

# Chilean Art under Dictatorship 1973-1989

A Study on Art and Giorgio Agamben's Theory on Politics



ESTUDIOS SOBRE LA FELICIDAD  
PROYECTO 1980

A. JAAR.

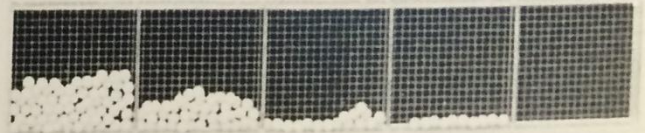
1 ESTIME UN PORCENTAJE DE GENTE FELIZ EN EL MUNDO

0 a 20%    20 a 40%    40 a 60%    60 a 80%    80 a 100%



2 ESTIME UN PORCENTAJE DE GENTE FELIZ EN CHILE

0 a 20%    20 a 40%    40 a 60%    60 a 80%    80 a 100%



encuesta realizada en lugares publicos de Stgo  
los dias 5 7, 19 y 23 de junio 1980.

Myrthe Groot

s1470507

Master thesis Arts and Culture

Track: Art of the Contemporary World and

World Art Studies

Prof.dr. C.J.M Zijlmans

15 Mei 2015



## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost I offer my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof.dr. Kitty Zijlmans, who has supported me throughout my thesis with her patience and knowledge. This thesis would not have been written without her effort and encouragement, which every time inspired me to challenge myself and to stay motivated.

Also, I would like to thank my colleagues from the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Santiago de Chile, especially Pamela Navarro, Mattias Allende and Alekas Córdova, who were always willing to help me and provided me the literature important for this thesis.

Finally, I thank my parents and friends for supporting me throughout my master study.



## Preface

During a three-month internship period at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC) in Santiago de Chile, my interest in the art history of the country increased. I learned about several Chilean artists and artistic developments that differed from the art history that I knew. What aroused my interest was that many exhibitions at MAC often are organized in the context of Chile's dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s, or had an indirect relation to the collective memory of this period. It became clear to me that this period, which was characterized by the brutal physical and mental oppression of the Chilean people, plays a significant role in the field of arts in Chile.

Along with this awareness, I became informed about the number of Chilean exiles who had lived and still live in the Netherlands. Many Chilean people left their country after the military coup on 11 September 1973. This event turned Chile in a seventeen years during dictatorship. The realization that next to me, quite a number of people were unaware of the fact that Chilean exiles lived in the Netherlands in the 1970s, showed me how often we only know half the story, or half the history.

I felt the same way about art history. As a student from the Netherlands, educated by Dutch Universities, I have become aware of limitations of the story of art history I was taught and of the discipline itself. The discipline of art history is considered by different art historians and critics as in need of re-evaluation or change, to become more inclusive towards art from outside the 'western' world. This position as discussed in the book *Is Art History Global?* (2007), edited by James Elkins has much inspired me. More specifically, the contributions and arguments of art historians Kitty Zijlmans and Andrea Giunta to this book are my starting points for this thesis.

Kitty Zijlmans stresses the importance to re-evaluate the way art history has been written and why it has been written in the way it has. According to her we have to work towards the writing of different art histories (Zijlmans, 293). Andrea Giunta's argument runs similarly and proves that for example Argentina has its own, distinct art history. She stresses that due to the repression by the dictatorship of Argentina between 1978 and 1983 no research on contemporary art was done. She argues that after Argentina became a democracy again, the writing of an art history, something that had not existed for years, was a way to recover the past and memories. This is one of the reasons that her research was oriented toward Argentinean art (Giunta, 30-31).

Through the arguments of Zijlmans and Giunta I have been able to position myself in the field of art history. I decided to write my MA thesis Arts and Culture on Chilean art, as a way to contribute to art history at large, and Chilean art history in particular, but also to get to know it better. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the Chilean art production under the dictatorship between 1973 and 1989.



## Table of Contents

Introduction	9
Chapter 1: State Structure under Chile’s Military Regime	11
Chapter 2: Violence in Chile: the Subjected People	20
Chapter 3: Art under the Military Regime	29
Chapter 4: Guillermo Núñez: Art from an Exile	35
Chapter 5: Diamela Eltit: In Between the Margins and Society	39
Chapter 6: Alfredo Jaar: Creating a Space for Agency	45
Conclusion	51
Illustrations	53
Appendix 1    Biography Guillermo Núñez	63
Appendix 2    Biography Diamela Eltit	65
Appendix 3    Biography Alfredo Jaar	67
Works Cited	69
List of Images	73



## Introduction

In the introduction of the 'Arte y Política Colloquium' (Arts and Politics Colloquium) in 2004 in Santiago de Chile, the Minister of Culture José Weinstein emphasized that the relation between Chilean art and politics became more clear after the 1960s ('Linking Art and Politics in Chile', 4 June 2004, Santiago Times). It is in this period that the influence of politics on the arts became more explicit. As art historian Gaspar Galaz also emphasizes, artists became influenced by the social and political events that happened in Latin America and the rest of the world. He writes that Chilean art made in the 1960s and 1970s was characterized by the social and political engagement of artists. Young artists were influenced by events in Latin America such as the Cuban Revolution, the assassination of Che Guevara and the Cold War, but also by developments in their own country (Galaz, 64-66).

One of these developments in Chile was the coup that overthrew President Allende on 11 September 1973. Allende and his Marxist oriented party Unidad Popular were governing Chile since 1970, after having a Christian Democratic government under president Frei. With the coup Chile's history of democratic stability was ruptured violently. The Palacio Moneda<sup>1</sup> in the capital Santiago de Chile was bombed by the air force. The rest of the capital city and other cities in the country, were taken over by the armed forces. The military pledged a coup against president Salvador Allende and installed what became a seventeen years long dictatorship (1973-1989) led by a junta consisting of four military men, of whom Augusto Pinochet became internationally infamous as dictator of Chile.

The influence of the dictatorship on the field of art is undeniable, but in many writings on this period this influence has only one outcome: many artworks are often interpreted and described as a form of protest, criticism, or as reflections of the repressed subject (Goldman; Gómez-Barris 2007). While I do not disagree with these interpretations, I am of the opinion that often artworks are too easily interpreted as protest art or as a reflection of political violence whereby other, more hidden layers or formal elements of the artworks are overlooked. Therefore, what I aim for in this thesis is to provide another perspective on how the artworks produced under the dictatorship can be interpreted.

In doing so, the theory of political philosopher Giorgio Agamben plays a central role. With his work on politics, as published in his book *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1995) he gives a theoretical framework. His main argument is that implicit to our thinking of sovereignty, is the notion of sovereignty as power over life. His theory provides several concepts that will prove to be extremely practicable to understand the politics of the Chilean dictatorship and to interpret the artworks that will be discussed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Moneda Palace: seat and residency of the President of the Republic of Chile

In chapter one, the situation in Chile under the dictatorship will be analysed based on Agamben's concept of 'state of exception', which is the opposite of conditions by 'suspending the constitution' (Agamben, 15). Working with Agamben's concepts of sovereign power and law I will argue that Chile can be considered as a state of exception under the dictatorship, and that the military regime can be recognized as the sovereign power. Two other concepts that will be explained in this chapter are the 'relation of ban' and the 'zone of indistinction' which exist regarding to the sovereign power and law and violence.

In chapter two, I will continue with analysing Chile through Agamben's framework, but more focussed on the Chilean people. Through Agamben's concept of 'homo sacer' the position of many Chilean people can be understood. The concept of 'bare life' is closely related to that of 'homo sacer'. Both complicated concepts will be explained in-depth in chapter two.

Agamben's concepts 'relation of ban', 'zone of indistinction', 'homo sacer' and 'bare life' are of importance as will become clear in the final chapters of this thesis concerning the art production under the dictatorship and the discussion of the works of artists Guillermo Núñez, Diamela Eltit and Alfredo Jaar. Firstly, in chapter three, I will describe the conditions of the art scene in Chile during the dictatorship and on the writing that has been done on the art production of this period. The chapters four, five and six consist of the analysis of the works of the three artists. The analyses of the artworks are based on the main question of this thesis, namely: how can Chilean art produced under the dictatorship be interpreted through Agamben's concepts on politics? In my attempt to answer this question it proves that Agamben's concepts from his political theory are very helpful to understand the situation of Chile's dictatorship and the art produced in this period. At the same time, by interpreting the artworks through Agamben's concepts, I can reflect on the limits of his theory and concepts.

## 1. State Structure under Chile's Military Regime

The military Junta maintained to stay in power for seventeen years. From the day of the coup in 1973 Chile stopped being a democracy until the plebiscite of 1989 which would lead to the transition into a democracy again. The military rule in Chile was the longest in Latin America, where also in Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil military regimes were ruling during the 1970s. Several factors gave rise to a situation in which the Junta could remain in power for so long, such as the establishment of the state of siege by declaring Chile being in a civil war. Through Agamben's theoretical framework the relational concepts of 'included exclusion' and 'the ban' in Chile's state structure under dictatorship can be understood. This will give me insight in how power, law, and the lives of the Chilean people were related, and structured Chile for seventeen years. Firstly, the different factors and the situation that led to the coup will be described. Then, based on Agamben's explanation of the paradox of sovereignty, I will argue how Chile can be considered as in a state of exception under the dictatorship. Thirdly, the function of law and its relation to violence will be explained by giving examples of events that happened in Chile. The chapter will end with explaining the acts and events through which Chile became to function under a new constitution with regard to Agamben's framework.

### 11 September 1973 and its prelude

Economist Stefan de Vylder explains the economic situation in Chile, which formed the context of the coup. Allende was leading the Unidad Popular (UP), a party formed from several leftist parties during a social, political and economic crisis. Because of the economic crisis there was a lot of hostility towards the government. Strikes occurred occasionally, land was occupied in the rural areas by small landholders or landless farm workers as protest, and unrest under the people of the urban areas arose and resulted in organized political protests. The crisis grew bigger because of the collapse of national banks. The collapsing was caused by a part of the people that did not have faith in the socialist government, which was increased by the critical utterances from the right wing parties (De Vylder, 26-27).

In addition to that, Paul E. Sigmund, specialized in political theory and Latin American politics, gives insight in to how class polarization and economic inflation increased. Allende's ideal and model of a peaceful transition to socialism became unlikely to happen after two years of governing. Nevertheless, as Sigmund remarks, it is important to take several factors in account that form the political context of Chile in the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s and which eventually led to the coup. An important notion is that the economy had already started to be imbalanced in the 1960s under the government of then president Eduardo Frei. Also, the United States was to a great extent involved in sabotaging the Marxist oriented government of Allende (Sigmund, 9).

So several factors formed the cause of the coup. One of them is the economic crisis, which clearly was not only a failure of the Allende government but a situation that had started in the 1960s already. Another factor was the United States, in the middle of the Cold War during the 1970s and hostile towards Allende's government, and played a big role in making the coup possible.

On the day of the coup the military had taken over the power quickly. Political scientist Mark Ensalaco describes the events on 11 September 1973 in his book *Chile Under Pinochet. Recovering the Truth* (2000). As he remarks, on this day tanks were rolling through the streets in the capital city of Chile, and the navy had entered and taken the ports of Valparaíso and Talcahuano on only a few hours distance of Santiago, the night before. The armed forces of Chile were taking over the country, committing a coup to dispose of the president. At approximately 8.30 am that same morning, the high command of the armed forces and carabineros<sup>2</sup> broadcasted their first commandment, stating that the president had to surrender to the armed forces immediately. Also, they stated that they were devoted to "prevent the country from falling beneath the Marxist yoke" (Ensalaco, 3). Some presidential and cabinet ministers tried to enter the Moneda, some of them succeeded, some of them failed and got arrested. President Allende refused to resign as he stated in his last message over the radio around 10.00 am. The armed forces responded with an air attack with rockets on the Moneda. When the palace was already burning, most of the ministers and advisors surrendered eventually. All the people present at the Moneda were arrested. The security team of Allende, composed of several specially trained young men, was executed. Most ministers were exiled. A well-known example is Orlando Letelier, minister of Defense, who was exiled after his arrest and eventually assassinated in the United States. Allende took his own life with a gunshot.

Ensalaco describes, with the declared war Chile became a state under siege and the Junta, existing of four institutions, the air force, the navy, the carabineros and the army, was to rule the country. The Junta possessed the sovereignty, the power to rule over Chile. One of its members was Augusto Pinochet, who later in the media would be seen as the dictator of Chile. He had become army chief of staff in early 1972 and came in command of the army and the Chilean armed forces in August that year. The other members were General Gustavo Leigh Guzmán of the air force and Admiral José Toribio Merino Castro of the navy, who both came in command in August 1973. The fourth member was General César Mendoza Durán who became director of the Carabineros right after the coup (Ensalaco, 3-48).

