduction—we struggled to find a theme for the annual ISLAA conference that felt both relevant and appropriately urgent. The emergent field of art historical ecocriticism presented itself as the obvious approach.

Ecocriticism developed as a theoretical model in the 1990s, but art history has been delayed in adopting the methodology. However, 2018 might be reasonably argued as marking a turning of the tide. The year that ISLAA, The Institute of Fine Arts, and The Graduate Center, CUNY, hosted "Super/Natural: Excess, Ecologies, and Art in the Americas," similar events were held across the globe at Stanford University, the University of Bern, Princeton University, and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, among other institutions. This critical mass of new research focusing on interconnections between aesthetics and the environment demonstrates a decisive break with the apathetic past and a new moral reckoning within the art world of its own role in the crisis of overconsumption that is disproportionately affecting communities in the Global South.

As a group of art historians focused on the visual culture of Latin America, we wanted our symposium not only to respond to US critics practicing ecocriticism but also, more specifically, to dialogue with Latin American scholars who have been vocal critics of western neoliberalism and the massive waste it generates. Primary among these voices is that of Brazilian anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, whose theorization of Amerindian "multinaturalism" argues for the original humanity of all things. As Viveiros de Castro explains, in many indigenous American mythologies, the disruption of the primordial state led to the speciation of all simultaneously human-and-nonhuman beings. Thus, Viveiros de Castro's "perspectivism" dictates that humanity is a reflexive condition, while animalness is merely the condition of being viewed from the outside.

Taking Viveiros de Castro's universalizing ideas as a starting point, we invited presentations that analyzed interspecies relationships and problematized traditional designations of "nature" and "culture." Specifically, we were interested in visual records of social practices and "super/natural" ecological phenomena that defied empirical explanation and therefore demarcated the limits of Western philosophy and scientific analysis. In choosing the papers for this edition of *Vistas*, I wanted to honor the diverse interests of the organizing committee and speakers by bringing together essays that consider distinct Latin American geographies and historical moments that call into question extractive colonial and neocolonial attitudes. Although not included in this volume, compelling keynote addresses at the conference by colonial art historian Daniela Bleichmar and Brazilian contemporary artist Eduardo Kac also demonstrated the broad chronological potentialities of ecocritical research.

Gaby Greenlee's contribution contrasts Inka and Spanish perceptions of the silver-rich mountain Cerro Rico during the colonial period. While the Spanish valued the mountain for its mineral wealth and advertised their ability to extract its deposits via engravings that celebrated exploitative labor practices and environmentally degrading refining processes, the Inka community venerated mountains even while they were being defiled. In the Inka world, mountains were an important part of

the social network that linked human, natural, and supernatural spheres. The Inkas considered the mountain both a protector and an embodiment of the divine, so the mountain's viewpoint, not the grasping representations of myopic invaders, mattered most to them.

While Greenlee elucidates opposing paradigms toward extraction, Lesley Wolff highlights the violence of consumption in her reading of Rufino Tamayo's *Naturaleza muerta* (1954). Tying Tamayo's images of watermelon—a food associated with the cultural and economic substratum—to political and social repression in Mexico, Wolff elaborates Tamayo's struggle to be viewed as a modern artist. Wolff grounds her analysis in bell hooks's concept of "eating the other," demonstrating how people and objects associated with the native/rural were visually exoticized, disciplined, sanitized, and sold for foreign consumption. Importantly, Wolff's reading is grounded in the emerging discipline of food studies, which invites readers to question how what we physically ingest shapes our visual and cultural environment.

Finally, Javier Rivero Ramos's paper triangulates the relationship between art, ecocriticism, and cybernetics via the work of contemporary Chilean artist Juan Downey. After arriving in New York in 1968, Downey increasingly experimented with art installations that employed sensors to measure natural forces and supply feedback into animal/human communication systems. Rivero Ramos argues that in the era of emergent environmental activism, Downey's cybernetic loops demonstrated the potential for interspecies communication and their fundamental interdependence. As the finale to this volume, the essay is an outstanding example of the creative thinking imperative in the face of escalating crisis.

Natura in Excelsis: Sacred Mountains as Producers of Culture, Wealth, and the Supernatural in the Colonial Andean Mining Space

Gaby Greenlee

Rendering Value in the Andes

In 1532, the Inka empire spanned most of the length of South America, bridging coastal and mountain areas through an extensive network of roadways and administrative centers.[1] By November of that year, however, Spanish invaders would capture a contender to the Inka throne, Atawallpa, and the empire's fragmentation would begin. In a European map printed circa twenty years later, the South American continent is registered with an unsettling erasure: a massive area that for thousands of years had been populated by distinctive cultures is reduced to a ghostly outline with nothing but the words "El Peru" at its center. It is a stark, empty space awaiting an imprint; the Andes mountains—the primary subject of this essay—are eerily absent. The rendering suggests that to the European eye, the land's value was still undefined. In fact, many aspects of the South American landscape resisted Spanish perceptions. Even though the Spanish were enthralled by the material riches of the Americas—gold shaped the vocabulary of wonder and bolstered the religious zeal that accompanied New World explorations—Europeans failed to grasp certain notions of substance in the Andes, misunderstanding in critical ways how materiality was *experienced*, rather than just consumed.[2]

Another reading of the blank map is that it presents a new beginning. For millenarian Christians, such as the Catholic monarchs and Christopher Columbus, the Americas were to be the "new heaven and new earth," where God's mission could be enacted away from the corruptions of the Old World before the final apocalypse.[3] Missionaries did in fact enter the Americas on the heels of conquest. But if spiritual wealth was to be found in the new colonies, so too was wealth in precious metals, interpreted by many as Providence's gift to the Spanish monarchs.[4] While extravagant accounts from the first Caribbean outposts

painted a picture of rivers and streams lined with bountiful gold, these would be eclipsed by later incursions into the rugged Andes resulting in truly spectacular outputs of silver.

The prodigious production of Andean silver mined for European markets toward the end of the sixteenth century transformed the question of value in both the Andean and Spanish worldviews. At first, silver and gold produced in the colonies served as an index of Spanish monetary wealth, but this equivalence would not last.[5] The straightforward correspondence between bullion and wealth soon dissipated, and the comforting notion that gold and silver had a stable and fixed value faltered.[6] While vast amounts of gold and silver streamed into Spanish coffers, the Crown simultaneously drew on credit to finance further expansion, and the merchant class likewise speculated on the continued growth of global financial markets. This reliance on credit upended prior mercantilist notions that wealth existed in fixed quantities while interest and inflation overturned the idea that gold or silver could be equated to a constant value.[7]

The layers of false representations perpetuated by Spain and the Church are eminently visible in the neatly balanced composition of a print by Theodor de Bry (fig. 1). The print shows Columbus and his men receiving bulky riches from the Native inhabitants.[8] However, gold troves proved to be more fantasy than reality for the Europeans. In truth, the materialized wealth we see here would eventually give way to the invisible, diabolic flows of the credit economy generated by the promise of such plentiful deposits.[9] Similarly, we see Indigenous figures making obsequious gestures that befit how Europeans imagined themselves: as heralds of the Native people's salvation. Yet Indigenous inhabitants were not as forthcoming as the image suggests. Nor would the Christian cross being raised on the left-hand side of the print, and echoed in the lance Columbus pierces into the land, ever be as firmly planted as the Church hoped—neither in the soil nor in the spirit.

Matters of Value and Temporal Shifts at Potosí

The mountain called "Rich Hill," or Cerro Rico, in Potosí, in present-day Bolivia, rises more than 15,000 feet above the altiplano of the southern Andes. It is one of the sites on our planet that, through extreme thermal processes, collected ancient universal stardust into vast silver deposits under its surface. Although the intense highland sun bathes its surface in golden light, it is because of its silver that Cerro Rico entered the European imagination 500 years ago. Over and over, Cerro Rico's pyramidal form would be represented in European prints and paintings as an emblem of the Spanish Empire long after Spain's Golden Age had passed.

But before the Spanish identified its potential and lay claim to its mineral deposits, Potosí's Cerro Rico existed within a different empire's value system. The Inkas, whose empire dominated the Andes for more than a century before the arrival of the Spanish, also knew about the mountain's silver veins.[10] And yet the Spaniards and Andeans never experienced the same mountain. Principally, Andeans did not see the mountain's silver as something to be circulated in exchange for other goods. Nor were precious metals coveted for accumulation—gold and silver would not have represented greed and unnatural hunger in the way they could for Europeans.

If gold and coinage had been perceived up to this time in Europe as "incarnated value" and if the dematerialization of money would at turns be confusing, mysterious, and suspect for the average sixteenth-century European, for Native Andeans, the question of how matter such as gold and silver *mattered* was also critical.[11] This is because of how Andeans perceived mountains. Spaniards, and later Europeans, sorted through imaginings of wealth and power in the Indies with countless representations of Cerro Rico. In key colonial chronicles, representations of the silver mountain convey the source of Spain's wealth as a conical form that sits imperturbable and solid, perhaps assuaging through imagery the anxiety that the public felt toward the immaterial, abstract money generated by a credit economy.[12] For Andeans, in turn, the mountain was understood as beyond representational value, and instead in terms of "presentational" value. Another way of expressing this would be "subjectivity"; that is, in the Andean socio-sacred context, mountains were understood as both object

and subject and were treated as beings with sentience who were part of a social network that spread across human, natural, and supernatural spheres.[13] Furthermore, metal ores were seen as extensions of a mountain's supernatural aspect, evidenced also in the gold and silver figurines so often deposited in Andean mountain burial shrines.[14]

The early colonial mine of Cerro Rico, therefore, is a site that bears witness to the critical shifts in value brought on by colonial incursion, particularly in contrast to Andeans' interactions with natural phenomena and landscape forms that acknowledged supernatural presence. Although Cerro Rico's mineral deposits had been known and probably mined by the Inkas and other Native cultures, it was not until after the Spanish first registered claim to its silver veins in 1545 that the mountain manifested a value we might recognize within categories of wealth or profit and within the rubric of an extractivism married to speed. My assertion here is that the question of speed, of introducing modes of production that would alter notions of the temporal in relation to geological processes, is intricately linked to a cultural shift during the early colonial phase that would contort how different types of matter held value. In the substance of silver—lustrous, malleable, tarnishable—and in its exploitation, the Spanish discourse of "wealth" and "profit" encountered the Indigenous discourse on the "natural" and "supernatural."

