

Chapter Title: Aquí: Performing Mapping Practices in Santiago de Chile

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Book Title: Women Mobilizing Memory

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Published by: Columbia University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/10.7312/alti19184.12>

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## CHAPTER VIII

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### *Aquí*

#### *Performing Mapping Practices in Santiago de Chile*

MARÍA JOSÉ CONTRERAS LORENZINI

It's a warm autumn day in Santiago. I'm dressed in red and my seven-month pregnant belly is particularly prominent as I lie on my back on a sidewalk alongside a busy road. I can feel the sun on my face, the dust below my head, the sounds of the Santiago that doesn't stop. I'm motionless, imagining the last instants of the life of Marta who was killed forty-three years before in that same spot. Was she assassinated at night? Could she feel the sun on her face while lying down dying in the street? Did she know somebody was following her? What was she thinking at the exact moment when she was shot? My action was part of *Aquí*, which I performed in August 2016 and which I analyze in the following pages.

In 2014 I learned about an interactive map that geolocates the exact places where corpses of victims of political executions carried out during the first four months of the dictatorship in Chile (September to January, 1973) were found in Santiago. All of these places remain unmarked in the urban space of the city, so I considered the digital map an innovative tool for mobilizing erased memories. The performance *Aquí* reverberates with the digital map: it proposes an alternative embodied and ephemeral mapping tactic that contributes to alternate ways of making visible what remains unmarked, expanding the repertoire of protests by which historical political violence has been represented in Chile's urban space.

In *Aquí*, I reoccupy some of the unmarked spots identified in the digital map by performing a die-in. The gesture is solitary: I just pop up in the

city and lie motionless in the exact locations where female corpses of the dictatorship's victims were found. Aarón Montoya-Moraga, using a drone, takes aerial photos of my body lying in these spaces: streets, *terrains vagues*, riverbanks, and dumping grounds. The performance does not end in the embodied gesture; it is an open-ended practice that continues on the internet, where the photos are exhibited and linked to the map. Beside each photo, we find the name of the victim, the place where her corpse was found, and the time of arrival to the morgue. *Aquí* is not designed for in-the-moment, present spectators, but rather for internet users, who can get to know both the digital map and the embodied practice of the reoccupation of these spots.<sup>1</sup>

*Aquí* problematizes the notion of protest by walking a thin line between a dissenting performance and a protest. Benefiting from a feminist perspective, in this essay I will discuss the relationship between vulnerability and agency in the live performance and also the political efficacy of its photographic documentation in the digital realm. I propose this analysis from my particular point of view as both artist-author and scholar of the performance. Without any intention of installing a distance between my work as a performer and my capacity to reflect on it, I will work from the position of



Figure 8.1

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortínez.

a reflective practitioner, capable both of devising performance materialities and offering conceptualizations about them.

### Santiago: The City of Forgetting

In the Metropolitan Region of Chile, where Santiago is located, there are more than 240 memory sites related to the dictatorship. According to Piper and Hevia, these places make up a sort of archipelago, “a set of islands where each is itself a territory, but at the same time, and viewed as a whole, make up a larger territory built by each one of them.”<sup>2</sup> As the authors indicate, memory locations registered since the end of the dictatorship can be grouped according to different criteria. There are memorials, monuments, walls of names, former concentration and extermination camps, plaques, sports stadiums, bridges, murals, monoliths, and even *animitas* (roadside shrines). Some are concentrated in the center of the city, while others are housed in more peripheral areas. Some of these places have different uses today and indicate a violent past only by dint of some reminder sign; for example, the Detention Center *Tres y Cuatro Álamos*, has been transformed into a home for vulnerable children and signals its past with a mural on its outside walls that alludes to the embroidered handicrafts that the prisoners made as an act of resistance and hope. Some of these sites were known even before the end of the dictatorship, as is the case of Villa Grimaldi and Casa José Domingo Cañas, while others were gradually identified thanks only to the testimonies of victims given to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.