### **Chile under the Rule of the Junta**

The Junta was now in charge of governing Chile, and what was at first considered as a temporarily interference turned into a longstanding dictatorship. Agamben's concept of 'state of exception' will

---

<sup>2</sup> Carabineros: national police of Chile.

help to understand the transition from a democracy into a dictatorship in Chile. The state of exception is a phenomenon that defines the situation in which a constitution is suspended, where distinctions between law and violence become blurred, and where citizens become subjected to violence. As Agamben argues, a state of exception can be a response to a civil war. It is a situation that is opposite of normal conditions, and in order to deal with such an internal conflict, the government suspends the constitution temporarily. When the constitution is suspended, the moment is created for a person or group of persons to gain power. This person or group of persons can remain in power when the state of exception becomes the rule (Agamben 15-63 ).

Chile was declared at war by the military on 11 September 1973. Ensalaco calls this war an 'invented war', implying the war was based on false grounds. As he explains, the Junta considered the members and supporters of the Unidad Popular (UP) guilty of the economic crisis of Chile. The memoirs of Augusto Pinochet tell that he believed that the UP and Allende ruined the country economically and financially, and spread hate and violence throughout the country. Ensalaco argues that these are unconvincing efforts to justify the violent coup and that the Junta was more moved by hatred, rage and cruelty (Ensalaco 5-45). His argument on the invented war is supported by political scientist Robert Barros. He explains that the declaration of the civil war by the military regime was not legal. The Chilean Code of Military Justice defines and regulates categories such as a 'state of war', which only refers to forms of armed rebellion. From an international perspective, armed rebellion is not considered as 'war'. Also, the particular circumstances that would legally provide the situation to declare a 'state of war', were absent in Chile in 1973. At the time of the coup, there were no forms of armed activities in Chile (Barros, 119-120). So according to Ensalaco and Barros, the civil war was declared on false grounds. Nevertheless, it created a situation in which the constitution was suspended and a state of exception could rise. To be able to understand the structure of the state of exception, first the paradox of sovereignty needs to be explained.

I understand sovereignty as a status of being sovereign, which means that a person or group of persons has the power or authority to govern as it is claimed by a state or community. In a democracy this means that the sovereign belongs to those who are democratically chosen by the people. In the case of the coup in Chile, the sovereignty was violently taken by the Junta.

According to Agamben the paradox of sovereignty means that the sovereign is outside as well as inside the juridical order. When the sovereign has the power of proclaiming a state of exception and the validity of the juridical order is suspended, he puts himself outside this juridical order. At the same time the sovereign is inside the juridical order because he can decide if the constitution can be suspended or not. Agamben argues that in this way the sovereign places himself 'legally' outside the law. This phenomenon where something is included but at the same time excluded, characterizes the state of exception and is, what Agamben calls, an included exclusion. Whatever is excluded as an

exception, still relates to the rule. It is related because the exception comes only into existence because the suspension of the rule gives rise to the exception. Agamben then concludes that the state of exception is the situation that results from the suspension of order. The relation between the exception and the rule is what Agamben calls the relation of exception, or the relation of ban. In this case it defines the situation where it becomes impossible to determine what is inside our outside the juridical order (Agamben, 15-29).

Following Agamben's argument, that the state of exception can come into existence as a response to an internal conflict, I understand the situation of civil war and the period of dictatorship a state of exception. The civil war caused the suspension of Chile's constitution. However, the Junta declared that the Chilean Constitution of 1925 would be respected to the extent that the situation of civil war allowed. In practice, the Constitution of 1925 was not respected. For example, the Junta declared a state of siege without awaiting the congress' decision on this matter. In any situation as such, the congress would have to assign the authority to the Junta to declare a state of siege, but by eliminating the congress, the Junta could grant itself this authority (Ensalaco, 51-52). Since the constitution was not respected it can be considered as suspended, and so the state of exception came into being. In Agamben's terms, the Junta as the sovereignty decided on the suspension of the constitution. It acted outside the juridical order by ignoring the congress, at the same time being inside the juridical order, because the Junta could actually make the decision on the state of exception. The Junta placed itself 'legally' outside the law.

### **Law and Violence**

Understanding Chile as a state of exception so far does not end with the explanation of the paradox of sovereignty. What characterizes the period of dictatorship in Chile was the violence commissioned by the Junta, or in Agamben's terms, violence commissioned by the sovereignty. Human rights were often violated, but many persons that committed these crimes were never prosecuted. In Chile, law did not prevent violence, but violence occurred with impunity. This can be understood in the situation of the state of exception through Agamben's thinking on violence and law as related to this. Therefore, I will first analyse how sovereignty, law, and violence are related to each other.

According to Agamben it is often assumed that sovereignty belongs to law, understanding law as a fact that has the power to decide what is legal and what is illegal. Nevertheless, in his opinion this does not solve the problem of the paradox of sovereignty. He starts his explanation on this by giving a definition of the sovereignty of law by Greek poet Pindar.<sup>3</sup> According to Pindar, sovereignty of 'nomos'<sup>4</sup> means that violence can be justified in the assumption that violence and law are unified,

---

<sup>3</sup> The first recorded formulation of sovereignty of law has been written by Pindar (518 – 438 bc) and already contains the ambiguity that Agamben continues to elaborate on, namely that law justifies violence.

<sup>4</sup> Nomos is the concept of law in ancient Greek philosophy.

which makes them indistinguishable (Agamben, 30-31). In my understanding of this, law, then, is a fact that can justify violence to safeguard law. In that case the distinction between law and violence becomes blurred. Nevertheless, considering sovereignty as belonging to law does not solve the problem of the paradox, this is because the sovereignty of law preserves a paradox in itself. This paradox means that law justifies the same violence from which it should protect the people.

In an attempt to explain sovereignty and to eliminate the paradox, Agamben offers a different thinking on the often presumed contradiction between law and nature. The ambiguity between law and nature has often been explained by the axiom that the strongest person is the one who rules and constitutes law, not by means of violence but as a natural given (Agamben, 34). In this presumed contradiction violence and law are unified (the person who becomes ruler by means of violence decides on law) and form the opposite of nature. Agamben argues instead that the event in which the strongest person by means of violence becomes the ruler is a natural event. He considers this thinking against law in favour of nature as a presumption of the opposition between 'state of nature' and 'civil society'. Therefore, he explains how the state of nature and civil society are related to each other. The concept of 'state of nature' comes from philosopher Thomas Hobbes, and is explained by philosophers Sharon A. Lloyd and Susanne Sreedhar as a condition without a government, the natural condition of man (Lloyd and Sreedhar). Agamben describes the presence of the 'state of nature' when a state is considered as if it falls apart. This 'state of nature,' the natural condition of man, survives in the person who holds the sovereign power. The survival of the state of nature in the sovereignty is how the state of nature relates to civil society. As he writes, if we consider law as a 'natural fact' it is sovereign (Agamben, 35- 36). In my understanding of Agamben, law is sovereign insofar that it is constituted by the person who becomes the sovereignty by means of violence, which is a 'natural' event.

Political scientist Genaro Arriagada describes how Chile was considered as one of the most modernized countries of Latin America before the military took over. It was known for its stability and sophisticated parliamentarism. Also, the army was one of the most disciplined and known for its independency from politics (Arriagada, vii-ix). In addition to this, De Vylder writes how Chile was an exception on the South American continent, since its history did not know any military coups (De Vylder, 23). After the coup, life changed in Chile. Human rights were violated to an extreme extend by the military. In Agamben's terms, the 'state of nature' survived in the form of the Junta which held the sovereign power. The consequence was that a space for violence was opened up, as the violent coup for example shows. Because as the sovereignty the Junta related to law, the 'state of nature' also related to law: violence and law became blurred. This became apparent in many situations and events during the period of dictatorship. An example is the dusk to dawn curfew described by Ensalaco as a way for the military to execute people or to get rid of dead bodies (Ensalaco, 30).

The blurred distinction between law and violence characterized the military regime of Chile which had several departments and organizations to exterminate the left. Ensalaco for instance, writes how for a certain period a secret governmental agency was acting outside the law to enable the Junta to transform Chile. An event that took place just three weeks after the coup shows the violent character of the new military regime. It was a drumhead trial,<sup>5</sup> starting at the beginning of October 1973. Army General Sergio Arellano Stark was leading a delegation that visited seven cities and towns to review the sentences that were handed down by the war tribunals that were put together in a short time right after the coup. Ensalaco describes that at the time the tour came to an end on 19 October 1973, the delegation had at least killed 72 people who were either socialists or communists. He points out that there had been no war tribunal at all and that the exact number of executed people has never been verified due to the disappearing of bodies. The trial is an example of how under the 'state of emergency' violence was justified. Another way the military regime could justify violence was by issuing ex post facto laws. These laws made a committed act illegal while it was legal at the time the act was committed, and so the regime could deal with militants and members of the leftist parties. These persons were for example found guilty on grounds of their communist ideology, with the consequences that they disappeared or were subjected to sanctions such as losing jobs or exile (Ensalaco, 39-51).

The acts of issuing new laws and safeguarding the power of law is something that Agamben also describes. He makes a distinction between constituting power and constituted power. According to Agamben this distinction means that constituted power exists only in the State, and constituting power is situated outside the State. Constituted power needs the frame of the State to be relevant, but also because it confirms the State's reality. Constituting power does not relate to the State in such a way that it can exist without the State (Agamben, 39). This can, for example, be understood in the case of the ex post facto laws. The constituted power was the power that the Allende government had within the frame of the Constitution of 1925 and its laws. The Junta, on the contrary, did not need the State as a frame to use its constituting power in order to issue new laws.

Understanding a constitution as a constituting power makes clear the paradox of sovereignty. Agamben argues that "if constituting power is, as the violence that posits law, certainly more noble than the violence that preserves it, constituting power still possesses no title that might legitimate something other than law-preserving violence and even maintains an ambiguous and ineradicable relation with constituted power" (Agamben, 40). In my understanding, Agamben is of the opinion that violence used to change the law is acceptable, arguing from the point of view that the law often has to be fought in order to gain more equality or democracy, such as, for example, in the French

---

<sup>5</sup> Drumhead trial: an ad-hoc military tribunal that has a specific goal and is marked by a lack of impartiality. The verdict ends often in harsh punishment.

Revolution. He therefore perceives violence that preserves such a law as less 'noble', but he acknowledges that the constituting power does not hold and legality to use violence, only to protect the law, which makes it therefore, related to the constituted power.

Sovereign power is both related to constituting power and constituted power, localized at the indistinction between the two. This becomes clearer in cases where the constituting power remains preserved alongside constituted power, such as in totalitarian states. In these cases the state parties appear as representing the State structure, what can be understood, so Agamben argues, as a way to maintain the constituting power; the constituting power appears then as an expression of the sovereign power or is closely related to it (Agamben, 40-42). Chile's dictatorship can be understood as a situation in which the constituting power and sovereign subject became indistinguishable, which will be explained in the next paragraph.

### **The Military Regime under a Constitution**

According to Agamben, the moment when the constitution is suspended is the moment when a person can gain full power. In Chile, the Junta violently took the sovereign power and by deciding on the suspension of the constitution it could remain in power. The regime appeared as a monistic personalized regime based on the image of Pinochet as commander in chief and president. Both Ensalaco and Arriagada describe the Junta's role as minimal and ascribe the executive and legislative power to Pinochet (Ensalaco; Arriagada). Barros, on the contrary, argues differently by questioning the assumption that dictators cannot constrain themselves from institutions organized in a constitution they made themselves. He argues that the Junta had in fact a legislative significance that functioned as an institutional constraint internal to the dictatorship. Pinochet was selected as the Junta's president, however, in the understanding that the Junta members would rotate in leading the Junta. The rotation was an informal agreement and never codified in any legal instrument, and it never happened. Nevertheless, no specific powers were conferred to the title of President of the Junta, which was organized in the Statute of 1974. The Statute also said that the executive power, like the legislative power, belonged to the Junta as a whole and that decisions could only be made with unanimous agreement of all four Junta members (Barros, 1-75). So, contrary to what is widely believed, the military regime was not a personalized regime of Pinochet. The sovereignty remained in the hands of the Junta as a whole.

An interesting remark that Barros makes is that there were no official institutions that could limit the military regime on constitutional or legal grounds, until the constitution of 1980 went into effect in 1981 (Barros, 82). Before 1981, the state of siege was renewed every six months (Ensalaco, 51). This created a situation in which the constitutional law that had to protect civilians, could be violated. When the state of siege eventually turned into a permanent state under the Constitution of 1980, this did not mean that the state of exception was not current anymore. Barros explains that

the Junta drafted the new constitution without any involvement of an elected constituent assembly (Barros, 172). This shows how the distinction between sovereign power and constituting power now officially dissolved with the new constitution. The Junta did not need the framework of the State to make legislative decisions, but did this (often) by means of violence. The state of exception presented itself as the state structure. Nevertheless, the power of the Junta became more limited now by the Constitution of 1980, which eventually led to the transit to democracy in 1990.

