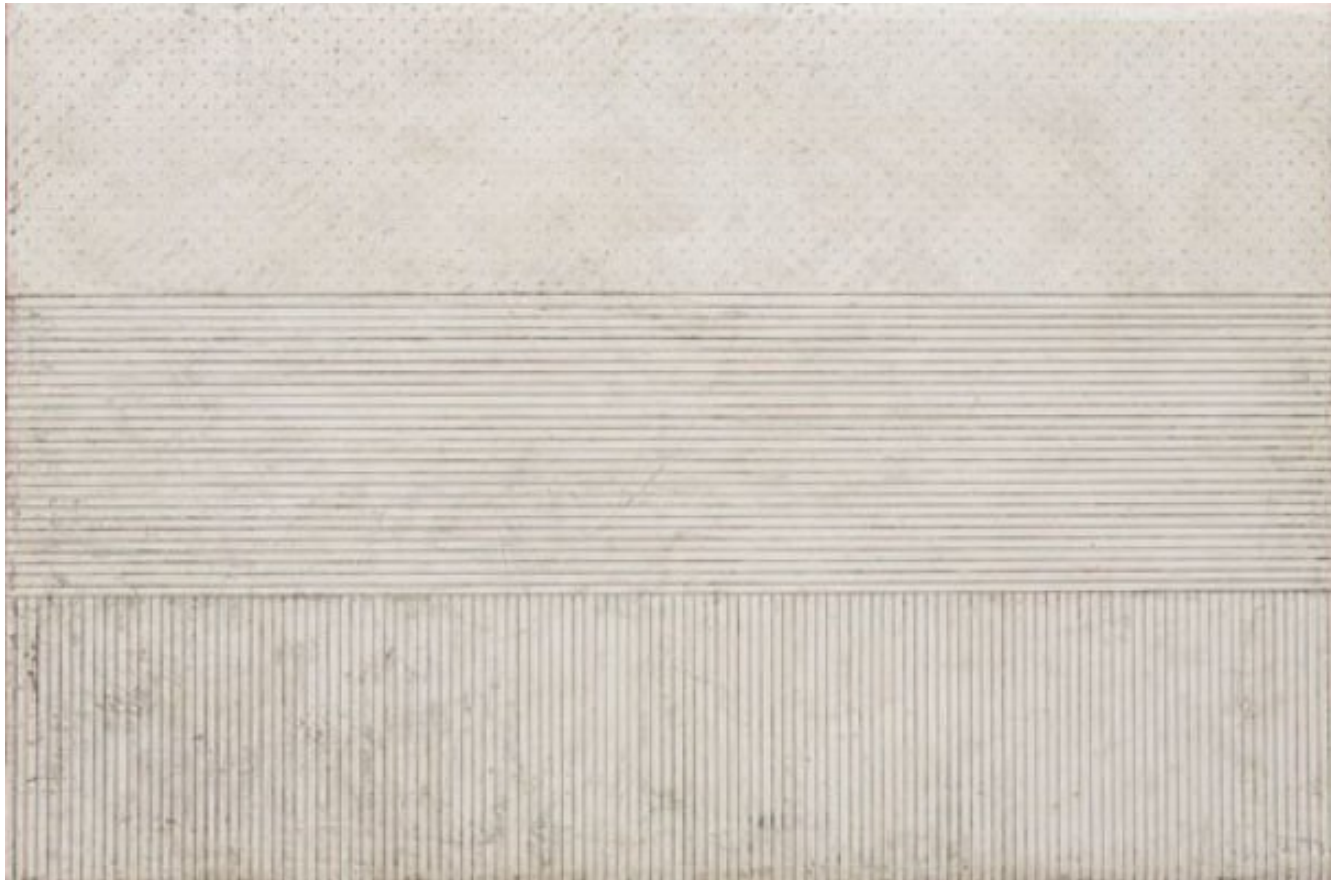


The Aesthetics of Politics and the Politics of Aesthetics in Contemporary Venezuela



Juan José Olavarría, Bandera Cruda, 2008

19th – 20th September 2014
Room SG1, Ground Floor, Alison Richard Building

The Aesthetics of Politics and the Politics of Aesthetics in Contemporary Venezuela

19-20th September 2014,
University of Cambridge

Organizing committee

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Acknowledgments

Our warmest thanks go to Julie Coimbra and Sam Mather, who have provided invaluable support throughout the organising process of this conference.

We would also like to thank our chairs: Matt Wilde, Nick Roberts, and Lucía Michelutti.

This event was kindly supported by the Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS) and the Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS).

Conference summary

This two-day conference aims to engender interdisciplinary discussion of the aesthetic manifestations that emerge with, against, or alongside the State apparatus in contemporary Venezuela. The premise for this conference draws on Deleuze and Guattari's proposition that: 'Thought as such is already in conformity with a model that it borrows from the State apparatus, and which defines for it goals and paths, conduits, channels, organs, an entire organon.' This 'image of thought' as a mirror of the State apparatus informs the aim to examine the relationship between political engagement and aesthetic manifestations in diverse realms, such as everyday cultural practices, official propaganda, digital technologies, literary production and the visual arts.

We ask: Can attempts to think culture outside of the State apparatus succeed in narrating identities beyond officialised discourse? Are cultural movements that resist the image of the State able to escape state logic through the innovation of artistic technique and theory? What effect does cultural policy have on aesthetic production?

Programme

Date/Time	Event	Information	Location
Thurs 18th 6:00	Film screening	Venezuelan Film	SG1, Alison Richard Building, Sidgwick Site
Friday 19th			
9:00	Registration & coffee	Alison Richard Building, Sidgwick Site	The Atrium, Alison Richard Building, Sidgwick Site
9:30-11:00	Panel 1	Memory, Heritage and History in National Discourse Erik Del Bufalo (Universidad Simón Bolívar) 'Aesthetics of restraint: the imagination of an enclosed society in Bolivarian Venezuela' Raquel Rivas-Rojas (Independent scholar) 'Memory and Horizons of Affect in Mirtha Rivero's Historia menuda de un país que ya no existe' Desiree Domec (University of Essex) 'Conservation and Assets of Cultural Heritage in Venezuela: From Social Participation to Governmental Policies and the Case Study of Armando Reverón's Castillete' Marco Cupolo (University of Hartford) 'Caudillo grandfather, oil rentier son, beggar grandson, and Venezuela today' Chair: Nick Robert (University of Durham)	SG1
11:00-11:30	Coffee break		The Atrium

11:30-1:00	Panel 2	Ideological Inscriptions and the Body	SG1
		Paula Vásquez (CESPRA- CNRS France) 'The Sacrificial Logic and the End of Citizenship: The Three Bodies of the Bolivarian Revolution'	
		Juan Peraza Guerrero (Universidad Del Salvador), 'The True Face of Simón Bolívar. Televised Exhumations and other Necrophiliac Tendencies in Contemporary Venezuela'	
		Natalia García Bonet (University of Kent) 'The Indian within: negotiating indigenous identity among dominant images of indigeneity in Venezuela'	
		Elizabeth Gackstetter Nichols (Drury University), 'The War of Silicon: Aesthetic Surgery, Consumption and Physical Beauty in Venezuela'	
		Chair: Lisa Blackmore (Universität Zürich)	
1:00-2:00	Lunch		The Atrium
2:00-4:00	Panel 3	Divine Intervention and Political Performativity	SG1
		Colette Capriles (Universidad Simón Bolívar) 'Ser visto, ser hablado. Lecciones de poder en la Venezuela Bolivariana'	
		Isaac Nahón-Serfaty (University of Ottawa), 'Por una estética del discurso esperpéntico: el caso de Hugo Chávez'	
		Daniel Esparza (New School for Social Research), 'Theological revolutionary representation: a philosophical approach to political chavista identity' (<i>in absentia</i>)	
		Javier A. García (University of Cambridge) "'Chávez, el Nuevo Cristo: The Aesthetics of Popular Religion in Venezuela from Chávez to Maduro'	
		Chair: Lucía Michelutti (University College London)	
4:00-4:30	Coffee Break		The Atrium