Thus, part of this essay's intent is to bring forward what value meant for Andeans in terms of natural forms like mountains and silver and how they inhabit the temporal and the spatial. In Andean ontology, mountains have a forceful presence, presiding over communities spatially and physically. They are steeped in social processes that intricately bind them with human activities and survival over ages. As looming forms that articulate notions of ecology and landscape in the Andes, mountains function within relational networks of human-natural intersubjectivity and are thought to have a role in structuring some of these networks.[15] As Andean inhabitants move through the landscape, they situate themselves according to the largest, highest, and most established forms that surround their visual boundaries—the mountains.[16] Everything and every place is uniquely oriented within local space, but also within a broader regional space, primarily defined by a hierarchy of mountain

peaks.[17] It might be said that one's viewpoint from a hilltop or mountaintop is critical, but more carefully, the mountains' viewpoint is key, for they are the main landmarks in the landscape and it is in relation to them that one orients oneself.[18] Mountains with superior vantage points are especially recognized as having a supernatural presence. They are critical to ever ongoing hydrological processes that nourish agriculture, and this factor, among others, incorporates mountains in social relationships: mountains as lords (or *apus*) ensure the livelihood of their communities over time.

A mountain's height, however, is not the only index of its potential divinity or its linkage to the social network. Other qualities contribute to a mountain's value as a divine presence and social actor. Because the Cerro Rico contained silver, a resplendent material that recalled the Inka celestial deities, it had high socio-sacred value as a site that bridged natural and supernatural categories.[19] The significance of gold for the Inkas is well known, as its brilliant color and shine were associated with the Inkas' primary deity, the Sun.[20] Gold's material value was further linked to divinity in the earthly sphere as it circulated in close association with important Inka religious temples and with the body of the Inka ruler, who was thought to be a semidivine child of the Sun. In counterpart, silver was paired with the feminine Moon and, through its material qualities, embodied lunar essence. Importantly, silver also played a part in worship rites for the Sun. Characterized as "the 'light' of the inner world," silver correlated to the Sun's rays in a complementary dualism.[21] In fact, silver mined at Cerro Rico and at another nearby silver mountain, called Porco, was said to have been dedicated to the Inka sun god, and both mountains retained a sanctuary to the divinity.[22]

In the decades following Spain's territorial claim to Cerro Rico's silver veins, production fluctuated according to access and the facility of processing different consistencies of silver ore. Nonetheless, 1545 was a life-changing year for the mountain. Before this, the traditional mode of processing silver had been smelting ore in clay *guayrachinas* (cylindrical ovens) that used mountain winds to generate sufficient heat to transform the element slowly, in limited amounts.[23] By the mid-1570s, however, the introduction of mercury amalgamation had replaced smelting and silver processing reached new levels of productivity.[24]

A 1671 Dutch print by Arnoldus Montanus reflects the significant changes mercury wrought and exemplifies how representations of the mountain circulated widely throughout Europe (fig. 2). The mercury amalgamation process led to dramatic increases in silver refinement, as evidenced in the production mills that pepper the background. The image offers a peek into the new mining space: instruments of science swallow human labor in dark, airless caverns according to a production model that exalted the incipient capitalist values of quantity, speed, and a transformed landscape.

Sifting through ideas of representation and presentation, it is also valid to consider mercury's material qualities within the collision of Spanish and Andean value systems. When not in its liquid form, mercury is found in an ore called cinnabar (a mercury sulfide compound), whose powdered form and red coloring have been used by numerous cultures as pigment, as medicine, and also as poison.[25] Its vermilion hue is thought to have been valuable to the Inkas for use in adorning objects and perhaps even bodies, despite its toxicity.[26] In appearance, cinnabar's sedimentary solidity is metonymic for Earth's slow geologic time. In contrast, the silvery, fluid (but dense) materiality of its liquid counterpart, quicksilver, is shifty and slippery as it attracts and draws out precious metals such as silver, gold, and tin from their metal ores. Quicksilver's ability to alter other metals catalyzed dramatic temporal and spatial changes to the Andean mountainscape.

After amalgamation processes were introduced in the late sixteenth century to improve silver refining, Cerro Rico would be mined at a pace so unforgiving that by 1600 the exploited labor there was producing roughly half of all the silver coming out of the Americas.[27] During this period the Spanish colonial administration relocated thousands of Indigenous people to toil within sweltering mine shafts or to trudge barefoot through toxic sludges of mercury, salt, water, and silver ore.[28] Unscrupulous extraction and forcible change overturned complex social relations within Andean society, in many cases decimating entire communities; it also encroached on Andean sacred practices that sustained human relationships with mountain deities.

Subterra/Super Terram

Silver's value in the Andean context lay in its association with mountain deities and local socio-sacred practices. But, as noted, it also drew significance from its association with the Inka ruler. Many mountaintop sites housed sanctuaries that explicitly linked the material value of a mountain and its ore deposits to sacred Inka imperial rites. Both Cerro Rico and neighboring Porco were supernatural bodies housing sanctuaries, indicating that the mountains were actors in the socio-sacred sphere.[29] But how could these mountains and their silver retain a socio-sacred presence in light of the temporal and spatial uprooting that undermined their value within supernatural and social networks? The plundering of mountains for silver deposits and the dissolution of social organization across mountain communities threatened to reformulate how humans and supernaturals acted within relational frameworks—in the face of this onslaught, how did mountain deities retain meaning? In other words, how did meaning that came *from* the mountains and their silver—as experienced by native Andeans—counter the subsequent meaning that Spaniards attached *to* them? The contention here is that even at the most active periods of mineral extraction, mountains continued to make themselves relevant as supernatural players. Traces of sacred, relational practices on Cerro Rico and other silver mountains in its vicinity during the late sixteenth century bear testimony to their persistent supernatural presence.[30]

In 1599, two years before Wolfgang Richter created his engraving depicting Cerro Rico's interior, colonizers destroyed the sacred sanctuary at its summit, thus exposing that for Andeans the mountain *had* retained divine presence despite half a century of European mining and evangelization (fig. 3).[31] In addition, although neighboring Porco's mines had been handed over to the Spanish in 1538, some forty years later, a Spanish chronicler mentions that three sacred stones once located on its summit sanctuary had been found inside another mountain (called Caltama), having been taken there for their protection.[32]

These accounts suggest that the mountains did not lose their identity as divine beings even as colonizers presumed to control them. What is more, the fact that Porco's sanctuary was relocated to Caltama for safekeeping shows that mountains retained their integrity within Indigenous relational practices and

were still seen as powerful protective forces. The possibility that mountain interiors—and even the interiors of mined mountains—could have been havens instead of utterly depleted sites pushes us to reconsider the appalling images of human bodies laboring within Cerro Rico's earthen body. Amid the horrors of the mines, there are hidden narratives. The European representation of the vivisected sacred mountain points to the disruption of time and space in terms of geologic processes and of Andean culture, lifeways, and sacred practices. And yet evidence of Indigenous religious altars in the mountain space and subsequent Indigenous uses for silver (such as silver threads in traditional and sometimes sacred Andean weavings) suggest that value located within natural and supernatural materiality withstood colonial aggression.

Looking Again

If we survey the numerous European representations of Potosí over the centuries of its exploitation, such as Giuseppe Maria Terreni's late eighteenth-century Italian print modeled on earlier depictions, we get a sense of how European aesthetic strategies helped structure colonial violence (fig. 4). The difficulty in countering a European mode of representational visuality cannot be understated when examining the Andean context of visual meaning-making, so often invested in a less figural, presentational value system not easily dissociated from spatial and relational processes and experiences. For more than 200 years Cerro Rico nurtured a European fascination with silver's value in relation to money. It is also apparent that Europe was enamored with representing the mountain in terms defined by human activity *over*, rather than *with*, the landscape.

In the proliferation of Cerro Rico prints that circulated in Europe through various Dutch, Italian, British, French, and Spanish printing presses, the presence of houses, mills, churches, and people seem to be the points of reference for how we should understand social life and productivity in colonial Peru. On the surface of these images, we see that the Spanish invasion was a cosmic overturning, a reordering of space and of material reality that smothered the mountain's supernatural identity and squandered Andean lifeways. But let us look again. Mountains

such as Cerro Rico and Porco, which in an Andean worldview were closely linked not to representational systems but to relational, presentational ones, did not exit the socio-sacred networks in which they had participated for millennia. Colonizers were slow to realize it, but in all of their prints and engravings something other than the human presence *was* being expressed. Colonial devastation was unable to transgress deeply enough to uproot the materialized, sacred, and relational value of mountains. Even the mountains that were relentlessly mined nevertheless managed to hold space for Indigenous belief systems. This was evidenced in how mountain interiors could become refuges for ritual objects and altars during the colony. It is also apparent in how mountains today continue to be seen as agents in a human-supernatural social network. Mountains are still perceived as relational beings interacting with highland communities. They are sources of water that irrigates farmland, but they are also the origins of sometimes harsh weather cycles. As dominant presences in the landscape, mountain supernaturals oversee many aspects of life, protecting local inhabitants while also demanding respect.[33] The mountains still loom large, and still they look out from their vantage points.

