

# Giuseppe Campuzano's Afterlife

## *Toward a Travesti Methodology for Critique, Care, and Radical Resistance*

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**Abstract** The following hybrid essay contributes to, as well as complicates, the afterlife of Giuseppe Campuzano's work on *travesti* as methodology and offers questions raised from community organizing and collective care in order to claim a legacy of *travesti* as *curandera* (healer). This is made evident as the essay weaves through an affective history of AIDS-related struggles in life and death and the networks of care they invoke, including Campuzano's own, in order to move through questions of need, desire, collaboration, and urgency for gender and sexual dissidents in the Global South. These reflections result in a specific theorizing that challenges traditional forms knowledge production and creates possibilities through which to enact queer futures that enhance our commitment to one another's survival.

**Keywords** *travesti*, transfeminism, HIV/AIDS, necropolitics, critique

I write because my *ancestras* work moves me in such a way that I must take responsibility for continuing to ask the questions they began to trace. Not just that—I must ask new ones. I write because *ser travesti* is not just about gender or sexuality. *Es una fiesta, mi amor*.<sup>1</sup> It's about daring to transgress, to open up new possibilities. I write as a way to fight for our future, to stress the responsibility we have to one another in our collective care and in our scholarly artist-activist work. I write because of my commitment to my community's lives, even when death has already taken over. I write because I hope to enact here the creative, politico-theoretical exploration of what we and our work mean to one another, to write *with* the communities I'm a part of. I write to move us toward a future imagined by our *ancestras*, which can be felt and enacted by us.<sup>2</sup> I ask, What does it mean to be undone by another's loss, death, the very reality of our precarious lives, in ways that move us spiritually, creatively, critically toward a different

understanding of ourselves?<sup>3</sup> How does an intimacy with travesti death affect our imagining and building of our political community in the face of indescribable, sometimes even ungrievable loss?<sup>4</sup>

In the last fifteen years, the diva that is Giuseppe Campuzano rose to public attention, both in Peru and internationally, because of her scholarly artistic work that led to the art installation and book project she named *Museo Travesti del Perú* (*Travesti Museum of Peru*; Campuzano 2007). *Absoluta, absolutísima!*<sup>5</sup> Her project seduced many, in part because it reflected a longing to see queerness written into our indigenous history, and in part because the images she produced were transgressive, counterhistorical, and beautiful. It also provided many of us, sexual and gender dissidents, with a vision of ourselves that did not compromise our roots, or our faggotry—a vision that never needed to be absolutely redeemable, uncomplicated, or without contradiction.

Miguel A. López, scholar-curator and a friend of Giuseppe, described the *Museo Travesti del Perú* as “halfway between performance and historical research,” situated in a promiscuous intersectional thinking of history through the perspective of “a fictional figure he calls the androgynous indigenous/mixed-race transvestite” or, more specifically, *travesti* (López and Campuzano 2013). The *Museo Travesti del Perú* uses a multiplicity of artifacts of *travestismo*—photos, clothes, crafts, and objects—to confront and challenge the colonized vision of the nation-state and fracture heterosexual subjectivity, giving possibility to “invisible subjects whose life is permanently between life and death: the HIV-positive, the undocumented immigrants, the intersex.”

The implications of this project, then, go far beyond narrow conceptions of trans or gender studies, as it embodies a critique of an entire mode of scientific Western knowledge production that has attempted to speak for and about our bodies, our communities, and our histories. Giuseppe’s self-fashioned methodology is completely promiscuous, invented through the body as a site for reinvention and the creation of a truth that is as artificial as the limits that produced its erasure. To quote *la cabra* herself,<sup>6</sup> speaking of a piece in the museum that consisted of a pair of worn-down white platform heels named *La Carlita*, which she almost lost after an installation in Bogotá:

My friend Carla migrated from Peru to Italy in 2003. She was getting rid of some things, among them a pair of old shoes, so I asked her to give them to me. . . . She always offered to send me a new pair and I repeated that I kept those as an allegory for her travels (transgender, transnational). Carlita was murdered in 2008 by a john. In 2009 I looked for the shoes once more, this time to take them to Bogotá but I could not find them: my mother had thrown them in the garbage! After a hysterical fetishist moment, I managed to recover its travesti meaning and I simply

got another pair. That falsified Carlita was the one you gave me back, that I pruned, as a symbol of a truncate trip, to show it at la Trienal de Chile, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Santiago. The original Carlita never existed. (La Fountain-Stokes, n.d.)

