UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Manos

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Master of Fine Arts

in

Visual Arts

by

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2019

The Thesis of Sam Wohl is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Hands are indices of labor. Sensorial documentation of hands can reveal the “triple-day” as manifested in contemporary society among women of the Global South. Images, interviews and research from the production of the film *Manos,* which focuses on formal, informal, and reproductive labor in the River Plate region of Latin America, support this claim. This article pairs examples from the film with ideas from Silvia Federici and her analysis of the accumulation of

reproductive labor within the capitalist project. This article also deconstructs Third Cinema and analyses films of the River Plate through the lens of labor. It makes allegations about the future investigations by the candidate in the study of labor and perception via film and art.

Hands are indices of labor. Traces of labor live on the hands and in the sounds and objects surrounding them. *Manos* is a film that looks at hands at work to reveal markings of the hours of the "triple day". By filming close up, long takes, the film claims that tacit knowledge can be glimpsed in watching, listening and focusing on hands. Calluses, scars, and cuts are one indicator of labor, but more can be known from the temporal rhythms, repetitions, techniques, habits, and ticks. Poetics of speed, durability, tenderness, and moments of respite offer ulterior modes of knowing a human being other than history, emotional connection, or as the lens of capitalist production favors, wage value and consumer value. The surface qualities, the texture, and blisters testify to hours, days, and years of labor. The hands of a fisherwoman are soft when water logged, but when they dry off, there is a hardness to the textured history of damage and wear to the nails and cuticles. The hands of a manicurist are strong, fast yet tender. The muscles in her hands retain the repetitive motions of the task. Scars mark memories of a day, a time, a place, and incident and are reminders of what these tools of labor are made of: meat, flesh, bone, each requiring care and respect for their delicacy, magic, and utility. Hands speak in a non-verbal language known only by others who use their hands in tandem, parallel, or in cooperation. The tacit knowledge manifested in muscle memory is difficult to explain, but a common phenomenon. When first learning a motor task, movement is often slow, stiff and easily disrupted without attention. With practice, execution of motor task becomes smoother, there is a decrease in limb stiffness, and muscle activity necessary to the task is performed without conscious effort. Other activities that through muscle memory that can be performed unconsciously are games, drawing, music, and magic. Inversely, labor is also an index of the hand. Handprints, fingerprints, grease and sweat on the brushes of the manicurist and

the knives of the fisherwoman give life to their tools of trade. Where there is visible change in materials, space, landscape, or social arrangements, hands have been at work. Hands also have the power to stop doing. Through withholding labor, hands are re-channeled to be tools of protest, resistance, and producers of autonomous zones. In focusing on the tactic knowledge of hands, materiality, and manual production, hidden-in-sight facets of the global economic system are brought into focus. Hands are the backbone of the capitalism. *Manos* focuses on women workers of the River Plate region of Latin America to create a temporal labor space in a plurality of contexts. The opening shot of *Manos* presents people from the fishing cooperative at Laguna de la Rocha, at work, standing in knee deep water, gutting fish. A child sits in a boat, floating next to the workers. The fisherwoman pauses her work to hand the child a bottle of Fanta soda. This small gesture is an indicator of the "triple day"; the fisherwoman's hands are active in both care work and manual labor. The "triple day" is best characterized as the stacking, layering or intersection of three distinct labor types—formal labor, informal labor and reproductive labor. All types of labor defined above can be re-channeled to produce and reproduce communal organizations and counter-hegemonic realities.

The distinct categories of labor—formal, informal, reproductive—are revealed in the everyday realities of manual work. The wage labor system makes it so that no worker is able to guarantee their own social reproduction. With the exception of rural workers, whose work sometimes yields food items and products needed for daily sustenance (if that land is not privatized, which is often is), everyone else works in exchange for money to fulfill their daily needs. Earning a wage or a salary enables reproduction by making it possible for the worker to wake up the next day and continue generating wealth for others. Much of

formalized wage labor in its gendered form is actually informal due to being situated in the black market, where exploitation and wage slavery is the norm.