These places, be they houses, buildings, or street locations, hold dissimilar relationships with their violent pasts. Memorials sometimes indicate the scene of a crime, such as the Muro de la Memoria (Wall of Remembrance) of Puente Bulnes; at other times, memorials indicate where the bodies of the victims were found, as in the case of the Memorial Las Sillas, a tribute to the murdered members of the Communist Party (Manuel Guerrero, Manuel Parada, and Santiago Nattino), built on the site where the bodies were abandoned north of Santiago. This heterogeneity shows that sites do not per se hold memory, but they become sites of memory when they are given value as places where something happened that is considered worth remembering and when this recognition generates specific practices and uses of the space. From this perspective, as Patrizia Violi suggests, it is important not to think of sites of memory as a geographic morphology; places are memory sites

when they include people, objects, and the use of the space around a common political project.<sup>3</sup> Thus, as Violi emphasizes, it is essential to approach these places not from an ontologizing or reifying view; a place is never a permanent “deposit” of memory. To be anointed with memory, these sites have to be invested, constructed, and animated to work not only as indices of violence but also as interpretations and political judgments of the past.<sup>4</sup> Memory sites respond, then, to a collectivity that gathers to retrieve a trace of the past in a given space. This is the case with most of the abovementioned Chilean sites of memory, which have been driven mainly by non-governmental organizations, associations of relatives of *detenidos desaparecidos*, or former political prisoners’ organizations. In Chile, the state’s role has been limited to buying some properties where crimes against humanity occurred in order to loan them to organizations that administer and manage them. Only on rare occasions has the state been involved in the design and implementation of sites of memory. Perhaps the most emblematic example is the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos (Museum of Memory and Human Rights), which opened in 2010 during President Michelle Bachelet’s first term.<sup>5</sup>

The state’s failure to take a leading role in rescuing memory sites responds to the politics of consensus established during the transition in Chile.<sup>6</sup> Let us remember that after seventeen years of a civic military dictatorship in Chile led by Augusto Pinochet, the so-called “transition to democracy” was negotiated with Pinochet still as commander in chief of the army. The transition, set in motion by the Referendum of 1988, in which the population voted against Pinochet’s regime continuing, was based on a consensus to grant impunity to perpetrators of crimes against humanity. The narrative of reconciliation was possible only because political and juridical institutions validated the military’s pact of silence.<sup>7</sup> The state was the principal agent of a misunderstood reconciliation that was undertaken at the expense of the quest for truth and justice. The evident result was the silencing of any counter-memory practices and the institutionalization of a sanctioned amnesia that shaped every possible externalization of memory.<sup>8</sup>

One specific consequence of this politics of amnesia is the way memory was and still is displayed and performed in public space. Along with the memory sites managed by civic organizations, there are thousands of other places where acts of violence were committed that remain unmarked, unseen, and unknown. More than failing to recover spatial memorial heritage, the politics of consensus and the consequent amnesia radically and

actively contributed to rendering these places and the events that happened in them invisible. This invisibilization was an active operation; forgetting must not be understood as an absence but as a manipulation of the collective memory process. In Chile, the state constructed “a city for reconciliation,” obsessed with appearing as the modern Latin-American neoliberal capital of consumption.<sup>9</sup>

Places have a performative dimension: they activate practices and behaviors. Communities give life to the memory of places and define, in an always dynamic and ongoing dialogue, their meanings and uses. A politics of amnesia curtails collaborative practices of remembrance and, more importantly, collective practices of protest and resistance that may somehow disrupt the amnesiac status quo. An unmarked city is a city of oblivion, not because it has no monuments but because it does not allow the *working-through* that necessarily involves mobilizing memory. Ultimately, as Julian Bonder reminds us, memorial, etymologically, means not only “monitor” or guide, but it also refers to the ability of the mind to be alert and lucid, ready for action.<sup>10</sup> A city built in the shadow of crimes is a city that cannot make sense of or generate a narrative and collective embodied practices about a violent past—a city where the dead are still haunting.