The new constitution did not mean that the military became less repressive and authoritarian. Barros gives an example of articles in the constitution that described the ban on Marxist parties, or the power of the president to detain persons up to five days, a restriction on the freedom of assembly, and the banning from individuals up to three months to specific locations in Chile (Barros, 168-172). So, Chile can be considered as a state of exception from 1973 until even after the new constitution in 1989. Its political structure was characterized by what Agamben calls the relation of ban, which becomes apparent in the case of the Junta being inside and outside juridical order at the same time, by declaring a state of siege. Also, in the case of the suspension of law that enabled violence, this relation of ban becomes evident. Analysing the period between 1973 and 1989 as a state of exception shows, that the political structure under the military regime consisted of indistinctions, where illegality and legality, and law and violence became blurred. This situation gave rise to the figure of 'homo sacer', a concept introduced by Agamben to describe the subjected position in which a person is exposed to violence. The next chapter will explain this concept which in its turn will provide a further understanding of the relation of ban and zones of indistinction.

## 2. Violence in Chile: the Subjected People

From chapter one we can understand the situation in Chile in which the Junta was installed and remained in power by being at the same time inside and outside the juridical order, and where the distinction between law and violence became blurred. This chapter will continue to analyse the both illegal and legal acts of violence with a focus on the Chilean people, who became subjected to this violence. As far as Chile can be considered as a state of exception during the dictatorship, the status of many Chilean people can in Agamben's terms be called 'homo sacer'. According to Agamben the 'homo sacer' is a person that is banned from the community and can be killed without punishment. Since his killing could be carried out by a person from that same community the 'homo sacer' was excluded from, the 'homo sacer' stays thus in a relation with the community. The life of the 'homo sacer' is what Agamben calls 'bare life' and this is life stripped from every right (Agamben, 71-83). Through the concept of 'homo sacer' and 'bare life' Agamben explains his argument how the sovereign has power over life.

Following Agamben's theory, Chile can be understood as by biopolitics, which means that every aspect of life becomes included in the mechanisms of power. The framework will give me insight into how the lives of the Chilean people became subjected to the power of the military regime, whereby violence and death played a major role. Firstly, the concept of 'homo sacer' will be explained and how this concept can be understood in the situation of many people in Chile. Secondly, the 'bare life' and its biopolitical significance in nation-states will be discussed. This will be followed by an elaboration on the situation of many Chilean people who were facing violence and death. At the end of this chapter the detention centres and concentration camps of Chile will be discussed with regard to Agamben's notion of the camp as the visible location of 'bare life'. As taking perspective from the situation in Chile it will become clear that Agamben's concepts of 'homo sacer' and 'bare life' are not fully comprehensive and that certain aspects are ignored.

### **The Position of the Chilean People under the Military Regime**

With Agamben's concept of 'homo sacer' the position of many people in Chile can be understood. Therefore, this complicated concept needs to be explained first. The term 'homo sacer' comes from archaic Roman law. Here, the 'homo sacer' (sacred man) defines the person who is judged by the people on account of a criminal act and is therefore excluded from the community. It is not allowed to kill this sacred man. Hence, if he is killed, the person who committed the murder will not be condemned for homicide (Agamben, 71-74). Agamben emphasizes that the 'homo sacer' is not a sacred person that will be sacrificed, which would have explained the killing with impunity and thus the paradox. Agamben explains the paradox as a circular phenomenon in which one concept becomes to define the other and vice versa. He remarks that several modern scholars explained

'sacer' through the concept of 'taboo', which contains an ambiguity too. This ambiguity lies in the explanation that someone is excluded from the community because he is 'filthy'. At the same time 'taboo' also means a prohibition on the violation of the sacred. The ambiguity of 'sacer' is explained through the ambiguity of 'taboo', and in its turn the ambiguity of 'taboo' used to explain the 'sacer'. So, the 'homo sacer' is the figure that is set outside the community and cannot be violated, yet he can be killed with impunity. (Agamben, 71-80).

Since the 'homo sacer' is set outside the community he is vulnerable to violence. According to Agamben, this violence opens up a sphere of human action. This sphere is the state of exception, when the sovereign decided to suspend the law (Agamben, 82-83). As explained in chapter one, the suspension of law means that it remains to have a relation with the exception: it is not applied to the exception but it withdraws from it. Agamben argues that in a similar way the 'homo sacer' stays in a relation to the community he is banned from, he is included in the form of exclusion. Also, the 'homo sacer' stays in a relation to the community by the fact that he can be assaulted or killed by a person from that community. It becomes impossible to determine whether the 'homo sacer' is inside or outside the juridical order: he is situated in a zone of indistinction. Then, if the sovereign decides on the state of exception, he in fact decides on the 'homo sacer' as the exception which does not longer belong to the community and its juridical order. To consider this from a different perspective it can be argued that without the 'homo sacer' the sovereign power could not be constituted. As Agamben argues, the figure of 'homo sacer' is the constituting factor of the political sphere of sovereignty (Agamben, 82-83). If the situation of Chile from 1973 to 1989 is understood as a state of exception, then the people that fell victim to the state violence can be considered as 'homines sacri'. Many persons who were a member or supporter of the leftist parties, became excluded. The ban on these parties, which was caused by the dissatisfaction about the leftists politics of the Unidad Popular, became the exception which enabled the Junta to constitute their power.

In the first weeks after the coup the Junta immediately carried out actions to exterminate Marxism. As Ensalaco describes, the men of the security team of Allende were arrested and executed by the military. Also the ministers and advisors were arrested and taken to detention locations or they disappeared (Ensalaco, 26). These members and supporters of the UP-government were excluded on the basis of their Marxist ideology. They can be considered as 'homines sacri' because the military could kill the members with impunity.

Not only UP-members found themselves in the situation where they could be killed with impunity. The paramilitary organization Movimiento Izquierda de Revolucionaria (MIR) (Revolutionary Left Movement) was a primary enemy of the military regime. Political scientist Jane Esberg describes the organization as a Marxist-Leninist organization which was based at the University of Concepción, Concepción. The MIR had become a clandestine organization under the

government of Frei. In the first year of Allende's presidency the MIR positioned itself as the armed wing of the government. Forty MIR-members were granted amnesty and many leaders left their hiding places. However, in the second year of Allende's presidency the MIR had a much weaker position and in the final months of Allende's presidency the MIR turned against him (Esberg, 9- 12). This did not mean that the MIR supported the coup or the Junta. Ensalaco explains that the MIR was one of the few organizations who tried to put up armed resistance against the armed forces (Ensalaco, 145-155). The MIR as a Marxist organization that was armed and had training camps, was a reason for the Junta to exterminate the organization and an official ban was secured in the Constitution of 1980 (see chapter one). The MIR members became officially banned and in Agamben's terms 'homines sacri'.

The banning of people was not only restricted to significant political members of the left organizations only. Anybody who might have been involved with leftist parties or denounced the Junta could be arrested and tortured. Ensalaco describes the weeks following the coup as a period in which the military entered many shanty-towns and factories throughout the whole country. The raids were intended to destroy the left's workplaces and to take out shanty-town organizers, even though there was no armed defence in the towns. Students too found themselves in the vulnerable position of being subjected to the power of the Junta. On the day of the coup, military arms went into the Universidad Técnica del Estado in Santiago. Over six hundred students, along with the rector Enrique Kirberg and the president of the students association Osiel Núñez, were detained. Some of them were released shortly after their arrest, some of them were detained for many days (Ensalaco, 28).

During the seventeen years of dictatorship violence and disappearances remained a dominating aspect of the lives of the Chilean people. The criteria on who was banned and who was not, shifted, as became clear after the first years of the military regime passed. The interview with a young man named Carlos, which was taken by Patricia Politzer and published in her book *Fear In Chile. Lives under Pinochet* (1989), gives an insight into how the criteria shifted parallel to the people's changing opinions. The interview with Carlos was taken in the early years of the 1980s, at a time when the Junta was still in power. As an eye witness his story is valuable for understanding the years under the military regime. Carlos was seven at the time of the coup, and as a student during the 1980s he became involved in politics. He tells about how he and others students began to organize initiatives such as leaflet campaigns from 1981 on that expressed critical thoughts about their circumstances. Carlos describes a demonstration in 1985 when a thousand students put up resistance after the carabineros managed to enter the campus of the Instituto Pedagógico de Universidad de Chile and barraged them with buckshot and rocks. In 1985 Carlos had become a member of La Jota, the Communist Youth, after years of joining demonstrations and other forms of

resistance. On that day in 1985 not only communists were fighting against the carabineros as he explains, also the students that were Christian Democrats took up clubs and sticks to defend themselves (Politzer, 51- 62). This example shows how Christian Democrats and Communists became a unitary front when it came to demonstrate and act against the suppression of the military regime. In addition to the demonstration of 1985, Carlos explains how his father, a Christian Democrat who was convinced that the coup was the only way to end the problems of the Unidad Popular, eventually stopped supporting the military regime. Nevertheless, in the plebiscite on 11 September 1980, Carlos' father had to vote for Pinochet. It was told that the ballot boxes were transparent, and his father would have risked losing his job if he would have voted against Pinochet (Politzer, 52). The story of Carlos gives insight into the increasing number of people who joined the demonstrations and denounced the Junta. As a consequence more people became subjected to the violence of repression. The decision on who was considered dangerous for Chile was not only made on the grounds of Marxism anymore. Now, anybody that denounced the Junta could become in Agamben's terms 'homo sacer'.

A situation came into being in which there was no clear distinction of who was banned and in danger and who was not. More and more people became subjected to the violence once they started denouncing the Junta. Another group of people who was literally banned from the Chilean community were the people in exile. Some of them left the country voluntarily, some of them were forced by the military regime to leave. It is important to note that the exiles discussed here are the people who due to the political atmosphere were forced or saw themselves forced to leave the country. Chilean writer Isabella Allende<sup>6</sup> points out that there were different cases of exile. There were the people who left before 1973, fleeing for Allende's socialism, people who left between 1973 and 1978 were political refugees, and the people who left after 1978 most likely were people looking for job opportunities (Gómez-Barris 2009, 135). According to political scholars Thomas C. Wright and Rody Oñate Zúñiga, some four thousand people were forced into exile under the pressure of the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional<sup>7</sup> or other governmental organizations (Wright and Oñate, 2007:34).

Agamben's theory enables an understanding of the position of the exiled persons. The existence of 'homo sacer' is based on the fact of just living, he does not have any rights anymore. Agamben explains: "the 'homo sacer' is saved by the mercy of the sovereign power by being exiled" (Agamben, 183). This aspect of saving people's lives became the regime's justification for forcing people into exile. The case was that most forced exiled persons left the country legally with a passport and often on scheduled flights. The regime portrayed the exile of people as voluntarily and

---

<sup>6</sup> Isabelle Allende is the niece of former Chilean President Salvador Allende.

<sup>7</sup> Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA) was the secret state police of the Junta.

humane (Wright and Oñate, 2007:35). For those who maintained their Chilean passports had an “L” stamped in it, meaning ‘lista nacional.’ These people were prohibited from returning (Wright and Oñate, ‘Flight from Chile: Voices of Exile’). An important person who was forced into exile was Orlando Letelier, the ambassador of Chile in the United States under Allende’s government, but also leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties were living in exile, such as Luis Corvalán, senior leader of the Communist Party. The MIR members Andrés Pascal Allende<sup>8</sup> and Edgardo Enríquez also left Chile. Human rights defenders also were among the persons who were forced to leave the country, as in the case of Jaime Castillo and Eugenio Velasco. Both were exiled in 1976 after publicly accusing the military regime for violating human rights. They were only allowed to return by April 1978 (Ensalaco, 82-129). As Wright and Oñate write, for the ones that voluntarily left Chile the main reason often was that they saw that friends or family members were harassed, arrested, or disappeared. Some of the exiles were allowed to return to Chile after eleven years, while others who were considered more dangerous were not allowed to return until 1989 (Wright and Oñate 2007, 32-35). Nevertheless, as Ensalaco remarks, a few political exiles such as members from the Communist Party and the MIR, returned clandestine from exile (Ensalaco, 145). Living underground they faced the reality of a life that is situated on the sharp edge between citizen and outlaw.

Agamben’s elaboration on the figure of ‘homo sacer’ continues with describing the actual life of the ‘homo sacer’, which he calls ‘bare life’. Through Agamben’s framework I am able to understand how ‘bare life’ relates to citizenship, human rights, and law. This, in its turn, enables me to analyse the long period of human rights violations during the dictatorship, and to understand how the concept of ‘bare life’ shows that democracies and totalitarian regimes are close to one another.

### **Bare Life in Chile: Violence and Death**

The life of the ‘homo sacer’ is the ‘bare life’ that is decided upon by the sovereign power. This is what Michael Foucault calls ‘biopolitics’, which means that the biological life becomes included in the mechanisms of power. Agamben argues that the biological life has been included in these mechanisms in modern democracies for a long time and their fundamental referent has become ‘bare life’. By this, he means that the ‘bare life’ is already implicit in every modern democracy. Based on the 1678 document of Westminster as the foundation of modern democracy, Agamben argues that with the regulation of the protection of individual freedom in jurisdiction, ‘habeas corpus’ was necessary to form the law.<sup>9</sup> he explains that not the qualified, political life was placed at the centre of democracy, instead it was the body, which Agamben calls the biological existence or *zoē*, which was

---

<sup>8</sup> Andrés Pascal Allende is the nephew of former Chilean President Salvador Allende.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Habeas corpus’ (Latin) means translated ‘you may have the body’.

placed at the centre of democracy (Agamben, 119-124).<sup>10</sup> As explained earlier, the sovereign exception on the life of 'homo sacer' gives rise to sovereign power. Continuing on this, Agamben then argues that by deciding on 'bare life' as the sovereign exception, the sovereign power is the holder of human rights (Agamben, 124). In this situation bare, natural life becomes to belong completely to the political order of a state.