Formal labor is labor for a wage. It is productive biopower reduced to its relation to capital. Historically it has been done outside the home within a quantifiable set of hours. This work, driven by demands of mercantile commerce and the global market, is performed to produce, supply, or export goods, services, experiences, and social exchanges. The dominant history of struggle in the context of formal labor has primarily been a story of male struggle in surrounding a fair wage, the eight-hour work day, factory conditions, and mechanization. When we think for formal labor we think mechanic, assembly line, manufacturing, sales, transportation, shipping and agricultural manual labor. In capitalist society, formal labor tasks are gendered. Feminized labor refers to the predominance of women in certain occupations such as nursing, teaching, and office work. Their participation in these professions is naturalized by the stereotype of a female "essence" and a biological predisposition that often emphasizes care and affective capacities. The labor is often is undervalued because it is perceived as being natural, hence "not even work."

Nurses, a feminized sector of formal labor, are at the forefront of the contemporary struggle to for reproductive rights in Argentina. Julieta of Buenos Aires is a doctor at a health clinic. She is part of a network called Red Informativa de Mujeres de Argentina who assist women in finding legal loopholes that allow them to obtain abortions. The network also serves as a watchdog for hospitals and clinics in the interior who frequently deny women reproductive health access for political reasons even when women's cases meet the legal requirements of rape or incest. Julieta discusses how this political labor is essential to providing

holistic services to women as a health professional, although this almost always falls outside of the parameters of her time on the clock.

Informal labor still consists of labor for pay but it is more precarious. It is market-oriented, but not salaried. It often requires the worker to perform various modalities simultaneously, such as producer and independent vendor. In the Global North this category of labor might be referred to as the "gig economy," but in the River Plate this work is referred to as "changas", or odd jobs. A notable term used by Hardt and Negri in *Commonwealth* to describe of the rise of the gig economy in the Global North, is "feminization". Hardt and Negri appropriate this term, almost sarcastically, to assert the "triple-day" as a known, unfair condition of women of the Global South is now seeping into the Global North. Informal labor is the product of economic precarity due to the lack of capital investment in the public formal sector to create full employment. The formal sector is gendered due to capital's prioritization of value producing jobs, which tend to be associated with male labor. Thus, the informal sector is overwhelmingly populated by female workers who, faced with limited state services to help with child care, retract to the informal sector which provides them the flexibility necessary to complete their triple shifts. "Feminization" can also refer to the falsely stereotype of "nimble fingers" of female workers to naturalize and devalue textile work, sorting, or picking.

In the Global South, multiple modes of informal labor are performed in domestic spaces, often in addition to formal labor outside the home. This work shows the way that the public, market-based production intersects with the home, in addition reproductive labor. Tracing back to Feudal Europe, Silvia Federici presents the rag picker, who picks up and repairs items for resale, and the prostitute, as sectors of informal labor. The notion that these are not real jobs is a

lie. Although precarious they are the main source income for many people. Like formal labor, informal labor can be organized. In Villa 20 of Buenos Aires, Argentina, groups such as La Dignidad, Red Informativa, la Jardin Communitario, women and men organize to provide basic municipal services. These services include child care service, clinics, and house to house trash collecting.

In Villa 20, female trash collectors make their daily rounds collecting trash, house to house, with hands gloved for protection. Female traffic-crossers, amidst aggressive drivers and freight trucks, use handmade stop signs, or cardboard, paint and packing tape to manage traffic for children returning home from school on a large boulevard that cuts through the center of the Villa. These community organized services debunk the gendered stereotype that poor women in the villas do not work and only rely on state support, a popular narrative among the upper class. These social services are part of Movimiento Popular La Dignidad (Dignity Popular Movement), a piquetero mass organization that spawned out of the Argentine 2001 economic crisis.

At a clinic in Villa 20 in Buenos Aires, Suzy, a Red Informativa worker, shared her experience working in a mafia-run, clandestine textile factory located in the Villa when she initially migrated to Argentina. These types of jobs are associated with human-trafficking circles. Female immigrant labor makes up for the bulk of mass textile production in Argentina. The clothes they sow are sold in poor neighborhoods, at street fairs, corner stores, and from residents' houses. Suzy's parents continue to work in a similar factory from 9am to 6pm, and then return home to produce black market shoes from their living room from 9pm to 3am.