4:30-6:00	Panel 4	<p>Territorialities, Landscapes and Urban Narratives</p> <p>Elizabeth Barrios (University of Michigan) ‘Dead Landscapes, Living Nation: Nature and The Limits of National Narratives’</p> <p>Santiago Acosta (Columbia University), ‘Territoriality and Representation in Posthegemonic Times’</p> <p>Jacinto Fombona Iribarren (Independent scholar), ‘Venezuela está candela, When is chaos rhetoric not rhetorical?’</p> <p>Gonzalo Chacón Mora (University of Kent), ‘Imagining the Malandro: Anti-politics and the representation of the Malandro in Venezuelan Cinema’</p> <p>Chair: Rebecca Jarman (University of Cambridge)</p>	SG1
6:00	Pre-dinner drinks		Location TBC
7:00	Dinner	Formal Hall (for those who pre-booked)	Selwyn College

Sat 20th

10:30-12:00	Panel 4	<p>Socialist Symphonies/Sympathies?</p> <p>Geoff Baker (Royal Holloway), ‘Politics and El Sistema’</p> <p>Wilfredo Hernández (Allegheny College, Pennsylvania), ‘La política de la música en La clase (2007), de José Antonio Varela’</p> <p>Hazel Marsh (University of East Anglia), ‘Popular music and politics in Venezuela in the Chávez period: ‘New Song’ and 21st century Bolivarianism’</p> <p>Yana Stainova (Brown University), ‘A Sonorous Silence: the Polyphonous Politics of Classical Music in the Youth Orchestras of Venezuela’s El Sistema’</p> <p>Chair: Penélope Plaza (City University London)</p>	SG1
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12:00-1:00	Lunch		The Atrium
1:00-2:30	Panel 5	<p>(Trans)National Identities</p> <p>Manuel Silva-Ferrer (Freie Universitaet Berlin) ¿Hegemonía comunicacional? Nuevos escenarios de la cultura y la sociedad venezolana</p> <p>Katie Brown (King’s College, London) ‘Manifiesto: País – a response to the prescriptive nationalism of Bolivarian cultural politics?’</p> <p>Wesley Beaver (University of Oxford), ‘Transnational Collective Action in the Digital Age: the Venezuelan diaspora and the SOS Venezuela Movement’</p> <p>María Teresa Vera-Rojas (Universitat de Barcelona), ‘Rethinking Venezuelanness through Disenchantment: Exile and National Identity in Eduardo Sánchez Rugeles’ Los Desterrados’</p> <p>Chair: Matt Wilde (Institute of Latin American Studies)</p>	SG1
2:30-3:00	Coffee break		The Atrium
3:00-5:00	Keynote address & questions	<p>George Yúdice</p> <p>The Challenge of Democratizing Cultural Policy</p>	SG1
5:00-5:30	Closing comments and thanks	Lisa Blackmore, Rebecca Jarman, Penélope Plaza	SG1
5:30	Wine reception		Centre of Latin American Studies, Alison Richard Building

Abstracts and bios

Panel 1: Memory, Heritage and History in National Discourse

Erik Del Bufalo (Universidad Simón Bolívar)

Aesthetics of restraint: the imagination of an enclosed society in Bolivarian Venezuela

Space and time are, as Deleuze and Guattari pointed out, transcendental conditions of politics aside from perception. The Bolivarian space and time are, in my hypothesis, states of reverberation of the same political hegemony within the realm of undetermined boundaries that always echo, nonetheless, a transcendent and redundant center of power. This hegemonic indetermination is a form of political control that outpaces the traditional pattern of populist or authoritarian ideology. By the critic mirror of four contemporary Venezuelan visual artists: Miguel Amat, Amada Granado, Jaime Castro and Jorge Domínguez Dubuc, I intend to show how the Bolivarian configuration of space and time is the abstraction of movement and change, respectively; in others words, how the Bolivarian repressive governance separates space from openness (Granado, Amat), and time from transformation (Castro, Dubuc). In this way, “the revolution” can exploit the potency of the multitudes for the sake of the political establishment. These artists confront the enclosed society of the chavista State with the radical landscape of introversion of the public space, such as a high security prison, a slum cable car, a militarized water dam or a bus stop on the middle of nowhere.

Bio

Erik is an Associated Professor of Philosophy at the Simón Bolívar University, Caracas. He is coordinator of the research group “Políticas del Discurso en la Venezuela bolivariana” at the Centro de Investigaciones Críticas y Socioculturales. USB. He is Docteur en Philosophie of Paris X University and is the author of: *El Rostro, Lugar de Nadie. Erotismo, Ética y Umbral en la obra de Alí González* (Fundación Mercantil, Caracas, 2006) and *Deleuze et Laruelle. De la schizo-analyse à la non-philosophie*, (Kimé, Paris, 2003).

Raquel Rivas-Rojas (Freelance researcher and translator)

Memory and Horizons of Affect in Mirtha Rivero’s *Historia menuda de un país que ya no existe*

In postautonomous literature memory tends to substitute imagination for constructing the present. Fiction and memory come together to constitute a structure of feeling –or rather a horizon of affect– that today occupies the place left vacant by national literature. Nation is now often imagined from a testimonial nostalgia, not always productive. It is an affective yearn that constructs evocative subjects rooted in a fleeting identity. These are, among others, the effects produced by the stories gathered in Mirtha Rivero’s *Historia menuda de un país que ya no existe*. Through an “affectionate reading” of these testimonies, I would attempt to follow the implications of this kind of narrative for a profoundly divided national imaginary as the Venezuelan one, in which tales of identity no longer work as cohesive fictions but as narratives of confrontation.

Bio

Writer, translator and blogger. PhD in Latin American Cultural Studies (King’s College London, 2001). She has published more than thirty articles in academic journals and the books *Bulla y buchiplumeo. Masificación cultural y recepción letrada en la Venezuela Gomecista* (Caracas, La Nave Va, 2002), *Narrar en dictadura* (Caracas, El Perro y la Rana, 2011) and *El patio del vecino* (Caracas, Equinoccio, 2013). She lives in Edinburgh and maintains two blogs: *Notas para Eliza* and *Cuentos de la Caldera Este*.

Desiree Domec (University of Essex)

Conservation and Assets of Cultural Heritage in Venezuela: From Social Participation to Governmental Policies and the Case Study of Armando Reverón’s Castillete

Since the event of Hugo Chavez’s election as constitutional president in Venezuela in 1999, and the establishment of a socialist government, community organization is playing a substantial role in the building of a new social order, where the idea of participation involves a process of mutual transformation both of the person who is assuming a role or responsibility within his community, as well as for their environment, entourage and cultural heritage. This paper will expose the socio-cultural context in Venezuela and the vital challenges faced in the heritage field, focusing on current cultural legislations, the valorization of cultural heritage and the role of social participation on processes of decision-making within cultural institutions.

