

TRAVESÍA CUATRO

Mariela Scafati

## MARIELA SCAFATI

(1973. Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Painter, printmaker and queer activist, Mariela Scafati uses unframed, monochrome canvases to create three-dimensional objects and installations that reinterpret traditional genres such as portraiture and landscape painting. Painting serves Scafati as a medium of memory and processing of her personal experiences, crossed by community work.

Her work is currently shown at MALBA in Buenos Aires, and Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. Recent shows include Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; KW Institute for Contemporary Art (in the context of the 11th Berlin Biennial); Collegium, Arévalo, Spain; Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York; and Isla Flotante gallery, Buenos Aires, among others.

This year, she took part at Documenta Fifteen with the project Rancho Cuis, as a member of Serigrafistas Queer, a group that create slogans to print on t-shirts to use at LGBTQIA+ pride marches and transfeminist demonstrations. Since 2013, she has been part of Cromoactivismo (together with artists Daiana Rose, Marina De Caro, Vic Musotto and Guille Mongan), a group that uses color to intervene poetically in political events.

Among other collaborative projects related to screenprinting, education, performance and radio, Scafati is cofounder of Taller popular de Serigrafía (TPS); she was part of Belleza y Felicidad; in 2014 she made the performance Ni verdaderas ni falsas with TPS and Serigrafistas Queer t-shirts, that was also presented in 2022 in Reina Sofía Museum in the context of Giro gráfico exhibition; she created Radio Electrónica Artesanal together with Lola Granillo.

Scafati's work is part of institutional collections such as the NationalGalerie, Berlin; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; Reina Sofía National Art Center Museum, Madrid; MCA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; MALBA, Buenos Aires; MACBA - Museum of Contemporary Art of Buenos Aires; MAC - Museum of Contemporary Art of Bahía Blanca, Argentina.



# Comienza

Travesía Cuatro Madrid  
November 2022 - February 2023

“Does a painting look like a body when it becomes a thing? How long can a painting stay a painting? Under what circumstances do we find ourselves dressing someone? Who does painting look like? Who is our scent? (...)”

“How much movement does non-movement generate? I look at it; it comes closer and moves back. (...)”

Excerpts from the text by Mariela Scafati, published in *Remains-Tomorrow: Themes in Contemporary Latin American Abstraction*, Ed. Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Hatje Cantz, 2022.



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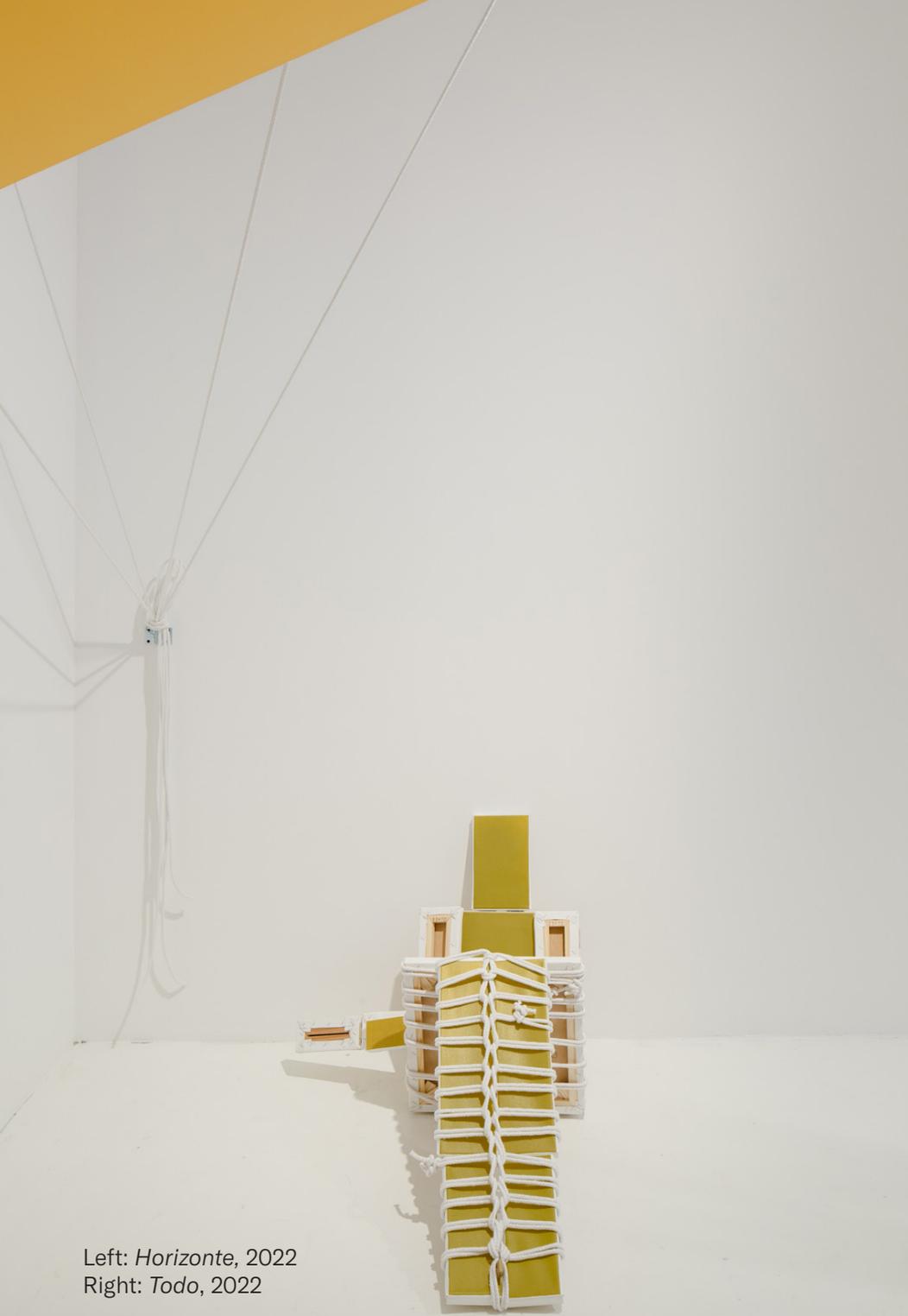
# ***Pensalo [Think About It]***