Estefania, a transwoman from Nicaragua, works as a cuidacoche, or car-sitter, in the streets of Montevideo. She continues to work part-time as a sex

worker and has relied on both occupations to sustain herself after being fired from her work as a carpenter while transitioning. Estefania helps people parallel-park and keeps an eye out for vandalism and car theft. This occupation is commonly performed by homeless people and people in extremely precarious positions. Car-sitters are highly stigmatized by upper class sectors of the population who do not recognize the occupation as work and resent having to give change in exchange when leaving their parking spot. Estefania, with manicured hands, carries a small flier that she distributes to drivers, which reads: "I am a car-sitter. This is my job. This is real work, like any other form of work. Please respect me and respect my labor."

Reproductive labor is unpaid work that reproduces workers. As defined by Leopoldina Fortunati, reproductive labor refers to the feminized work that "renews" the male productive labor in the form of unpaid cleaning, laundry, ironing, cooking, and care. Under heterosexual marriage, this work becomes natural and expected—the woman provides household labor to sustain the male bread-winner who then produces surplus value for his boss. Thus, the wife reproduces the wage-worker in the home but is not waged herself. Her labor is deemed to be biologically determined, hence naturalized, so it cannot be remunerated. The naturalized lie is that this work is a "labor of love". Presented in the concepts of Silvia Federici in *Wages for Housework,* capital benefits from the extraction of the labor of two people under heterosexual marriage and only pays for one. The working male surrenders his autonomy in the 40-hour work week, and the female non-waged worker surrenders her autonomy by socially reproducing the male worker in the home. Thus, women provide labor considered "use value", but not "exchange value". Finally, women's work extends to literal reproduction in the form of child birth and child care, creating future labor power.

Two teachers whose occupations grew out of the Argentine 2001 unrest, show where reproductive labor has been rechanneled. During this unrest, residents of the Villas played a key role is demonstrating and forcing the government into exile. The Villas of Buenos Aires are a vast improvised structure of cinderblock, wood, sheet metal, and concrete that ring the metropolitan center of Buenos Aires. During the 2001 unrest, in protest of lack of government support for basic municipal elements during the economic crisis, such as water and electricity, Villa residents ascended the highways and barricaded traffic flow in and out of the city. The residents needed help caring for children while they participated in roadblock uprisings. In response to this need the preschool was organized by the community and teachers emerged a pivotal to the longevity of the resistance. The preschool work was eventually formalized as part of the demands of the community, which fought to obtain support for a childcare facility for young children – something not covered by Argentine state services.

The home is used for a place of meeting and organizing. This reproductive labor space is rechanneled in distinct ways in struggles both now and in the 68 epoch. In present day Uruguay, the Charrua are currently fighting for recognition by the state, which is the only Latin American country to deny recognition of indigenous groups within its territories. Guidai Vargas uses her home as a space for Charrua gatherings, where they discuss political strategies and maintain spiritual practices. Mariana Mechoso curates and maintains the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU) archive from her home. The archive documents the organization's history and the popular unrest of the 1960s and 70s, during which the FAU organized roughly one-third of the country's labor unions. The archive was stored behind a trap door in a safe-house throughout the seventies and eighties when the majority of the organization's members were in prison, exiled,

or executed. Mariana curates this alternative archive to support counter-narratives that challenge the official ones presented by the state and the market. Lilian Celiberti was part of a network of mothers who organized themselves to demonstrate solidarity and support with political prisoners during the sixties and seventies. Celiberti, who spent numerous years in prison herself, also received care packages of fruits and vegetables from a collective of mothers. Celiberti is currently the director of the organization Cotidiano Mujer, a feminist collective dedicated to communication and human rights. The Doneschi sisters of Montevideo's El Cerro neighborhood played a key role during the 1968 and '69 strikes by workers in the neighborhoods meatpacking plants. While upwards of twelve thousand workers carried out factory occupations for nine months, they were supported by a network of housewives who cooked, laundered, pressured politicians, and collected donations. These women's reproductive labor proved essential in allowing the male meatpackers to maintain the strike– the women continued to reproduce the male workers who no longer performed their roles as surplus value producers for their bosses. The women's re-signified housework shows that the private is not just private but can be the basis for a public and collective social project as well. These domestic spaces can be a re-imaging of the commons.