1. Much scholarly literature of the twentieth century uses the spelling "Inca," but this essay follows a shift over the last few decades that privileges the spelling "Inka" in accordance with the phonetics of the Quechua language, which was spoken by the ethnic Inka people before Europeans introduced the Latin alphabet in the sixteenth century. Quechua continues to be spoken today in the Andes. It is generally not favored among Andeanists to add the "n" (Inkan) even when using "Inka" in adjectival context. Thus, I use Inka throughout, even when it is an adjective.

2. The discourse of "wonder" corresponded to a European taste for the unfamiliar and that exceeded the ordinary. This was a mode of apprehending the nonwestern, for example, as through the "thoroughly externalized objects that [could], after the initial moments of astonishment [had] passed, be touched, catalogued, inventoried, possessed." Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 22–23.

3. Sabine MacCormack, "Ubi Ecclesia? Perceptions of Medieval Europe in Spanish America," *Speculum* 69, no. 1 (January 1994): 76–79. The mid-seventeenth-century Peruvian-born Augustinian friar Antonio de la Calancha wrote that Peru was the "new heaven and new earth" prophesied in John's Apocalypse.

4. Elvira Vilches, *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 26–27.

5. Vilches, 55–56.

6. Vilches, 31–44.

7. Vilches, 31–35.

8. While recognizing there are and have been many Indigenous groups in South America, the words "Native" and "Indigenous" are capitalized here since they refer to identity categories in the manner that "Spaniard" or "European" are equally recognized. For more on terminology and spelling as applied to Indigenous people, visit https://najanewsroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NAJA_Reporting_and_Indigenous_Terminology_Guide.pdf.

9. Vilches, 31–34.

10. Pablo Cruz, "Huacas olvidadas y cerros santos: apuntes metodológicos sobre la cartografía sagrada en los Andes del sur de Bolivia," *Estudios atacameños, arqueología y antropología surandinas*, no. 38 (2009): 57. Cruz and others further note many sacred mountain mines were kept hidden, while other mountains were offered up as decoys in their stead. For example, Porco mine was discovered "for" the Spaniards about a decade before Potosí, even though the local communities certainly knew of Potosí's silver wealth. Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne adds that mineral veins or mine shafts were also part of cult practices. Potosí has also been linked to ritual practices associated with a pre-Inka divinity, Pachacámac. See Bouysse-Cassagne, "Las minas del centro-sur andino, los cultos prehispánicos y los cultos cristianos," *Bulletin de l'institut français d'études andines* 34, no. 3 (2005): 448–50.

11. Vilches, 33.

12. See Cieza de León, *Parte primera de la chronica del Peru* (Seville: En casa de Martin de Montesdoca, 1553), n.p., digitized manuscript, John Carter Brown Library, box 1894, Brown University, accessed December 15, 2019, https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCB~1~1~500185~100000200:Cerro-de-Potosi?qvq=q:potosi&mi=4&trs=56.

13. Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Scorned Subjects in Colonial Objects," *Material Religion* 13, no. 4 (2017): 416–17.

14. Thomas Besom, "Inka Sacrifice and the Mummy of Salinas Grandes," *Latin American Antiquity* 21, no. 4 (December 2010): 399–422; see also Constanza Ceruti, "Human Bodies as Objects of Dedication at Inca Mountain Shrines (North-Western Argentina)," *World Archaeology* 36, no. 1 (2004): 103–22. Bouysse-Cassagne states that the entire mining process was sacralized, including the smelting process with the clay *guayrachina* ovens. Bouysse-Cassagne, 450.

15. On relational value, see Tamara Bray, "From Rational to Relational: Reconfiguring Value in the Inca Empire," in *The Construction of Value in the Ancient World*, eds. John K. Papadopoulos and Gary Orton (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology UCLA, 2012), 397.

16. Catherine Allen, "To Be Quechua: The Symbolism of Coca Chewing in Highland Peru," *American Ethnologist* 8, no. 1 (February 1981): 161.

17. Allen, 161–62. While Pachamama (Mother Earth) refers to a feminine, "undifferentiated ground," sacred mountains are usually masculine and order space hierarchically.

18. Allen, 161.

19. Mary Van Buren and Brendan J. M. Weaver, "Contours of Labor and History: A Diachronic Perspective on Andean Mineral Production and the Making of Landscapes in Porco, Bolivia," *Historical Archaeology* 46, no. 3, (2012): 82–83. There is archaeological evidence for an Inka-period shrine atop Mount Porco, which held Cerro Rico within its viewshed.

20. Bouysse-Cassagne, 449; see also Emily C. Floyd, "Tears of the Sun: The Naturalistic and Anthropomorphic in Inca Metalwork," *Conversations: An Online Journal of the Center for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion* (2016), accessed December 15, 2019, doi:10.22332/con.mst.2016.2.

21. Van Buren and Weaver, 83.

22. Tristan Platt and Pablo Quisbert, "Tras las huellas del silencio. Potosí, los Inkas y el virrey Toledo," in *Mina y metalurgia en los Andes del Sur desde la época prehispánica hasta el siglo XVII*, eds. Pablo José Cruz and Jean-Joinville Vacher (Sucre, Bolivia: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, 2008), 233. Van Buren and Weaver established that the Inkas mined silver at Porco to adorn Cusco's Sun temple along with gold. Potosí's silver possibly shared the same destiny. Van Buren and Weaver, 83.

23. Florian Téreygeol and Celia Castro, "La metalurgia prehispánica de la plata en Potosí," in *Mina y metalurgia en los Andes del Sur desde la época prehispánica hasta el siglo XVII*, 15–18.

24. Téreygeol and Castro, 15.

25. B. Arriaza, et al., "Toxic Pigment in a *Capacocha* Burial: Instrumental Identification of Cinnabar in Inca Human Remains from Iquique, Chile," *Archaeometry* 60, no. 6 (2018): 1325. The sixteenth-century Jesuit José de Acosta recounts that the Inkas used cinnabar for war paint or celebratory events. See Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, Book 4, Chapter XI (Bolonia, Spain: IbnKhaldun epublibre, 2013 [1590]), 281, Internet Archive, accessed December 15, 2019, https://archive.org/details/AcostaJoseDe.HistoriaNaturalYMoralDeLasIndias2013_201903/page/n3.

26. B. Arriaza et al., 1325–27. See also Maria Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, *Pachacamac y el señor de los milagros: una trayectoria milenaria* (Lima: IEP Ediciones, 1992), 74. Rostworowski references two chroniclers who mention the importance of mercury (azogue) within Andean ritual practice.

27. Nicholas A. Robins, *Mercury, Mining, and Empire: The Human and Ecological Cost of Colonial Silver Mining in the Andes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 39. See also Vilches, 31–34.

28. Tristan Platt, "The Alchemy of Modernity: Alonso Barba's Copper Cauldrons and the Independence of Bolivian Metallurgy (1790–1890)," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 1 (February 2000): 3–13, 23.

29. Cruz, "Huacas Olvidadas," 60. "Porco" was a name linked to a supernatural entity (*wak'a*) associated with lightning and war. As an identity applied to the mountain, "Porco" seems to refer to the supernatural's territorial jurisdiction. Potosí's Cerro Rico probably fell under the same jurisdiction, sacralized by the Inkas who acknowledged this socio-sacred network.

30. Tim Ingold, "Temporality of the Landscape," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (October 1993): 152. Ingold formulates that landscape is capable of giving testimony.

31. Bouysse-Cassagne, 450.

32. Bouysse-Cassagne, 450. See also Cruz, "Huacas Olvidadas," 59.

33. For more on sacred mountains in the Andes today, see Tristan Platt, "Symétries en miroir. Le concept de *yanantin* chez les Macha de Bolivie," in "Anthropologie historique des sociétés andines," special issue, *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 33, no. 5/6, (September–December 1978): 1081–107; see also Allen, 157–71.

Figures

Gaby Greenlee

Natura in Excelsis: Sacred Mountains as Producers of Culture, Wealth, and the Supernatural in the Colonial Andean Mining Space

Figure 1

Engraving of Christopher Columbus arriving in the "Indies," originally captioned "Columbus, as he first arrives in India, is received by the inhabitants and honored with the bestowing of many gifts." From Theodor de Bry, *Americae* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Theodor de Bry, 1594). Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries.

Figure 2

Engraving of Potosí's mountain, in Arnoldus Montanus,
De nieuwe en onbekende weereld (Amsterdam: Jacob Meurs, 1671).
Courtesy the John Carter Brown Library.

III.

Wie die Indianer das Goldt aus den Bergen graben.