It is in this spirit that I write this to speak not only about Campuzano and the Travesti Museum but also about *mi familia infecta*: the families we create out of our impure blood, our abject bodies, and undesirable fluids. I write because I need to speak about ancestry, the meaning of legacy, the ways in which we write ourselves not just into history but into our communities. I write to contribute to the field of queer of color critique, but one that is rooted in *cuerpas/territorias* (body/territories) from the Global South.

I also write even when the knowledge I have to share openly defies academic translation, not just because our indigenous tongues have been, largely, taken from us with the imposition of Spanish first, and English second, but because it is sacred knowledge, unable to be fully known or understood under the current paradigms that dominate our fields and the intellectual spaces we produce knowledge from. So there may be some things here that will be messy, unexplainable, unverifiable, unscientific, unable to be categorized—and that is part of the message. Attempting to know everything is a colonial epistemology in which I refuse to be complicit.

Even though this essay states my affiliation with a university and my status as a graduate student, I am writing first and foremost as the child of the *campesinas* that the terrorist state was unable to sterilize. I am here as the child of the travestis that refuse to be killed even when their physical bodies are no longer here. I am here as an activist who has been working on the ground for over ten years, as an artist who is struggling to find their voice, as a scholar who is both hypervisible and unable to be truly seen, and as a healer evoking magic and collective power. Most important, I am writing as a hot ass mess, as a *loca*, *maricón*, *travesti*, *chuchi-chinchay*, *bebida furiosa*, *gordx rabiosx*, *escandalosa*, *impertinente*, *deseosa*, *chismosa*, *qariwarmi*, *guerrxerx*, and *bruja*.

I came to know about the work Giuseppe was doing through my *tío*, Germain Machuca, my father's younger sibling.<sup>7</sup> For me, as a child, he was always my favorite, the one who moved their body like no one else, who constantly transformed their body—and mine—in ways I was just starting to dream possible. Since age three, she would bring me in her room and say I was her favorite model. I would beg her, “Píntameee” (paint my face), and she would ask to be acknowledged in her beauty before she would accept. Once I had sufficiently complimented her, telling her how perfect, beautiful, wonderful, stunning, gorgeous she is, we would begin. I remember that trance-like emotion when I would

feel his soft hands working their magic on me, feeling their breathing on my face as they shared with me the sacred, dangerous, thrilling, and extremely pleasurable world of dying in front of the mirror to be reborn as *Otra*, to lend your body to another, to connect to our *ancestras travestis*, to become one of the multiple possibilities that inhabit one's *cuerpa/territoria*. Many times, she has birthed me. I have always been her child. She has always been *mi hada madrina*, my fairy godmother. In the stories she has told me over the years, she always repeats how they met all their soul mates and lovers in front of a mirror. I think this is how we fell in love, too. I cannot think of another moment more defining for the *maricón* that I am today.

*Mi tío* Germain and Giuseppe were connected through a lifeline of blood and semen, infectious fluids carrying both danger and pleasure, creating our own deadly bloodlines and families along the way, moving through bodies as a bio-hazardous sexual threat. They met as teens during the eighties, at the height of the civil war, the HIV/AIDS crisis, and state-imposed curfews in Peru: just two tall queens in a club way too small for their egos. The ways in which they are connected and disconnected from each other are complicated and deeply personal, but it is important that you know that even though a lot of their travesti work has been done together, only one of them has the international recognition that they both deserve.

TRAVEEEEEESTIIIIIII!!! MARICOOOOOOOÓN!!!! CABRIIIÍSIIMAAAAAAA!!!