In her essay *The Accumulation of Labor and the Degradation of Women: Constructing "Difference" in the "Transition to Capitalism",* Silvia Federici traces the origins of the devaluation of reproductive labor to pre-capitalist Feudal Europe. Federici looks at the privatization of the commons, unincorporated open spaces that could be used for communal subsistence agriculture, socialization, autonomy, festivals, gatherings, and games. The commons are the cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society, including natural

materials such as air, water, and a habitable earth. These resources are held in common, not owned privately. These undesignated fields of Feudal Europe were especially important for women, who, having less title to land and less social power, were more dependent on them for their subsistence, autonomy and sociality. When these commons where appropriated by industry it devastated the social fabric of peasant life. As a result, there were anti-enclosure riots in which peasants (women and men) took to casting down fences and hedges on land they claimed as village commons. The government soon eliminated these rioters through imprisonment. When these spaces were privatized it removed the capability for peasants to produce sustenance goods for common consumption and forced a reliance on wage labor. Women were especially affected because as soon as land was privatized, monetary relations began to dominate economic life. With the demise of the subsistence economy that prevailed in pre-capitalist Europe, the unity of production and reproduction which had been typical of societies based on production-for-use came to an end, and these activities became the carriers of different social relations that were sexually differentiated. In the new monetary regime production-for-market was defined as value creating activity whereas the reproduction of the worker began to be considered valueless and even ceased to be considered work. Here it's function in the accumulation of capital became invisible, being mystified as natural vocation and being labeled "women's labor". These 500-year-old issues may seem like a thing of past, but as the maturation of capitalism evolved over centuries has calcified and exploited these the institutionally naturalized roles. An additional claim of Federici's confronts the systematic eradication, demonization, and criminalization of magic and the practices of herbalists and midwives. The apex of this enforced naturalization, and Silva Federici's main claim, is the witch-hunts of medieval

Europe where a means of state terror to criminalize single women, who organize outside the home, and don't reproduce workers. During the population crisis, also known as the black plague, one third of the population perished. The majority of the dead were comprised of the peasant class. Federici claims that the ruling and mercantile class, in response to a devastated work force, needed to reproduce workers quickly. This term in Marxist labor theory is called 'primitive accumulation', or the enforced and accelerated production of free or cheap workers or slaves. Under the terror state of the witch hunts, women who were not reproducing a male worker and reproducing children could be framed with witch-craft and killed. Informal professions of the period that were commonly attribute to witch-craft were prostitutes, mid-wives, herbalists, and independent vendors. Phrases such as "idle hands are the devils work", are an index of the policing of autonomous socialization, spirituality, reproductive rights, or any working hands that do not go to support the production of capital.

Federici's research on the policing of the body in Feudal Europe, can be seen in the 68 epoch and felt today, especially as discussed in the struggle for reproductive rights in Argentina. For the women of the Anarchist Federation of Uruguay (FAU), active in the late 60's, the three labor types were re-channeled, re-directed towards a counter-labor, or labor of resistance. The women of the FAU acted as textile union delegates, guerrilla fighters, data collectors, and surveillance experts. The 1960s-1970s historical conjuncture is appropriate in relating to the present historical conjuncture 1) the mass mobilizing capacity of the New Left, one that has not been culturally palpable until the current rise of Latin Americanist feminism as a mass political force, and 2) the 60's and 70's rise of military dictatorships, state terrorism, and the current rise of regional far-right projects in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States.

Argentina and Uruguay are two countries that share deep historical connections on both the left and the right. The massive Latin Americanist feminist movement has become an important political project in both countries over the last decades. River Plate feminists advocate a societal analysis rooted in the historical experiences and material realities of women living in the Global South. They emphasize the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's role in domineering actions through the imposition of structural adjustment programs such as the privatization of industry, land, and natural resources. Colonial-era racial categories continue to divide society as capital continues to extract their labor in the everyday by accumulating resources and wealth destined for the Global North.