DIe Indianer arbeiten auß dem Gebirge Potossi welchs wol für daß reichste Gebirg in gantz Indien mag gehalten werden/ daß Goldt herauß solcher gestalt/ wie man hie zu Land/ in den Bergwercken auch thut/ nemlich sie müssen es alle auß den Felsen herauß hawen/ vnnd theilen die Arbeiter in zwey Theil/ ein Theil arbeitet deß Tags vnd ruhet deß Nachts/ der ander Theil ruhet deß Tags vnd arbeitet deß Nachts/ wiewol sie eben so wenig Tag eine Zeit als die ander sehen/ sondern müssen sich stets mit Kertzen behelffen/ dann sie wol 150. Klafftern tieff vnter der Erden stecken/ doch müssen sie vnangesehen der grossen Höhe/ alle das Ertz auff ihren Rücken hinauff tragen. Darzu sie dann Leyter gebrauchen/ die gedoppelt nemlich zwo an einander gemacht seyn/ diese Leytern sind von gewunden Ochsenhäuten gemacht/ vnnd mit höltzern Staffeln durch zogen/ gehen also allzeit drey hinter einander hinauff/ vnd darneben drey auff der andern Seyten hinab/ vnnd weil sie sich allezeit mit beyden Händen halten müssen/ im hinauffgehen/ hat der förderst allezeit ein brennendt Liecht am Daumen gebunden/ weil auch wie gemelt/ der Weg hoch hinauffzusteigen ist/ haben sie unterwegens Ruhebäncke/ darauff sie mit ihrer Last ruhen können.

Von

Figure 3

Engraving of Native laborers extracting ore from a mine,
originally captioned “Wie die Indianer das Goldt aus den Bergen graben”
(How the Indians dig gold from the mountains).
From Theodor de Bry, *Neundter und letzter Theil Americae*
(Frankfurt-am-Main: Wolffgang Richter, 1601).
Courtesy the John Carter Brown Library.

Figure 4

Engraving of Potosí city and its silver mountain,
originally captioned "Veduta della citta, e della montagna del Potosí"
(View of the city and the Potosí mountain). From Giuseppe Maria Terreni,
Atlant dell'America contenente le migliori carte geografiche, e topografiche delle principali citta, laghi, fiumi e fortezze del nuovo mondo
(Livorno: Presso Giovanni Tommaso Masi e comp., ca. 1777).
Courtesy the John Carter Brown Library.

Mister Watermelon/Señor Sandía: Fruitful Anxieties in Rufino Tamayo's *Naturaleza muerta* (1954)

Lesley A. Wolff

The recent gustatory turn in the humanities has, at last, brought cuisine into more rigorous conversation with art, raising questions about whether food can be art and how art and craft may be allied practices.[1] Richer discursive frontiers at the intersection of food and art, however, remain underexplored. Rather than consider food on hierarchical terms (i.e., is cuisine a "high" art?), I propose we ask how food is visual and why that matters. For if food can indeed be art, then it too is beholden to the matrices of power that craft a dominant visual vernacular at the expense of the visual and lived realities of subjugated populations. To that end, this essay sets forth an ecocritical reading of *Naturaleza muerta* (Still Life, 1954, fig. 1), one of twentieth-century Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo's most widely viewed, but understudied, murals. Specifically, this essay considers the role of watermelon not only as a symbol in Tamayo's composition, but more urgently as an eco-visual signifier of Mexican heritage. This includes the complex ways watermelon elevates imagined spheres of national belonging while veiling the informal food economies of market vendors that propelled this heritage. By drawing upon feminist scholar bell hooks's concept of "eating the other"—a gustatory metaphor for the fraught power dynamics of race and gender in Western society—this essay argues that watermelon functions as a vehicle for the competing discourses of displacement, decontextualization, and signification of the Other in Tamayo's modernist mural and, by extension, mid-century Mexico City's visual landscape. By reading Tamayo's mural through the often overlooked ecologies of "consumer cannibalism," this essay sets forth new methodologies of corporeality and consumption at the intersection of food studies and art history.[2]

Tamayo's multipaneled mural, created at the apex of his career, strikes its viewer with the monumentality of its mundane still life subject. Such an epic scale was typically reserved for the murals of Los Tres Grandes (The Great Three)—Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro

Siqueiros—whose explicitly sociopolitical and historical commentaries Tamayo frequently criticized. The viewer confronts neither campesinos (peasants) nor pre-Columbian Aztecs, but instead fruits and wines ready for consumption. The painting spans twenty-eight feet and reaches nearly seven feet high, rendering the forms larger than life. Tamayo composed *Naturaleza muerta* to fill the far wall of the restaurant in the newly opened Sanborns department store along the posh Paseo de la Reforma—a vital boulevard renovated in the mid-twentieth century to extend westward from Mexico City's historic center toward newly developed affluent neighborhoods. Architectural historian Katherine O'Rourke has called the Paseo de la Reforma "Mexico City's spine of corporate capitalism."[3] In the foreground, the mural depicts two wine bottles and a small cup sitting atop a round table tilted toward the viewer; a bowl filled with apples, one of which has escaped and landed on the viewer's left; the back of two wrought iron chairs; and twelve oversize slices of watermelon that form a halo around the central still life tableau, teetering on the foreshortened floor.

Watermelon marks a prominent theme in the work of Tamayo, who was known to his friends as Señor Sandía (Mister Watermelon). In the most literal sense, the moniker was well deserved; Tamayo painted dozens of watermelons in his lifetime (and even more works in his patented "watermelon red" color). However, the motivations behind this rather cheeky sobriquet remain unknown. Tamayo took great pride in creating works of universalist plastic expression. Was this nickname in jest—an effort by his contemporaries to undermine his avant-gardist experimentations of form and color by calling out watermelon and Tamayo as agrarian products? As an artist of Zapotec heritage who persistently struggled to assert his artistic agency in relation to his perceived indigeneity, the name Señor Sandía professes Tamayo's marginalized status rooted in modern nationalist attitudes about indigenous urban labor.[4] Like the watermelons precariously hovering at the precipice of Tamayo's composition in *Naturaleza muerta*, the artist's association with the fruit feels socially and racially pointed, a tongue-in-cheek gesture in which nationalist anxieties churn, uneasily digested.

Feminist scholar bell hooks describes the Western inscription of otherness onto bodies of color as the contested gustatory process of "eating the other." Likening social difference

to adding spice to a dish, hooks posits that the pleasures of consumption have become a poignant, if underappreciated, vehicle for the contestation of race and sex in Western society.[5] White mainstream culture, hooks states, necessitates difference in order to "liven up" an otherwise monotonous, dull landscape. hooks's interests lie in the power dynamics of Western, patriarchal desire, yet her foodways metaphor has nonetheless been adopted by scholars as a vital bridge between coloniality, the material intersection of foodways, and racial anxieties perpetuated by capitalist consumerism.[6] Although hooks invokes "eating" metaphorically, the subjugation of producers in the Western commodity chain is a visceral reality, one actualized through the material, visual, and performative encounters of consumption, gustatory and otherwise. In short, as anthropologist David Graeber argues, the imagination mediates all material desire and its end result, consumption.[7] The modern imagination is one of ecological excess and its attendant anxieties and aspirations, many of which revolve around and are persistently reinscribed through food and its social, material, and performative connotations and practices.

Even though Tamayo's images of watermelon are devoid of human presence, they nonetheless implicate social and political bodies through the culturally marked act of eating. In North America, watermelon has historically been a "product of difference," one cultivated and sold by the rural working class. Watermelon is thus a vehicle through which white anxieties about bodies of color have been visually and viscerally prescribed. Watermelon grows on the ground. It is frequently consumed uncooked: a raw product, socially *in*distinct in an era of mass industrial production. The fruit's harvest and consumption readily signal social and racial tensions inscribed through the hierarchy of refinement. Watermelon is thus a product through which the violence of hegemonic consumption—"eating the other"—is made manifest.[8]

Though details surrounding the commission of Tamayo's mural are unclear, its creation coincided with the opening of the newly constructed Sanborns department store. By the 1950s, the Sanborns brand, established by two American brothers in the 1900s, had become ubiquitous in the ever-expanding Mexican urban landscape. As John Wilhelm's 1957 English-language *Guide to Mexico City* proclaims, "Everybody knows Sanborns."[9] Indeed, since its inception, Sanborns has crafted a prolific brand that

drew upon the popularity of Mexican muralism both in Mexico and the United States to deliver its corporate message of cultural authenticity. This self-branding included commissioning the mural *Omniciencia* (Omniscience, 1925) by Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco for its flagship store.

In spite of the explicit entanglements of the arts and consumerism fostered by Sanborns in modern Mexico City, the department store has been nothing more than a footnote in art historical considerations of the city's visual landscape—a fact that likely stems from exclusionary attitudes toward vernacular and commercial modernisms in art historical study. I suggest, however, that the painting should be interrogated precisely *because of* its vernacular pedigree. Sanborns's capitalist consumerism marks an important entry point into Tamayo's pictorial language at the nexus of globalism and national heritage. Sanborns espoused a keenly manicured brand of Mexican culture for the knowledgeable modern consumer seeking to possess and engage an exotic culture with the greatest efficiency, even at the expense of accountability to the living communities represented, whose local heritage the chain co-opted. Sanborns's consumer model expressed precisely the mode of hegemonic privileging of product over producer that Nicholas Mirzoeff ascribes to "visuality": a controlled knowledge production enacted through the gaze.[10] As a curated, for-profit site of perceived Mexican authenticity, Sanborns regulated the field of vision for its customers—the majority of whom were historically upper-middle-class Mexicans and US tourists—in the image of the nation's emergent capitalist aspirations. The lived realities of Mexican geopolitical fragmentation—the "colonial matrix of power"—existed beyond the visible scope of the urban tourist consumer for whom Sanborns made cultural encounters exceedingly facile, if superficially homogenous.[11]

Nonetheless, as a commissioned artwork for this commercial site, *Naturaleza muerta* functions amid a sea of commodities—an object intended to facilitate and heighten the patron's engagement with the Mexican goods and foodstuffs for sale. As the nexus of this consumerist ecosystem, *Naturaleza muerta* does the symbolic work of situating the patron within a site that signifies the perception of Mexican popular culture—*el pueblo* (literally "the people")—without necessitating an encounter with the realities upon which the idea of this

nationalist heritage was built. In her description of "eating the other" and the veiled dynamics of power, hooks argues, "One desires contact with the Other even as one wishes boundaries to remain intact."[12] Sanborns crafted its store in the image of this co-option-desire paradigm, an image in which the problematics of watermelon are literally and conceptually foregrounded.