Poem by Mariano Blatt for the exhibition *Comienza* at Travesía Cuatro Madrid

Think about it:  
you, me, her and him  
in a small big city in which the center,  
the main place,  
the emblematic image,  
the international brand,  
the picture on the postcards,  
where the poor beg for money,  
everything,  
absolutely everything,  
is called sun.  
Think about it.  
Don't tell me anything now.  
You just think about it.  
You, me, her and him  
in the sun,  
alone,  
thinking.  
Don't tell me anything.  
Smile  
if you want  
but don't tell me  
"I'm smiling".  
Smile  
lonely  
or alone  
you me her and him  
in the sun  
looking at the  
sun.  
And think about it.  
Feel in your eyelids  
the warmth of the  
sun  
in  
sun.

Do you feel it?  
Don't tell me anything.  
Do you see  
the color of the skin?  
Think about it.  
Don't tell me yes  
or tell me no.  
Think about it.  
In silence  
alone  
in sun.  
And when you have thought about it  
open your eyes.  
Call me  
if you want  
to tell me  
"I've already thought about it".





Left: *Horizonte*, 2022  
Right: *Todo*, 2022



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Llamame, 2022



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## 19cm closer

Solo show at PSM Gallery, Berlin  
Works acquired by the Nationalgalerie collection,  
now on view at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin  
2021

“(…) I fabricated, I dressed. I wrapped a painting in a hoodie and the hands of the girl that I love with mine, because remember: I had lost all sense of distance. And for this reason, I did other things too: I hammered, I printed, I painted. I tied, I sewed, I drew, I imposed order. I disassembled, screwed things together, I wrote out poems longhand in notebooks. I walked out, I came back, I embraced. I kissed, I danced, I fell asleep. I lived in a state of infatuation. I told stories. I studied passionately. I stole signage from the city streets and built a house. I painted flags. Of these I prefer the flown ones to the dragged or draped ones. The best thing about them is their height: if you get lost in a crowd, you can get back to your people. I served the paintings to scaffold between things and in turn to build invisible scaffolds between people. I talked about myself to talk about others, I talked about others just to talk. And with their help, I dragged the table out onto the sidewalk and we bathed it with food. We toasted and we drank, greeting the neighbors as night fell, because the night always goes down despite joy. Finally, I cried.

I chose a number at random and a unit of measure, easily recognizable with a tool anyone could use, to mark the scale of the possible. At least what's possible for the time being, for these words I use to kill time, struggling to convey that I lost the sense of distance. That's why if, today, someone looks up at the indanthrene, cobalt, aquamarine, thallus with a tiny bit of white and asks me: Is that supposed to be the bottom of the ocean? I confirm: it is the bottom of the ocean. And if they ask, might that be the backdrop of the night sky? It is the backdrop of the night sky. But if you ask: Are they precious stones? They will be.

I want you to know that I always smile, even when I'm serious.”

Excerpt from the curatorial text by Marie Gouiric.