### Digital Mapping: A New Landscape of Memories

The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation Report established that 2,279 persons were killed for political reasons during the civic-military dictatorship under Pinochet.<sup>11</sup> Almost half of these executions occurred during the first months of the dictatorship in Santiago and they took place all over the city: in universities and hospitals, in the streets, and in the domiciles of the victims. Santiago is full of unmarked places where killings happened for political reasons.

In 2012, Gabriel Medina, a journalist from ArchivosChile, elaborated an interactive map of Santiago that displays the sites where the bodies of people executed by the Chilean civic-military dictatorship between September 11 and December 31, 1973 were found.<sup>12</sup> Each of these places is marked with a silhouette in the digital map. You can see the map with all the silhouettes at once, or you can play an animation that shows the avalanche of corpses found day after day in streets, rivers, and other places around the city. In some cases, the exact spot is not specified; this is why many of the

silhouettes concentrate, for instance, in the Posta Central, where the corpses found in the streets were first transferred. The map shows a total of 1,053 cases of political executions. Of these, 890 correspond to cases registered in the Rettig Report (signaled by black silhouettes), 150 are potential cases of political violence detected by the research of ArchivosChile that do not appear in the report of Truth and Reconciliation (in red), and 13 are indeterminate cases (in blue). The map also allows clicking over the silhouettes in order to obtain information about the victims.

The sources of the research developed by ArchivosChile were obtained through the Transparency Law that obliged the Servicio Médico Legal, the Registro Civil, and the Segundo Juzgado Militar to provide official documentation about the places where corpses were found during the first months of the dictatorship. The research also included dozens of interviews with former morgue workers, employees of the Segundo Juzgado Militar, and relatives of the victims. One of the most useful documents was the Transfer Book of the Chilean Legal Medical Service, which comprises the registration of each of the bodies examined by forensic medics in that period. The book contains information (often incomplete) about the cause of death (e.g., “shot,” “hanging,” etc.), the place where the person was wounded or killed, the time of arrival at the morgue, and other information.

The interactive map is a powerful tool that makes visible what otherwise remains unseen in the city. Instead of plaques or monoliths that mark the space in situ, the map creates a bi-dimensional graphic representation of the space and then marks it. This map subscribes to the current trend of mapping projects around the world. As Montanari and Frattura suggest, the production, processing, and construction of maps “has become a veritable social, cultural and widespread practice that does not come just from the commercial market, but has also taken on, so to speak, aspects of a widespread grassroots practice.”<sup>13</sup> ArchivosChile appropriates this diffuse activity to contest the hegemonic politic of erasure. The gesture is significant since, as Franco Farinelli affirms, maps create habitus in Pierre Bourdieu’s sense, that is, “structuring structures” that both come from practice and shape these practices.<sup>14</sup> To Bourdieu, habitus is neither objective nor a product of free will; it works as a set of dispositions rather than as internalized mandates.<sup>15</sup> Applying this notion of habitus, one can see how the digital map breeds an alternative geopolitical and affective perspective on Santiago, a city that, despite its aspiration to erase its violent past, is exposed as full of blood-splattered corners.

The map takes charge of the restrictive possibilities of the externalization of memory in urban space and transfers them to an alternative scenario (the digital), where it is possible to display what has been denied and erased. The animation also provides a rhythmic sense of the quantity and placement of the political executions. The map makes evident the machinery of terror of the civic-military dictatorship. Its web-based interactivity creates a new landscape of memory, one that provides information suppressed by more established media and opens a path to another usage of the space and probably another affective relation to it. The map creates a new spatiality, a new temporality, and also a new perspective to look at, live in, and practice in the city of Santiago. It actually achieves the construction of another landscape that disrupts the national politics of consensus, becoming an effective means of mobilizing memory work for the future.

### *Aquí* (Here): Between Vulnerability and Agency

As a performance artist, I was profoundly moved by the interactive map. I thought about all these unmarked places and reflected on the operation of digital marking. I then imagined a further marking strategy that, instead of working in the direction of monumentalization of memory, could propose a practice that, in accord with the performance work I've been developing, be both embodied and ephemeral. I thought that an ephemeral performance could act in counterpoint both to the physical unmarking and the digital mark.