As a foodstuff of African origins, watermelon embodies the globalization of commodities and the violence of institutional enslavement. It is also a cipher for the quieter (though no less grave) injustices of silence and invisibility that the African diaspora has experienced in Mexico and elsewhere in the Americas, something readily witnessed by the nation's co-option of watermelon as a national fruit without recognition of its African indigeneity. Since the nineteenth century, watermelon has prevailed as a symbol of the Mexican nation, even staking a claim as the "national fruit."[13] Nineteenth-century leaders of Mexican independence were said to have found inspiration for the flag in the red, white, and green colors gleaming from a slice of watermelon at their feet on the eve of victory. Watermelon began populating the visual as well as the folkloric field during this era of nascent independence when it was adopted into the popular *lotería* card deck as card number twenty-eight.[14] Watermelon imagery again proliferated in the 1940s and 1950s, as Mexican artists, many of them female, began turning away from the socialist arts of the immediate postrevolutionary era and toward privatized forms of painting, such as easel still lifes. Simultaneously, watermelon and other tropical fruits began visually populating the urban Mexican landscape in the form of commercialized, fetishized, and exoticized *calendarios* (corporate calendars) and tourism promotional posters, which equated the seductive qualities of the Mexican land with modern gustatory desire (fig. 2).[15]

Modern desire permeated all aspects of the new Sanborns for which Tamayo's *Naturaleza muerta* was commissioned. The store occupied the ground floor of the recently constructed US Embassy, a punctuated symbol of Western modernity designed by Mario Pani, arguably the most influential architect of the Mexican Miracle.[16] Pani's US Embassy building, along with his other structures along the Paseo, became an important icon of modernist Mexican architecture and marked a vital break from the colonial revival style of the 1940s. This sharp high-rise

heralded a new era for Mexico City's commercial and political aspirations, reorganizing the city in the imaginations and social practices of its citizens, as exemplified by the Sanborns storefront foregrounded in Wilhelm's English-language *Guide to Mexico City* (fig. 3). This building, inclusive of the American diplomatic offices and American-owned commerce, became a metonym for Mexico City's modernization, literally eclipsing the city's colonial past with the skyscrapers of this new capitalist moment.

Though supermarkets were increasingly prevalent in 1950s Mexico City, the persistent association of watermelon with informal street vending and local markets—and thus the working classes and Mexican citizens of color—also symbolically and materially bound the fruit to complex postrevolutionary social attitudes in Mexico; these at once depended upon the visualization of tropical heritage and rebuked the physical labor upon which this local stereotype depended. Local markets were sites of sensorial tensions between pleasure and disgust. While touring Mexico City's open-air marketplaces in the 1950s, one American tourist remarked that while the smell "is a little strong to the sensitive nostril . . . the color is worth the discomfort."[17] In spite of the adventure and spectacle these encounters promised, state-sponsored efforts for reform rendered informal economic ventures such as street vending undesirable in the eyes of the Mexican body politic. Letters to the Federal District's government from the early and mid-twentieth century attest to contentious attitudes toward informal vendors, with complaints ranging from odorous offenses and noise pollution to sexual deviancy.[18]

In 1952, just a year before Sanborns's latest department store opening, Ernesto Uruchurtu Peralta took office as regent of Mexico City. As Mexico began embracing foreign corporate interests and a boom in international tourism, Mexico City's emergent middle class became increasingly eager for "a 'modern' vendor-free city."[19] Uruchurtu became a voice for the anxious middle class, swiftly and aggressively enacting policies to place these undesirable bodies out of sight from Mexico's affluent boulevards. This resulted in the sequestration of vendors to permanent retail spaces (at an astonishing cost of $350 million between 1953 and 1958). This rooted the sellers, including watermelon vendors, in fixed locations around the perimeter

of the city and thus tied them to more formal bureaucratic operations that could be observed, quantified, and controlled. Uruchurtu's market reform received praise from Mexican elites and US tourists alike, who claimed that the city's sanitary problems had disappeared along with the fruit stalls.

Concurrently, the nation's most well-known artists capitalized on a visualization of this increasingly invisible urban character.[20] The prolific portrayal of vendors selling fruit hearkened back to the state-sponsored *indigenismo* project of the 1920s, in which Mexico sought to elevate the idea of the rural Indian as the bedrock of national heritage, even as agrarian reforms remained incomplete and ultimately overshadowed by increasingly capitalist state agendas.[21] Tamayo, an artist groomed by *indigenismo*'s architect, José Vasconcelos, often invoked fruit vending—watermelon and otherwise—in his work. Orphaned at a young age, Tamayo was raised by his aunt and uncle, who owned a fruit-vending business in Mexico City's Merced Market. As an internationally renowned artist, Tamayo held contempt for those who looked for ties between his fruit-vending youth and his penchant for painting still lifes and indigenous fruit sellers. He took particular offense to his "enemies" who claimed that his family "only had a little kiosk" at the market.[22] Tamayo sought to profit from portrayals of vernacular Mexican heritage in his work but felt that he could only do so as an external agent. Any discussion of his ties to working-class spheres threatened to devalue his modern artistic agency, particularly in the era of Uruchurtu and the sequestration of fruit vendors who indeed possessed "little kiosks."

As a believer in the formalist Mexican ethos of *arte puro* (pure art) and a member of the School of Paris and La Ruptura, two loosely aligned mid-twentieth-century avant-garde movements, Tamayo dedicated much of his career to devising a "universalist" language through plastic composition. Nonetheless, Tamayo's work persistently engaged indigenous Mexican iconography and mythology, thus situating his work along the nebulous borderlands of Western and Latin American modernisms. He was at once insider and outsider to Mexican nationalist imagery and Eurocentric expression alike, a malleable signifier and embodiment of the slippages between subject and object, self and other, in his life and art.

Importantly, Tamayo began incorporating watermelon into his work in 1928, immediately following his return from an extended stay in New York where he befriended numerous artists involved in the Harlem Renaissance. I suggest that his time among artists engaged in the struggle for a distinctly African American intellectual voice and aesthetic propelled him to engage with watermelon not only as a captivating plastic form but also as a signifier of life at the margins. The artist later reflected on the relationship he developed with the US in the painting *New York Seen from the Terrace* (1937, fig. 4), in which a figure, supposedly the artist, gazes longingly at the city's skyline while bound to the confines of a terrace—a liminal chasm between him and the American modernity he desires. The American flag hangs dutifully above the apex of the terrace, while directly below, two watermelon slices create a visual and cultural counterpoint to the industrial New York skyline with the colors of the Mexican flag and the tropical culture it evokes. This dialectic, between flag and fruit, proclaims a valuation of the raw versus the refined in nation and modernity. In this light, the complex dynamic between the two worlds depicted in *New York Seen from the Terrace* reveals the artist's stated desire to claim his Mexican heritage and his longing to move beyond that aspect of his identity.

This dialectic also takes center stage in *Naturaleza muerta*, in which the bowl of apples, literally a US product, contrasts with the unruly Mexican watermelon slices. The slices—inherently metonymic signifiers of the whole fruit—stand as a raw counterpoint to the conventional still life accoutrements of wine and apples on the tabletop. Tamayo clearly utilizes the watermelon to play with perspective and composition, foreshortening the picture plane with the angled slices that also lend the mural a linear dynamism. Yet the hovering watermelon slices take a back seat to the apples and wine that sit in the foreground. While discussing his years in New York in an interview later in life, Tamayo mused, "I always had a clear idea that New York was the center of art . . . I was truly formed in New York. . . . Here [in Mexico] we have always been lagging a little behind."[23] The watermelon, Mexico's national fruit—a fruit ripe with hidden histories of subjugation and masked injustices—literally resides *a la zaga* (lagging behind) the conventional, Western still life imagery at the

mural's center. The composition thus visualizes the modernity/coloniality dialectic as much as it conveys a transnational sentiment of longing and belonging. *Naturaleza muerta* stands as a testament to Tamayo's clever integration of competing imagery, quietly alerting the viewer to the problems and anxieties of 1950s Mexico City while also shielding them from sight. Eating the Other is never a benign act, and no one understood this with greater empathy than Señor Sandía.

1. The gustatory turn has developed rapidly across many disciplines in the humanities, now comprising its own robust field of food studies. The foodways of the Global South, and Mexico in particular, comprise a particularly robust bedrock of scholarship in the field. Important English-language works include Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700–1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Jeffrey Pilcher, *¡Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); and Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2012). In addition, publications and exhibitions that explicitly entangle food and art have begun to proliferate, including *Art and Appetite: American Painting, Culture, and Cuisine*, ed. Judith A. Barter (New Haven: Yale University Press for the Art Institute of Chicago, 2013); Mary Ann Caws, *The Modern Art Cookbook* (London: Reaktion Books, 2018); Nicola Perullo, *Taste as Experience: The Philosophy and Aesthetics of Food* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); and *Coffee, Rhum, Sugar & Gold: A Postcolonial Paradox* (exhibition curated by Dexter Wimberly and Larry Ossei-Mensah, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, 2019).

2. "Currently, the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other's history through a process of decontextualization." bell hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 373.

3. Kathryn E. O'Rourke, *Modern Architecture in Mexico City: History, Representation, and the Shaping of a Capital* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017), 249.