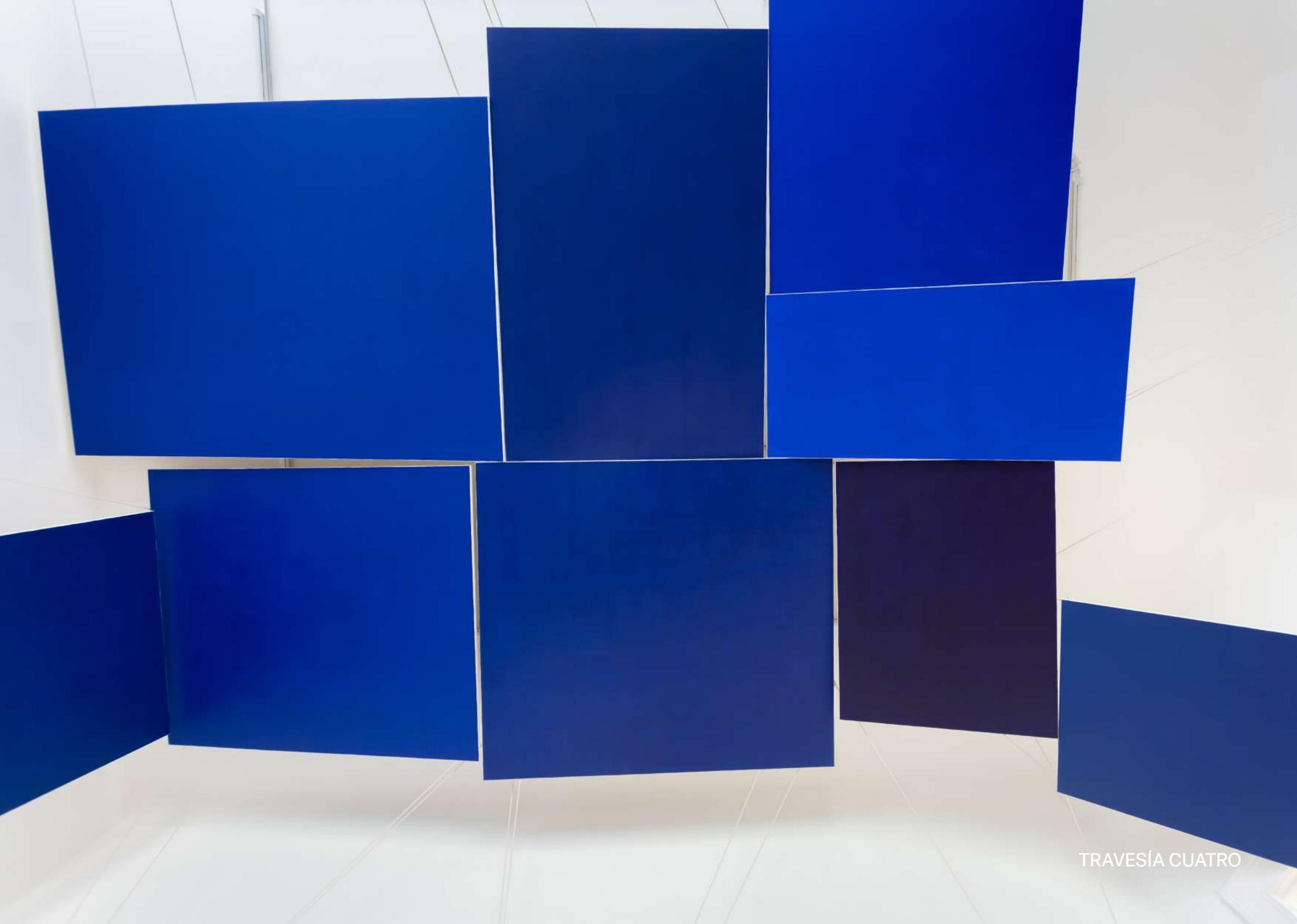




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# ***Pienso en tu pelo [I think of your hair] and Algo se rompió: 2011-Windows-2021*** **at Nationalgalerie collection, Germany**

Under Construction group show  
Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin  
2022

Ever since the institution was founded in 1861, the collection of the Nationalgalerie has continually been expanded to include contemporary works from each passing era. The collection has been “under reconstruction” since the exhibition and research project *Hello World: Revising a Collection* (2018), which reflected on the political and cultural ramifications of the Nationalgalerie’s approach to collecting, and called for non-Western art movements and transcultural approaches to be incorporated into the museum’s practices and collections.

In a presentation of selected new acquisitions, which since 2005 have been made possible in great part thanks to the support of the Stiftung des Verein der Freunde der Nationalgalerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, the Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart is showing works by international artists in various media, including painting, installation, sculpture, video and works on paper. Through their different approaches, aesthetics, themes and reference points, these works influence how we look at both past and present, while evolving the collection and challenging and negotiating its function as the identity of the museum. Over the course of the exhibition, audiences will be able to see how these works are able to constantly produce new readings, with the museum serving as the site of a lively process of interrogation and interpretation.

The work “Pienso en tu pelo (I think of your hair)” (2021) hangs from the ceiling on a rope. Additional ropes are knotted around some of the canvases in the manner of Japanese bondage art. The ensemble is reminiscent of a strapped body hanging upside down from the ceiling. This opens up numerous possibilities for interpretation: Is the figure subjected to physical violence, as in torture? Or is there not something playful inherent in the pose? And doesn't the title reflect a tender attachment?