The discussion of heritage will contextualise the disappearance of Armando Reveron's studio and dwelling place, El Castillete; an iconic cultural element of Venezuelan art history conveying a highly aesthetic and historical value, looking at the strategies employed in the attempt to conserve and interpret El Castillete as a habitat, as well as to evince local historical accuracy as a it is occupies an important role on local's cultural memory. Other examples of mayor conservation projects will be discussed as a way to shed light into current heritage policies in Venezuela.

Bio

Book conservator with an MA in conservation from the University of the Arts London and 10 years of professional experience in books and paper conservation partly in the UK, Venezuela and Ethiopia. From 2007 until recent date, she worked as a conservator for the visual arts' collection of Venezuela's National Assembly, was the conservation advisor for various private and institutional collections in Caracas, while carrying out the fieldwork for her PhD on Armando Reveron's Castillete, its dwelling place and studio lost in the 1999 floods. Since 2006 she had been the advisor the community of Macuto for the conceptualization of a project for a partial replica of El Castillete and in 2011, as a representative of the National Gallery of Arts (GAN) created a governmental committee for the recovery of the site.

Marco Cupolo (University of Hartford)

Caudillo grandfather, oil rentier son, beggar grandson, and Venezuela today

Abuelo mercader, (arriero o hidalgo), hijo caballero, nieto podiosero is equivalent to the British proverb; "From clogs to clogs is only three generations". The today Venezuelan version of this proverb translated in English for the paper title) may be: Abuelo caudillo, hijo rentista petrolero, nieto pordiosero. The grandfather of today Venezuela was its last, authentic caudillo, Juan Vicente Gómez. Under his rule, oil started to be the crucial resource of the country economy. Thanks to the fabulous and popularly called, renta petrolera, (oil income or rent), for decades not only many Venezuelans but also numerous immigrants improved their social and economic conditions. After Gómez death, although military regimes with a mission to modernize the country failed in meeting the political demands of emerging social classes, democracy rose through a wider distribution of oil rent. This development pattern ended in the late 1970s and was no longer sustainable in the 1980s and 1990s, when ruinous economic crises, social unrest, rampant crime, anti-politics, coups, and authoritarian attitudes became the distinctive features of the pauperized and anomic country.

At this point, many Venezuelans began wishing a thaumaturgist kind of caudillo to revive the miraculous oil bonanza that had spoiled their fathers, and Hugo Chávez Friás emerged to be the country leader. Now Chavismo, which also comes from a desperate need for balance in the country, threatens to become a rentier socialism based on a bewildering interpretation and cult of Bolívar's autocratic militarism.

Bio

Marco Cupolo is Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies and Director of the Program of Hispanic Studies at the University of Hartford. He studied sociology in Italy, Political Science at the UNAM in Mexico, and received a Ph.D in Political Science from the University of Connecticut. He has taught at universities in Mexico City, Caracas, and Hartford, Connecticut. Since 2006, Cupolo teaches at the University of Hartford where he was chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures, and is associate professor and director of the Hispanic Studies Program. Cupolo has published books, articles, chapters, translations, and reviews in English, Italian, and Spanish in Europe, Latin America, and United States on International, Italian, and Latin American Studies, and Modern Political Economy and Theory.

Panel 2: Ideological Inscriptions and the Body

Paula Vásquez (CESPRA- CNRS France)*

La lógica sacrificial y el fin de la ciudadanía: Los tres cuerpos de la revolución bolivariana

This paper will deal with a "Trinity" of bodies, both living (suffering, agonizing) and dead ones (corpses, remains): those of Simón Bolívar, Hugo Chávez, and Franklin Brito. By reading together different ethnographic accounts, images and textual analysis about these three figures of Venezuelan political history, I would like to put forth a specific "sacrificial logic" they seem to incarnate. These three bodies-characters show how in Venezuelan political discourse notion such as "sacrifice", "salvation," and "suffering" have progressively undermined the idea of citizenship by reducing it to its most physical —incarnate— representation. First, the "spectacular" handling of Simon Bolivar's remains allowed for a manipulation of the historical past and aimed to construct a vision —an illusion— of the future. Second, the mystery created by Venezuelan government around Hugo Chavez's health and the gravity of his illness allowed for the image of the suffering president to occupy the entire space of political power thus preempting any possibility of institutionality. Finally,

Franklin Brito's agony during his hunger strike could be seen as the embodiment of political contempt and the physical struggle for recognition, in the sense posited by Axel Honneth. In general, this paper wants to engage with both Rafael Sánchez and Michael Taussig's discussions around political theology in Venezuela.

Bio

Paula Vasquez Lezama (Caracas, 1969) is an anthropologist and a sociologist who has conducted field studies in Venezuela and in France. She is a permanent researcher at the CNRS in Paris, France where is member of the Centre d'études sociologiques et politiques Raymond Aron (CESPRA). She is currently conducting a research that deal with the social and political constructions of the physical body in Venezuela. She has published *Poder y catástrofe. Venezuela bajo la Tragedia de 1999* (Santillana, 2010) in Caracas and *Le chavisme, un militarisme compassionnel* (Editions de la Fondation de Sciences de l'homme, 2014) in Paris.

Juan Peraza Guerrero (Universidad Del Salvador)

The True Face of Simón Bolívar. Televised Exhumations and other Necrophiliac Tendencies in Contemporary Venezuela

Simón Bolívar died in 1830. On July 17, 2010, his sarcophagus was opened in order to test the hypothesis that he had been murdered by a secret conspiracy. The forensic procedure was broadcasted live, photographed and recorded. Two years later, the then President and leader of the Bolivarian Revolution, Hugo Chávez, published the pictures of the 3D reconstruction of The Liberator's face made with evidence from his exhumation. In these images, aesthetic, political, communicational and technological functions mixed into a complex, multi-layered reading. The investigation suggests that this process could be interpreted as a performative action executed by the State apparatus, as an expression of what Venezuelan researcher Sandra Pinardi called "aestheticized politics" (1). In this regard, the official statement that accompanied the pictures defined them as faithful representations of reality: "The true face of Bolívar" was a phrase consistently repeated by the media. However, these are in fact simulations that objectify complex operations relating Venezuelan national narratives and postmodern concepts. Generated by computer programs these representations mark the beginning of the newest phase of the "Bolivarian theology" (2). History is cyclical. Another assassination theory has been announced after the death of Chávez in 2013. It seems that the controversial exhumation constitutes a different kind of discovery: it sheds light on the ways meaning is constructed in the region. Rather than

a traditional perspective, an aesthetic one that implements contemporary notions as simulation and spectacle could be revealing, allowing researchers to decode or assimilate the most recent Venezuelan history.

Bio

Juan Peraza Guerrero (Venezuela, 1987) studied Audiovisual Communications at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and the Masters program in Aesthetics and Art Theory of the Universidad Nacional de La Plata. He is a Professor of Art History and teaches the seminar Photography and Policies of Truth at the Universidad del Salvador. He has published research articles and participated in conferences related to the discourses of contemporary aesthetics in Latin America.