In 2017 and 2018, River Plate feminist organizations succeeded in bringing questions about gendered violence and reproductive rights to the fore in national political debates. This resistance comes at a historical conjuncture when the global far-right's agenda spreads throughout the region. Like their predecessors in the Dirty War-era dictatorships (1973-85), these "post-fascist" political projects in both North America and South America seek to crush popular manifestations of public unrest, holding particular contempt for reproductive rights. Perhaps the most extreme example of this development in Latin America is the recent election of Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, who, like his North American counterpart, Donald Trump normalized violent and misogynistic rhetoric against women and all gender non-conforming people. A primarily example of state violence against women and activists, which shares echoes the 60's and 70's dictatorship, was the public killing of Marielle Franco in Brazil last year. Marielle Franco was a Brazilian politician, feminist, and human rights activist. She was a black, queer woman from the favelas, and elected representative on Rio de Janiero's city council. Her

career was focused on defending poor, racialized women in the favelas, and fighting for the rights of MST, Brazil's landless peasant movement, who have been criminalized by the Bolsonaro regime. In March 2018, Franco was assassinated in the street by ex-police. It was discovered that the ex-police officer was a neighbor of Bolsonaro. This state violence echoes the dictatorships of the late 20th century and follows the violent tradition of unrepentant shootings and abductions. Additionally, Brazil was the first to fall to fascism in the 60's, and there is fear now that this trend could happen again in other nations. Today, the Marielle Franco collective, in its plurality, continues her fight throughout Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina. This years' winning block at carnival in Rio de Janiero featured dance and theatrics representing Franco's death. It was broadcast on national television and was a means, through art and media, to publicly demand justice.

The history of the 68 epoch in the Southern Cone, where thousands of leftists were tortured, disappeared, or exiled in an international operation of state terror (Operation Condor) backed by the CIA, has many revolutionary protagonists. Many such were inspired by Che Guevara's foco model of armed rebellion. Foco proposes a model for small cadres of fast-moving militant groups that can provide a focus for popular discontent against a sitting regime and thereby lead an insurrection. Although the original approach was to mobilize and launch attacks from rural areas, many foco ideas were adapted by urban movements by the late 1960s, such as was found in the River Plate. Among the many revolutionary groups of the region such as the Montoneros and Tupamaros, the Anarchist Federation of Uruguay is smaller and lesser known. The FAU's actions prior to the dictatorship was that of social insertion within workers struggle and student movements. During the dictatorship, when their

activities became criminalized, their struggle became directed against the right-wing government. The FAU's revolutionary labor included gathering intelligence, caring for safe houses, taking photographs, documenting schedules, drawing maps, locating police outposts, and identifying escape routes. The women of the FAU used the mask of reproductive labor as a front for their actions; safe houses were fronted by day care centers and surveillance was conducted in staged couples. The "couple" would go together to the place and simulate taking pictures of each other. In these photos, however, it was the background that was in focus, for that is where the desired information was located. It is ironic, then, that in order to transact revolutionary behavior, people (men and women both) heighten the visual qualities of their culturally reproduced normalcy to become hidden in plain sight, not draw attention to oneself and blend in. As in the film *Battle of Algiers* (1967), the three women revolutionaries who bomb the cafes, anglicize themselves in order to pass checkpoints and carry out their actions. Cinematic narratives, of the region and internationally, often focus on the punishment these revolutionaries suffered at the hands of the state. Although this is true, and tragic, it distracts from the ongoing revolutionary project. The fact that the surviving women of the FAU are still working as archivists and activists within contemporary struggles, such as the struggle to legalize abortion in Argentina. Their current action is more relevant than their exile and victimhood.