If Scafati’s corporeal works such as “Pienso en tu pelo” echo portraits or figure paintings, “Paisaje invertido (Inverted landscape)” (2021) in turn refers to the genre of landscape painting. Here, six movable paintings of different, dark shades of blue hang below the ceiling so that, when viewed from below, they merge to form an inverted landscape.

Sven Beckstette



*Pienso en tu pelo*, 2021

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YESTERDAY  
 I LOST THE SENSE OF DISTANCE  
 HOW IT WAS TO TOUCH HANDS

HAPPY EXPERIENCES  
 ARE CIRCLING AROUND ME  
 MEANWHILE  
 WITH MY HEAD  
 ON THE CAMPAIGN  
 1 VOTE

VIDA SIEMPRE LISTA  
 PARA IRSE A OTRA PARTE

NO PODEMOS ACTUAR  
 SIEMPRE CON LA MISMA INERCIA

QUE BUENAS NOTICIAS  
 LO DE FIORITO

SI SE PUEDE  
 TO SMILE  
 TO CRY  
 THEY ARE PART  
 OF THE SAME

USED 2007 WITH 1997  
 TFIELD AND BLIND  
 BY BOUZOIS PRESS

JOVINCITAS TOT LIGES  
 AUTONOMIA  
 PERHUMAN K

THE BODY  
 FLUID  
 BARRYDOL

MY TRIP GOT CANCELLED

PATH CURVES  
 WE LOVE  
 TO BREATHE

ALL DAY  
 WITHOUT ELECTRICITY  
 NOW WITHOUT VOICE  
 AT LEAST YOU CAN WRITE  
 THAT'S NOT CONSIDERABLE

YOU BUILD OTHER  
 BODIES  
 FROM OUR OWN  
 BODIES

Y SI FUE UNA PELICULA  
 SERA UNA INDEPENDIENTE  
 MIRA TUS DIENTES  
 DONDE SE REFLEJA EL COMIENZO  
 DE UNA HISTORIA QUE  
 VERDAD

LET ME KNOW  
 IF I CAN HELP YOU  
 WITH ANYTHING

CELL PHONES  
 BEGAN  
 TO RECEIVE  
 TEXT MESSAGES  
 LET'S MEET ON THE STREET

20 METERS  
 8 CENTURIES OF FREED  
 A SMALL RIVER WATER  
 COVERED BY A CITY  
 UP TO THE SKY

THE PEOPLE  
 I CAME ACROSS TODAY  
 WERE NOT AFRAID TO SAY  
 WHAT THEY WANT  
 AGES 10 TO 85

## Algo se rompió: 2011-Windows-2021

Storefront of Art and Architecture, New York  
2021

"The body, fluid barricade," states one of 60 monochrome posters hand-painted by artist Mariela Scafati in shades that range from militant red to wild pink. For this installation, Scafati reaches back to 2011, when she presented an exhibition entitled *Windows* in Buenos Aires. Ten years later, she revisits and expands upon this body of work, recontextualizing it in light of the intermediate decade of transfeminist activism that has intensely impacted the artist and those around her. "I don't know if I can define these ten years with words, but possibly with colors."

"A self portrait in reds and pinks," offers Scafati by way of description. *Something Broke* is a diary of the personal and the collective, in the form of paintings that are both poems and protest signs. It's a window into the artist's body as a painter, a teacher, an activist, a queer silkscreener, and – as of recently – a mother. It's a spectrum of visceral crimsons.

It's the color of solidarity. "Infinite happiness on the street," she wrote in 2011. *Windows* was initially presented during a heated presidential election in Argentina, and at a time of great enthusiasm for the Indignados Movement against austerity policies in Spain. The work incorporated ideas from the assemblies, modes of organization in public space, and creative strategies that emerged from these efforts, many of which were inherited from Reclaim the Streets, the Arab Spring, and other global and local social movements.

It's the color of attention. "Rush of affection for you," she pronounced, as broadcasts from around the world seemed to be permanently streaming on the windows of her computer screen. In 2021, upon leaving a window open in her house, a neighbor passed by and said "Let me know if you need anything." This gesture of support became more common than ever before during the pandemic, and it continues to be.

It's the color of boldness. "Sí se puede. To smile, to cry, they are part of the same," she declared at the time with a sense of lightheartedness. Now, ten years later, the feeling is different. It's a sense of hope mixed with melancholy, knowing that we've been here before and uncertain what will happen next.

It's the color of despair. "Constant loneliness, even between the crowd," she remembers. Now, even as connectivity expands through WhatsApp and beyond, it's hard to escape a feeling of isolation, as if something broke in the network that unites us.

These reds and pinks emerge from the artist's bonds of affection through activism, and from an entanglement of art, politics, and life. They are windows that frame the subjectivities of a body that seeks to inhabit other ways of being.