The word *travesti* functions in Campuzano's work not as an identity but as a methodology and epistemology. Giuseppe's use of *travesti* is not without tension. In Peru, an important part of the trans movement rejects the use of the word, reminding us of its history as a derogatory term that is used to delegitimize trans women as women. The investment in *trans* as an umbrella term for the multiple indigenous forms of gender and sexual dissidence stems, very clearly in my opinion, from the need to be seen, validated, and most important, funded by people in power from the Global North—those who have the power to make our government listen and obey under the threat of isolation from the globalized neoliberal capitalist order. In contrast to the supposed universality of *trans*, *travesti* is provincialized and particular, even where some form of this word exists in many languages. The most obvious definition of *travesti* comes from the verb *travestir*, to cross-dress. Hence, the travesti is the body that cross-dresses and becomes a type of person, the travesti subject. Travesti is not woman and is not trans. Travesti is classed and raced: it means you do not present femininely all of the time because you cannot afford to. It means the use of body technologies to transform one's body does not come from a doctor's office but from resourcefulness in the face of *precarización*, the act by which the matrix of domination

makes our bodies and our lives precarious. *¿Más clarito?* It means you get creative, you use pens for eyeliner, get your hormones and silicones from your friends underground, or use *tinta* instead of *testosterona* to transform your body. It also means you're only safe at night, when the children are sleeping and the darkness allows a certain freedom and permissiveness to roam more freely, to perform gender and sexuality with less judgment, outside the scrutiny of the regular order, state agents, and the establishment. Travesti is usually a sex worker, whether out of need for money, validation, survival, or most likely a mixture of the three. She does not have a DNI, Documento Nacional de Identificación—most likely she never has had one. She is undocumented, and most of the time she has migrated away from the family she was birthed into in order to be reborn among those of her kind. Travesti is the refusal to be trans, the refusal to be woman, the refusal to be intelligible.

Most important, she has always been here. The central aim of Campuzano's travesti project is not to find the travestis in Peruvian history but, rather, to make out of her travesti body a map, a museum, an epistemology, to create on her body a way of coming to know the world and to weave oneself into it. It is about using *nuestra mariconada y nuestro escándalo, tomar ese exceso que también es chisme con labial, escarcha y risa de loca*, to destabilize the colonial nation-state project, its history, its ideals, its methods, and its narratives. We are drawing a line that connects us to the ancestors the colonizers tried to erase, and we will not be complicit in this killing of our bodies/territories when, as travestis we stand in our power as sacred beings, shamans, and witches able to cross between the spheres of masculine and feminine energy, thus being closer to the divine, that realm of *danza/batalla* (dance/battle) and *peligro/poder* (danger/power) that ultimately triggers transformation.<sup>8</sup>

When we claim ourselves as part of this sacred tradition we are tapping into a form of power that is routinely displaced from us but also given to us through the history of the treatment of our bodies. The fact that we simultaneously cause so much social anxiety, lust, and distress is the key that, in this project of travesti as a politics, we are trying to claim for ourselves. Our power comes from living on the edge, the margins, *la calle*, the hours between dawn. Our power comes from tapping into the sacred space of transcendence, the refusal to accept coherence, stability, or respectability as a way of life. To stand in this refusal, when so many cannot and will not see us as human and will not honor the power we are trying to claim for ourselves, also puts us at risk.

This is where I want to intervene my right to complicate Campuzano's project in order to visualize new potentialities, a way of moving her critique forward as we attempt to fill the spaces that she left when she passed away in 2013. I claim her as my *ancestra* as I claim the right to do a critique of her work, which

demands of me the capability to see her contributions as well as her shortcomings and to claim those as opportunities for growing in her legacy as we create one of our own; to do a reading that is travesti, critical and tender, reparative but sharp; to do with *ternura radical*, because this work is important and political and intimate; to do the asking and challenging as we care for one another and acknowledge our fragilities and differences as sites of resistance, imagination, and politico-affective agency (D'Emilia 2015). I want to ask what it means to do work in the afterlife of somebody whose impact has been so critical and has moved and inspired us toward new collaborations with one another. So many young *cabritas* have been brought together by the impact of her work, the grief and loss after her passing. Most of us have articulated a sense of urgency to be with each other in different ways, after her death, and the deaths of those in our communities who have continued to die after her passing. The work I have been doing over the past five years has included the creation of performance art pieces, documentary theater plays, community-based research projects, publishing books, and collecting oral histories from over a thousand *cabras* all over Peru. It has also involved loving and caring for my community, my friends, lovers, *bebitas*, sometimes even strangers. Some days, some of the most important work I have done has been cooking, dancing, drinking, listening, opening up my home, and providing warmth and nurture.