Returning to the idea of the commons, but in Montevideo, Uruguay 1968, there are other examples of reproductive resistance labor. Like the masks of reproductive labor which necessitated a folding of identity, to behave overtly unpolitical, while engaging in reproductive revolutionary work, the commons (sidewalks, parks, bus stops, beaches, boulevards) can be seen in a similar way. Albeit the difference in time and terrain, from feudal fields, to a modern city of the

20th century, a parallel phenomenon remains between the two epochs in policing common spaces. One FAU interlocutor who has chosen to remain nameless stated that she felt unsafe alone in public, and it was safest to conduct surveillance in crowded places. Surveillance duties were always carried out in pairs, as if simulating dating, because a couple is less suspicious than a person alone. During the 68 dictatorships these commons were policed so heavily that it was dangerous to go out. Most organizing was thus done in the home. The present-day post-modern urbanity of the US leaves little room for direct action or any public gathering outside of the milieu of the spectacle or consumption. This, Frederic Jameson posits, is urban design intended to create a pseudo-commons or false sense of common space; an architectural strategy to staunch subversive, autonomous, or magic gatherings with multi-spatial, labyrinthine, pan-optic strategies. These "un-commons", such as malls, shopping centers, cineplexes, and freeways that dividing neighborhoods based on class and race, are built with the intent to prevent massive organized gatherings of the multitude.

Third Cinema emerged throughout Latin America and the Global South in the late sixties and early seventies as a strategic means of departure, and stance against the Hollywood-driven culture industry. The text below is from the essay "Towards a Third Cinema" by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino discussing the political theory of Third Cinema:

> The mechanistic takeover of a cinema conceived as a show to be exhibited in large theatres with a standard duration, hermetic structures that are born and die on the screen, satisfies, to be sure, the commercial interests of the production groups, but it also leads to the absorption of forms of the bourgeois world-view which are the continuation of 19th century art, of bourgeois art: man is accepted only as a passive and consuming object; rather than having his ability

to make history recognized, he is only permitted to read history, contemplate it, listen to it, and undergo it. The cinema as a spectacle aimed at a digesting object is the highest point that can be reached by bourgeois film-making. The world, experience, and the historic process are enclosed within the frame of painting, the stage of a theatre, the movie screen; man is viewed as a consumer of ideology, and not as the creator of ideology. This notion is at the start of the wonderful interplay of bourgeois philosophy and obtaining of surplus value. The result is a cinema studied by motivational analysts, sociologists and psychologists, by the endless researchers of the dreams and frustrations of the masses, all aimed at selling movie-life, reality as it is conceived by the ruling classes.

The first alternative to this type of cinema, which we could call the first cinema, arose with the so-called 'author's cinema', 'expression cinema', 'nouvelle vague', 'cinema novo', or conventionally the second cinema. The alternative signified a step forward inasmuch as is demanded that the film-maker be free to express himself in non-standard language and inasmuch as it was an attempt at cultural decolonization. But such attempts have already reached, or are about to reach, the outer limits of what the system permits. The second cinema film-maker has remained "trapped inside the fortress" as Godard put it or is on his way to becoming trapped. The search for a market of 200,000 moviegoers in Argentina, a figure that is supposed to cover the costs of an independent local production, the proposal of developing a mechanism of industrial production parallel to the System but which would be by the System according to its own norms, the struggle to better the laws protecting cinema and replacing 'bad officials' by 'less bad', etc., is a search lacking in viable prospects, unless you consider viable, the prospect of becoming institutionalized as 'the youthful, angry wing of society'- that is of neocolonialized or capitalist society.

Real alternatives differing from those offered by the System are only possible if one of two requirements fulfilled: making films that the System cannot assimilate,

> and which are foreign to its needs, or making films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the system. Neither of these requirements fits within the alternatives that are still offered by second cinema, but that can be found in the revolutionary cinema outside and against the System, in a cinema of liberation: the third cinema.

Via advancements in cheaper, lighter-weight cameras, small light-footed film teams with interchangeable skills, Third Cinema filmmakers, often worked often embedded with revolutionary groups. Third Cinema film makers mission was to create images of revolution to be distributed back to the people present on screen, not exported, like to many products, to northern or western audiences. Third Cinema aims to capture reality as it manifests in the Third World and propose questions around strategies and tactics for how to create dialogues around shared circumstances across borders and continents. The cinematic technique breaks free from normative portrayals of "the good life," ethics, prosperity, and success. Instead, it aims to capture the everyday reality of subaltern populations. The long takes capture the real-time repetition of laborious tasks and enable the audience time to contemplate and become hypnotized by the repetitive task. Ideally, the audiences screenal experience will bleed into their lived experience and they will see images of hands, gloves, fish, or nails when they close their eyes at night.