MPIÖ: 2

WS-2021

de los  
no son re  
siondo pres  
la artista  
un odoado  
tension en ella y  
años, posiblment

anocromáticos pintados a  
el al rosa salvaje. Para esta  
bolicación titulada Windows  
silo este cuerpo de trabajo  
activamos transformamos  
pidora. No sé si llegó con  
oloro.

descripción. Algo se  
se pinturas que son a la vez  
la artista como un libro  
p. madre. Es un aspecto de

scribio en 2011. Windows se  
sibilidad en Argentina y  
los indignados en contra  
a asonamientos sus modis  
vros que surgen de estos  
para tres. Desde la transman

mis tras transmisiones de  
ento en los vertidos de la  
de su casa pasó una vecina  
de apoyo se volvió mas

AFATI J

TIEMBRE

THE BODY  
FLUID  
BARRICADE

RECONTRA HUMANO  
AH! THE LIGHT JUST CAME BACK  
QUAKERS  
SO GOD TO HEAR THAT ABOUT  
COSTIVAL

ESTABLE  
DENTRO  
DE LA GIMNADIA  
NOSTALGIA

IT HAS GROWN UP  
GOT BIGGER AND  
IT EVENS BEGINS  
TO TAKE STEPS TO WALK ALONE

20 METERS  
8 CENTURIES OF FREED WATER  
A SMALL RIVER  
COVERED BY A CITY  
UP TO THE SKY

IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT IT WILL BE  
HURTABLE AT ANY MOMENT  
THE PAPER WAS SHAKING  
AND I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND  
WHAT I WAS READING

RADIO  
THERE ARE  
COVERAGE  
BECAUSE OF THE MOUNTAINS  
ARE YOU THERE?

SLOWNESS

PATH  
CURVES  
WE LOVE  
TO BREATHE

STREAMING  
PERMANENTE

ROOM  
NOT VIOLETT

CELL PHONES  
BEGAN  
TO RECEIVE  
TEXT MESSAGE  
LET'S MEE

Y SI FUE UNA PELÍCULA  
SERA UNA INDEPENDIE  
MIRÁ TUS DIEN  
DONDE SE REFLEJA EL C  
DE UNA HISTORIA  
QUE VEN

## ***The Mobilization***

KW Institute for Contemporary Art  
11th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art  
2020

Installation acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

Since it was first conceived, her new piece, *Movilización* [Mobilization, 2020], has undergone a process of transformation that reflects the global pandemic which brought daily life in so many countries to a grinding halt, as well as the protests against police brutality and systemic racism. Meanwhile, in her own country, far-right demonstrators took to the streets to protest lockdown measures; until then, popular dissent in Argentine cities had been more typically associated with feminist groups protesting patriarchal violence against women. A painterly composition originally consisting of upright bodies preparing to engage in some sort of demonstration, the piece now comprises sixty-five prostrate bodies in a state of attentive horizontality. Their stillness pays homage to those unable to rise up on their own but also acknowledges the political potential of fragility as an “oblique form of imagining a [better] tomorrow,” in the words of art historian Nicolás Cuello, who collaborated with Scafati by contributing a poetic text that forms part of the installation. *Movilización* thus embraces the choreography of the pandemic moment with its temporary suspension of social life to reflect upon the future forms that collective political and social action may take.

Övül Ö. Durmusoglu





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## Niebla

Museo de la Cárcova, Buenos Aires  
Art Basel Cities Week  
2018

Mariela Scafati's abstract paintings confound traditional expectations of the medium. They are often unframed, jutting out from the wall, or obstructed by hanging objects, such as clothing, furniture, or rope. Originally trained as a graphic designer, she is immersed in color theory and the history of Modernism, and constantly pushes the boundaries of these disciplines through her installations, which propose that a painting is not an image but a visual punctuation in space. For her site-specific installation in the Museo de la Cárcova, Scafati has created a suite of paintings and arranged them into 11 groupings that resemble human figures. The transformation of two-dimensional paintings into a three-dimensional and interactive experience is fitting for La Cárcova, given its long history of educating artists through replica sculptures spanning art history. Scafati herself studied here in 1997, when she moved from Bahía Blanca to Buenos Aires to participate in a painting workshop taught by Tulio de Sagastizábal and Pablo Suárez. *Niebla* brings her restless experimentation with color and form back to one of its places of origin.