Natalia García Bonet (University of Kent)

The Indian within: negotiating indigenous identity among dominant images of indigeneity in Venezuela

This paper will explore how Venezuelan indigenous groups manage to negotiate their identity among dominant images of indigeneity reproduced by the National government, having to forge their own space between the indigenous heroes from the past and the "Indian within". One of the discursive pillars of the Government of Hugo Chavez, and of his successor, Nicolas Maduro, has been the recognition of previously neglected minority groups, especially Indigenous and African descendant populations. Besides incorporating a set of innovative legislations regarding indigenous rights in the 1999 constitution, indigenous groups have become an important element of the "Bolivarian revolution" political discourse. This political image of indigeneity, however, has found its most iconic representatives in the epic figures of the past, such as the chief Guicaipuro, who fought against the Spanish Empire in the 16th symbol of resistance; his image represented in a series of graffiti and statues across the capital. Moreover, indigeneity as resistance is also claimed to reside within the bodies of government officials. Both Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro have identified themselves as indigenous in public declarations and have appeared partly dressed in indigenous attire. This recognition of the "Indian within" constructs an image of Venezuelan creoles as hybrids, within which the identities of Spanish, black (African), and indigenous co-exist in perpetual tension. However, it has also placed contemporary indigenous groups in a complex position, reducing their identity to a trait, an ingredient of Venezuelan distinctiveness grounded in the past.

Bio

Natalia Bonet is a Venezuelan anthropologist currently working on a PhD in social anthropology at the University of Kent. Her research explores how indigeneity is constructed as an institutional narrative at the Indigenous University of Venezuela (UIV) and how this narrative is negotiated among the myriad of discourses about indigenous people reproduced by media, the state, academics and religious organisations. Before starting at Kent she studied a BA in anthropology at the Central University of Venezuela (UCV), and completed a diploma in Culture, Gender & Sexual Diversity at the same institution, she also completed an MA in Social Anthropology at the University of Kent. Her research interests centre on ideas of representation and identity, and how these two are interconnected; she is thus interested in issues of recognition and visibility. Natalia presently works as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) at the University of Kent.

Elizabeth Gackstetter Nichols (Drury University)

The War of Silicon: Aesthetic Surgery, Consumption and Physical Beauty in Venezuela

In 2011, Socialist President Hugo Chávez used the platform of his weekly television program to announce a “war on silicon.” In his remarks, the president denounced the practice of plastic surgery in Venezuela, attacking both the physicians who performed breast implants and the parents who allowed their daughters to receive them. This attack, in a nation where breast enhancement is a common quinceañera gift and bank loans are easily available to those seeking aesthetic surgeries, brought into sharp relief the tensions between the anti-consumption discourse of the socialist government and the culturally normalized practices of the Venezuelan people. While the official propaganda machine of the state denounced aesthetic surgery as a product of western cultural imperialism, the numbers of Venezuelans seeking procedures to enhance their appearance continued to remain steadily high. Avenues of inquiry related to this tension include questions of race, class and gender as they relate to women’s appearance. Using those issues as context, this paper will focus on several specific questions: 1. How has the official propaganda of the state sought to change popular opinion on beauty norms in Venezuela? 2. How have the state’s own official and unofficial messages worked to counteract its own anti-beauty work/anti-consumption rhetoric? And finally, 3. How does the state’s official discourse on beauty interact with textual and visual messages produced by non-state participants in community dialog?

Bio

Dr. Elizabeth Gackstetter Nichols is Chair of the Department of Languages and Professor of Spanish at Drury University. Dr. Nichols has been working in the field of Venezuelan literature and women’s studies for fifteen years. Her current research investigates the construction of social norms of physical beauty in Venezuela and Latin America generally, with particular attention to visual and written representations of the forces of enculturation that define and set the boundaries for those norms. Dr. Nichols is the co-author of an introduction to Venezuela titled *Venezuela*, and numerous book chapters and articles, including: “Decent Girls with Good Hair: Beauty, Morality and Race in Venezuela” in *Feminist Theory*, “Taking Possession of Public Discourse: Women and the Practice of Political Poetry in Venezuela” in *Bottom Up or Top Down? Participation and Clientelism in Venezuela’s Bolivarian Democracy* and “Virgin Venuses: Beauty and Purity for ‘Public’ Women in Venezuela” in the forthcoming *Women, Politics and Media in Emerging Democracies*.

Panel 3: Divine Intervention and Political Performativity

Colette Capriles (Universidad Simón Bolívar)

Ser visto, ser hablado. Lecciones de poder en la Venezuela Bolivariana*

Exploraré el deslizamiento, en Venezuela, desde una estructura de poder enunciativo, modelizada en el parlamentarismo y el sentido de la ley, hacia una estructura de poder espectacular. J. E. Green (2008) ha acuñado la idea de un “poder ocular” para marcar el poder plebiscitario y carismático weberiano. En una crítica a esta tesis, pretendo complejizar la idea de la revolución como espectáculo atendiendo a tres elementos: la saturación de lo visual, el recurso a la oralidad (en el sentido de Walter J. Ong) como espacio identitario, la escritura como fetiche (la experiencia de Manifiesto-País, exhibición curada por Lisbeth Salas, Galería Mendoza, Caracas, 2014).

Bio

Colette is a professor and researcher in Political Theory and Philosophy at Universidad Simón Bolívar. She has served in the public administration on design and management of social and cultural policies. Her distinctions include the Federico Riu Prize on Philosophical Research in 2000 and the El Nacional Prize for the Best Opinion Article in 2006. In addition to several academic papers, she published two political chronicles books: *La revolución como espectáculo*, 2004 and *La máquina de impedir*, 2010. She is currently researching 21st Century democracies and a general theory of tyranny.

Isaac Nahón-Serfaty (University of Ottawa)

Por una estética del discurso esperpéntico: el caso de Hugo Chávez

El discurso de Hugo Chávez ha sido estudiado desde la perspectiva de la retórica del mito con connotaciones épicas (Nahón-Serfaty, 2010; Torres, 2009). Este discurso, caracterizado por una narrativa de la emancipación, es altamente persuasivo debido a su resonancia con imaginarios que conforman la “mentalidad” de la sociedad venezolana (Briceño Guerrero, 1997). El objetivo de este artículo es proponer una vía alternativa para interpretar un discurso que es altamente productivo desde el punto de vista de una “reflexividad estética” (Lash, 1995), pero que corresponde más al esperpento (Valle-Inclán, 1981) que al mito épico. Según Valle-Inclán (Ibid.) el esperpento es una “tragedia que no es tragedia” (p. 105) en la que “las imágenes más bellas en un espejo cóncavo son absurdas” (p. 105). El esperpento nos ofrece un esquema analítico que nos guía en la comprensión de la dimensiones estéticas del discurso. Como lo ilustraremos en el caso que nos ocupa, el discurso esperpéntico reproduce los modos conocidos del melodrama y del reality show con un tono grotesco. Nos centraremos en un momento excepcional del continuo retórico de Chávez que expresa los aspectos esperpénticos de su discurso, cuando interviene en la misa de Jueves Santo el 6 de abril de 2012. Este evento resulta particularmente dramático. En ese momento Chávez padecía un cáncer terminal. Su intervención en la misa rompe con el protocolo del ritual religioso, relegando a la figura del Cristo sufriente a un segundo plano, y centrando el foco en el fallecido presidente.