After her death, conversations surrounding Campuzano's HIV/AIDS politics have been less present than during the time she was actively working on these issues. Giuseppe embraced HIV infection as a crucial and provocative form of power, in the ways in which it allowed us to create a bloodline of queers and dissidents: a new blood family out of impurity, in ways that threaten notions of biological, heteronormative families. *El cache*, sex, our own fucking and our desire, are brought back to the front and center of our political and intellectual work. To examine what desire provokes in terms of our gender, what it produces in our embodiments, the ways in which we are moved by others for whom we feel erotic connections, which may very well be untamable and ungovernable emotion—that which by definition makes us queer. It is our methodology, a space for us to enact the unthinkable, undreamable, *lo irrespetable, impensable e, incluso, grotesco*. We never had to fuck pretty because we were already travesti, *maricón*. We needed the theory to understand this position as powerful, in that it destabilizes that which is deemed as respectable knowledge on human sexuality and gender. This way of fucking, living, being, looking, and performing travesti disrupts norms, is chaotic by nature, unrestricted, high risk, and high reward. Giuseppe's proposition of power over an HIV-seropositive status and the travesti body threatens parts of the gay and trans community who would rather see themselves disaligned from the stigma of a death still associated with promiscuity, immorality, undesirability, untouchability.

In Latin America, Peru is one of the few countries that have not yet formulated laws that are affirmative or protective of the queer and transgender population (No Tengo Miedo 2016). Violence against queers, and particularly *mariconas escandalosas*, is not only sanctioned by the nation-state through the lack of access to justice but also perpetuated through law enforcement personnel, who target working-class trans and gender-nonconforming folks for sexual harassment, rape, arbitrary detention, and beatings, among others (Instituto Runa 2006). Furthermore, the HIV/AIDS crisis has deeply affected the negotiation for recognition from the state. With the first case of HIV reported in 1983, it was only in 1996 that the state implemented a structured program, with budgeted resources, to prevent HIV/AIDS targeting specific at-risk populations and providing antiretroviral treatment for mother-to-child transmission (Cueto 2002). It was not until 2004, more than twenty years after the first case, that a program to provide universal access to antiretroviral treatment was made available by the Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud del Perú 2006). This reveals that no care is provided by the state when people are characterized as responsible for the causes of their death and their own violence—or, rather, that the only way in which care is provided is if sexual and gender dissidents let go of those behaviors, sexual practices, aesthetics, and relationships that make their life queer, and therefore worth living. What does it mean, then, to ask for care and survival, standing in refusal to live a life of a sanitized existence, sex life, politics?<sup>9</sup>

It is because of all the possibilities that I see stemming from Campuzano's work that I am pushed to think about new ways of asking her questions even in death: Where is the place of collaboration and friendship in her project before and after she became disabled? How many of these ideas and explorations in gender and travesti performance were done in *complicidad* with others? Why do we need others when we are faced with death and not with recognition? Who influences our work even when nobody knows their name? Who do we find out that we need in death that we could not acknowledge in life? How does death structure our relationships to one another's survival?

I started spending more time with her when she fell ill and her death was imminent. Even then, she generously provided space for me to interview her and share my research with her. She asked me to share more about disability studies as she was beginning to write a different kind of body into her performance-scholarly work. Giuseppe Campuzano passed away in November 2013 after a long battle with HIV/AIDS-related lipodystrophy and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, which made her body extremely vulnerable and thus caused her to need her friends and chosen family even more. Becoming crip, developing a hunger and a need for disability studies, and attempting to weave that into her work were all peaking when she passed.