***Familia (Daniel, Kinga y Maite)***

Isla Flotante, Buenos Aires, 2019  
Work acquired by Adrastus Collection





## ***Desvío Morley***

Isla Flotante gallery, Buenos Aires  
2019



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***Para Mariela. que me deja que la visite en sueños. Roy Orbison***

Svenja & Mark Lüdemann, 2019



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***Handcuffs' secret***

Installation view of Isla Flotante booth at Art Basel Miami Beach, 2017







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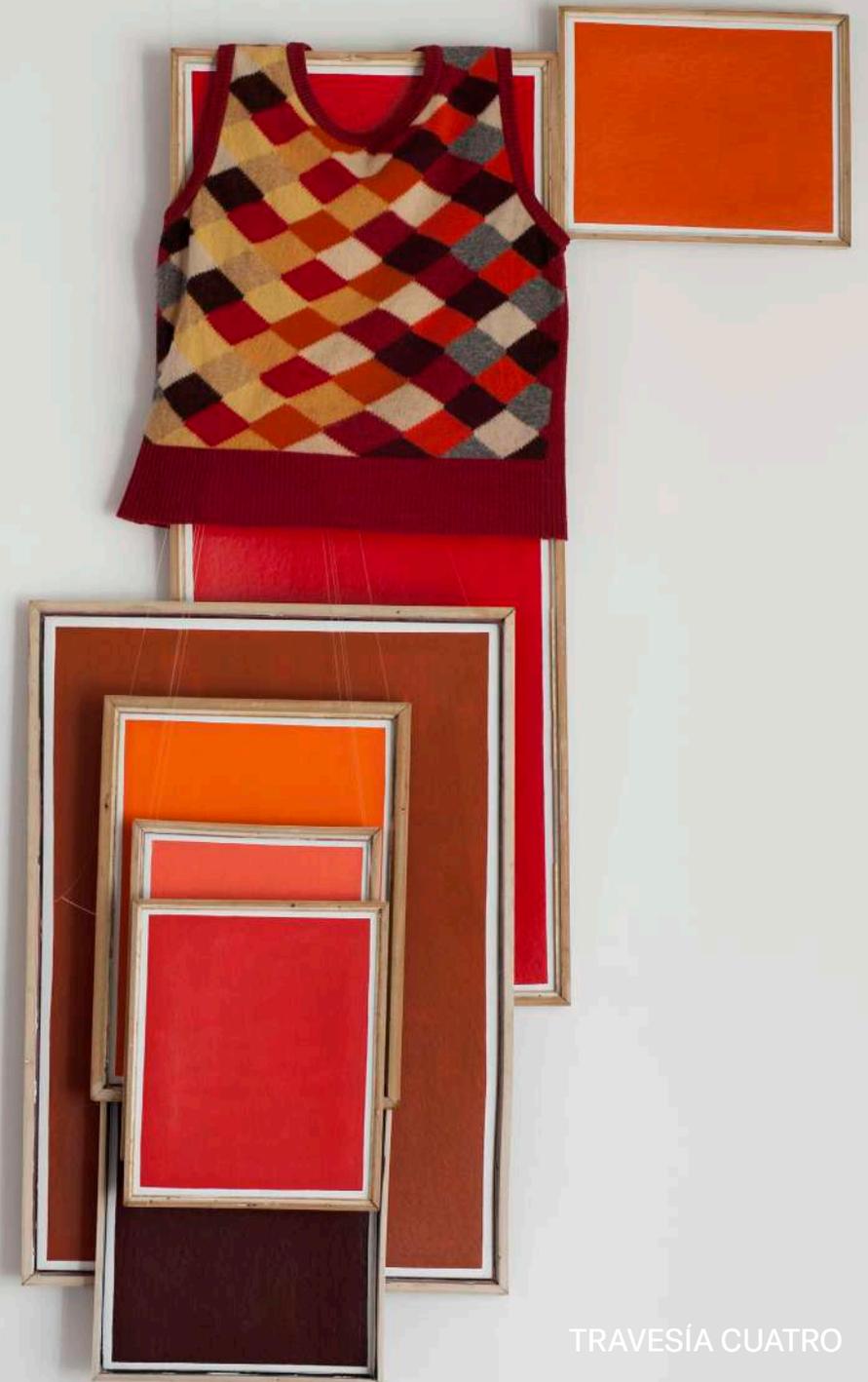