Solanas and Getino were critics of first cinema, auteur cinema, and direct cinema. One of their criticisms was on the idea of director or one with vision, notions of singular protagonists or heroes. Instead, Third Cinema utilized interviews, agit-prop, and objective camera work to generate images of labor and voices of workers. Through this re-direction of film-work, third cinema filmmakers sought intentionally to transform the movie theatre into a zone of labor discourse,

struggle, and agitation. Solanas and Getino proclaim "students raised barricades on the Avenida 18 de Julio after a screening of *Hora de los Hornos.* This outcome of outrage leading to protest, was the desired effect, contrary to mainstream films which replace real effects with temporary affectual satisfaction.

This manifesto has value regarding the distributing of cinema, by any means necessary, back to the region and for the people depicted on screen. However, the aesthetics of leftist 60's and 70's agit-prop films leave much to be desired. Their attempt to create imagery that fuels resistance to power, only enforces the fact that what they are making is still responding to power and thus shoring it up by positioning themselves in relation to it. Art has the power to make autonomous zones that resist on their own terms. On Solanas and Getino's terms, they are ignoring the ulterior position of art, which, through sensorial, experiential or other means, shock audiences, great or small, into unforeseen modes of knowing and deliver truths about the world. Unaddressed by Solanas and Getino as well, is the social tension present in the act of representation and distribution on any scale which always, in its attempt to transcend it, opens an impenetrable ontological void, between class, gender, and race. The filmmaker must find a home in this impossible void and make webs. Artists form the River Plate whose work I respond to more than films like *Hora de los Hornos* are the video artist Mika Rottenberg and the neo-realist filmmaker of the early 2000's Sandra Gugliotti (*Una dia de suerte, 2001)*. Also, worth discussing is Wong Kar Wai's *Happy Together* (1997), which takes place in Argentina and is made by and features non-Argentinian protagonists. Formally, these works are different from *Manos.* They occupy narrative and theatrical spaces, but they can be viewed as musings on labor and economics. Each artist spins their distinct webs in the ontological void, pointing out hidden truths, and reveal corporeal contradictions.

Sandra Gugliotta's 2002 film *Una dia de suerte* (A Lucky Day), is about economic turmoil and unemployment among the young population during the Argentinian economic crisis. The film follows, Elsa a 25-year-old woman who barely makes a living in Buenos Aires and desires to go to Italy to follow a man she fell in love with; an invisible character we never encounter. Her many *changas*, include a promotional girl handing out flyers for "anti-stress" tablets, dressing up in odd outfits while holding balloons to promote new restaurants, running pharmaceutical scams, and only when all else falls apart, prostitution. On its surface, *Una dia de suerte* is non-political. It appears to be about the craziness of youth, love, life changing decisions, individuality, and following one's heart. It's shot and cut expressively, hand held, 16mm, switching between black and white stock, focusing primarily on Else's desires and emotional state. However, the action in the background and secondary characters reveal more about Else's political conditions than the surface narrative. Many scenes portray Else and her gang of friends walking around passing the despairing multitude who drum, protest and setting fires in the middle of the street. Shouts can be heard from off camera, "Friends! Please join out struggle!" The struggle at stake was the economic crisis of 2001, the same on that birthed the childcare, trash collection service, and crossing guards of La Dignidad in the Villas. In *Una dia de suerte* there are many scenes by candle light indicating the rampant city-wide black outs during the 2001 crisis. One particular scene, at the end of the second act, is between Else and her anarchist grandfather. In the three-act structural sense, this scene is emotionally loaded as Else says goodbye grandfather, who encouraged her to go to Italy to find her live. Her grandfather is originally from Italy, but he fled as a young man to escape poverty and fascism. This intergenerational conversation insinuates an economic analysis of Else's

migration. Upon her arrival in Sicily, she calls home to talk to her grandfather, he is not there. He had just run into the streets to join the final moments of struggle as the government was being forced into exile. The backdrop of the love-sick hustler's narrative speaks to the economic forces which, as much as love, individuality, and free will, bind the decisions of life.

