



VISUAL ESSAY
**A SILENT CRY
IN OUR NOISY
INSTITUTION**

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Abstract

"A silent cry in our noisy institution" as a visual narrative is an experience that celebrates its fifth anniversary in the context of a festival involving a macro-activity called ArteAcción (1). This initiative took place in the Lola Gonzalez High School. There, students approach a process of investigation and inquiry about an issue or social phenomenon. This is a phenomenon that affects the wider community (family / neighborhood / school). Contemporary art practice, new technologies, and principles of human ecology and the environment promote an interstitial condition, which opens up a universe of questions. In addition, this activity proposes a link between the various disciplines, enhancing knowledge and contributing to the understanding of social and cultural reality in which students are immersed.

Parallel activities, investigated visual narrative as a way of reflective, critical thinking and questioning. This served to integrate all means of literature, poetry, movement, sound, plastic etc., giving way to awareness and ultimately to intelligence. (Read, 1991)

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A silent cry in our noisy institution

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj1KoTB2j0c>

This is an initiative framed under the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of contemporary art which aims to make visible the silent screams that are housed in classrooms and corridors. The proposal realizes the stories that are woven into everyday life but are camouflaged amid the noise of laughter, brightly coloring of hair, and cursing. So, this initiative's relevance lies in its comprehensive contribution to the knowledge, skill, and ability of each and every student.

In the search for mediation processes, "A silent cry ..." leverages the characteristics of contemporary artistic practice, allowing one to step back to see and to perceive changes in the nature of daily life, making it practical to design as Geertz (1973) says "thick description"(p. 10). The processes in contemporary art practice introduces us to the big stages of the dialogue, where the "question" is the beginning of learning.

It is important to clarify that for this particular publication was selected the visual narrative of 2014: "The contrasts of my commune". This narrative realizes the process of design, creation, production and assembly of a collective mural; with dimensions of 3 meters high x 10 meters wide (2). The theme was chosen in consensus with the students of 9th grade. The project allowed the students free rein in the thinking, critical, creative and innovative process. Students demonstrated what can be achieved when they are called to discover and enhance their artistic, cognitive, ecological and particularly technology skills.

This was a multimodal project where painting, body language and movement, sound and other artistic expressions appears. All participants collaborate to allow a meeting between work and viewer, leading to a new development. This symbolic story explores ways of remembering and forgetting the everyday stress and violence that is the current life of the inhabitants of the Commune 13. It was investigated using personal recollections from dramatic memories of residents. Equally vital were regenerative experiences drawn from personal expression of these experiences where the senses crossed past and present realities, constantly activating future projects.

In the narrative, "The contrasts of my commune" (3), the memory is a source of strength and art and a retention device that gives new meaning to collective consciousness. It was evidenced by the emergence of many artistic proposals. After the commune was intervened militarily, it was possible to construct other versions of the story. In this way, the stigma of a community can be changed by visualizing collective projects for making a better future; avoiding the return of a violent past, which they are working hard to prevent from reoccurring.

However, it is worth noting that the written narrative had an added value. The analysis proposed a meeting between a reality and a fictional literary fact. The Community 13, like Shakespeare, has been permeated by feelings of human drama, for example hatred between two families. Hamlet's revenge, Othello's jealousy, Macbeth's greed, and envy and lust for power in Richard III set a context of rivalry that became progressively hostile, and a matter that originally was a discrepancy, ends in a real disgrace.

In the violence that took place in the Community 13, they lost thousands of lives; fathers, mother, brothers, uncles, nephews, sisters, wives, daughters and friends. In the midst of violence there is no place to access the links. Unfortunately, only the awareness of these tragic losses led to a willingness to do something to prevent it happening again. Through an analysis of the historical memory of the comuna13 and with reference to some of the works of Shakespeare, students were able to understand what a bond of interdependence means, as in Romeo and Juliet.

The goal is to develop activities that promote the production of images in a school in order to intervene and comment on the surrounding world. The aim is art not only for decorative or expressive purpose, but for understanding the field of culture as a space for participation, conflict resolution and agreements. (H. Giroux, 2004). It is important to note that the production of the narrative involved (by 240 students in grades 7th and 9th) was enjoyed by almost 1200 spectators of the education community. In this exchange, other logical ideas were established with a view to the construction of new cultural meanings.



To conclude, this project is a commitment to understand and act, individually and collectively, against the phenomena and social problems faced by communities. This, about the urgency of having schools that propose and expand their literacy processes, contributing to the students interact with their reality through cognitive, social, aesthetic, ethical and affective skills or abilities. Aims to make the students appropriate their context, breaking with the linear structure that the school has kept since long time ago, making possible the reading and the critical reflective analysis which becomes in learning “in situ” (4).

This project is the ability to keep track of the unsaid, the silent voice that hides multiple senses, requiring varying interpretations and questions, striving to see if we can reset new maps and new languages on the territory and the memory of our institution and our education.









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NOTES

(1) Una de las actividades más importantes en que se divide el proyecto "Ecoimaginario"

(2) <https://picasaweb.google.com/108311188738082694040/TemasFestivalArteAccion>.

NOTES

- (3) Commune is a term used in Colombia to refer to an administrative unit of the urban area of a medium or major city in the country, bringing together sectors or certain neighborhoods. Most capital cities of departments are divided into communes.
- (4) "In situ" means the analysis of a phenomenon exactly in place and conditions where it takes place (without moving to a medium or special place, without modification of the usual or natural constraints).