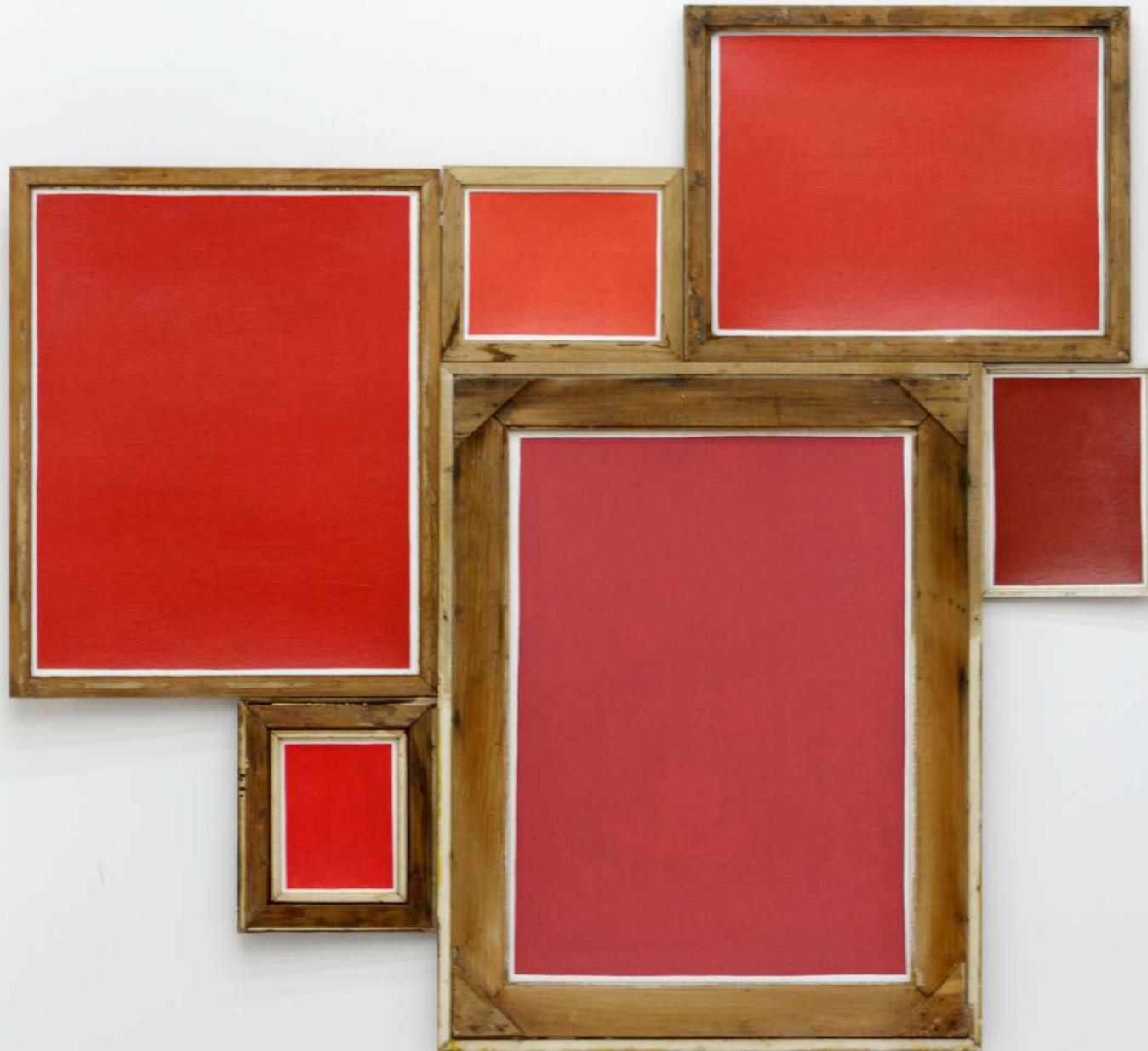
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***¿Cuánto puede un cuadro?  
[How Far Can A Painting Go?]***