A lot of her work, and the recognition that came with it, would not have been possible without a network of talented artists and researchers who helped piece together the project of travesti that she ultimately authored. It is likely that a lot of scholars work that way, but for me and my community of *bebitas furiosas* who are attempting to build a transfeminist politics from the Global South,<sup>10</sup> being together and creating collectively are not just preferred but needed, to cite one another as we create together as well as individually, to reference where the ideas we are taking credit for are imagined collectively. To give credit where being recognized by others is a form of survival has become a key practice in ensuring everyone's work, whether intellectual, emotional, physical, or domestic, is valued, acknowledged, seen, and understood, but also interpreted and infused with value and meaning. Whose work are we building on when we are making sense of a world we experience and transform together? Whom do we erase in our work in order to insert others who are already so often acknowledged? Who, if not the community of *cabras* I am surrounded with, informs the way in which I theorize my social existence? And most important, what kind of knowledge gets valued and devalued as we move forward in creating a community-based artist/scholarly/political practice?

We held the most beautiful funeral for *la mariconísima*.<sup>11</sup> My *tío* Germain lent her his body, and we had a *pasacalle* throughout her block, with a band singing both *A quién le importa*, by Alaska y Dinarama, and *Que linda flor, qué hermosa flor*, a popular Andean *huayno* song. She was that, *una cholita travesti*.<sup>12</sup> I had never been at a travesti funeral before, but I have had to hold many since she passed. For me, coming to a trans and nonbinary identity has also signified a politics of community, of impure bloodlines and legacies, of healing and caring for each other as political work. This is Germain's legacy, which is hidden in Giuseppe's work, and which I also claim for myself. As a child in the late 1980s and 1990s, Germain took care of many of her friends who died at the height of the AIDS epidemic, creating a sense of devotion and healing that I believe to be central to the identity of travesti as *curandera*. Germain has been for many decades now *la curandera que* provides nurture, care, and healing in so many of our *ancestras'* most vulnerable moments. She did this early on for *las locas del Teatro del Sol*, Peru's first *teatro maricón*, where she was adopted by Beto Montalva and Pipo Ormeño, to learn theater, dance, performance, after she had found a photograph of them in the newspaper and ran after school to see their play. She also learned about the pain in our deaths and our struggles to survive. She fought for Pipo y Beto to have a hospital bed in the times when even money could not buy you health care for HIV/AIDS. She cared for Giuseppe and has done so for many others over the years.<sup>13</sup>

The centrality of this work as a travesti politics has become painfully evident during the past five years as I have become a full-time activist working on

the ground. As Lohana Berkins (2014), queen of *furia* travesti, would say: "After marriage equality passed in Argentina, you would think that our boyfriends would go running claiming social security for their travesti wives, but it has not happened. They do not want to take us out of the dark. Nothing has changed for us."

Yefri Peña is an iconic travesti from *el Cono Este de Lima* who, a little over ten years ago, survived one of the most gruesome hate crimes in Peruvian history. She was attacked by five men who took off her silicone breasts, broke her arms, left her bleeding out on the streets in front of a police van. She had to pay one hundred soles to get a taxi to drive her to the hospital. They did not want to touch her there, refused to wipe the sweat of her forehead or give her water. They left her for dead; she struggled to show she was alive. She was released the next day alleging lack of space for her at the hospital. She spent one month at her house sitting on a chair without food, water, or an IV. After twenty-eight days she woke up and said, "Mamá, tengo sed," and drank two liters of water in one sitting. She is the most powerful, strongest person I know. She has since then gotten back on the streets, working as a peer sex-health educator, taking several travesti sex workers to get regular checkups, buying them food, providing space to talk, to laugh, for *chisme* and for counsel.<sup>14</sup> For this she is both loved and feared at every health care center she visits. She will not allow for any discrimination toward another travesti. And she will always leave with the most condoms in her purse. So, when she calls, you just answer. Me and Rudi y Adriana, my intense and beautiful research *compañeras*, were pulling together our second book when Yefri called us crying at the beginning of 2016 because one of her friends, Yuya, had fallen ill due to AIDS-related health issues, as well as tuberculosis. The doctors at Hospital Hipólito Unanue en El Agustino refused to see her. We left everything to go raise hell for them. For a year we took care of Yuya through a list of volunteers to see her and feed her when she was unable to, since the hospital would not. We ran a campaign to crowdsource funds for her care *y armamos un ESCÁNDALO* so the hospital would admit her. After about a year of in-hospital treatment, she recovered and was on her way to getting out of there when she relapsed and suddenly passed away. It took us several hours to retrieve her body from the hospital, as they would not recognize we were family, even when I had been signing all of her consent forms for the past year. At the hospital morgue, they would not touch her. They wanted to sell her body to medical students, to whom the hospital gave my number and who would not stop calling and harassing me, saying that we were selfish for not "contributing to science" and that they would bury the body after they were done anyway. We said no, even when we could barely afford her burial. I said, "No—you have taken enough from us through your actions and omissions. Let her community give our Yuya a proper burial." We had to go in and get her cold