4. While watermelon has a long history of negative racial connotations in the United States, it takes on national meanings in the Mexican vernacular and even holds the title of "national fruit." Nonetheless, as a tropical fruit with African origins, sold on roadsides and in working-class markets, watermelon is a fruit associated with the agrarian tradition from which Mexico sought to distance itself in the twentieth century. Moreover, Afro-Mexican identity and its invisible role in the construction of a mestizo nation profoundly reverberate in the heritage and co-option of watermelon in the Mexican nation, though such undercurrents

are rarely, if ever, brought to light in Mexican visual or culinary discourse.

5. bell hooks writes, "Displacing the notion of Otherness from race, ethnicity, skin color, the body emerges as a site of contestation where sexuality is the metaphoric Other that threatens to take over, consume, transform *via* the experience of pleasure" (emphasis hooks). hooks, 367.

6. See Krishnendu Ray, *The Ethnic Restaurateur* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 4.

7. David Graeber, "Consumption," *Current Anthropology* 52, no. 4 (August 2011): 494.

8. See Tanya Sheehan, "Looking Pleasant, Feeling White: The Social Politics of the Photographic Smile," in *Feeling Photography*, eds. Elspeth Brown and Thy Phu (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 127–75. "As she [Tompkins] notes, racialized bodies, in particular black bodies, are figuratively ingested, harnessed by an incorporation both total and necessary to the ordering of what is home and what is not, to what constitutes the groundwork of national belonging." Sharon P. Holland, Marcia Ochoa, and Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "Introduction: On the Visceral," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 20, no. 4 (2014): 393–94.

9. John Wilhelm, *John Wilhelm's Guide to Mexico City*, 3rd ed. (Mexico: Ediciones Tolteca, 1957), 31. Sanborns first opened its doors in 1903 under the ownership of Californian brothers Walter and Frank Sanborn. In 1953 the company was bought by the American Walgreens Co., under which it remained until 1984, when Carlos Slim purchased the corporation, and under whose auspices it remains today.

10. Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 2.

11. See Anibal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–80; see also Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), xxvii.

12. hooks, 370.

13. On his second trip to the Caribbean in 1494, Christopher Columbus marveled at the melon seeds he planted, which grew easily in the Caribbean terrain. From this initial cultivation, the fruit quickly spread throughout the hemisphere, its growth likely intensified thanks to enslaved Africans who carried seeds with them through the Middle Passage.

14. *Lotería* is a card game akin to bingo, which became popular in Mexico beginning in the eighteenth century. The game is based on drawing cards from a deck and matching those cards to images on a playing board. The images that populate the *lotería* deck have become iconic signifiers of Mexican national heritage, such as *el gallo* (the rooster, no. 1), *la bandera* (the Mexican flag, no. 16), and *el nopal* (the cactus, no. 39).

15. See Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill , NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 97; see also Ageeth Sluis, *Deco Body, Deco City: Female Spectacle and Modernity in Mexico City, 1900–1939* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 84.

16. In contrast to the more prominent socialist pursuits of muralists in the immediate postrevolutionary period, this later era, known as the Mexican Miracle, has received relatively scant attention from art historians. Under President Miguel Alemán (in office 1946–1952), Mexico began a shift from educational and agrarian reform

to increased capitalist enterprise and industrialization. This was an era in which Mexico's gross national product increased by approximately 160%, largely driven by an increase in tourism and an open-door policy toward trade and privatization. See Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1975 [1959]), 7; John Mraz, *Nacho López, Mexican Photographer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 24; and Eduardo Venezian and William Gamble, *The Agricultural Development of Mexico: Its Structure and Growth since 1950* (New York: Praeger Pub., 1969), 16.

17. Wilhelm, 100.

18. Correspondence to the governor of the Federal District of Mexico requesting the closure of a fruit stand, March 19, 1910, Gobierno del Distrito: Vías Públicas, vol. 1975, exp. 321, fojas: 10; correspondence to the governor of the Federal District of Mexico requesting the closing of a fruit stand, September 17, 1913, Gobierno del Distrito: Vías Públicas, vol. 1980, exp. 790, fojas: 6, Archivo Histórico del Distrito Federal, Mexico City, Mexico; petition from vendors of San Cosme Market to the secretary general requesting permission to continue operating open-air market stalls, July 5, 1922, Secretaria General, Rastros y Mercados, vol. 3988, exp. 117, fojas: 2; Susie S. Porter, *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879–1931* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 136; see also John C. Cross, *Informal Politics: Street Vendors and the State in Mexico City* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 109.

19. Cross, 161.

20. The indigenous fruit seller is a common Mexican trope, whose depictions can be traced to contact-era codices. It was later popularized in the nineteenth century with the circulation of cartes de visite published by Cruces y Campa and prints from other photography studios. In the twentieth century, many artists portrayed indigenous fruit sellers, from Diego Rivera's frescoed murals of the Totonac civilization painted along the corridor of the National Palace in Mexico City (circa 1946) and Rufino Tamayo's depictions of two modern-day women in *Fruit Vendors* (1938) to Olga Costa's large-scale oil on canvas showcasing the vast array of modern-day market offerings in *Fruit Vendor* (1951).

21. See Rick López, *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 29–64; and Adriana Zavala, *Becoming Modern, Becoming Tradition: Women, Gender, and Representation in Mexican Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 194–95.

22. Cristina Pacheco, *La luz de México: entrevistas con pintores y fotógrafos* (México D.F.: Fondo de Cultural Económica, 1995), 578.

23. "Siempre tuve la idea muy clara de que Nueva York era el centro del arte . . . Yo realmente me formé en Nueva York . . . Aquí [en México] hemos ido siempre un poco a la zaga." Pacheco, 583–86 (translation mine).

Figures

Lesley A. Wolff

Mister Watermelon/Señor Sandía: Fruitful Anxieties in Rufino Tamayo's *Naturaleza muerta* (1954)

Figure 1

Promotional postcard for Sanborns (recto), featuring Rufino Tamayo's *Naturaleza muerta* (1954) pictured hanging in the Sanborns Restaurant, ca. 1960. Collection of the author.

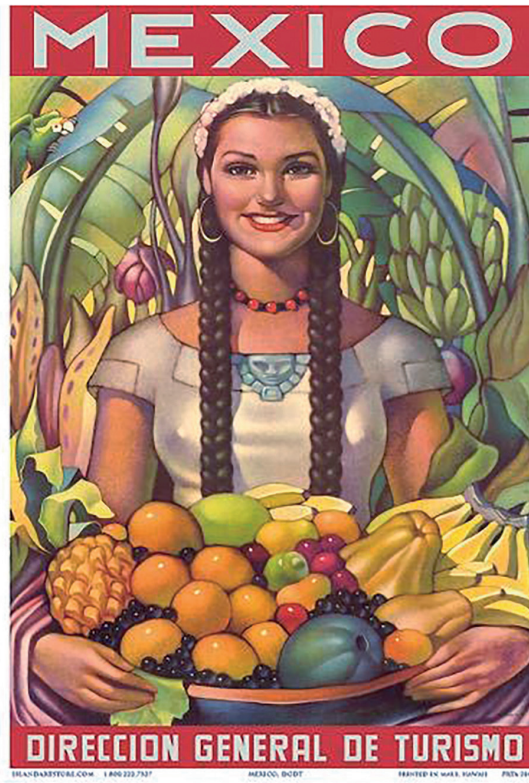

Figure 2

Promotional travel poster by Jorge González Camarena, commissioned by Mexico's department of tourism, ca. 1951.

Figure 3

Cover of *John Wilhelm's Guide to Mexico City*,
featuring the Paseo de la Reforma with Sanborns at center, 1957.
Collection of the author.

Figure 4

Rufino Tamayo, *New York Seen from the Terrace*, 1937.
Oil on canvas, 20 ⅜ × 34 ⅜ in. (51.75 × 87.31 cm).
Colección FEMSA. Photo by Roberto Ortiz © 2020 Tamayo Heirs / Mexico /
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Radicalizing Cybernetics: Chilean Nitrate, Talking Bees, and Juan Downey's Ecopolitics

Javier Rivero Ramos

On June 11, 1995, the *New York Times* ran an obituary that read, "Juan Downey, a well-known video artist whose work helped establish his medium as a serious art form, died on Wednesday at his home in Manhattan. He was 53."[1] The piece, written by Roberta Smith, described Downey as an extraordinarily adroit artist capable of working in a wide variety of media, including prints, drawing, sculpture, performance, and video. While Smith highlighted the "eclectic sensibility" that made Downey so dexterous at working in multiple media, she carefully circumvented the political valence of his oeuvre.[2]

Critics and scholars sidestepping the question of Downey's politics is not uncommon. His explicitly political works are few and interspersed through his multidecade career. For those who would see in them nothing but the cultural arm of American interventionism, his incidental association with organizations such as the Center for Inter-American Relations or the Pan American Union was suspicious. Is Downey's work an example of what Luis Camnitzer derisively describes as the softening of politics during the late 1970s?[3] Or does his work circumvent militancy in favor of a different politics? I believe that the answer lies in what Smith referred to as Downey's "eclectic sensibility." In the following essay, I consider Downey's political investments through an analysis of three works that make use of cybernetic theory to articulate a vision of politics vitally imbricated within social, cultural, and natural ecologies.