My first decision as an artist was to work on the cases of women. If erasure and forgetfulness are installed in Chilean society generally, it is well known that the stories of women are even more difficult to retrace and reveal.<sup>16</sup> Of the 1,053 cases included in the interactive map, forty-three are women, of which thirty-one are cases registered in the Rettig Report, eleven are indeterminate cases, and one is potential. Of the thirty-one cases included in the Rettig Report, only twenty-three established a defined geolocation. From these cases, I selected eleven (citing the date of the coup, September 11, 1973).

My concrete action was very simple: I lay down motionless in the exact spot defined by the map, like a dead body. This action cites a protest tactic, the die-in, that are a widespread practice in protests around the world. In the United States, the first record of a die-in dates from the 1960 environmental



Figure 8.2

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortínez.

protest in Boston that proposed that a “festival of death” be staged to oppose the pollution caused by the traffic at Logan airport. In 1969, a multitude of demonstrators lay on the grass in Central Park to protest against the Vietnam War, while in 1976 *Le Monde à bicyclette* performed several die-ins in the streets of Montreal to reclaim the rights of the cyclists. Cyclists have been performing die-ins ever since in many cities throughout the world. In the 1990s, the ACT UP movement performed large die-ins in Washington but also in Paris. More recently protests against police brutality in the United States in Ferguson, Missouri regarding the fatal shooting of Michael Brown and in New York to protest the killing of Eric Garner (both in 2014) included massive die-ins. In Colombia, die-ins have been performed during the last years to call attention to narco violence. In Chile, the most massive die-in was convened by me in 2013 for the fortieth anniversary of the state coup. For eleven minutes, 1,200 people participated in the die-in along La Alameda, the main street of Santiago, creating a two-kilometer line to commemorate the 1,200 *detenidos desaparecidos* in Chile.<sup>17</sup>

The citation of specific protest tactics utilized elsewhere is one of the salient features of contemporary social movements. Social media and the

internet have played significant roles in disseminating actions and gestures within and beyond national borders and across different time zones.<sup>18</sup> Digital media have enabled a transnational and transtemporal continuity of memorial tropes and practices, constructing what several scholars have been calling connective memories.<sup>19</sup> The re-appropriation of these tactics creates a historical continuity that amplifies the reach of local movements and allows for mutual learning. The citation of the die-in in *Aquí* subscribes to this transnational trend and connects Chilean local memory politics to global performances of direct action. But it also repurposes the die-in with another way of performing it. While die-ins are typically mass events—the more people the better—in *Aquí* I perform a “solo die-in.” This choice has to do with the digital map, which renders visible the appearance of individual corpses. As mentioned above, the map allows one to click on the silhouette in order to get more information about that single victim. *Aquí* echoes the digital map’s interplay between the individual and the collective. As the digital map allows one to visualize both the massive recurrence of state violence and the singularity of the victims, *Aquí* tries to appeal to both dimensions: the recurrence is expressed in the series of photos while the individuality appears in the solo gesture.

As an embodied gesture, *Aquí* materializes this interplay in its particular way. The human body signifies a single existence, but it also indicates the general type of human being; it works both as a token and type. The dual dimension of showing the body is something that I’ve been investigating in my creative work. In *Aquí*, I’m not “acting” as the victims, neither am I “representing” them. As an artist, I chose not to know anything about the victims; I knew only what appeared in the map (their age and name). My gesture is plain and simple: I’m occupying the same spot where female victims of the dictatorship were murdered. I’m not dressing as them, I’m not relating to them as “characters.” I’m very careful to prevent “fictionalizing” past events and “acting” as past victims. I’m literally “in the place of” these women, trying to work as an index, not a symbol. This gesture is performed by the structuring presence of my own literal social identity: I’m a Chilean woman and artist present in the place of a past victim. My body indexes the lack of a physical mark capable of indicating an act of state terrorism committed in public space.