Bio

Isaac is Associate Professor at the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa. He has a BA in Comunicación Social from the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, and M.Sc. in Sciences de la Communication from the Université de Montréal, Canada and a Ph.D. Communication, Université de Montréal, Canada. His current research program is focused on public discourses on health and their impact on perceptions and social representations about different conditions and illnesses.

Daniel Esparza (New School for Social Research) **in absentia*

Theological revolutionary representation: a philosophical approach to political chavista identity

In his book on Spinoza, Deleuze claims that every society “is a matter of obeying and nothing else. This is why the notions of fault, of merit and demerit, of good and evil, are exclusively social, having to do with obedience and isobedience”, whereas religion –as explained by Western Judeo-Christian tradition- is basically a matter of disobedience: man is called to ob audire, to give ear, to pay attention. Only afterwards man is supposed to act: “if one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame” (Proverbs, 18,13). However, Revelation cannot be heard since, as Walter Benjamin explains, Revelation is not content. How is this to be understood when Biblical religions are religions of the Word is actually a paradox: unsayability is meant to be heard. If Revelation is not content that implies listening and disobeying, then Representation –understood as knowledge of good and evil as Sittlichkeit, that is, exclusively social- means content, idolatry and obedience. The Bolivarian slogan Chávez soy yo –“I am Chávez”- works as the Biblical promise the snake makes to Adam: “you will be like God”, that is, as the actual representation of power. This alleged empowerment means establishing a relation with the discourse that substitutes the unsayability of Revelation. This substitution of unsayability for discourse might be better understood using Kierkegaard’s notions of eternal happiness and prattle, being the former traded for the promised land of Revolution –as classless society, as Eden- and the latter being political representation. I will try to show, then, how Chávez soy yo works as the ultimate political fetish since, in its offering of “a true vision of a given community” –as James Martel points out- “it is inherently idolatrous”.

Bio

(Caracas, 1978). Art historian (Universidad Central de Venezuela, 2000). His main interest in art history involves researching for prohibited and/or forgotten christian images both in medieval Europe and in baroque Latin America. Magister Scientiarum (M.A) in philosophy (Universidad Simón Bolívar, Venezuela, 2014). He has written mainly on Walter Benjamin’s work, with an special interest on his considerations on politics, epistemology and theological approach to history and language. He has worked as a lecturer at the Universidad Central de Venezuela and as an Academic Assistant and researcher at the Universidad Simón Bolívar’s philosophy department, where he also was in charge of the *Revista Venezolana de Filosofía*.

Javier A. García (University of Cambridge)

“Chávez, el Nuevo Cristo”: The Aesthetics of Popular Religion in Venezuela from Chávez to Maduro

Shortly after Hugo Chávez's death, Nicolás Maduro appeared on national television claiming that his predecessor appeared to him in the form of a very small bird and blessed his election campaign. Far from an isolated incident of public religious display, examples are legion where Maduro has engaged the media to summon the spirit of Chávez in support of the Bolivarian Revolution. This mysticism culminates in a syncretistic tendency to baptize Chávez and his legacy with Christological significance, such as when Maduro stated “Christ the redeemer was made flesh in Chávez.” Indeed, Chávez himself infused his revolution with Christological iconography and significance, which became an integral marker of *chavista* identity during his presidency and beyond. This paper explores the aesthetics of popular religion that have arisen during the Bolivarian Revolution, specifically the media-tion of a Chávez Christology through television and the internet during Maduro's tenure. It therefore engages the themes of propaganda, revolutionary identity, and social media, which have become so definitive of modern Venezuelan politics. Moreover, it argues that Chávez Christology constitutes a critical yet understudied element of the Bolivarian Revolution's self-understanding. By promoting and disseminating myths of Chávez as a Christ figure in the media, proponents of the revolution have not only sanctified their cause but demonized the opposition. This paper thus suggests that in order to understand the history and possible dénouement of *chavismo* under Maduro, it is necessary to decode the spectacle of popular religion at its heart.

Bio

Javier Garcia is a Venezuelan-American Ph.D. student at the University of Cambridge. He completed his B.A. in Philosophy and French at Georgetown University, (including a year at the Sorbonne), before matriculating at Peterhouse College for his postgraduate studies in 2009. His doctoral research focuses on the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor and theologian famed for his resistance against the Nazis during the Second World War. Although born in the USA and raised mostly in Southeast Asia, Javier maintains an interest in the history and politics of his native Venezuela.

Panel 4: Territorialities, Landscapes and Urban Narratives

Elizabeth Barrios (University of Michigan)

Dead Landscapes, Living Nation: Nature and The Limits of National Narratives

This paper examines the political implications of the idealization of natural landscapes in Venezuelan cultural production, especially in the *novela de la tierra* and its recent critical revival. The aestheticization of the country's natural beauty has perpetuated the image of an eternal, infallible national landscape, allegedly untouched and untouchable by human action. In other words, the aestheticization of nature through the idealized landscape hinders the possibility of cultivating an ecological politics. Consequently, to delve into the idea of natural landscapes, or more specifically nature, as a transcendental entity is not simply a discursive exercise meant to unsettle the comforts of a recurrent nationalist trope. Indeed, the need to challenge the myth of a transcendental nature as the stage for the nation's unfolding explicitly addresses the fact that questions of politics and history generally possess a bracketed, a priori, and often aestheticized vision of nature that largely determines the conceptual and material boundaries of the nation and its history. In other words, the boundaries surrounding the idea of an allegedly eternal nature in cultural and political thought create particular understandings of time and history that place human subjectivity not only at the center of historical change, but also as the agent and object of such changes. This paper thus argues that twenty-first century Venezuelan politics cannot be fully evaluated outside of a consideration of the relationship among politics, landscape, and the exploitation of “natural”.

Bio

Elizabeth Barrios is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is currently working on her dissertation entitled “Geographies of Denial: The Times of Land and Oil in Latin American Cultural Production.” Her research interests include contemporary Latin American literature and cinema, Venezuelan politics, historical reenactments, critical theory, and eco-criticism.

Santiago Acosta (Columbia University)

Territoriality and Representation in Posthegemonic Times

The current debate in academia about the future of Latin American politics is characterized by two distinct theoretical standpoints: on the one hand, a “posthegemonic” idea of politics, which favors a deterritorialized form of agency and views the state as an apparatus of capture that neutralizes the creative power of the multitude; on the other hand, a “postsubaltern” position that argues in favor of identity politics and the reformulation of the state in order to build—in the words of John Beverley—“a people-state, or a state of the people.” However, a closer look at the recent struggles of the Yukpa indigenous community to claim their ancestral lands in the Sierra de Perijá in northwestern Venezuela, or at the obstacles faced by Venezuelan Urban Land Committees in their efforts to gain legal ownership of lots in the barrios, reveal a deadlock that the affective and deterritorialized strategies of the multitude cannot fully resolve, at the same time complicating the possibility of building a “people-state” without first deconstructing some of the principles of identity politics. This brief essay examines posthegemony theory and postsubalternism—with special attention to the place of land in both approaches—in an attempt to demonstrate how some elemental Latin American struggles still demand a form of territoriality that can serve, ultimately, as the basis for a specific cultural and political identity and as a guarantee for political representation.