In his 2013 Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, Bruno Latour called for the revitalization of politics through "ecologization," its extension into the cosmos of nonhuman agency where humanity takes place.[4] Latour's project, like much of the contemporary theory devoted to the Anthropocene, differs from previous conservationist green advocacy on two critical points: first, in its grounding in new materialism, which favors a disarticulation of the ecocentric/anthropocentric dyad, thus casting nature not as a distinct

realm, but as a locus from which to launch a defense of both the environment and humanity; and second, in its emphasis on the need for this project to be interdisciplinary, a joint enterprise led by both scientific and social imperatives. Building on Amitav Ghosh's notion that climate change is not only a crisis of the environment but also of the imagination, I want to propose that the visual arts are a privileged site for articulating, visualizing, and launching such a project.[5] According to Latour, the Anthropocene forces us not only to recast the interrelationship between science and politics, but also to completely break down the barrier separating them.[6] Although the urgency of climate change is unmistakable, it might distract us from the fact that the proposal for tearing down disciplinary boundaries between the natural and social sciences is far from new.

One of the pivotal moments of interdisciplinary incursion took place during World War II, in the wake of Norbert Wiener and Arturo Rosenblueth's collaborative work on physiological and mechanical responses to communicational stimuli on animals and machines. In his groundbreaking 1948 book, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, Wiener introduces us to the recently coined term "cybernetics" and defines the nascent discipline as "the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal."[7] The book and studies that emerged in its aftermath foreground humankind's imbrication in the environment through communicational flows of information. In *The Human Use of Human Beings*, Wiener writes: "Information is a name for the content of what is exchanged with the outer world as we adjust to it, and make our adjustment felt upon it. The process of receiving and of using information is the process of our adjusting to the contingencies of the outer environment, and of our living effectively within that environment. . . . To live effectively is to live with adequate information."[8]

Wiener's enthusiastic venture into the possibilities of communication between entities as disparate as humans, animals, and machines soon gave way to a grim reality. At the Eighth Macy Conference in 1951, for example, psychologist Herbert G. Birch pushed back against what he regarded as the overzealous characterization of communication in bees as a form of understanding comparable to human cognition.[9] Skepticism from the scientific community was not the only form of backlash.

During the run-up to the Cold War's arms race, Wiener's communicational theories were appropriated by the emergent military-industrial complex, a development he publicly lamented.[10] But the genie was out of the bottle, and as the wartime consensus gave way to Vietnam, Nixon, and the energy crisis, Wiener's motto, that "to live effectively is to live with adequate information," would be taken up as a battle cry by the counterculture movement. In 1970, a group of artists inspired by the nascent field of electronic media and communication launched an alternative journal titled *Radical Software*. The editorial of the first issue reads: "Power is no longer measured in land, labor, or capital, but by access to information and the means to disseminate it. . . . Our species will survive neither by totally rejecting nor unconditionally embracing technology—but by humanizing it. . . . Only by treating technology as ecology can we cure the split between ourselves and our extensions."[11]

It was precisely around this same moment that, in 1970, Downey's early ventures into electronic sculpture evolved into increasingly ambitious artworks wherein the focus was on rendering sensible viewers' interrelation with the invisible energies surrounding them and enabling their existence. Consider *Invisible Energy Dictates a Dance Concert*, an installation and performance carried out on August 11, 1969, in which Downey attached a Geiger counter, a seismograph, a radio wave detector, a barometer, and a radar wave detector to five buildings of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.[12] Signals indicating the detection of different forms of energy were transmitted by each of the instruments to an electric oscillator, which in turn transformed the signals into sounds. Five performers reacted to these aural stimuli, embodying through dance the fluctuations in the five forms of energy detected by the instruments.

Although designed to make palpable to the spectator the invisible forms of energy that biologically enable and socially determine life, this work was not yet cybernetic. A critical element was missing: feedback. Not so different from our everyday use of the term, cybernetic feedback refers to the "return of a signal to a controller indicating the result of an action taken by that controller and used to determine further actions."[13] More simply put, it is the capacity of a signal to return to its emitter, indicating the effects caused by that signal that allows

the emitter to adjust accordingly. Although *Invisible Energy Dictates a Dance Concert* featured several forms of energy detection and transmission, it lacked the communicational feedback loop that lies at the core of cybernetics.

In fall 1971, The Electric Gallery in Toronto held a solo exhibition of Downey's work wherein he presented the installation *Light + Soil + Water = Flowers + Bees = Honey*, which can be called cybernetic in the full sense of the term. The exhibition's press release reads: "In the dark cellar of the gallery, spectators can view Downey's 'Life Cycle' in which he uses electric light, water and soil for the growth of flowers and bees. (In 1970, Downey turned his New York loft into a small farm to promote the use of Chilean nitrate fertilizer.)"[14] The two surviving photographs of the exhibition depict four beehives propped against a wall and a bed of soil with planted flowers next to them (fig. 1). Downey also replaced the cellar's lightbulbs with infrared and ultraviolet light and installed a closed-circuit video loop in which a camera trained on the hive sent a live video image to a monitor on the flower beds. In this work, there are two distinct feedback loops, one metaphoric and one literal. In the metaphoric feedback loop, the bees can see the beehive as they pollinate the flowers and thus are "aware" of how their work impacts the hive. This feedback is illustrative, as the bees have their own channels of communication, regardless of the camera.

The key cybernetic element in this work is the honey, as it signals that the bees not only survive but actually thrive in the artificial environment Downey set up. Infrared and ultraviolet bulbs, store-bought plants, cellar: none of these elements bodes well for the bees. However, as a review printed in *The Syracuse Journal* reports: "the bees have accepted their artificial environment ferociously."[15] For Downey, honey is the return signal that allows the controller to know that the setup is effective. Downey creates what he calls "a responsive environment," a system in which the consequences of his interventions upon other life-forms are made cogent to him.

But how can we account for Downey's cybernetic turn? What happened between September 1969 and winter 1971? A parenthetical remark in The Electric Gallery's press release offers us a clue: Chilean nitrate. Around the beginning of 1970, Downey transformed his house into a self-sustaining urban farm,

where he harvested plants and raised animals in order to provide food for his family.[16] The drawing *Clean New Race* (fig. 2) diagrams in plan section the different spaces allotted for these activities in his loft, together with the design for a wooden plant box with a sprouting bean. A text box in the drawing reads: "In my loft in New York City I build wooden plant boxes; I prepare soil for these and sow vegetable seeds as well as house plants. Beans, corn, potatoes, tomatoes grow from clean soil with the help of a natural fertilizer: Chilean nitrate of soda potash. These vegetables provide clean food and oxygen to animals and family; poultry, goats and fish provide clean meat, eggs and milk for the family."[17] The somewhat troubling title turns out not to be a statement about racial purity, but about providing pollutant-free sustenance for his family.

Chilean nitrate of soda potash lies at the literal root of this "clean new race." This mineral, whose largest deposits lie in Chile's Atacama Desert, would play a central role in the run-up to Downey's eco-cybernetic installations of 1971. The installation *Make Chile Rich* (fig. 3), which consisted of a collage mounted next to a sack of Chilean saltpeter, contrasts a photograph of a plant fertilized with ammonia nitrogen and another one fertilized with Chilean nitrate of soda potash. A text panel reads: "promotion of the worldwide use of a natural fertilizer. Most of the food we eat is partly the result of artificial fertilizers, these have proven to be, in the long run, harmful to: animals, mankind, plants, soil, and even fatal to some species; the nitrate from Chile is a top-quality natural fertilizer widely and worldly used until the beginning of this century, when it was substituted by artificial fertilizers."[18]

Make Chile Rich reveals the extent to which Downey's recourse to cybernetics was also propelled by his politicized turn toward ecology. The work was not conceived in a vacuum but responded to a heated public debate taking center stage at the time. In 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, which launched an unprecedented wave of concern for the environment and led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 and the nationwide banning of DDT insecticide in 1972. Like many others at the time, Downey recognized the catastrophic danger that industrialized farming posed not only to the environment, but also to humanity via our dependence on the soil. As Downey recognizes in works such as

Clean New Race, *Make Chile Rich*, and *Light + Soil + Water = Flowers + Bees = Honey*, to advocate for conservation is to advocate for humanity as well.

Make Chile Rich is doubly political: not only does it champion a conservationism that preserves humanity, but in its understanding of soil as the root of social practices and interactions, it also foregrounds geopolitics. Chilean nitrate of soda potash, better known as Chilean saltpeter, was one of the country's most profitable exports before the turn of the twentieth century. The Guerra del Pacífico, one of the major South American conflicts of the nineteenth century, was driven by the imperatives of Chile, Peru, and Bolivia to control nitrate deposits.[19] However, after German chemists were able to synthetically produce nitrate ammonia in 1918, this thriving agricultural activity ground to a halt. The once prosperous mining towns on the edge of the Atacama Desert became ghost towns, haunted by the specter of economic speculation.

This uncanny connection between wars fought and lost, lives built and ruined, and minerals mined and injected back into the soil was not lost on Downey. As Hans Bellamy Foster writes in *Marx and Ecology,* we need "a strong historical materialism that does not impoverish its materialism by denying the natural-physical aspects of material existence . . . no study of changing historical developments and possibilities could be free from the study of the natural-physical science."[20] If humanity is to survive, it needs to understand evolving material relations (what Marx called "metabolic relations") between human beings and nature.

These works by Downey open up spaces for thought along these lines. Downey's turn toward a fuller understanding of cybernetics was propelled by an already politicized ecologization. It recognized macrocosmic public policy as invariably rooted in material conditions, and those conditions being constituted at a microcosmic level, in humanity's relation to the natural elements, to soil and air, and to the environment. Today, it suggests breaking down the ethnocentric/anthropocentric dyad in favor of an understanding of humanity as imbricated in nature. This cybernetic model of humanity and nature forged into one symbiotic being pulsating with flows of information calls for recasting conservationism as a site of meditation, locution, and action from whence to radically

question and alter the totality of social and material relations that constitute politics. For the editorial of the 1973 issue of *Radical Software,* Downey wrote, "Wars against humanity and nature have been technology's raison d'être and the incentive for its urgent development. Misapplied technology generates apparent wealth, but in the process disharmonizes the interaction between humanity and nature."[21] Today, these words ring with deafening urgency.