body from the hospital morgue freezer, clean her, dress her, and organize her wake. We bought her a dress, and I did her makeup. Even dead, she was looking very *coqueta*, just as she did when I met her, unable to speak yet picking husbands from her hospital bed, sorting through all the cute boys roaming the halls. “Porque ser travesti es una fiesta, mi amor.” At the wake, only four people showed up. I think most people who identified with her were scared about what this meant for their own mortality. She always talked about multiple boyfriends whom she loved and literally gave her life for, but none of them were there. Yefri called *y PUTEÓ A TODO EL MUNDO* and told them that they needed to come, that it could have been any of us.<sup>15</sup> And then travestis from all over *el Cono Este* came to her funeral. We talked about how *nos desvivimos por el hombre*, we lust so much to be desired back by these men who refuse to acknowledge us publicly, and that’s ultimately what kills us. Patriarchy is killing us. We cannot keep looking to men for care. We need to care in our own travesti ways.

I want to think about what it means to acknowledge oneself in intimacy with the vulnerability that makes travesti life marked for death, what it means to move inside and out of that level of risk, to ask if care will be forfeited from us when we most need it. In the face of extreme violence, as Jina B. Kim theorized in her talk “Crippling the Welfare Queen” (2018), interdependency moves us from a stigmatized position onto a radical crip-of-color mutual need of others for survival, which becomes crucial for creating a livable world. I bare the question, What does interdependency mean in light of a necropolitical state whose HIV/AIDS politics sees *locas, travestis y putas* as responsible for their own deaths? How does the death of others with whom one identifies—who are not yet recognized as grievable—produce new forms of interdependency and care among the living, the living-dead, and the dead?

Before Giuseppe passed, she organized an intricate network of care and support, including multiple friends who assisted her when she was no longer able to move on her own. She never wanted to be a burden to her biological mother, but in a way she believed that it was up to us as an impure family to care for one another. This is where I want to pick up on her work, on the centrality of collaboration as a liberatory practice, as a deeply travesti practice now embodied in myself and the *bebitas* around me.

A couple summers ago, Max Lira, Ibrain Plácido, and I opened an artistic laboratory under the name *Bebitas Furiosas: Deseos Peligrosos* (Lira Tapia, Machuca Rose, and Plácido San Martín 2016), a space for different *cabritas, travestis, bebitas, y mariconas* to explore different techniques and technologies in order to collectively research, create, dance, heal, liberate, feel erotic, experience wellness and freedom. The three of us came to know one another and to offer our vulnerability to one another through a common sensitivity regarding Giuseppe’s

work, *una capacidad de movernos y conmovernos*, a capacity to move and be moved that we believed could take us to deeper explorations of that impure travesti positionality. To explore travesti as an epistemological possibility to be something beyond man or woman, gay or straight, but that is still *loca* and, maybe most important, brown, *precarizada*, already existing in the margin and making that a beautiful place to be. Yefri, Yuya, Giuseppe, and Germain are all travestis we claim as ancestors because of the multiple possibilities in the practices of creating a world where we can exist. Furthermore, Giuseppe's legacy is not only in the brilliance and excellence in her scholarship, in the rigor in her research, or in her creativity and self-expression. It is also in her vulnerability, in her needing her friends, in the structures that feed into the narcissistic self that allows so many scholars to speak from the I but that for us, for the legacy we are claiming, is a constant turn to the collective. To the community, to *las amigas*, to *las bebitas furiosas*, to the ways in which we see ourselves, we heal ourselves, we hurt and nurture each other.