The relation to the interactive map was crucial but not always easy. Sometimes it was feasible to lie down in the exact places that the map defined, but other times it became impossible. After forty-three years, the



Figure 8.3

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortinez.

city has changed notably, so there were many spots that could no longer be reached. This is the case of the place where Isabel Díaz was executed; nowadays a crossroads of highways that were not there in 1973 runs through the location. In this case, I chose the nearest place where it was possible to lie down, which turned out to be a dumping ground.

While doing the performance, I experienced firsthand the most concrete evidence of the need to have some kind of sign in order to transform these spots from vernacular places into memorial sites. *Aquí* provided an alternatively embodied way of marking these places. My presence in each of these spots, even if provisional, was a way of re-inhabiting these forgotten places and performing the political gesture of saying, “here a woman was killed.”

The die-in performance became a strong, touching, and sometimes dangerous action. I lay down in the streets where cars sometimes passed by without even noticing me; I stayed motionless in the bank of a heavily polluted river; I rested on a filthy dumping ground and lay down in front of a police car. My seven-month pregnancy made these experiences more difficult, both because I could not move as freely as usual (and that made it even more difficult to reach these places) and because I was more self-conscious of the risks these actions implied. My pregnant condition also

yielded immediate reactions among the people in the streets who saw me. Many times during the performance, people approached and asked me if I was OK. On one of these occasions, a medical team came out from their polyclinic to assist me. Clearly my pregnancy increased the perception of my vulnerability (and at the same time, problematically eclipsed any other possible symbolic interpretation about the gesture).

*Aquí* also elicited other types of reactions. For instance, inside the ex-Universidad Técnica, where the corpse of Marta Ana Vallejo was found, students kidded about my presence; I could hear a couple of them joking: “Look! I found a Pokémon” (an apt joke, considering that the popular Pokémon Go game arrived in Chile in those same days). At other times, the action just passed without notice and provoked no reaction among passersby. In every single spot, a sense of vulnerability took possession of me. While lying down in these dirty forgotten places, I could imagine the vulnerability of the women who were killed there forty-three years before.

The sense of vulnerability that I felt was not only an affective dispositional product of the enactment of the die-in, it also reflected a social ontology that Judith Butler has described well. According to Butler’s conceptualization, “[V]ulnerability understood as a deliberate exposure to power is part of the very meaning of political resistance as an embodied enactment.”<sup>20</sup> Studying the forms of political assembly from a feminist perspective, Butler proposes a new way of considering activism, not just in terms of an active body but through the interplay between vulnerability and resistance: “Such collective forms of resistance are structured differently than the idea of a political subject that establishes its agency by vanquishing its vulnerability—that is the masculinist ideal we surely ought to continue to oppose.”<sup>21</sup> *Aquí* responds to this interplay between vulnerability and agency. Instead of performing a protest in which my body could be vigorous, I chose to lie down, motionless, exposing, and enacting the victims’ and my own vulnerability. The performance develops in the liminal region described by Butler in which receptivity and responsiveness are not clearly distinguishable and where the performative gesture is neither fully passive nor fully active.

But *Aquí* does not end with the live action, as noted above; a drone took aerial photos of my action. The use of the drone is more than an aesthetic choice: it also reframes a technological device that has been used as a military arm both to directly attack and to surveil. Far from being innocent toys, drones were created as weapons: let’s not forget that one of the initial names for drones were predators. In *Aquí*, the drone works both as a military

and as an aesthetic tool. Analogously to the replication of the gesture of the die-in, the drone offers concrete ways of juxtaposing past and present vulnerabilities.

The photos of my performance are displayed on the internet, linked to the map, and displaying the information of the victim that corresponds to each photo. The aerial photos publicized on the web rhyme with the map's visuals, which also work with a zenithal point of view. Past and present weave and coincide in a panoptical perspective that installs a space under surveillance.