According to Agamben, it is precisely the declaration of rights that enables the sovereign power of a nation-state to come into existence. He bases himself on the Declaration of 1789 to explain this.<sup>11</sup> This declaration describes that every person born has equal rights, that these rights are preserved in the figure of the citizen, and that sovereignty can be attributed to the nation. This means that every person born in a nation is a citizen. According to Agamben 'bare life' is the pure fact of birth (Agamben, 127-128). In my understanding of Agamben, this part of the declaration can be explained as the preservation of 'bare life' in the figure of the citizen from the moment of birth. Then, sovereignty is attributed to the nation, because 'bare life' gives rise to the sovereign power in the same way as birth, which relates directly to nation in the figure of the citizen, and gives rise to the nation's sovereignty.

Through the argument of Agamben that 'bare life' is the constituting factor of sovereign power and the nation-state, the transformation of Chile from a democracy into an authoritarian regime can be understood. The democracy and the Constitution of 1929 of Chile preserved the rights of Chilean citizens. Following Agamben's theory, 'bare life', which comes into existence by the birth of a Chilean citizen, was preserved in the Constitution. According to Agamben, when the form of organization that takes care of and controls the citizens changes, a democracy can turn into a totalitarian regime (Agamben, 122). After the coup, the military regime used violence, torture and death to 'take care' of the lives of these people. The idea of the Junta that Marxism had to be eliminated from Chile changed the form of organization that took care of the Chilean citizens in such a way that to a great extent the lives of Chilean people came under control of the military regime. As such, Chile changed from a democracy into a totalitarian dictatorship.

An example of how the state enemy became subjected to the sovereign's power to make the decision on death, becomes clear in the case of Blanca Ester Valderas Garrido, who was interviewed by Politzer. Valderas tells how President Allende personally named her mayor of the created township Entre Lagos. On 11 of September 1973 she was arrested, together with her husband and three other men. They were taken to the bridge over the Río Bueno near Osorno. All of them were shot and they fell in the water. The four men died, but Valderas survived (Pollitzer, 9-14). The 'bare life' of Valderas, her husband and three friends, came to the surface from the moment the Junta had

---

<sup>10</sup> Agamben uses the word 'bios' to refer to the qualified, political life. 'zoē' (Greek) means translated 'life'. Agamben uses this term to refer to the life of a body, the biological existence.

<sup>11</sup> The French Declaration of Human and Civic Rights 1789.

decided to ban and exterminate Marxism. Valderas and the four men became, in Agamben's terms, 'homines sacri', and exposed to death. The subjected position of Valderas becomes even clearer considering the fact that Valderas had to take another name and live anonymously without her seven children for many years, in order not to be discovered and executed after all. Valderas was living in what Agamben calls a 'zone of indistinction': she was neither citizen nor outlaw.

There are many examples of the violence against persons that were not the primary political enemies of the military regime like Valderas, which show the unlimited decision on the 'homo sacer'. Ensalaco describes a demonstration in July 1986 in Santiago where the poor people of the shantytowns and a large number of people from the middle-class joined. The violence of the regime cost the lives of eight people, one of them Rodrigo Rojas De Negri. He and Carmen Gloria Quintana, nineteen and eighteen years old were caught by soldiers while joining a demonstration and were taken to a place outside the city. Here the soldiers poured petrol over them and sent the two teenagers up in flames. The soldiers left the two abandoned on the side of the street. After losing consciousness Rojas awoke and took Quintana along, until they found help. Rojas had more than 60% of his body burned, and died after four days in hospital (Ensalaco, 144). Rojas is an example of a person, who joined a demonstration and on whose 'bare life' was decided by the power of the military.

The decision on the 'bare life' of exiles became present in several different cases during the dictatorship of Chile. The Chileans who were sent into exile were subjected to the decision of the military regime. In this way they stayed in a relationship with the military regime that banished them. For most people exile saved their lives, in other situations the notion of 'bare life' became clear in different ways. Several political leaders of the leftist parties who decided to stay in the country or to return clandestine from exile to Chile were in this way related to the military regime by facing the constant threat of death. Some of the leaders were on the list of 'most wanted', such as the MIR-members Miguel Enríquez, Bautista van Schowen, Andrés Pascal Allende, Alejandro Villalobos Díaz, and Víctor Toro (Ensalaco, 71). The risk of staying in Chile and the threat of death shows the nature of 'bare life': Van Schowen was arrested on 13 December, 1973 and disappeared afterwards; Toro was arrested in mid-1974; Enríquez was killed on 4 October 1974, and Villalobos was killed in an ambush in January 1975 (Ensalaco, 72-82).

The political leaders who returned or stayed in Chile faced the reality of being banned, and living a clandestine life, could be discovered and killed at any point. Considering their lives as 'bare lives', what is interesting in this case is they were in Chile to organize their parties and put up with resistance, which shows a certain agency. It is this notion of agency that Agamben ignores in his theory. According to Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, specialized in modernism, ethics and critical theory, the notion of agency has no place in Agamben's theory since this could not be limited to the arguments

that Agamben makes on law and power structures. As she points out, Agamben focuses on the 'bare life' as the referent of the sovereign power, thereby defining 'bare life' as such that it cannot oppose the demands of the sovereign power (Ziarek, 93). What is important here to keep in mind is that not the political leaders' situation, of what can be understood as 'bare life', itself is what they mobilized, but rather their political ideology. So in this case, although Agamben describes 'bare life' as the life that remains after losing every significance in society, here, the political leaders kept in fact a certain identity and significance. The definition of 'bare life' as a referent of law and power, denies the fact that people who can be considered as 'homo sacer' can have agency and mobilize themselves against the sovereign power.

While the above discussed situations explain how 'bare life' can be understood during the period of dictatorship in Chile, in the following paragraph I will elaborate the part of Agamben's theory in which the 'homo sacer' becomes visible in a spatial arrangement that he calls the 'nomos of modernity' (Agamben, 167). This will enable me to position the significance of the detention centres and camps in Chile in the political structure that has so far been framed by Agamben's theory.

### **The Concentration Camps of Chile**

Agamben includes the camp in his theory on 'homo sacer', calling it the 'political space where bare life' becomes visible. According to Agamben, in a state of exception any individual can be taken into custody to safeguard state security, and the camp is the space that opens up once the state of exception becomes the rule. The camp is the permanent spatial arrangement for the state of exception and therefore exists outside the normal order. People in the camps are the 'homines sacri' with only their 'bare lives' left. The decision of 'bare life' is not regulated by any law, because the sovereign power can decide on 'bare life' in the state of exception where law and fact have already become indistinguishable (Agamben, 167-171).

According to Agamben, when a juridical fact (such as the declaration of civil war in the case of Chile) is no longer necessary for the sovereign to decide on the exception in the camps, the biopolitical significance of the camp becomes clear. After the decision of the exception has been made, the sovereign power can now produce *de facto*<sup>12</sup> the situation in the camp to decide on the 'bare life'. Since 'bare life' is located at a zone of indistinction in which it is neither political nor biological existence, everything is possible (Agamben, 170). The camp is the materialization of the state of exception, because it gives visibility to the exception: the 'bare life.'

Camps and detention centres were located in different parts of Chile. In the camps, even after the official ban on Marxism by law in the Constitution of 1980, it became impossible to determine what were the specific criteria for people's detention. Infamous became the places Estadio Nacional,

---

<sup>12</sup> De facto: in practise but not necessarily ordained by law.

Estadio Chile, Villa Grimaldi, and Londres 38 in Santiago. Ensalaco describes Villa Grimaldi as one of the places where many people were tortured. The centre was located in the Reina section of Santiago, in the east of the city, and operated by the DINA. Beating was an often used technique, but the more extreme torture techniques remained inside the centre. There were small boxes that confined prisoners, or the villa's 'tower' where small cells were built barely big enough to contain a human being. During interrogations violent blows were applied on the ears of prisoners, which caused a rupture of the eardrums, imbalance, and disorientation. Electroshocks were also often used on political prisoners. With an electric prod shocks would be given to sensitive parts of the body, such as the genitals. Sometimes prisoners would be strapped to a metal bed frame, and electric currents would be sent through it, causing an electrocution of the whole body. There was a doctor present to examine the physical condition of prisoners, who would give advice if the tortures could continue or not. However, many prisoners died due to the effects of torture or were killed if they were of no important value to the torturers anymore (Ensalaco, 90-167).

The examples of torture show how de facto a situation was produced in which the torturers could decide on life or death, and make clear the form of biopolitics of the military regime. What characterized the political structure is the blur between illegal and legal, law and violence, and citizen and outlaw. The Chilean people who can be considered as 'homines sacri' found themselves in a zone of indistinction by the fact that they were banished from the community, but the fact that they could be killed with impunity by the military regime meant that, at the same time, they were included in this community.

What is important is the fact that the subjected Chilean people and their 'bare lives' were the referent of the political structure through which the military could remain in power for so many years. At the same time, the analysis illustrates that the notion of 'homo sacer' and that of 'bare life' is not clear cut. Several situations and events in Chile showed that the decision on who was banned and who was subjected to violence was not fixed. Therefore, 'homo sacer' should be considered as an open concept. In the situation of Chile this means that, besides the clear group of banned persons, many other persons were a potential 'homo sacer'. The second important note that can be made on Agamben's theory is the fact that agency does not play a part in his theory, the case of the clandestine political leaders has proven otherwise. They organized themselves besides the fact that they were subjected to the power of the military regime.

With Agamben's theory it was my aim to understand the situation in Chile through the relation of ban and zone of indistinction. These two concepts will enable me to analyse and interpret works of three Chilean artists I have selected to elaborate here further. I aim for establishing a connection between the artworks and the politics of Chile. In the next chapter the conditions of the Chilean art scene under the military rule will be explained first. Then in chapter four, five and six the

art of respectively Guillermo Núñez, Diamela Eltit and Alfredo Jaar will be scrutinized.

### 3. Art under the Military Regime

The power of the Junta was dominant and repressive in many ways and influenced the daily lives of the Chilean people, but also affected the cultural scene in Chile. Essayist Adriana Valdés, who has been writing reviews on art and literature for many years, explains that the access to art and public resources became difficult since institutions such as the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Biblioteca Nacional were in the hands of the military regime. She also mentions that writing on art became scarce, because also newspapers and magazines were controlled by the regime (Valdés 2006, 277-278). In addition to this, writer Diamela Eltit states in an interview conducted by academic Robert Neustadt, who is specialized in Latin American Studies, that although the universities remained open the influence of the military regime was present. There was no space for creativity or active participation in this political context. At the Instituto Pedagógico, for example, there were militants with guns keeping watch during classes (Neustadt, 92).

The atmosphere of repression led to several developments in the field of the arts which will be discussed in this chapter. The conditions of the art scene under the dictatorship and the degree of the censorship will be explained. Many academics ascribe a political influence or content to art made under the dictatorship (Goldman; Gómez-Barris, 2007), others, such as Francisco Brugnoli, emphasizes the existence of other developments. It is of importance to explain that the different developments in art and the terms that define these developments are not fixed, so that I will be able to give an interpretation of the artworks without being led by such terms.

#### Conditions and Developments in the Arts

Cultural critic Nelly Richard elaborated how the military regime established a form of censorship. The Junta had a specific idea of the cultural production and a cultural image that was based on an old form of patriotism and on the ideal Chilean family as a traditional Catholic family. Nevertheless, as Richard remarks, the censorship was not applied strictly and contained inconsistencies. Often one verdict by the regime contradicted another one. This was because the censorship was not organized univocal, so many officials were left to their own judgment (Richard 1986, 25-26).

The censorship and the fact that it was inconsistent influenced artists in different ways. Art critic and curator Guillermo Machuca and curator Maria Berríos distinguish four developments in the art production under the military regime. The *official art* was the art that came from the institutions such as the universities. Machuca and Berríos call the art that was made by artists in exile *political art*. *Protest or oppositional art* was the art made as a protest against the regime, such as the Brigada Ramona Parra or the Agrupación de Aristas Plásticas Jóvenes (APJ), both groups that made mural paintings with protest slogans. The fourth is the *Avanzada*, a term for the art which Machuca and Berríos describe as related to political art, but at the same time rejecting the idealistic tendency of

political art and the conservative tradition of the academic art (Machuca and Berríos, 87-88).