2014



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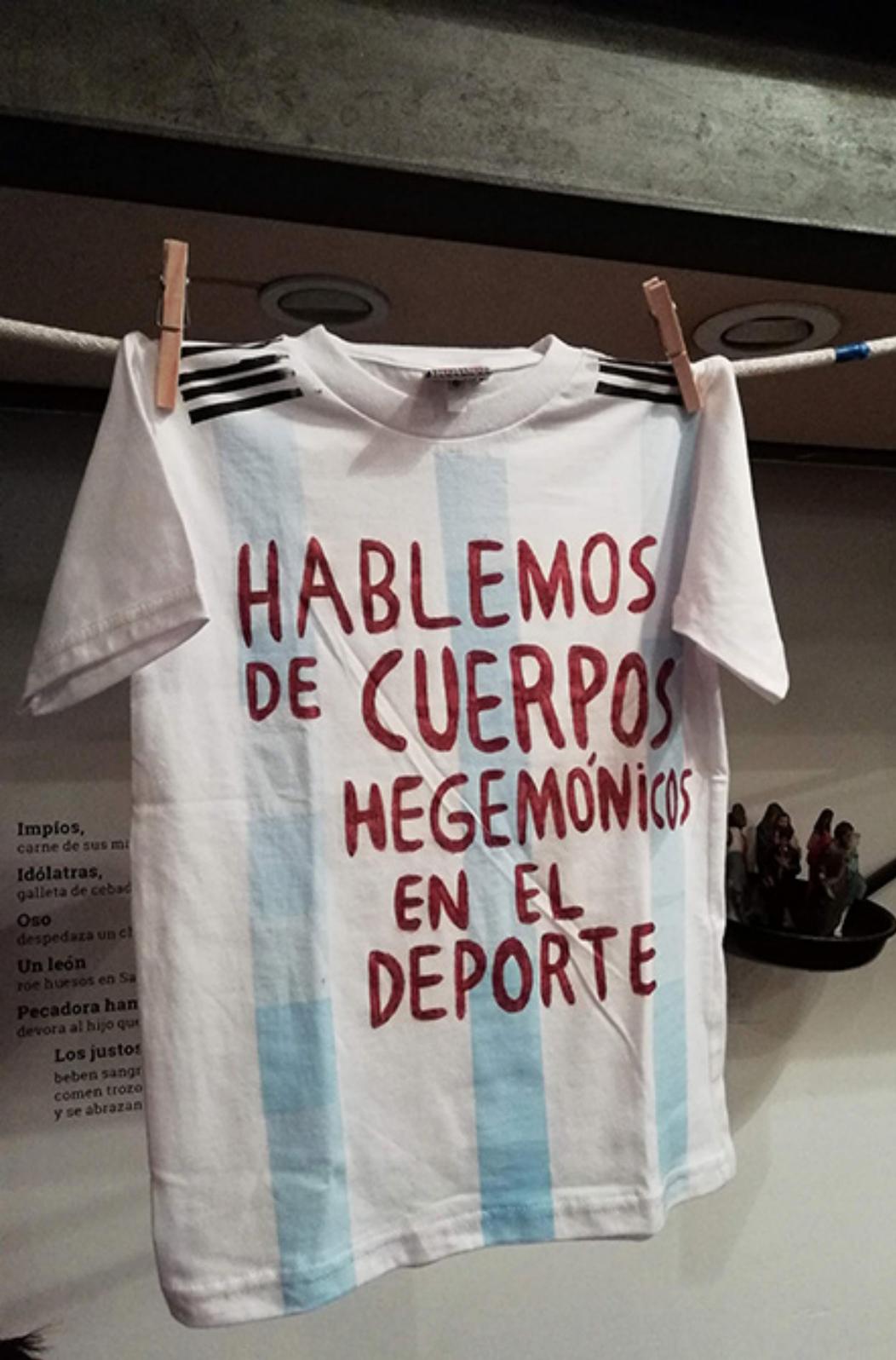


## Serigrafistas Queer

Group emerged in 2007 from the meeting between the need of a queer activist to print some t-shirts with slogans for the LGTTTBIQP Pride March and the handmade silkscreen printing workshop taught by Mariela Scafati in her workshop Belleza y Felicidad in the city of Buenos Aires. Since then and until today SQ holds meetings where slogans are discussed and collectively yablones and stencils are assembled to later print them in the context of the March that takes place every year in different cities of Argentina. Since 2013 Serigrafistas Queer has an archive coordinated by Guillermina Mongan, which has, among other materials related to its actions, a yabloteca that makes freely available the yablones that are generated in each meeting.

*Rancho Cuis* (2022), Serigrafistas queer's contribution to documenta fifteen, continues their preoccupation with collective care, learning, and sharing. Rancho is slang for precarious, generally rural, living spaces, and ranchar is the verb that is used to describe their habitation. Argentinian social protest has semantically modified these terms. In 2018, for example, protesters would ranchar, or spend time together, in makeshift shelters while awaiting the results of congressional debates. Ranchar, then, means attending to each other without expectation of any final product.





## Cromoactivismo

Cromoactivismo's main objective is to intervene poetically and transversally, through color, in political-social events. Since 2013 it has been working together with collectives, groups, schools, in direct actions, promoting poster art meetings (cromoactivations) where posters (made of cardboard, hand painted) are made and then taken to the street or at other times working directly in the context.

Among the last activations of Cromoactivismo is the work with the Columna Orgullo en Lucha (Pride in Struggle Column) in the last two LGTTTBIQP pride marches and in the recent action for the legalization of abortion.

Marina De Caro, Victoria Musotto, Daiana Rose, Mariela Scafati and Guillermina Mongan are coordinating Cromoactivismo.





UN DESAPARECIDO  
ES UN MUERTO

LOS DD HH

Sondale la  
NUESTRA CULTURA

BLANCO  
POLITIZACIÓN  
DEL AFECTO

LOS DERECHOS  
HUMANOS  
SON  
NUESTRA  
CULTURA

BLANCO  
QUE  
CUMPLA

BLANCO  
LUCHA  
INCANSABLE

LOS DERECHOS  
HUMANOS  
SON  
NUESTRA  
CULTURA

Los derechos  
humanos  
SON  
nuestra  
Cultura

BLANCO  
UNE  
FUERZAS

BLANCO  
QUE NO  
SE CALLA

BLANCO  
que  
RONDA  
EL  
JUEVES

AMOR  
POLÍTICO

TRAVESIA CUATRO | MADRID  
San Mateo 16  
28004 Madrid  
España

TRAVESIA CUATRO | GUADALAJARA  
Av. La Paz 2207  
Colonia Lafayette  
Guadalajara  
México

TRAVESIA CUATRO | CDMX  
Calle de Valladolid 35, Roma Norte  
06700, Ciudad de México  
México

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