Bio

Santiago holds a BA in Literature (Universidad Central de Venezuela), Master’s Degree in Venezuelan Literature (Universidad Central de Venezuela) and an MA in Spanish (San Francisco State University). In Caracas he was the founder and editor of *El Salmón: Revista de Poesía*, a quarterly magazine that won Venezuela’s National Book Award in 2010. While working and studying in San Francisco he co-directed the journal *Canto: A Bilingual Review of Latin American Civilization, Culture, and Literature*. He has published the poetry collection *Detrás de los erizos* (2007) and the chapbook *Caracas* (2010). He is currently pursuing a PhD in Latin American and Iberian Cultures at Columbia University in New York City. His research interests include cultural institutions, canonicity, illegibility, and the links between aesthetics and politics in Latin American literature and criticism.

Jacinto Fombona Iribarren (Independent scholar)

Venezuela está candela, When is chaos rhetoric not rhetorical?

“Venezuela is on fire” (“Venezuela está candela”) is the title of a song by Mestiza and Neblinna, a Venezuelan rap duo who addresses the culture of violence, and the political crisis of anti-government protests under the banner of NO+BALAS that has become popular throughout social media. In this essay I explore questions of violence and discourses on class that circulate as critiques of a regime that sought to impose a utopian, mostly agrarian view of Venezuelan identity. An understanding of the country that turned its back to its urban demography, and can be traced to a nostalgia for the rural that appeared in modernization poems like Gerbasi’s *Mi padre el inmigrante* (1947). A film like Jonathan Jakubowicz’ *Secuestro* express (2005), a piece that tortures the filmgoer through a first hand account of an “express” kidnapping and murder, portrays in a raw and direct style a urban culture that understands itself under siege, a style that undermines the safety of detachment that representation may offer yet it reincorporates or rehashes nineteenth century discourses on the ills of society or a “sick” socius, the social self. I seek to underline connections between the “urgency” of Ana Teresa Torres call to “think the country” (*pensar el país*) expressed in a project like *Manifiesto: País* (2014), and the understanding of modernizing discourses underlying the rap song and the rap actors of Jakubowicz’s film.

Bio

Jacinto Fombona Iribarren holds a Ph.D. Spanish and Portuguese from Yale University. He taught literature and film at Tulane University, Fordham and the University at Albany (SUNY). He has published several articles on poetry, contemporary narrative and theory, as well as a book entitled *La Europa necesaria* (Beatriz Viterbo, 2005) on travel narratives of the Modernista period in Latin America.

Gonzalo Chacón Mora (University of Kent)

Imagining the Malandro: Anti-politics and the representation of the Malandro in Venezuelan Cinema

This paper will explore how the image of the *malandro* has been represented and positioned in Venezuelan Commercial cinema and how such representation has contributed to the reproduction of discourses of anti-politics, understood as the disenchantment with the Venezuelan political system of the so called IV Republic.

The *malandro*, constitutes a popular urban criminal often associated with young people from *barrios* (slums), and has become a very representative figure of the discourses of urban violence in Venezuela. Therefore, the figure of the *malandro* quickly became a common reference in media and especially in cinema, often devoted to the portrayal of different forms of violence as a way of social critique. With the frequent use of stereotypes and the construction of marginal geographies, this 'imagined' *malandro* has been constructed as a negative internal 'other' that has, nevertheless, experienced several changes in time. This representation, however, has usually been placed in contrast to corrupt and perverse figures of authority, and especially politicians, connoting the idea that even though the *malandro* is a criminal the whole system is essentially corrupt and the ultimate source of violence and corruption has always been the political system. The discourse of anti-politics was fundamental to Hugo Chávez's raise to power and the continuation of the 'Bolivarian Revolution'. Such posture has also helped to support the idea that there has been a complete break between the previous political system and the new government.

Bio

Gonzalo is a Venezuelan Anthropologist (Central University of Venezuela) and Documentary Filmmaker with a M.A. in Visual Anthropology from the University of Kent (Canterbury). He worked with a local NGO specialised in the teaching of Traditional Tibetan Medicine in Ladakh (India) in the making of a collaborative film to promote the use Amchi Medicine in remote villages of the region. He co-coordinated and taught the first course on Visual Anthropology at the Centre of Anthropology of the Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research (IVIC). He co-produced the documentary 'El Silencio de las Moscas', which deals with the phenomenon of suicides in the Venezuelan Andes and has been made in coordination with a series of research projects carried out by the Department of Development Anthropology (IVIC) in the region. He is currently working in a historical film archive and his research interests include visual representations in different kinds of media, but especially in cinema.

Panel 5: Socialist Symphonies/Sympathies?

Geoff Baker (Royal Holloway)

Politics and El Sistema

A youth orchestra program founded by José Antonio Abreu, a close political associate of Pedro Tinoco who went on to become minister of culture under the second government of Carlos Andrés Pérez, El Sistema did not look as though it could survive the transition to Hugo Chávez's government unscathed, particularly given Chávez's well-known antipathy towards classical music. Yet the program not only survived but began to expand significantly, receiving increasing subsidies from the Venezuelan government. Over the last decade, it has drawn ever closer to the governments of Chávez and Maduro, now operating out of the Office of the President, with Abreu appearing prominently at important state occasions and his orchestras providing the soundtrack. The politics of El Sistema is a subject that is ripe for examination, not least because of the denials of the program's political dimensions by its leaders at home and advocates overseas. Furthermore, important issues finally came into focus in the public arena during the disturbances of February and March 2014, when a major political dividing-line emerged in the Venezuelan classical music world, yet they have not been properly analyzed. Key questions include: how did the program gain the support of a skeptical Chávez? What kinds of political critiques of El Sistema are made from the Left and the Right? Indeed, what are the politics of El Sistema? Does a program created under CAP I and expanded under CAP II concord with or counteract the fundamental tenets of the socialist governments that have funded its dramatic expansion?

Bio

Geoff Baker is a Reader in the music department at Royal Holloway, University of London. He specializes in music in Latin America. His book *Imposing Harmony: Music and Society in Colonial Cuzco* (Duke University Press, 2008) won the American Musicological Society's Robert Stevenson Award. He co-edited *Music and Urban Society in Colonial Latin America* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). He also works on Latin American popular music, publishing *Buena Vista in the Club: Rap, Reggaetón, and Revolution in Havana* (Duke University Press, 2011). Recently, he has been focusing on childhood musical learning in Cuba and Venezuela. He was co-investigator on the AHRC-funded project "Growing into Music." He held a British Academy Research Development Award in 2010- 11 and undertook

fieldwork in Venezuela; the resulting book, *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth*, will soon be published by OUP. He is a research associate on the ERC-funded project "Music, Digitization, Mediation: Towards Interdisciplinary Music Studies."