Whereas Machuca and Berríos distinguish four developments in the art made under the dictatorship, director of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC) and artist Francisco Brugnoli describes the art of this period as *experimental art*. He describes this art as a search for new signs and ways of communication and argues that many artists challenged and researched the viewer and the conditions of art and modernity. The Avanzada for example, challenged the conditions of the art world by initiating 'art actions', a phenomenon that can be compared with performance art and that until then was unknown in the Chilean art scene (Brugnoli, 19). If Brugnoli describes the art of this period as a search for new signs and ways of communication, the difference with Machuca and Berríos' description can be explained that their distinctions are rather based on content of the art than on the work method or formal elements of artists.

However, there is another term that has been often used to describe the art of the 1970s and 1980s. Art historian Soledad Novoa writes that the notion of 'vanguardia' (avant-garde) and of *conceptual art*, which means that the concept has priority over the aesthetical materialization, entered the art scene in Chile during the 1970s parallel to the political changes. The avant-garde art of Chile is often associated with what Brugnoli terms as experimental art and understood as conceptual art (Novoa, 75-78). I would like to stress that the art of this period indeed can be covered with the term experimental art or avant-garde art, but that within this frame different developments exist, such as conceptual art and the distinctions made by Machuca and Berríos, which are also not fixed, but can overlap.

There is also another development which Brugnoli calls a turning point in the arts in 1983 and a reaction on the avant-garde. Due to international exchange a new context was created for a new form of painting, called 'transvanguardia' (transavant-garde), a term and influence coming from Italy. The international exchange was partially caused by the return of many artists from European exile during the beginning of the 1980s. These artists were not familiar with the developments in the arts in Chile, neither were they or their art recognized by the art scene in Chile (Brugnoli, 17-19). In addition to this, art historian Alessandra Burotto remarks that the transvanguardia was successful at the universities in Chile and marked a return to figurative art and symbolism (Burotto, 21). Relating this to the argument made by Machuca and Berríos, transvanguardia art then, can also be called official art, which proves that such terms are not fixed.

Despite the fact that several developments are named or coined, the writing on art of Chile from the 1970s and 1980s seems to be dominated by what was considered as Avanzada art. This is due to Nelly Richard's study of the Avanzada in her book *Margins and Institutions. Art in Chile since 1973* (1986). Since its publication the book has held an important position in the writing on Chilean art under the dictatorship that is still lasting. *Margins and Institutions* was the first study which

analysed what was considered 'unofficial art' produced under the military regime. The artistic initiatives that came into existence around 1977 are termed by Richard as the Avanzada. With 'unofficial' she means the work that was not included in the official apparatus of arts in Chile and that was characterized by the communication form and signs that differed from the established and traditional cultural references (Richard 1986, 17).

Richard argues that along with the changed social organization, the coup and the subsequent dictatorship destroyed the system of social and cultural references. The Avanzada artists started to look for a way in which they could use other signs and ways to express themselves. The coup caused a radical change whereby the Junta 'replaced' the Chilean history with their own truth and history. According to Richard, the consequence for the cultural production was that language and communication forms to express social or political experiences were not sufficient anymore. Therefore, the Avanzada artists broke with every authoritarian form of language and communication that had dominated the cultural productions in Chile, that is to say, the authority of institutions such as museums, but also the authority of the military regime. Richard argues that in their deviated use of signs, references and metaphors, which were unsuitable for any of the political parties, the artists found themselves in a position in between the military regime and the opposition (Richard 1986, 17-18).

An example of this is Carlos Leppe, who used photography in many of his works. Richard remarks, that although photography was already used by artists during the 1960s, he adapted the medium to use it in a different way, not as a technical resource but as a theoretical figure. With this she means that the photography was considered as the only objective way to document the new reality of Chilean society under the military regime (Richard 2006, 115). Leppe made many self-portraits but in one of his works, 'El Perchero' (The Goatherder) from 1975, a new way of using signs and references is evident. In this work he undermines every element that is written to a traditional self-portrait (see ill.1). He does not take up recognizable features of himself in this self-portrait, but photographs himself three times in disguise. In the two photographs left and right Leppe is wearing a dress which expose his nipples by a round cut in the dress, appearing here as a woman. In the middle picture he has covered his genitals and nipples, whereby any sexual reference to the sex is lost. In the three photographs Leppe exchanges signs of sexual identification, whereby it becomes impossible to identify him as either man or woman. His work can be understood as showing that there is no single identity such as 'woman' or 'man'. Such identities were confined by roles by the military regime but also by the oppositional left. Richard's argument that Leppe's work is a way to mock or undermine the standardization of gender, and therefore was suitable for neither the military regime nor the oppositional left, becomes valid (Richard 2006, 116). This example shows that the degree of censorship was not too strict, and allowed for works that did not specifically lived up to the ideal

image of the military regime, or that were considered harmless.

For many of the Avanzada artists exhibiting their works in galleries and museums, the institutions they criticized, was a way to gain visibility. Richard describes this as an act of “opposing the rules, but from inside” (1986, 24). Between 1977 and 1982 the works of the Avanzada artists were generally accepted, and some artists even won prizes from the official institutions. These artists who criticized the institutions thus owed their recognition to them, which placed them in a contradictory position. According to Richard, the risk of getting such recognition was that the work became neutralized. Also, often the official criticism that interpreted the work different or did not read the layer of criticism hidden in the artworks (Richard 1986, 24).

This example of the Avanzada shows that artworks are open for different interpretations. Also, as described before, terms to define the different developments are not always clear cut and can overlaps. Now the different developments are described I want to leave the terminology for these developments out, so that the artworks that will be analysed in the final chapters can be interpreted without any connotations to such a term. I am of the opinion that when these terms are taken to literally or too much as a focus point, they can limit the interpretation of the artwork. It is exactly this that I want to avoid in my aim to give another interpretation of the artworks. The artworks of Núñez, Eltit and Jaar share the same political context which I have analysed through Agamben’s framework. From the perspective of Agamben’s concepts I will analyse and interpret the works of the three artists.

### **Visual Expression under the Military Regime: Three Case Studies**

By understanding Chile as a state of exception I have been able to expose the in Agamben's terms ‘homo sacer’ and ‘bare life’, and also the relation of ban and zone of indistinction in the political structure under the dictatorship. The notion of Agamben’s ‘homo sacer’ is not clear cut. Many people did not agree with the governing of the Junta, but not all of them were immediately banned in the form of detention or exile. This understanding of these concepts will form the perspective from which I will interpret the artworks of Núñez, Eltit and Jaar. Also, the artworks offer an interesting exchange of insights with the concept of ‘homo sacer’. They will show that these concepts are practicable, but that reality is more complex than Agamben’s definition of these concepts incorporate.

Núñez, Eltit, and Jaar were living and working in Chile at the time of the coup. During the dictatorship Núñez became a victim of military’s violence and was later forced in to exile. Jaar also left Chile but voluntarily, and Eltit stayed in Chile during the whole period of dictatorship. The different position the three artists had with regard to dictatorship is one of the reasons I chose to analyse their work. Where Núñez became a victim, partly due to his artworks, Eltit and Jaar never dealt with such horror even though they both initiated large art actions and projects which attracted

attention. I chose the work of these three artists because the formal aspects and content of their work are in fact open for interpretations of reflecting the tortured body or as a critique on the regime. Therefore, it is a challenge for me to take my analysis beyond this interpretation and to offer another one.

Firstly, the work of Guillermo Nuñez will be discussed. Nuñez was arrested two times, tortured and exiled, but returned during the 1980s from France. His work is often described as neo-expressionistic and giving visual expression to torture and violence (Gómez-Barris 2009). Secondly, the work of Diamela Eltit, by Richard described as part of the Avanzada, will be analyzed. Originally a writer, Eltit researched the possibilities of other media and forms of expression such as performance during the 1970s and 1980s, and also participated in the artistic group Colectivo Acciones de Arte (CADA). Lastly, the two-year project of Alfredo Jaar 'Estudios sobre la Felicidad' will be discussed. This project contains aspects that in their turn form an interesting perspective through and on Agamben's theory.



#### 4. Guillermo Núñez: Art from an Exile

The work of Guillermo Núñez is interesting because he experienced the position of being, in Agamben's terms, a 'homo sacer', being detained at several detention centres and later forced into exile to France (see appendix 4 for a biography of Núñez). As Gómez-Barris writes, political violence has always been a central theme in Núñez's work even before the coup in Chile on 11 September 1973. In an interview with her, he tells that he painted on themes of violence from other nations, such as the war in Vietnam, the violence against African-Americans in the US, Auschwitz and political violence in other Latin American countries (Gomez-Barris 2007, 91). Political violence continued to be a central theme in Núñez' artworks, only now the subject was more personal. Therefore, his work is often interpreted as a representation of the repressed subject and experiences of political violence (Gomez-Barris 2007; MAC).

The reason for Núñez' detention was based on his support for the leftist parties. Chilean journalist Catalina May describes that although he was a left wing sympathizer he was not in an immediate danger of arrest. However, Núñez provided shelter for those people who were in danger. Without knowing his real identity, he gave shelter to Victor Toro, a member of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) who got arrested in 1974. Shortly after his arrest, Núñez was also arrested. He was brought to one of the concentration camps and interrogated about his affiliations with the MIR. Afterwards he was kept in a room with fifteen other persons at the camp (May). The detainees were blindfolded and wore a cardboard sign with a number on it, which Núñez describes as losing one's identity and the condition of being a human (Núñez). Due to the initiatives of Núñez's partner, petitions signed by national and international supporters, and Núñez' status as an artist, he was eventually released under 'libertad condicional' (parole) after five months of detention (May).

In 1975 he held the exhibition ' Exculturas-Printuras' in the Instituto Chileno Francés de Cultura in Santiago. Unlike his earlier works which were mostly paintings, the exhibition in 1975 contained installations. These installations consisted of many objects such as birdcages and fish-traps. One of the works is a fish-trap in which Núñez put a piece of bread (ill.2). In other works he referred to famous artists, for example the work that consists of a birdcage in which a copy of Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa is shown. Another work is a homage to Argentinian Italian sculptor Lucio Fontana (ill.3). In this red birdcage a painting can be seen with of a few red lines that form an abstract unity, which is most likely a reference to the 'cut canvases' of Fontana and his Spatialism, a movement which promoted the creation of real space instead of a 'virtual space' often created in easel painting.

According to journalist Verónica Waissbluth, with the installations Núñez wanted to point out that everything was caged, or to say under control of the regime. As she argues, the food referred to aspects of daily life, the representations of the work of famous artists referred to the actual

detention of many Chileans. Another work contained a tricolour tie, red, white and blue (the colours of Chile's flag) that were knotted in a noose. Waissbluth describes the works as an explicit critique on the violence and deaths caused by the regime.

Waissbluth's interpretation of the work is very likable, especially since the birdcages and the fish-traps can almost speak for themselves, as a direct reference to his personal experiences of being detained. Nevertheless some details are overlooked by Waissbluth such as the fact that a cage is something different as a fish-trap. In both objects animals can be trapped and locked, but with a fish-trap a fish can in fact enter the object himself, but is not able to get out. A birdcage, if closed, cannot be entered by a bird himself from the outside. The fish-trap therefore can also be considered as a metaphor for the promises of the military regime for economic prosperity, whereby the bread symbolises this prosperity. Waissbluth also does not elaborate on the reason why Núñez' refers to artists, he also could have used other material to refer to the detention of Chileans. I believe that Núñez' own statement on these works can help to understand his choice. As he explained himself with regard to the installations, after his detention in 1974 he felt that drawing and painting could no longer express his feelings and thoughts on these circumstances. Choosing a famous easel painting to put in a birdcage can then be understood as Núñez' way to emphasize his feeling. Then, the homage to Fontana, who turned away from traditional easel painting, can also be understood in this perspective. Nevertheless, the Waissbluth's corresponds to that of the military regime at the time. It interpreted the exhibition as a critique, and the DINA closed the exhibition a few hours after it opened (Waissbluth, 60).

Art historian Shifra M. Goldman describes how Núñez was again arrested and brought to different detention centres of which one was Vila Grimaldi. After four months he was released, taken directly to the airport and put on a flight to France (Goldman, 252). Núñez' detention at the Villa Grimaldi and the other detention centres shows the vulnerable position he held of being subjected to the regime's power. Explained in chapter two, according to Agamben the camp makes the 'bare life' of the 'homo sacer' visible. Through this framework we can understand Núñez' position as being a 'homo sacer' with only his 'bare life' left. With the knowledge of Núñez' experiences with torture and detention it is easy to interpret his work as a visualization of these experiences, as Waissbluth has done. The work that I want to discuss next is 'Libertad Condicional', a work that Núñez made during his exile in France. This work is also open for the interpretation such as the visualization of his exile, but as I will argue, the understanding of this work can be taken a step further by means of Agamben's framework.

### **Libertad Condicional**

The work 'Libertad Condicional' (Parole) is made by Núñez in 1979 while he was living in France, and is a direct reference to his status after the first time he was released from detention. The work shows

a copy of Núñez's French id-card on which two of the same figures are printed (ill.4). Across these figures Núñez printed the French text "tout terriblement, Guillaume Apollinaire" of Apollinaire. The text is part of the poem 'Horse' (c.1918) written by French poet Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) in such a way that the reader can recognize the form of a horse out of the composed words (ill.5). The work is a serigraph that shows the composition of the separate images and texts.