The pictures taken from above also contextualize my gesture in urban space in an attempt to show both my body lying on the ground performing the mark, and the immediate context that appears as not caring, not knowing, not interested. The alternative mapping of the sites of atrocity that *Aquí* retells is not, then, an independent gesture. *Aquí* may not be understood without the interplay among the absence of physical signs in these places, the digital mapping, the live performance of reoccupying the unmarked sites, and its last instance: its turn back to the internet. The final addressee, then, is the internet user, who may see the digital and embodied mapping working together both as alternative and complementary tactics.



Figure 8.4

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortinez.

## New Forms of Protest: Platforms, Practices, and Political Mobilization

What does *Aquí* do? Is *Aquí* itself some kind of protest? Does it produce any political mobilization? How can this mobilization be characterized? A protest traditionally is defined as a live event that occurs in a public space and congregates groups of demonstrators. Its political efficacy typically relies on the massiveness of the call or on the creativity of the means of expression that protesters use in order to get the attention of authorities and put pressure on them to achieve certain political goals.

Certainly, *Aquí* does not correspond to this definition. There are two key issues that distinguish *Aquí* from a traditional protest. The first is its means of expression: *Aquí* does not rely exclusively on the modality of presence; *Aquí* uses both offline (the live performance) and online resources (the diffusion of the archive of the performance). The joint use of offline and online resources in *Aquí* is not an isolated case; it is actually just one example of how the space of appearance of the political has diversified in



Figure 8.5

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortinez.

recent decades. Recent forms of political assembly no longer take place exclusively in the streets and squares; they also currently rely heavily on the digital. Many authors have discussed the effects of the internet on communication within social movements. It is well-documented that social movements since 2000 have been using the internet, in particular social media, to facilitate the “organizing without organization” or to coordinate collective actions amid a lack of funding and infrastructure.<sup>22</sup> The most typical use of social media is to amplify the reach of a preexisting face-to-face community. This is, for example, the emblematic case of the Occupy movements, which, as Kavada explains, had a “core” of participants (people camping) and a large network of digital supporters who were not in situ.<sup>23</sup>

The role of the digital in *Aquí* exceeds this instrumental function; it works as a radical tool that reconfigures the politics of memory by allowing forgotten memories to appear and by rendering them available to a larger community. The function of the digital in *Aquí* is not then only communicative, but it supports the reshaping of an institutionalized politics of memory. The performance not only traces unmarked places; it unfolds new places, practices, and landscapes. Both dimensions, the digital and the embodied, produce a mutual synergetic loop, through which they work together. The live performance cannot be interpreted without reference to the digital map, and it is not complete until it goes back to the web, where it meets its addressee. The live and digital intertwine, generating a hybrid and liminal scenario that is idiosyncratic and that hosts and configures the protest against the hegemonic politics of erasure and amnesia in Chile. If, as mentioned before, the map itself structures another habitus, *Aquí* radicalizes the gesture by creating another mapping, this time based on the photography of a live performance. Therefore, the political mobilization does not respond to a pre-established mode of organization.

The second feature distinguishing *Aquí* from a traditional protest is its form of political associativity. In the initial live gesture of my lying in the locations where the corpses of women executed during the dictatorship were found, there was no simultaneous assembly of bodies. It was almost a private gesture whose significance was difficult to decipher, even for passersby. But the individuality of the gesture is not absolute: it starts from an individual motivation to project toward other forms of association. Even if other bodies were not there with me, there was an intergenerational aggregation of bodies and memories. I was there precisely because a woman had died in that particular spot, and that place remained unmarked and



Figure 8.6

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortinez.

phagocytized by the rapid growth of the city of oblivion. Therefore, instead of thinking of a simultaneous assembly of present bodies, *Aquí* performed a time-lapsed accumulation of bodies: My body was there because forty-three years ago the bodies of Noelia, Norma, Marta, Rosa, Isabel, Blanca, Rosa Emilia, Tabita, Irma, Jessica, and Raquel were found without life in these places. The act is not individual; it involves many other legacies and memories that together become an intersubjective palimpsest. Of course, I'm also there with all my own personal memories and oblivions. My body does not carry these as "materials" or "objects," but they just flow in and out of my body, as rivers and springs that activate and rest in response to that space that for some minutes collapses the past, the present, and the future.