Wilfredo Hernández (Allegheny College, Pennsylvania)*

La política de la música en La clase (2007), de José Antonio Varela

Entre 2000 y 2010 se filmaron tres películas en Venezuela que abordan el impacto social de las orquestas sinfónicas infantiles y juveniles: *Tocar y luchar* (2004), *Maroa* (2005) y *La clase* (2007). En esta ponencia analizo el tercer filme, contrastándolo con los dos anteriores y relacionándolo con la política cultural puesta en práctica después de la creación del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Cultura en 2005. Uno de los primeros largometrajes producidos por la Villa del Cine, *La clase* representa la música clásica bajo un ángulo diferente de las narrativas aceptadas sobre el efecto positivo que la enseñanza de música clásica ha tenido en sus participantes. Varela propone, en cambio, una versión propagandística y tendenciosa de ese impacto; tratamiento que ilustra la política cultural formulada por el Ministro Francisco Sesto, uno de los principales ideólogos del gobierno en el ámbito cultural. Sin embargo, encuentro en este tratamiento una evidente oposición a la filosofía del Sistema articulada por José Antonio Abreu, que el Presidente Hugo Chávez siempre apoyó y la prevaleciente hasta hoy. *La clase*, basada en una novela de Sesto versionada por Varela, narra una fallida historia de amor entre una violinista pobre y un clarinetista rico que se conocen mientras tocan en una orquesta juvenil en Caracas en 1989. Mi análisis usará la teoría de la distinción propuesta por Bourdieu y prestará atención al contraste de los lugares de residencia de los protagonistas, los efectos culturales que la música tiene en ellos y al paradójico y extraño uso de la música clásica en la narración. A diferencia de las propuestas de Sesto y Varela, el Estado ha seguido patrocinando el sistema de orquestas infantiles y juveniles, que en la última década se ha convertido en uno de los "logros" culturales del gobierno, especialmente en el ámbito internacional.

Bio

Wilfredo has taught Spanish language, Latin American Culture, and Hispanic cinemas at Allegheny College since 2000. He was born in Venezuela in 1963 and moved to the United States in 1993. He has a BA in Arts (Modern Languages) from the Central University of Venezuela (1990), a master and a doctorate in Spanish from the University of Connecticut, U.S.A. (1998 and 2002, respectively). His research focuses on Hispanic gender studies and the representation of illicit drugs in recent

Latin American cultural production. He has published peer-review journal articles, book chapters, and book and film reviews in academic journals in both the United States and Venezuela. Currently, he is completing *Venezuela maricona*, a book manuscript dealing with three gay writers: Isaac Chocrón, Armando Rojas Guardia, and Boris Izaguirre.

Hazel Marsh (University of East Anglia)

Popular music and politics in Venezuela in the Chávez period: 'New Song' and 21st century Bolivarianism

This paper examines how and why Venezuelan singer/songwriter Alí Primera (1942-1985) became intertwined with Venezuelan politics, both during his lifetime and posthumously. It focuses on three time periods. 1. Alí's life. Emerging from the Latin America 'New Song' movement of the 1960s-70s, Alí's songs expressed values which stood in opposition to the state at that time. Widely vetoed by the mainstream media, Alí diffused his songs via direct contact with his audiences and independently recorded albums. 2. Posthumous grassroots memorialisation. After Alí's death, his songs were collectively remembered and commemorated at grassroots levels in the late 1980s and early 1990s, creating spaces within which Venezuelans articulated resistance to the prevailing political order. 3. The Chávez period. The Chávez government used cultural policy to formalise grassroots commemorations of Alí's legacy. Alí's songs provided Hugo Chávez with tools with which to connect with decades of leftist political activism, to raise the status of the historically marginalised masses, and to represent his government as a break with the old order. The paper argues that official support for Alí in the Chávez period changed the ways many Venezuelans used and understood his legacy. Alí's songs came to act as cultural resources which Venezuelans mobilised in order to create and share political knowledge, to redefine themselves in relation to the state, and to reach new understandings of their place within a changed society. Alí's life and songs became tools which many Venezuelans mobilised in order to defend or contest 21st Bolivarianism.

Bio

Hazel Marsh is a lecturer in Spanish and Latin American cultural studies in the school of Politics, Philosophy and Language and Communication Studies, University of East Anglia, UK. Her research interests include popular music and politics, social movements, cultural activism, popular culture, collective memory and the Romany Diaspora, with a geographical focus on Latin America and the UK.

Yana Stainova (Brown University)

A Sonorous Silence: the Polyphonous Politics of Classical Music in the Youth Orchestras of Venezuela's El Sistema

What can classical music say in times of political change? This question sparked

heated public debate in the wake of student-led anti-government protests this year that presented the most serious challenge to Venezuela's socialist government in a decade. As people on both sides of the political spectrum voiced their political positions, the spotlight of public attention fell on El Sistema, a beloved institution that has remained silent. El Sistema is a state-funded classical music education program that aims to combat socioeconomic marginalization and violence by providing free music education to half a million young people across the country. Portraying the orchestra as a model and enactment of the ideal society, El Sistema pulls together into a collaborative experience young people who are otherwise divided by social hierarchies and a socialist state discourse focused on class ideologies. Yet, the Venezuelan government co-opts El Sistema by commissioning the orchestras to play at state celebrations while promoting it as a solution to the most pressing social problems. I ask the young musicians how they perceive the potential of music to nurture ethical sensibilities, build political imaginations, and engage state power and ideology. I explore how an engagement with aesthetics may result in the formation of ethical and moral communities across surprising social and political boundaries. Hence, I analyze how the "polyphony" of music may allow it to remain discursively within the structures of political power, yet give rise to intersubjective experiences that lie beyond the discursive regimes that seek to control it.

Bio

Yana is a fourth year Ph.D. student in anthropology. She has a BA in International Relations and Spanish from Mount Holyoke College and an MA in anthropology from Brown University. Her research is positioned at the intersection of ethics, aesthetics, and violence and explores the role of artistic production in times of political change. For her undergraduate honors thesis *The Place of Poetry in the Chilean Transition to Democracy*, Yana studied the ways poetry was used as a medium of resistance to the dictatorship. In her MA thesis *Social Fragility and the Sonorous Gift: the Social Resonance of Classical music in the Youth Orchestras of Venezuela's El Sistema* (winner of the Roseberry Nash Graduate Student Prize), she explored the meaning and significance of music for participants in El Sistema, a classical music education program in Venezuela. This is also the topic of her dissertation. She is a life-long pianist and flutist.

Panel 6: (Trans)National Identities

Manuel Silva-Ferrer (Freie Universitaet Berlin)*

¿Hegemonía comunicacional? Nuevos escenarios de la cultura y la sociedad venezolana

Junto a las modificaciones estructurales, la primera década del siglo XXI observó un viraje en los discursos de la comunicación masiva en Venezuela, dirigido a transformar el paisaje como escenario y, sobre todo, los modos de representación de las clases populares. La acción fue un reflejo de los importantes cambios políticos, económicos y sociales ocurridos en el país, y una muestra de cómo las clases populares, espejo de los símbolos de la hegemonía, más que de su acción directa, entraron en juego como parte de las transformaciones de las identidades y los imaginarios que operan desde los medios de comunicación en sus interacciones con el poder. Como alternativa a los numerosos análisis centrados en las modificaciones del "aparato cultural del estado", esta ponencia pretende retomar el giro producido desde mediados de los años ochenta del siglo pasado en los estudios de la cultura y la comunicación - que permitió relacionar el análisis de las estructuras culturales y los mensajes con las estrategias del consumo- para abordar el caso de la comunicación venezolana reciente. El objetivo es producir un acercamiento teniendo muy en cuenta que los medios, más que un fenómeno puramente comercial o ideológico, es un fenómeno eminentemente cultural, a través del cual la gente construye y reconstruye el sentido de su vida. Se trata también de observar como los elementos de la singularidad nacional no son únicamente el resultado de los conflictos locales, sino mucho más el producto de la confluencia de éstos con contextos más amplios de la realidad global actual.