The visual aspects of 'Libertad Condicional' contain clear references to Núñez' position as an exile. The copy of his French id-card shows that Núñez is not in his country of origin anymore. The title 'Libertad Condicional', or being on parole, refers to his release after his first detention and expresses the position he held when he was in Chile. The work points to two facts concerning Núñez' situation, he did not have full citizenship in Chile since he was exiled and at the same time he did not hold the French citizenship. Also Gómez-Barris emphasizes the aspect of exile in describing the work. According to her the work expresses how Núñez was in between national categories of citizen-ship. She argues that the work is his search for an individual subjectivity that goes beyond the state's authority (Gómez-Barris 2009, 85).

The written text provides an interesting aspect of the work. The viewer of Núñez' artwork first reads "tout terriblement" which means "all terrible", and the name "Guillaume Apollinaire". The first line "all terrible" can be Núñez' way to express his feelings on experiences of detention and exile, but the fact that he uses the name of Apollinaire forces us to look beyond this interpretation. The full sentence of which "tout terriblement/ Guillaume Apollinaire" is part of, describes how poetry completely dominates Apollinaire. In its turn, this sentence is part of the poem 'The Horse'. The written words are visually arranged in the form of a horse. Hence, the content of the poem is not about a horse. Willard Bohn, specialized in Comparative Literature, argues that the poem is a new form of aesthetics in which representation, art and poetry comes together. Nevertheless, as Bohn remarks, Apollinaire is known for linking word and image in his work. Led by this, Bohn interprets the horse as a visual metaphor for Pegasus, the traditional symbol for poetic inspiration, which also forms the content of the poem. It is about a transforming the way we perceive reality and the relationship between the individual and the world around us (Bohn, 60). It is not only the poem which is a reference to Apollinaire but also the two figures printed in black and white. If you take a close look, it is a man in French military uniform from World War I, which relates to Apollinaire's own experiences with war, as he fought two years during World War I.

In my understanding of this work, Núñez composed the different images together in order to express his experiences of being exiled and its consequences for his work as an artist. Then, the sentences taken from Apollinaire's poem relates to the two figures in army uniform, meaning that war is "tout terriblement". The sentences also refer to the content of the poem, which wants to transform the perception of the world and reality. Both references can then be understood in the

context of Núñez' own statement that he did not feel that the traditional forms of art were able to express his experiences (Waissbluth, 60). With a reference to the poem and the copy of his French id-card, Núñez' artwork entails his expression of the changed relationship between his individual subjectivity and the world around him. This changed relationship becomes even more clear in relation to his motherland.

As explained in chapter two, the exiled person can be considered as 'homo sacer', in this way we can consider Núñez also as a 'homo sacer'. Núñez was expelled by the Junta and could be killed with impunity. In this case the military regime was merciful and exiled Núñez to France and his life was spared. In this way Núñez remained in a relation to the military regime since he was alive thanks to its mercy. We can understand this as what Agamben calls the 'relation of ban', Núñez was at the same time included and excluded, neither citizen nor outlaw which signifies what Agamben calls the 'zone of indistinction'. The analysis of Núñez' serigraph as described above enables me to work with these concepts of 'relation of ban' and 'zone of indistinction' in such a way that the artwork can be interpreted a translation of these notions. The images he uses of his French id-card, the two unidentifiable figures and the reference to Apollinaire's poem, which entails the significance of a new relation between individual and the world, together form Núñez way of expressing his position of being in what we can understand as the 'zone of indistinction'. Thereby, he recognizes that he cannot identify with either his motherland nor the country of his asylum and that this forces him into a new form of artistic practices.

Nevertheless, it also confronts us with other insights in Agamben's theory. The question here is whether we can consider Núñez situation still as one of 'homo sacer' and 'bare life' while he lived in France. It can be argued that while he was living in France, being safe and able to participate in French society to a certain extent (not as a French citizen, but as a citizen who is protected by the French Constitution), he did not face the reality of 'bare life' anymore. So where Agamben's explanation of the situation of an exile ends with defining him as a 'homo sacer' with only 'bare life' left, which is a life that is subjected to the sovereign power, it becomes clear that in Núñez case there is in fact a life after 'bare life'.

The understanding of 'homo sacer' becomes also questioned in the next chapter with the work of Diamela Eltit. Contrary to Núñez she stayed in Chile, but also her work has often been interpreted and described as reflecting on the violence and tortured body under dictatorship.

## 5. Diamela Eltit: In Between the Margins and Society

### Zonas de Dolor I/Maipu

The work of Diamela Eltit (see appendix 2 for biography) is interesting since, initially being a writer, she explored different disciplines and worked together with other writers and artists, at the time of the military rule. In this period, Eltit often used her own body in performances which related to her writings, for example in her performance 'Zona de Dolor I/Maipu' in 1980. As Richard describes, in this performance Eltit reads her novel *Lumpérica* in a brothel, with her arms cut and burned. The performance was filmed by artist Lotty Rosenfeld. In the first minute of the film the viewer sees photographs of Eltit cutting her arm with a razorblade. She is sitting on a step, and close ups are taken of her face and her mutilated arms (ill.6). Then the viewpoint of the camera changes from seeing people standing in a door opening with in the background Eltit sitting, to a point where the camera is in the same room as Eltit where she reads out loud. Also, in the room are people present (ills.7-8). From one third of the film until the end, the viewer sees Eltit in front of the brothel washing the pavement with a bucket and brush (ill.9). Eltit is constantly reading out her novel *Lumpérica* in fast tempo with a high voice.

The novel *Lumpérica*, officially published in 1983 (translated in English with the title *E.Luminata*) relates to Eltit's cuts. Mary Green, specialized in Hispanic Studies, argues that the narrative of the novel has a radical character. There is no plot in the traditional sense, but the same scene is reinterpreted from different perspectives. It is therefore hard to understand what it is about, and it has been described as obscure and cryptic. Nevertheless, the book contains a critical aspect: it is a metaphor for Chile under the dictatorship. For example, the naming ceremony of the character *L.Luminada* is portrayed as unnatural and torturous whereby bodies are reduced to flesh, and upon this flesh an identity is physically inscribed. Green argues that this physical inscription reflects the violent methods of the military (Green, 26-36).

This interpretation of Green is plausible, since Eltit was aware of the political atmosphere and the violence of the regime, and this also influenced her art. This becomes evident from her comments on the performance in an interview conducted by Robert Neustadt, professor of Latin American Studies at the Northern Arizona University, in 1998. The artist states that the performance in the brothel was intended as an art action. She felt that at the time it did not make sense to make artworks for galleries and that it was more useful to make art that was related to the goal of *Colectivo Acciones de Arte (CADA)*. Eltit also points out that she thought the authorities knew about the political layers of some of her works and the actions she did with CADA (Neustadt, 99). Neustadt and Richard both remark that the work of CADA was made to destabilize both the authority of the regime and the discipline of art itself (Neustadt, 14; Richard 1986, 36).

Richard also emphasizes the relation between the mutilated body of Eltit and the circumstances under military rule. She describes that the body and the social landscape, formed a stage for communication. Since under the military rule the political sphere was no longer a viable option for action and the prohibitions shifted from the public sphere to the private sphere (Richard, 18). In my understanding of Richard here, is that she means that the streets and squares, such as the one in front of the Moneda Palaca, were no longer options for demonstrations or other action as they were during the Allende presidency. With the private sphere, Richard not only means the spaces within the walls of a house, but also the private sphere of one's body. In the case of Eltit it is this play between the private sphere of her body presented in the public space of the brothel, a space that exists at the margins of society. Richard writes that by mutilating Eltit's body the performance is in between the individual and collective experience. Pain enables the mutilated artist to identify with collective identity, the communal body of suffering (Richard 1986, 69).

Richard argument is supported by the artist's own statements on her individual performances. Eltit says in the interview with Neustadt that she intentionally did not chose a more public place like a street for her performance, but instead chose a political space such as the brothel (Eltit in Neustadt, 99). These political spaces of Eltit's performances are places that are seen as the margins of society. In another performance called 'Zonas de Dolor II/ El Beso' for example, Eltit kisses a handicapped vagabond in the streets. She does not only breaks with the traditional network of sexual transactions by freely kissing the man, it is also an act of identifying with those who do not participate in society.

Eltit's own statements on her works and the political situation, but also the specific choice to incorporate spaces and people that exist and live at the margins of society, shows her awareness of the political circumstances on her work. Nevertheless, stressing the political component in Eltit's work turns often into an interpretation of her performance as a form of political resistance. According to art historian Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra this often has happened. The mutilation of the body by Eltit herself is then interpreted as drawing attention to or a reflection of the violence and torture of the body under the military regime (Polgovsky Ezcurra, 518-525). Polgovsky Ezcurra herself also argues against this interpretation, following the argument that Richard made at the time of writing on Eltit's work in 1986. Richard stresses that what sets apart the work of Eltit is not the political references to subjection and repression of the Chilean body by the military regime, but the artistic language she uses to refer to this body. Eltit breaks down the techniques of the visual traditions and instead uses her own body to communicate (Richard 2009, 112). Richard explains that because of the censorship, the Avanzada artists used various methods to transmit information. Often, they would differentiate messages or intentionally use ambiguous signs that contained several meanings to obviate censorship. By using different signs with different meanings the reading of a

work could be delayed or it could leave the interpretation in a state of ambiguity (Richard 1986, 30-31).

I am of the opinion that Richard here gives a good interpretation which indeed goes deeper than merely understanding the mutilated body of Eltit as a literal translation of the many tortured and killed people in Chile. Interpreting the self-mutilation of Eltit as a way to communicate and identify with a communal suffering also enables an understanding of why Eltit always chose to involve people in her work who lived at the margins of society. It is then not only an identification with the communal suffering of torture only, but also the suffering of being poor, or being excluded on the basis of class.

It is because of this way of communicating that Eltit's work could exist under the political circumstances. The publication of *Lumpérica* was possible because there was in fact no market for this kind of literature as Eltit explains. The novel could be published because the work was only read by a small scene of artists of which Eltit herself was part (Eltit in Neustadt, 98). Polgovsky Ezcurra argues that the reason why the performance could happen and *Lumpérica* could be published, was because the work contained elements that could be read in support of the Catholic aesthetics promoted by the regime. Polgovsky Ezcurra interprets Eltit's self-mutilation as a reference to a religious symbolic: that of self-punishment in order to become a higher being. She compares Eltit's self-mutilation with the moralistic logic with which the military regime tried to form society according to a Catholic punitive and disciplinary model. However, as Polgovsky Ezcurra remarks, Eltit fragments the ritual, describing every cut and wound in the novel that she reads out loud. She does not confirm any external pressure such as the power of the military regime, in performing the self-mutilation. According to Polgovsky Ezcurra the ideal of self-mutilation becomes productive for Eltit herself and so she confirms agency through her act (Polgovsky Ezcurra, 526-529). This is another interpretation of Eltit's work in which the self-mutilation is also not understood as a reflection of victims of the military violence, and which can explain why Eltit did not suffer the same fate as for example Núñez.

I am of the opinion that the inaccessibility of Eltit's work, the small scale reading of her novel, and the ambiguity in which her self-mutilation remains, either criticizing the regime or as religious symbolic, are all factors that contribute to the fact that she could perform without repercussions. Even if her work is perceived as a form of political resistance, it is masked by signs that can also be explained in different ways. The several layers of Eltit's work enable a reading of the work through Agamben's framework.

As the academics cited here argued, understanding the self-mutilated body of Eltit as a representation of the tortured bodies under the military regime would be interpreting the work merely in a political context. It is not the representation that makes Eltit's work so significant and

sometimes difficult to read. In my opinion, Eltit explores the margins of society in her work, the people that are excluded from the community and who do not participate in it. This can be considered in the context of 'the ban' as explained by Agamben: whoever is excluded from the community stays in a relationship with this community because it is this community that makes him/her an exclusion. Therefore, the excluded people find themselves in a zone of indistinction, being excluded and included at the same time. So, if the mutilation of her body is understood as a way for Eltit to identify with the groups of people excluded from the community, her work can be interpreted as the translation of the relation of ban. Her work shows how the people still relate to the community, by identifying herself (as part of the community) by means of her body, with these people (excluded from community). Understanding the work as the relation that exists between the excluded and the community, it signifies the zone of indistinction.