There is another form of collectivity that emerges from *Aquí* and that is constituted by the online spectatorship regime. The associativity that *Aquí* produces is supported by the digital. This is also a common trait in new forms of political assembly, as Marcela Fuentes affirms: "Convergence is achieved in different spaces and sites through techniques that include the digital and networked modalities of affecting supporters."<sup>24</sup> From this point of view, the co-witnessing process that the performance provokes does not rely on co-presence but on co-knowledge. Through its online register, *Aquí*

may reach anybody around the world who can become familiar with the critique of memory practices in Santiago. The addressee of the performance does not need to be in the physical spot to understand, be informed, and maybe even mobilized for action. *Aquí* does not put into communication a pre-existing community, but it offers possibilities for creating new communities that, even if they result in more disaggregated communities, probably less conscious of the collective and more centered on the individual, still can spark strong political commitments and alternative modes of solidarity.

The solidarity that *Aquí* allows not only exceeds the physical space of co-presence, it also enables a sort of distributed solidarity that may be both intra- and intergenerational. The digital permits to build a network of solidarity that transcends temporalities weaving nongenealogical and nonlinear forms of mobilization of memory. The blast of both spatial and temporal dimensions is an important characteristic of these new ways of mobilization of memories.

*Aquí* is an example of these new forms of protest—forms that require an urgent revision of the classical definition of protest that relies exclusively on bodily congregation in public spaces. Protests may be characterized by their dissent from and critique of certain institutions, nation-states, social



Figure 8.7

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortinez.

structures, or politics, but they should not be defined by their modes of organization or expression. A looser definition may be more inclusive and effective in understanding contemporary modes of political organization. When studying a protest, one should look case by case at the ways different features combine and appear. Some of these may be, for instance, the platforms in which they operate (e.g., urban public space, private space, digital space), the character of practices they endorse (e.g., collective/individual; artistic/political), the forms of collectivity they configure (e.g., strong/loose membership, definite/permeable limits with other causes or movements, in-face/digital associativity), and finally the strategies by which they generate political mobilization.

*Aquí* does produce political mobilization but according to its own scale and reach. In the first place, *Aquí* provides a perceptual experience that effectively requires mediatized spectators to adopt a definable position in relation to the assassination of women during the first months of the Chilean dictatorship and at the same time a critical position regarding the lack of any kind of mark in public space that could somehow constitute a micromemorial. *Aquí* demands that spectators make a cognitive, perceptual, and affective link between those spaces and the violent past that they



Figure 8.8

Source: By Aarón Montoya-Moraga, edited by Andrés Cortinez.

housed. In the second place, *Aquí* mobilizes different ways of congregating and diverse forms of practicing politics. Instead of working the scale of monumental memory, or even its display in public space, *Aquí* forwards small-scale relations among subjects that come together provisionally to share a new way of understanding the past and projecting the future. Small-scale protests produce intimate networks of solidarity that allow alternative ways of witnessing a violent past. These kinds of practices create micro co-resistances that, as a tissue of tiny capillaries, mobilize memory, and that may, I hope, expand to support a bigger terrain where more and more people bear responsibility for progressive social change.