I think of the parties we hold to celebrate one another often, the meals we cook together, the joints we smoke, the way in which we create the most fabulous outfits and personas out of precarious conditions, how creativity and resourcefulness rise in the face of marginality and urgency. I think of the strategies we navigate to become who we are in spaces we fight more and more to create for ourselves. I think of La Casita Transfeminista that held so many parties and study sessions, wine downs, and activist meetings, writings of books and relationships, good sex and bad sex, fearing for our lives and our safety, and also rejoicing in our accomplishments together, even when it's been the most difficult. I think of Casa Bagre, Chola Contravisual, Serena Morena, PGNBebxs, La Munay, La Promesa, Trenzar, the work of Ashanti, de Diversidades Trans Masculinas, of the people at Bisagra, Dulce Fanzín, No Tengo Miedo, Acción Crítica, Imaginario Colectivo, Hijas de Lilith, Pussy Fiesta, Bésame Pasiva, el FRAX, and many other spaces we have created under multiple names in order to find ourselves in community. I think of all the ways in which we have strived to celebrate those who are most endangered within our communities. I think of *la cuerpita de la Fabrizia*, *bailando* and running to my room for an outfit change before the night is over, both outshining and inspiring everybody else. I think of Mayu, *la Wawita Absoluta*, creating beautiful art and educating with tenderness in the face of so much violence. I think of Pau Flores and her devotion to HIV/AIDS work even when she was dying of this herself. I think of Paloma Martinez and the need, the urgency for validation. I think of our parties, *la escarcha*, *los brillitos y los puntos*. I think of this complicated legacy and the tension between the personal and the collective, between whom we fuck and whom we are friends with, between *nuestra pulsión de vida y de muerte*, the eros and the thanatos, if you will.

I go back to our sacred space of healing together as a form of fighting for a future that has always been ours, even when we are constantly denied the opportunity to continue living. *Museo Travesti del Perú* has meant, in Giuseppe's afterlife, a project that for many of us has signified not only a looking at the past but also a longing and searching toward a queer futurity. As Giuseppe herself said, "El potencial del Museo Travesti no equivale a la cantidad o el costo de su colección, sino a su audacia para deconstruir y replantar continuamente sus supuestos" (The Travesti Museum's potential is not in the quantity or cost of its collection but, rather, its audacity to deconstruct and constantly challenge its suppositions) (Campuzano 2008: 50). Travesti now, for *las bebitas*, functions as a doorway that allows us to dream of a past connected to a future that can be enacted by celebrating the abundance of racialized and *sudaca* travesti aesthetics, sensitivities, and desires while drawing from an infectious lineage that connects us to our ancestors and our *muertas* who lived before us, no matter how validated their contributions are by the academic world.

*Cuando una travesti muere, nunca muere. Giuseppe Campuzano y Yuya Romayna, presente.* When a travesti dies, she never dies. Giuseppe Campuzano and Yuya Romayna, present.