Bio

Manuel graduated in Comunicación Social from the Universidad Central de Venezuela. He has a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Social Science from the Freie Universität Berlin. He has a long trajectory in the media and cultural administration, and worked at the Cinemateca Nacional de Venezuela. He was Director of Film and Audiovisual Media at the Culture Ministry in Venezuela and a member of board at the CNAC (Centro Nacional Autónomo de Cinematografía). He was director of ExtraCámara and has been a columnist in a range of publications. Manuel has published peer-reviewed articles and participated in international conferences on culture and communications. He is currently working on a research project at the Latin American Institute at the Freie Universität Berlin on the links between oil, society and culture at the start of the twentieth century.

Katie Brown (King's College, London)

Manifiesto: País – a response to the prescriptive nationalism of Bolivarian cultural politics?

Manifiesto: País, an exhibition held at the Universidad Central de Venezuela from 18 May-31 August 2014, features artwork based on responses by 66 leading Venezuelan writers, critics and intellectuals to the question of what 'país' means to them. The exhibition's curator, Lisbeth Salas, explains: 'I made the same request to each of them: define the word 'país'. The idea was that they speak about how they see it, what they hope for from the future that we seemingly don't have, how to rescue the idea of nation from memory, reminiscence and even exile. We are all living through the same thing, regardless of where we reside; what's certain is that Venezuela is no longer what it was and we don't know what it is now either'. In this paper, I examine some of the texts and their interpretations of national identity in the light of 'Bolivarian' cultural policy which, I will argue, propagates a very prescriptive and restrictive idea of national identity. I will begin with an overview of how literature has always been seen as a nation-building tool in Venezuela, and how the rhetoric of the Bolivarian government continues this, before analysing the resistance to the official idea of national identity expressed through Manifiesto: País.

Bio

Katie Brown is currently completing a PhD in Spanish American Studies at King's College London. Her thesis considers contemporary Venezuelan literature in the context of 'Bolivarian' cultural politics, with a focus on explorations of the process and value of writing as a narrative theme in recent novels. She runs venezuelanliterature.co.uk (@VenezuelanLit) where she posts information about books and writers, news stories, and translations, and has also participated in translation projects for Palabras Errantes.

Wesley Beaver (University of Oxford)

Transnational Collective Action in the Digital Age: the Venezuelan diaspora and the SOS Venezuela Movement

Soon after the student protests erupted in spring of 2014 hundreds of thousands of Venezuelan diaspora members took to social media platforms to organize protests. My research is concerned with the recent protests sparked by the insecurity and perceived lack of accountability of the Venezuelan government and the Venezuelan diaspora's involvement in the transnational SOS Venezuela protests. In particular, I will be talking about the relevance of diaspora populations in this context and their role in making these protests transnational, with a focus on the employment of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to these ends. The ascendance and widespread adoption of ICTs challenge traditional notions of collective action as well as traditional conceptions of state sovereignty. I have analyzed literature as well as conducted a series of interviews with individuals involved in the organisation of the protests. My aim is to determine whether and in which ways ICT's have facilitated protests, as well provide an outlet for "homeland" and "hostland" populations to communicate and redefine their national identity. Where relevant, I also include comparisons with transnational protests of the past that have had similar aims as SOS Venezuela to flesh out some of the particulars of the latter movement. The Venezuelan diaspora's employment of ICTs not only allowed for an alternative and accurate information intermediary that effectively circumvented government control, but it also streamlined the formation of a transnational protest movement that garnered international attention.

Bio

William Beaver received his BA from Occidental College in Diplomacy and World Affairs with a focus on the politics, history and culture of Latin America. He is currently completing his masters thesis at the Oxford Internet Institute on information and communications technologies and their role in transnational protests of diaspora communities in Venezuela.

María Teresa Vera-Rojas (Universitat de Barcelona)

Rethinking Venezuelanness through Disenchantment: Exile and National Identity in Eduardo Sánchez Rugeles' *Los Desterrados*

Traditionally conceived as part of the secularization processes of Modernity, disenchantment and the experiences of hopelessness that are usually associated to it, also entail a process of disaffection manifested in expressions of disidentification and collective lovelessness for the nation. This presentation seeks to think about the strategies upon which the Venezuelan writer Eduardo Sánchez Rugeles makes of the contemporary Venezuelan experiences of exile an expression associated to the disenchantment as a collective experience of identity in 21st century Venezuela. To this end, I will pay special attention to his book of crónicas, *Los Desterrados*, which in the midst of references to contemporary Venezuelan pop culture, compels the reader to redefine the Venezuelanness myth and fictions vis-à-vis the failure of the happiness and prosperity promises. Within this frame, the nostalgic mood of these crónicas become one of the most important means not only to represent the love-hate relationship of their characters with their national and individual origins, but also to record a critical perspective that dismantles the fictions of origins through which the sentiments of national belonging and identity representations were built upon.

Bio

María Teresa holds a PhD in Hispanic Studies from the University of Houston and is currently finishing a doctoral degree in Estudios de Género at the Universitat de Barcelona. She specializes in US Latina/o Literature and literature from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, focusing on gender and sexuality. She also studies contemporary Venezuelan culture, especially the role of emotions in literature produced in exile and politics of sexuality under Bolivarian socialism. She edited a volume entitled *Nuevas subjetividades/sexualidades literarias* (Egales, 2012), has published in a number of different journals and edited volumes such as *Into the Mainstream: Essays on Caribbean and Latin American Literature and Culture*; *Repensar la comunidad desde la literatura y el género*, among others. She is co-director and member of the editorial committee for *452oF. Revista de teoría de la literatura y literatura comparada*.

Keynote Address

George Yudice (University of Miami)

The Challenge of Democratizing Cultural Policy

George Yúdice received his B.A. (Chemistry) from Hunter College, CUNY; his M.A. (Spanish) from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana; and his Ph.D. (Romance Languages) from Princeton University (1977). His teaching includes critical theory, literary and cultural studies; his courses range from contemporary aesthetics and politics to urban imaginaries, to film recreations of literary works, Mapping Miami, and cultural policy in Latin America. He also teaches in the Program in Latin American Studies and he is director of the Miami Observatory on Communication and Creative Industries (www.miamiobservatory.org), which tracks work in music, theater, audiovisual, culture-based urban revitalization, cultural networks throughout the Americas, and community-based projects in South Florida. Yúdice has several individual and collaborative research projects under way: •Aesthetics Out of Bounds examines a range of projects that claim to have aesthetic value even as they work in other than artistic and literary spheres: the media, urban revitalization, social movements, etc. •Cultural Networking in Central America follows the organizational efforts of myriad cultural actors (from artists, musicians and writers to indigenous craftspersons and cultural tourism initiatives) to create a regional market and distributional system as a means to surpass the obstacles of the small and poor economies of the region. •Mapping Miami tracks cultural initiatives in South Florida and in particular in neighborhoods (Hialeah, Overtown, Doral, Kendall, etc.) not usually identified with art and culture (as is the case in South Beach, Wynwood and the Design District) •Circuits of Opportunity in Latino America maps initiatives that involve Latin American and U.S. Latino cultural producers His research and publications are mainly in the area of Latin American Cultural Studies, and in particular Cultural Policy Studies.

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