## Notes

1. The images are available in color on my website [www.mariajosecontreras.com](http://www.mariajosecontreras.com). In this volume, I include some of these pictures in black-and-white versions, specially prepared by Andrés Cortínez to fit the volume's requirements. Unfortunately, this format does not provide a complete sense of the pictures.
2. Isabel Piper and Evelyn Hevia, *Espacio y Lugar. Archipiélago de Memorias en Santiago de Chile* (Santiago, Chile: Ocho Libros, 2012), 16 (my translation).
3. Patrizia Violi, *Paessaggi della Memoria: Il Trauma, lo Spazio, la Storia* (Milan, Italy: Bompiani, 2015), 23.
4. Violi, *Paessaggi della Memoria*, 26.
5. Michelle Bachelet was herself a political detainee and torture victim in 1975.
6. See Tomás Moulián, *Chile Actual. Anatomía de un Mito* (Santiago, Chile: LOM, 1997) and Katherine Hite, "La Superación de los Silencios en el Chile Postautoritario," in *Historizar el Pasado Vivo en América Latina*, ed. Anne Perotin Dumon (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universidad Alberto Hurado, 2007), 1–41, <http://www.historizarelpasadovivo.cl/downloads/hite.pdf>.
7. Nelly Richard, *Residuos y Metáforas. Ensayos de Crítica Cultural sobre el Chile de la Transición* (Santiago, Chile: Cuarto Propio, 1998).
8. For insightful analysis of cultural production in post-dictatorship Chile, see Macarena Gómez-Barris, *Where Memory Dwells: Memory and State Violence in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) and Nelly Richard and Alberto Moreiras, eds. *Pensar en/la postdictadura* (Santiago, Chile: Cuarto Propio, 2001).
9. This is not the case with other countries in South America, where the politics of memory was driven by an engaged state that responded more actively to the demands of symbolic reparation for the crimes committed in totalitarian regimes. In Argentina, for instance, the construction or restoration of sites of

- memory has been a significant strategy to mobilize memory. See for example Elizabeth Jelin, *Los Trabajos de la Memoria* (Madrid, Spain: Siglo XXI, 2002).
10. Julian Bonder, "On Memory, Trauma, Public Space, Monuments, and Memorials," *Places* 21, no. 1: 67.
  11. Gobierno de Chile, "Informe de la Comisión por la Verdad y la Reconciliación" (Santiago: Gobierno de Chile, 1991).
  12. ArchivosChile.org is a project funded by the Center for Investigation and Information (CIINFO) of Washington, directed by John Dinges. The map is available at <http://archivoschile.org/2012/01/mapa-interactivo/>.
  13. Federico Montanari and Luca Frattura, "Mapping Cities: The Bologna Self-Mapping Project," *Ocula*, 14 (2013): 3.
  14. Franco Farinelli, "Dove (e Quando) il Luogo Divenne Spazio," *Memoria e Ricerca* 45 (2014): 20.
  15. Pierre Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action* (Paris: Seuil, 1994).
  16. My choice of working with women's cases responded to a necessity that I couldn't well articulate at that moment. It definitely didn't respond to an adherence to a fixed gender binarism. When the photos were posted online, many spectators pointed out the resonance between the gesture I was proposing and the femicides that took and continue to take place in Chile. This echo, even if subtle and unarticulated, became meaningful to me too.
  17. María José Contreras, "#VouloirNepasVoir ou la Possibilité de Présentifier la Présence Encore Absente de Détenus Disparus au Chili," in *Frontières & Dictatures. Images, Regards—Chili, Argentina*, ed. J. Medina, M. Mora, and F. Soluages, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2016), 81–102. See also Diana Taylor, *Performance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 22.
  18. Donatella Della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, eds., *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).
  19. See for instance Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Astrid Erll, "Traveling Memory," *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 4–18; Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Andrew Hoskins, "7/7 and Connective Memory: Interactional Trajectories of Remembering in Post-Scarcity Culture," *Memory Studies* 4, no. 3 (2011): 269–80.
  20. Judith Butler, "Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance," in *Vulnerability and Resistance*, ed. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leticia Sabsay (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 22.
  21. Butler, "Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance," 24.
  22. Jennifer Earl, Jayson Hunt, R. Kelly Garrett, and Aysenur Dal, "New Technologies and Social Movements," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*

- (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Dantella Della Porta and Lorenzo Mosca, eds., *Movimenti Sociali e Globalizzazione* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 2003).
23. Anastasia Kavada, "Creating the Collective: Social Media, the Occupy Movement and its Constitution as a Collective Actor," *Information, Communication & Society* 18, no. 8 (2015): 884.
24. Marcela Fuentes, "Performance Política y Protesta," in *¿Qué son los Estudios de Performance?*, ed. D. Taylor and M. Steuernagel (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).