1. Roberta Smith, "Juan Downey, 53, a Pioneer of Video as a Medium for Art," *New York Times*, June 11, 1993, 29.

2. Smith, 29.

3. Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 190.

4. Bruno Latour, "Once out of Nature—Natural Religion as a Pleonasm" (lecture, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, February 18, 2013).

5. See Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

6. Bruno Latour and Heather Davis, "Diplomacy in the Face of Gaia," in *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*, eds. Heather Saint Clair Davis and Étienne Turpin (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015), 43. The term Anthropocene was coined by chemist Paul Crutzen and biologist Eugene Stoermer to denote the geological time wherein human activity exerted a quantifiable influence on the Earth's geological processes.

7. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007 [1961]), 11.

8. Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (New York: Doubleday, 1954), 18.

9. Herbert Birch, "Communication Between Animals," in *Cybernetics: The Macy Conferences 1946–1953: The Complete Transactions*, ed. Claus Pias (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2016), 446–73. The Macy Conferences were a series of meetings held in various US locations between 1941 and 1960 that sought to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue, particularly between the social and natural sciences in the face of the rapid development of communication theories and technologies in the wake of World War II.

10. Julieta González, "Juan Downey's Communications Utopia," in *Juan Downey: una utopía de la comunicación*, eds. Julieta González and Arely Ramírez Moyao (Mexico City: Fundación Olga y Rufino Tamayo, 2013), 43.

11. Beryl Korot and Phyllis Gershuny, "Presentation," *Radical Software* 1, no. 1 (1970): n.p.

12. Juan Downey and Josephine Watson, *Juan Downey: con energía más allá de estos muros* (Valencia: IVAM Centre del Carme, Generalitat Valenciana, 1998), 52.

13. Jasia Reichardt, *Cybernetic Serendipity: The Computer and the Arts* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), 14.

14. "Juan Downey," The Electric Gallery press release, October 1, 1971, Avalanche Collection, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

15. "Artistry in Artificial Environment," *The Syracuse Herald Journal*, January 5, 1971, estate of Juan Downey.

16. Downey and Watson, 72.

17. Juan Downey, *A Clean New Race*, 1970, pastel, graphite, and tempera over board, 36 × 40 in. (91.4 × 101.6 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York.

18. Juan Downey, *Make Chile Rich*, 1970, mixed-media installation, variable dimensions, collection of Raúl Naón, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

19. Sergio González Miranda and Sandra Leiva Gómez, "El Norte Grande durante el Ciclo del Salitre: la política salitrera y la política exterior en la formación de un espacio transfronterizo (Bolivia y Chile, 1880–1929)," *Estudios atacameños*, no. 52 (2016): 11–29.

20. John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 8–9.

21. Juan Downey, "Technology and Beyond," *Radical Software* 2, no. 5 (1973): 2–3.

Figures

Javier Rivero Ramos

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Figure 1

Juan Downey, *Life Cycle: Soil + Water + Air = Flowers + Bees = Honey*, 1971. Closed-circuit camera, monitor, beehive, flower bed, and Chilean saltpeter; variable dimensions. Juan Downey Foundation, New York. Courtesy the Juan Downey Foundation.

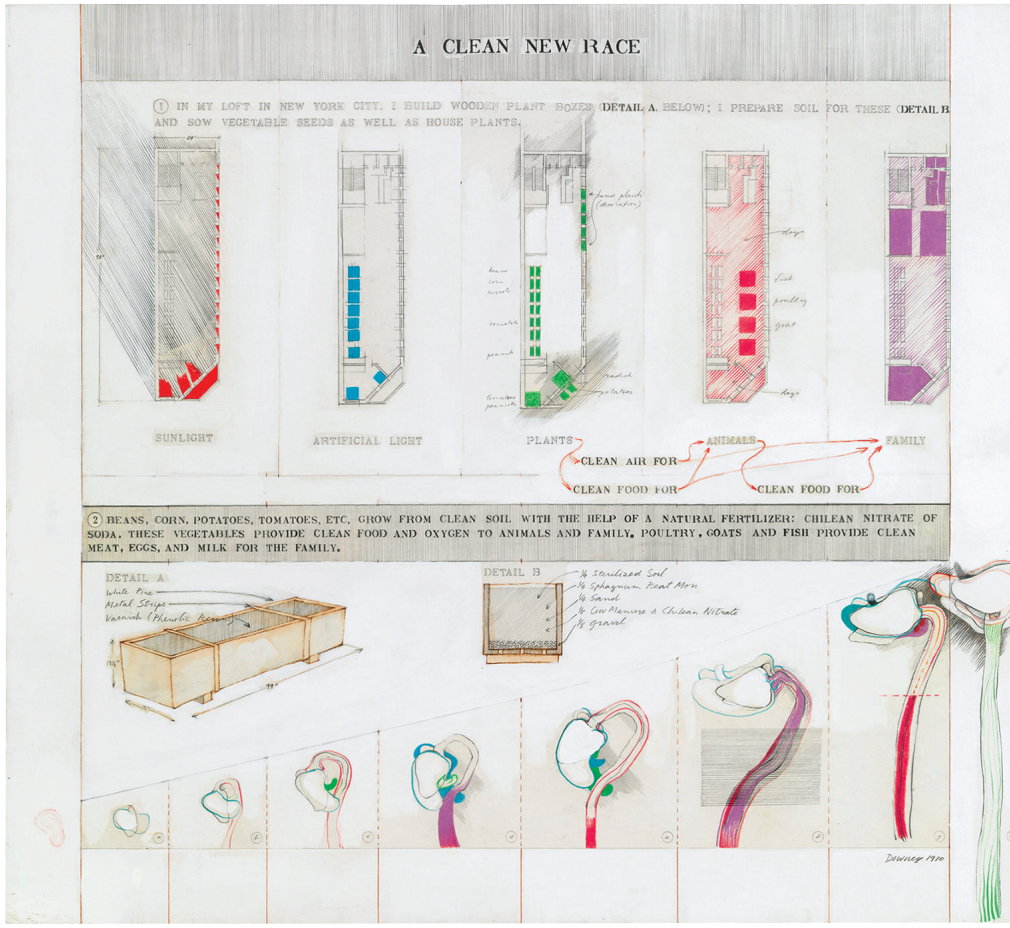

Figure 2

Juan Downey, *A Clean New Race*, 1970. Graphite, colored pencil, and acrylic paint on board, 36 × 40 in. (91.4 × 101.6 cm).
The Museum of Modern Art, David Rockefeller Latin American Fund.
Courtesy the Juan Downey Foundation.

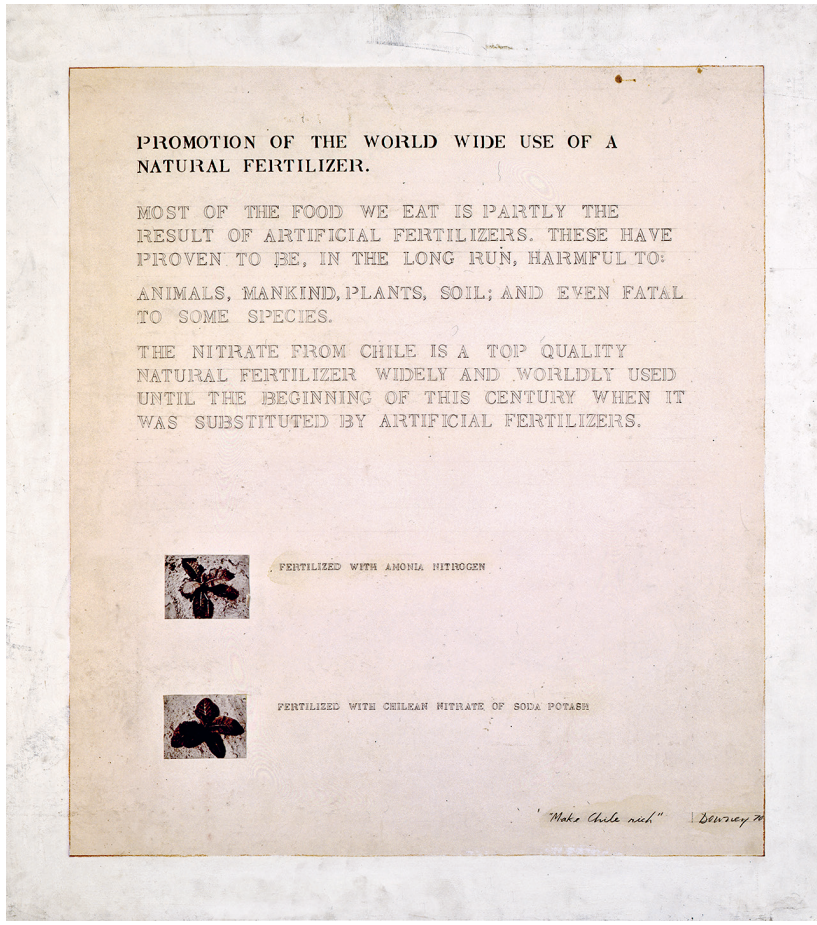

Figure 3

Juan Downey, *Make Chile Rich*, 1970. Closed-circuit camera, monitor, beehive, flower bed, Chilean saltpeter, and collage; variable dimensions. Collection of Raúl Naón, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Courtesy the Juan Downey Foundation.

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