#### **CADA: 'Para no morir de hambre en el arte'**

As mentioned before, Eltit aimed for the same goal with her performances as she did being part of the group Colectivo Acciones de Arte (CADA), namely destabilizing the authority of both the regime and the discipline of art. Besides Eltit, the group consisted of artists Lotty Rosenfeld and Juan Castillo, sociologist Fernando Balcells, and writer Raúl Zurita (ill.10). As Neustadt writes, CADA's first action was called 'Para no morir de hambre en el arte' (For Not Dying of Starvation in Art) on 3 October 1979, which was also filmed. The artists of CADA handed out bags of half a litre of milk in the poor neighbourhood Granja in Santiago (ill.11). By delivering the milk, the artists asked the people to return the empty bags which would be used for an exhibition in the gallery Centro Imagen. On the milk bags was printed the phrase "1/2 litro de leche", which was a reference to the idealism of the Allende government. According to Neustadt, the phrase was intended to revive the memory of the people to the Unidad Popular's guarantee of providing every Chilean child with the daily milk. The art action was distributed and continued on international level by Chilean artists in exile in Toronto, Canada, Bogota and Columbia (Neustadt, 25-30).

Richard gives more details on the art action, writing that on the same day a speech called 'No es una aldea' (It Is Not a Village) was held in front of the building of the United Nations. There was a publication in the widely distributed and popular magazine *Hoy*, which was a blank page with the following statement: "Imaginar esta página completamente blanca/ imaginar esta página blanco como la leche diaria a consumir/ imaginar cada rincón de Chile privado del consumo diario de leche como páginas blancas para llenar" ("imagine this page is completely blank/ imagine that this blank page is the milk needed every day/ imagine that the shortage of milk in Chile today resembles this blank page.") (ill.12). During the whole month of October an acrylic box with some bags of powdered milk, accompanied with the issue of *Hoy* and a tape of the speech, were shown in the art gallery Centro Imagen in Santiago (Richard 2000, 204) (ill.13). CADA chose to use the social landscape for

their art actions specifically. According to Richard, it tried to dismantle the idea of an a-historical artwork: a work that finds its eternal fame in a museum. The art actions were contemporary and needed the participation of people. Therefore, they could not be preserved as a museum preserves an artwork made in the past (Richard 54-57).

The collective art actions in which Eltit participated are similar in content and artistic language as her individual work. The focus on people living in the poor neighbourhood on the outskirts of Santiago and handing out milk in this area, shows CADA's involvement with those who live on the margins of society. Nevertheless, the art action is not an act to represent these people. It is in the same way as Eltit's individual work that CADA's art action shows how the excluded people still relate to the community. As explained in chapter two, many of the poor people who lived in the shanty towns outside Santiago had supported the Allende government since its socialist governing affected the people in a positive way. During the dictatorship many of these people became victim of the military violence, or lost family members or friends to it. Also, during the dictatorship the division between rich and poor increased. Due to the Junta's implementation of a neo-liberal economic policy the unemployment rate above 50% among the people in the shanty towns, and the provision of and access to social services deteriorated (Arriagada, 53-54). Thus, the people of the shantytowns can be considered as excluded from the community, based on the knowledge that many of them had been supporting the leftist government, but also because socially and economically they were living at the margins of society.

Eltit's individual performance could only be seen by those people who were in the brothel at that moment. CADA's art action, on the contrary, became part of what can be considered as the community by exhibiting parts of the performance in an art gallery and publishing in a popular magazine. By presenting parts of the art action in the art gallery and the magazine *Hoy*, the performance became part of the community in such a way that it was part of the cultural scene and because it was accessible for a broader public. The, otherwise invisible or difficult to discover, relation that exists between the excluded people and the community in the case of Chile is translated by CADA in their performance. Interpreting it as a visual expression of the relation of ban the situation of these people can then be understood as a zone of indistinction, in which they were neither excluded nor included.

As discussed in chapter two, almost every supporter of the Allende government or other left oriented persons became banned by the military regime that wanted to exterminate Marxism. Many of these people can be considered as, in Agamben's terms, 'homines sacri', subjected to the violence of the military. However, even though the majority of the poor people supported the Allende government, they did not all become 'homines sacri'. I can thus conclude that the distinction between who is excluded and who is included in Agamben's theory cannot always be made so clear-

cut. The next chapter will elaborate more on understanding 'homo sacer' on the basis of Alfredo Jaar's work, which contains many aspects that are interesting with regard to Agamben's arguments on politics. Jaar also left Chile but under different circumstances than Núñez, a difference which Agamben's framework helps to understand.

## 6. Alfredo Jaar: Creating a Space for Agency

Jaar was a teenager at the time of the coup and lived in Chile until 1982 (see appendix 6 for a biography on Jaar). Jaar became known in the Chilean art scene with his work 'Estudios sobre la felicidad' (Studies on Happiness), a project that lasted from 1979 until 1981. Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Kiasma, Marja Sakari, remarks that with this two-year project Jaar was granted a one-year scholarship in the 'Pintura-Grafica-Escultur', a competition funded by the Colorado Nacional de Valores Bank. This enabled Jaar to go to New York in 1982. When he arrived in New York, he realized that the same kind of censorship exists in what is called the 'free world' as the censorship he got to know under the dictatorship. Due to the censorship in Chile he discovered how images were used, and he realized that the strategies used in the US media were similar (Sakari, 223). In a conversation between Jaar and the director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Kiasma, Pirkko Siitari, Jaar states that his background and his experience with the dictatorship in Chile has laid the foundation for the artworks he made throughout his career. For Jaar, art is communication in such a way that he believes there is always an answer. Without an answer there is no communication, as he states (Siitari, 67-73).

A work in the oeuvre of Jaar that can be interpreted as an explicit critique on the politics of Chile is 'Buscando a Kissinger' (Searching for Kissinger) (1983) (ill.14). This work is a photograph of New York, which is taken from a bird's eye view' so that we look down upon the buildings. The photograph shows the World Trade Center and Battery Park situated on the waterfront. On the back ground we can see the East River going further into the city. According to these landmarks I believe that the photograph has to be made above the Hudson River, from the direction of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. On top of the photograph we see in bold black letters the title 'Buscando a Kissinger'. This title can be understood in the context of Chile's coup, in which American diplomat Henry Kissinger and which was supported secretly by the United States' government. In this work Jaar criticizes this involvement, and 'Searching for Kissinger' can be understand as a charge at Kissinger who was never called to account. In my opinion, by taking a photograph of New York, Jaar refers to his arrival in this city just a year before he made this work, in 1982. The photograph captures the view which was the first many immigrants saw entering the United States through the port of Ellis Island in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It also captures the view that one has from the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of freedom, which in my opinion contributes to an understanding of Jaar's work. He establishes an interesting relationship between the different aspects of his work, in which his personal life and Chile's dictatorship becomes intertwined. The photograph captures Jaar's arrival in the US, which can be interpreted as a symbol for his own person freedom after leaving his home country and its dictatorship. At the same time, Jaar establishes

another relation between himself living in the US and Chile, by making the involvement of the US in the military coup in his home country the subject of his artwork. Hereby, he emphasizes the contradictory events of his own freedom in a country that was involved in destroying any sort of freedom in his home country.

Whereas Núñez was forced to leave the country, being literally banned from the Chilean nation and without an identity in the form of a passport, Jaar voluntarily left and was able to keep his passport, an identification with the state Chile. The difference between the positions of Núñez and Jaar becomes also evident by their works. Núñez explicitly makes his personal experiences of being an exile the subject of his artwork, while Jaar is taking more distance by criticizing the politics of the country he now lives in and reflecting on his home country. Nevertheless, Jaar's work 'Estudios sobre la felicidad', which was made when Jaar still lived in Chile, contains many aspects that can be opened up for interpretation through Agamben's framework.

### **Estudios sobre la Felicidad**

As Valdés describes, the project 'Estudios sobre la Felicidad' consists of several phases in which Jaar used different methods. The first phase started in 1979, the research period and conceptualization of the project. The second phase, in mid-1980s, Jaar started asking people "Es usted feliz?" (Are you happy?) at different public spaces, such as the streets in Santiago, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, and the Instituto Cultural de Las Condes (ill.15). After collecting the results, he then presented them on white charts in several public spaces, giving the percentages of happy people in the world and the percentages of happy people in Chile. In the third phase, Jaar recorded people on video asking them the same question (ill.16). The fourth phase was in the late 1980s and consisted of portraits of happy and unhappy people (ill.17). In the fifth phase Jaar created what is called 'situations of confrontation', presenting the photographs and the video material of 'happy' and 'unhappy' people in public. In the sixth phase Jaar carried out public interventions, where he placed the question "Es usted feliz?" on billboards, at subways and other public places (Valdés 1999) (ill.18-19).

Jaar states that with the project he wanted to understand the principle of laughing. As he says, laughing was quite rare during the dictatorship. Jaar was influenced by the work 'MOMA Poll' of artist Hans Haacke and Henri Bergson's book *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of Comic* (1900) (Sittari, 67-69). The MOMA Poll was a project in 1970 where the visitors of the MOMA were asked for their opinion on the Nelson Rockefeller's campaign for re-election as Governor of New York State. The visitors of the MOMA could answer by dropping their 'ballots' in the 'yes' or 'no' box (Haacke). The work of Bergson consists of three essays in which he elaborates how laughter exists and relates to the human being (Bergson). Jaar used a similar method as Haacke to pose his question which related to a precarious theme. Inspired by the book of Bergson, Jaar's project can be considered as a

way to analyse happiness and its significance for human beings.

Jaar calls his question the most outrageous question one could possibly ask in a period of dictatorship. With regard to the censorship, he comments that at the time he thought the act would be read by the authorities as naïve and that they would not pay much attention to it. From the people who answered the question with 'no', nobody ever explained their unhappiness as caused by the military regime. Jaar explains that everybody was afraid under the military regime and so people answered in subtle ways. As he remarks, the act became a space of freedom, resistance and hope, because people could express themselves. It was a project that responded to Jaar's surrounding reality (Jaar in Siitari, 67-69).

The project employed a strategy to avoid the ban on free expression imposed by the military regime (Sakari, 221). Jaar's question exposed the social angst and trauma. Sakari describes the early work of Jaar (during the 1980s) as a form of protest, as well as a way to vent his frustration and traumatic experiences. He observed, made people think, and by doing this he provided himself a channel through which he could express his own opinions and responses. According to Sakari, by emphasizing details from press images and by posing such an innocent question, Jaar commented on the oppressive climate of the dictatorship in Chile (Sakari, 221-223). The interpretation by Sakari of Jaar's early works as a form of critique or protest is supported by Goldman's argument, who describes the project as a dissident strategy of small scale politics, enabling people to answer freely. A 34 percentage of the people answered the question "are you happy?" with "yes" and 66 percent answered with "no" (Goldman, 254).

Jaar's work can indeed be interpreted as a form of political art through which he, in a subtle way, comments on the politics of the military regime. Nevertheless, the work also provides other insights. Jaar himself describes the project as a work that was not so much a critique, but rather as a possibility, a space in which people had agency (Siitari, 67). By approaching people personally, Jaar created a way through which people could express themselves. This becomes evident by the fact that people answered the question honestly with "no". In any other situation, responding to this question could lead to violence or detention. By recording people on tape, as happened in the third phase (ill. 17), this space of agency gets another dimension. The power of video is that it documents whatever has been said. In a way it confirms and acknowledges the answers of the people who Jaar recorded. The fifth phase in which people were shown the results of Jaar's project and the video recordings he made, works in a similar way of acknowledgement, not by video, but by other people. As Valdés also mentions, the people interviewed are getting a face by the fact that they are recorded. The camera is often taken as an unprejudiced eye and therefore, the person acts different then in front of another person (Valdés 1999, n.p.)

What becomes clear is that the people were subjected to the sovereign power (the military

regime) but not necessarily subjected to violence. Jaar's project shows that the definition of 'homo sacer' is not that dogmatic as it might appear in Agamben's theory. There was a group of people that could clearly be distinguished as 'homo sacer' such as the political leaders of the left, but after the years passed and more people became unsatisfied with the military rule they could all become subjected to violence, detained or killed. The Chilean people then became divided as either supporting or denouncing the regime. However, this decision was not always visible since people were afraid to express their opinions. This caused a sphere in which a part of the Chilean people was subjected to the power of the regime, but not directly to the violence. They can be understood as 'potential homines sacri'.

What can be understood through Jaar's work is that the division that Agamben makes between 'community' and 'homo sacer' did not occur as such in Chile. The potentiality to become, in Agamben's terms, a 'homo sacer', left many people in a grey area in which they either became subjected to violence or not. In Jaar's work, people who can be considered as potential 'homines sacri' did not face the reality of 'bare life'(yet). By understanding 'homo sacer' as a more open concept, I am able to consider the issue of agency again. As mentioned in chapter two, the notion of agency is ignored by Agamben because it undermines his argument that 'bare life' is the referent of the sovereign power and cannot oppose this power. The results of Jaar's project show that almost everybody in Chile was what we can call a potential 'homo sacer'. As far as we can speak of 'bare lives' the people were given a form of agency in his project, first by giving people the space to give their opinion on their happiness. Then in the following phases Jaar expands this space, by using video and photography to document the people and by including more and more people as an audience. In this way, in terms of agency, a form of interactive space was created between Jaar and the interviewed person, and later between the interviewed persons and the audience. This means that the reality of Chile's dictatorship, and the situation of the Chilean people cannot be fully depict by Agamben's concepts of 'bare life' and 'homo sacer'. Rather, Jaar's work shows that the concepts are practicable with regard to Chile's situation, but that the concepts are not clear cut.