Happy Together by Wong Kar Wai, about two gay Chinese men, Ho and Lai, living in Buenos Aires, struggling to survive, while navigating the complexities of love in as expatriates in a foreign land. The two men are from different economic backgrounds. Ho is bound for the night life and tango clubs, while Lai works the door at the same clubs in addition to kitchen work and butcher work. Ho and Lai break up and get back together over and over, and Lai eventually returns home. *Happy Together,* shares themes with *Una dia de suerte* such as heartbreak, migration, and precarity, however it's mis-en-scéne is not built to support political or historical claims about the Southern Cone. The author of the film is an outsider, as are the main characters, and zones of interaction are domestic spaces, work spaces, public spaces, and leisure spaces. Like Else, Ho and Lai also moved to a foreign country on an adventure of love, but upon arrival their struggle became equally about economics and how to make ends meet. This is also where Ho and Lai face the void that pries them apart. These distinguishing traits point to a class difference between Ho and Lai. There are no family ties in *Happy Together* as there are in *Una dia de suerte*, and thus it is a film where the camaraderie is between lovers and workers. It presents webs of transitional kinships that form in the disenchanting void of economics and migration.

Mika Rottenberg is a social surrealist Argentinian artist who traffics in the cinema of the female body in relationship to machines of production. She often employs absurdity to evoke heightened forms of everyday labor. The creative theatrics of her multi-tiered, architectural videos are structured around the assembly line. There is often a chain of production in perpetual motion. Objects pass from set to set on hand made relays and conveyor belts; shifting, squishing, agglutinating and transforming. In *Mary's Cherry's* (2008), women in uniforms pedal stationary bicycles, cut pieces off their nails and process them into greasy, cherry-like forms. In fabricated, claustrophobic industrial spaces, Rottenberg presents the production of repulsive commodities. By re-enacting the labor without elevating the fetish commodity produced, Rottenberg casts the labor itself as the protagonist, free from value reduced to its relation to capital. She also focuses heavily on hands, and nails especially provide mementos of attitude, personality, and tacit knowledge. When asked about the dominance of female labor in her work, Rottenberg commented:

> It used to be hidden in the domestic sphere, and it's still hidden in the mass production industry in some parts of the world. I explored this in *NoNoseKnows* with pearl production. Because women's hands are smaller, they sort the pearls. Again, it is labor you don't see. I'm interested in exposing that, making it visible.

This observation, although true, is an index of physical and physiological stereotypes that have been embedded in concepts of what is male and female labor. In *Manos,* there are setups of male workers at Fabrica Funsa, a worker owner rubber factory in Montevideo, Uruguay. When asked by a colleague why include the labor of male workers in a film about female labor, a discussion evolved about hand stereotypes as indexes of falsely naturalized gendered labor and how hands are an index of the labor they engage in. At Funsa, the division of

labor between men and women is distinct. On the dark, humid factory floor, men operate heavy machinery to dip pallets of hand forms in to molten rubber to produce gloves. In an adjacent, equally hot and humid room, women sort and bag mountains of Funsa rubber gloves, examining, inflating, and probing for tears, melts, discolorations and other defects. Funsa rubber gloves, a product used throughout the River Plate, slogan is “proteger los manos” or “protect the hands. Although simply an ad on the surface, this slogan stands for a mission of support and protection for workers. Hands are a symbol for workers, their labor, and the tacit knowledge retained in the repetitive motion of their action.

The repeated motion of a task can distort perception of time and reality. This is why I asked the question, “do you see gloves when you close your eyes at night?” to Ivonne Nuñez of Fabrica Funsa. Her answer reverberated which revealed an disconnect between us, and a deeper truth about our exchange as videographer and interviewee. Ivonne agreed that, yes sometimes this happens, but it’s not that important, because at home there are other problems of greater concern. This statement, in response to a dreamy, off-base question, presented a deeper truth about the “triple-day”. The dreamy question elicited a politically charged answer that came from a place of sensory perception and experience. This new question about how distinct forms of labor effect workers senses and specifically their perception of time, is an avenue of inquiry that deserves deeper investigation in film and art.

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