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## Notes

1. *Me robo* this phrase from a piece by the same name written by Camila Sosa Villada (2016), travesti militant artist from Argentina.
2. I write inspired by the legacy of womxn of color and queer and trans people of color using autoethnography and autotheory to explore, narrate, and enact our different truths through art and other forms of cultural production. I'm particularly inspired by the work of Jillian Hernández (2018) in exploring the meaning of mourning and aesthetics for Latinx femmes through autoethnographic prose that brings the reader into contact with the author's grandmother.
3. Here I am thinking with Judith Butler's work in *Undoing Gender* (2004), questioning what death does or undoes for those who are connected and committed to one another's lives, recognition, and justice. I'm also moving through these questions with Butler's writing in *Frames of War* (2009), as I identify travesti lives to be particularly precarious under the necropolitical Peruvian state.
4. This set of questions are inspired by multiple conversations with Jill H. Casid over the spring of 2018, with and around the work of Stuart J. Murray in "Thanatopolitics: On the Use of Death for Mobilizing Political Life" (2006: 195), which frames a politics of death as a "response and a resistance to biopolitical power and to the Western conception of rational sovereignty with which biopolitics is allied." This understanding of death as a political act has important connotations on my urgency to theorize intimacy with travesti death as its connected to multiple affective, rhetorical, and symbolic devices through which travesti life and survival are produced.
5. *Absoluta!* is an exclamation that comes from old *telenovelas*, which my *tío* Germain taught me and which is a part of the way we talk to each other. *Cuando la mala de la novela* walks in looking fabulous, even though her whole character is based on a dilemma, she would be *absoluta*, overcoming aesthetically her dramatic position. "Absoluta!" we exclaim to each other, too, when we overcome with fabulousity.
6. *Cabra* is a term that comes from the insult *cabro*, which literally translates to "goat," meaning faggot. *Cabra* is the feminized form of the insult, a term reclaimed and used to encompass different forms of sexual and gender dissidence that move toward faggotry, *mariconada*, with an in-your-face attitude. It includes multiple genders, sexualities and bodies that move toward that form of feeling, and it is used intimately, among friends and *bebitas*.
7. Throughout this article, I use multiple gender pronouns to refer both to Germain and Giuseppe. I use this as a resource to destabilize gender categories as this is how I usually talk about them in Spanish as well. Germain would say to me, "I tried pants, I tried skirts—and I can't stick to either of them!"
8. These ideas on gender and de/colonization are affirmed in Campuzano's work through the scholarship of Michael Horswell (2005, referenced here as the Spanish version published in 2013).
9. The idea of travestis and *maricas* refusing to live a sanitized existence in regard to sex as a radical politics of desire is inspired by Néstor Perlongher's writing on *las locas* as a subject with a nomad sexuality that transcends "not only the heterosexual order, but is also a marginal position in the homosexual movement, in contrast to the masculine middle-class gay, whose place as a model citizen is central to the visibility and assimilationist politics sustained by the gay movement from the 80s and on" (Davis 2012).

10. *Bebitas furiosas* is deployed as a gender category to signify vulnerability, childlike play, a claiming of gender akin to femme, a softness, *un ser pasiva* that is also furious, angry, upset, disturbed. This concept was created as a collaboration among Max Lira, Ibrain Plácido, and myself—all nonbinary *cabras cholitxs* trying to ground our explorations surrounding desire in our aesthetic practice.
11. *Mariconixima* is a play on words used by Germain and Giuseppe, meaning the most maricón, and it's also used in this piece to gesture toward the title of an article I wrote and published online immediately after Giuseppe's death, on her legacy, our connection, and the impact of her beautiful travesti funeral, called "Mariconixima renace en cabrísimo ritual" (Machuca Rose 2013).
12. *Cholita* is a diminutive from the term *chola*, used as a form of endearment. *Chola* in Peru is a racial category that signals indigenous people and people of indigenous descent who have migrated from the mountains, *la sierra* (often pejoratively called *serranxs*) into the city. In a country where most brown people deem themselves *mestizx* (mixed) as a form of eluding indigeneity, *cholx* works as a slur to remind the bearers of their origins. It has also been made into a verb: *cholar* means to racialize somebody, to minimize and put them in their place by naming that they are *cholx* (Avilés 2017).
13. I'm currently working on a follow-up article to this one, centering intimacy with HIV/AIDS as read through the lens of disability, curative violence, folded temporalities, care work, and interdependence, as well as with and against the life and legacy of Germain Machuca.
14. Yefri Peña has also since been attacked again, as recently as December 7, 2018. She was going to get bread from the *panadería*, a couple blocks away from her home in Ate Vitarte, the *barrio* where she's lived for most of her life, when she was assaulted by a man who broke open her skull as he screamed transphobic insults. She has not yet gotten justice for either one of these attacks.
15. The word *puteó* comes from the verbo *putear*, which can be literally translated to "to slut." It has many meanings. In this context, *putear* means to speak assertively to put things in order, usually with the use of slurs and slang, in order to be understood in a demanding code that also shows closeness and mutual commitment to one another. For example, it's often done in parenting. When people respond and allow themselves to be *puteadas* by Yefri, they assert that she was ultimately right to call them out for not being present and therefore immediately show up, as a sign of respect, love, care, and a reaffirmation to this commitment.

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