---

The three discussed artists differ both in their use of media and content. Núñez was a victim of the suppression of the military regime himself, and he can be considered as an excluded person, a 'homo sacer' subjected to the power of the regime. He worked with his experiences in his artwork and in his work we can discover what Agamben calls the 'relation of ban'. Núñez' work 'Libertad Condicional' is an expression on how he found himself in between two nationalities, but also in being freed from the threat of being killed which at the same time related him to the military regime who spared his life by sending him in exile. Interesting is that in the work of Eltit and Jaar, who both lived in Chile or left Chile voluntarily without the threat of violence or death, provides us with new insights

in the concept of 'homo sacer'. Whereas we can interpret Eltit's work as a reflection of a 'relation of ban', that of the excluded poor with the ideal community according to the Junta, it also shows that not every supporter of the left became subjected to violence. More important, the poor were often also excluded economically, which shows that Agamben's definition of 'homo sacer' is not clear cut. With Jaar's work 'Estudios sobre la felicidad' I can come to my final argument on Agamben's theory and art. Jaar's work created a space for agency, by letting people express their opinion about their life conditions. This shows that in the case of Chile the division between who was 'homo sacer' and who was not, cannot be made clear cut anymore and that indeed agency can be present in a 'bare life'.

Núñez experiences can be defined by Agamben's concept of 'homo sacer' and I have taken the interpretation of his work a step further then this by analysing it through the concept of relation of ban. Analysing the works of Eltit and Jaar shows that also here we can discover a relation between people and the military regime. The analysis of these works has also shown that the Agamben's definition of 'homo sacer' and 'bare life' can be used and questioned both.



## Conclusion

This thesis focused on the Chilean art made during the dictatorship in the context of Agamben's theory on politics. In order to be able to answer the question on how the art can be interpreted on the basis of Agamben's theoretical framework I first analysed the political structure of Chile under the dictatorship. I so came to an understanding of the political structure of Chile and of Agamben's concepts. What in my opinion is an important element in Agamben's theory is that he emphasizes how subjected people and the sovereign power relate to each other. He explains this with the concepts 'relation of ban' and 'zone of indistinction', whereby he provides a deeper understanding of what it means to be excluded. That is, the excluded person is at the same time included since his life or death is depending on the sovereign power. It is this notion on which the relationship between the banned person and the sovereign power is based. I involved these concepts and insights in the interpretation of the artworks of Núñez, Eltit and Jaar. By doing so, I learned that the artworks show that Agamben's theory is not clear cut.

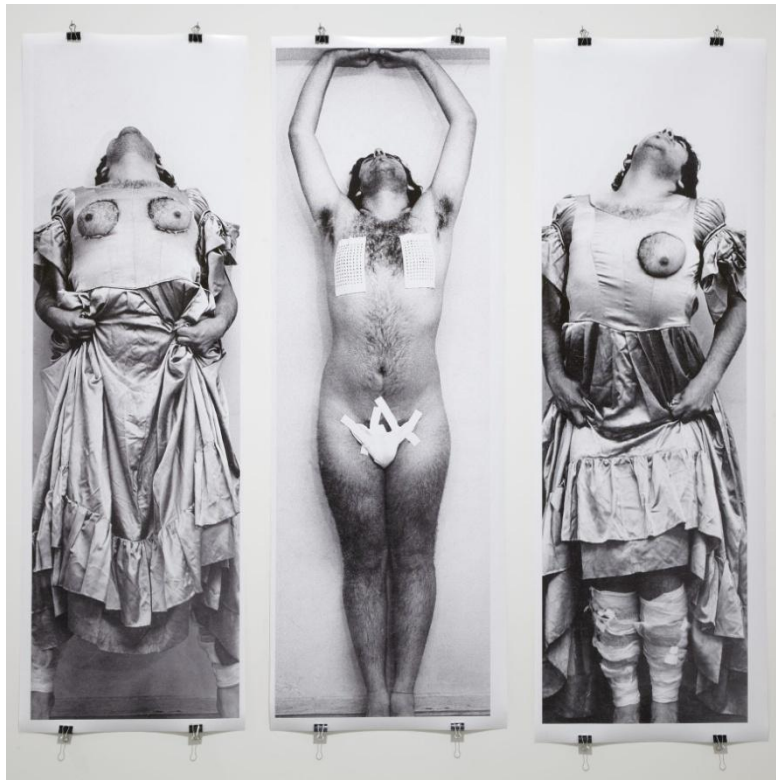
In general all artworks are political in that sense that they all offer a perspective on social relationships, but the term 'political art' points often to artworks that are interpreted as a form of protest, criticism, or a reflection of the repressed subject. The artworks discussed in this thesis, created under a repressive regime which influenced every aspect of the daily Chilean life, are open for such an interpretation. However, with my understanding of 'homo sacer', a figure that can be discovered in the political structure of dictatorial Chile, the artworks of Núñez, Eltit and Jaar can also be interpreted as a reflection of and on this concept. I am of the opinion that such an interpretation tends to put artworks in a critical position with regard to power, the military regime, since a reflection of the repressed or tortured persons can never be an objective endeavour.

In sum, what I want to argue is that the concepts of 'relation of ban' and 'zone of indistinction', which are closely linked to 'homo sacer', bring the interpretation of the artworks a step further. The different aspects of the artworks can then be interpreted as forming together the relationship that exists between the excluded and what can be considered as included. In my understanding of the artworks through the concepts of 'homo sacer', 'relation of ban' and 'zone of indistinction' the entanglement between the people and the power is exposed. This enables an interpretation of the artworks not as a form of critique or resistance but as a medium in which aesthetics offer a perspective, in this case, on the biopolitics of Chile.

Perceiving the artworks through the concepts of Agamben reveal two things. The first thing is that the artworks, without taking a critical position towards the regime, can reflect on the power relationships in the political structure of dictatorial Chile. The second thing is that the interpretation of the artworks, in its turn, gives another perspective on Agamben's theory and concepts of 'homo

sacer' and 'bare life'. It shows that although the concepts are extensively practicable in the case of Chile's dictatorship, some situations cannot be fully explained through these concepts. Hence, reality never corresponds with theory completely, but they can exchange insights in one another to come to a better understanding of both.

## Illustrations



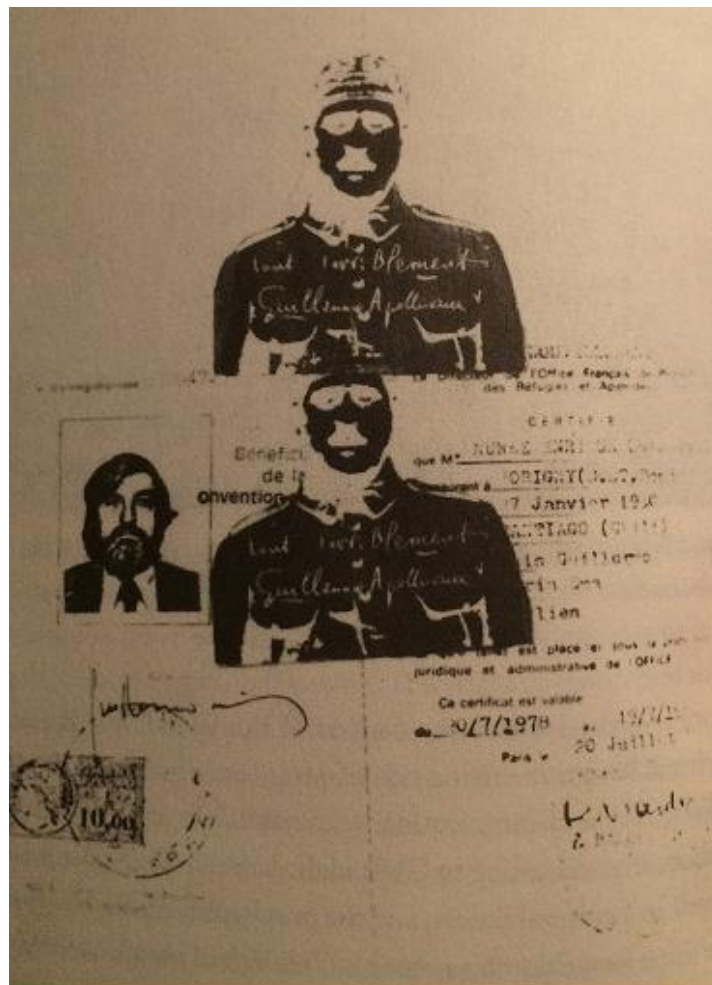
1. Carlos Leppe, *El Perchero*, 1975, photographs.



2. Guillermo Núñez, *Objodido: Aquí y en la quebrada del ají*, 1975. Installation.



3. Guillermo Núñez, *Objetado: Homenaje a Lucio Fontana*, 1975. Installation.



4. Guillermo Núñez, *Libertad Condicional*, 1979. Drawing and serigraph.

tout ferrilement  
 Guillaume Apollinaire

5. Guillaume Apollinaire, *Le Cheval*, poem, c.1918



6. Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/ Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil.



7. Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil.



8. Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil



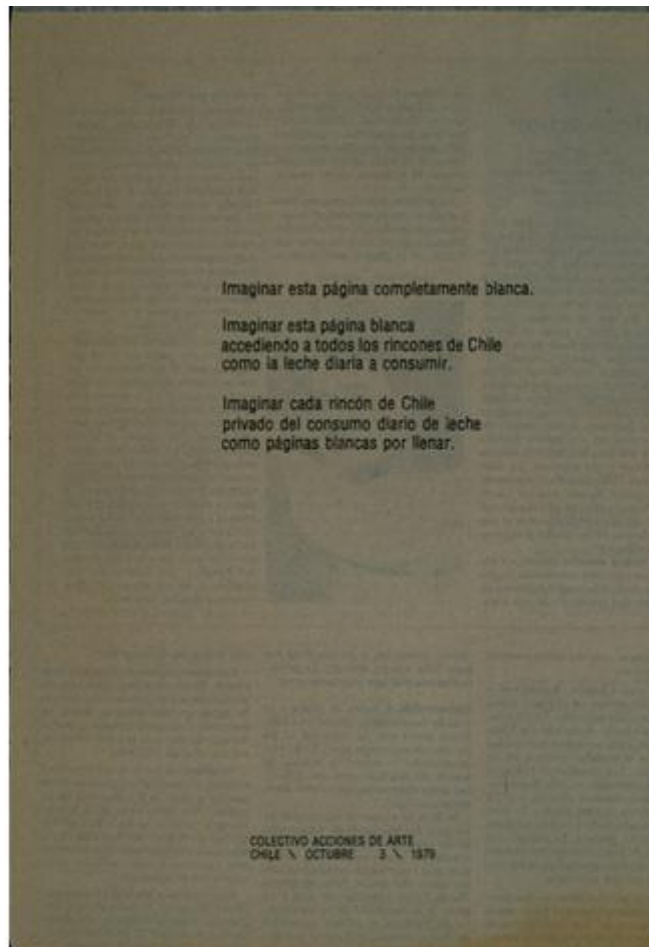
9. Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil.



10. CADA. From left to right: Juan Castillo, Lotty Rosenfeld, Raúl Zurita, Diamela Eltit, Fernando Balcells, date unknown.



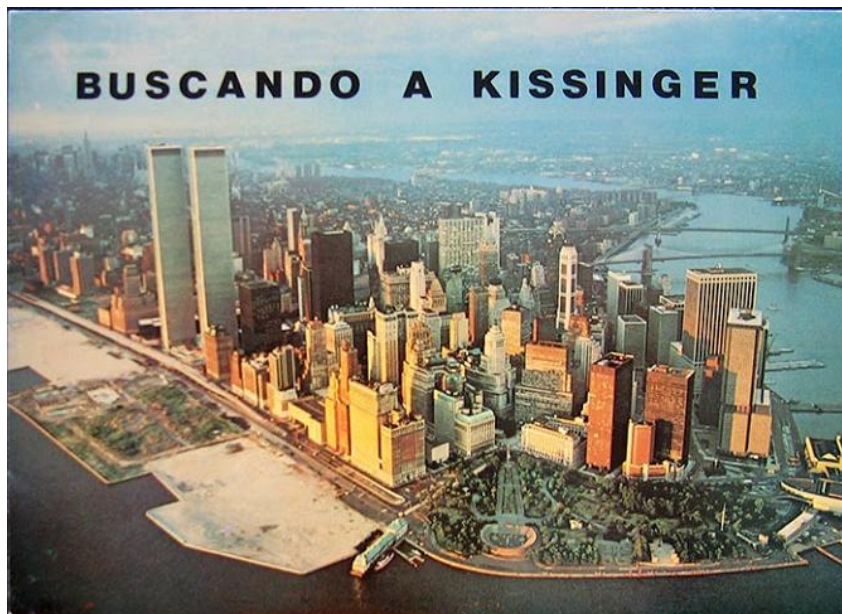
11. CADA, *Para no morir de hambre en el arte*, 1979. Photograph of art action.



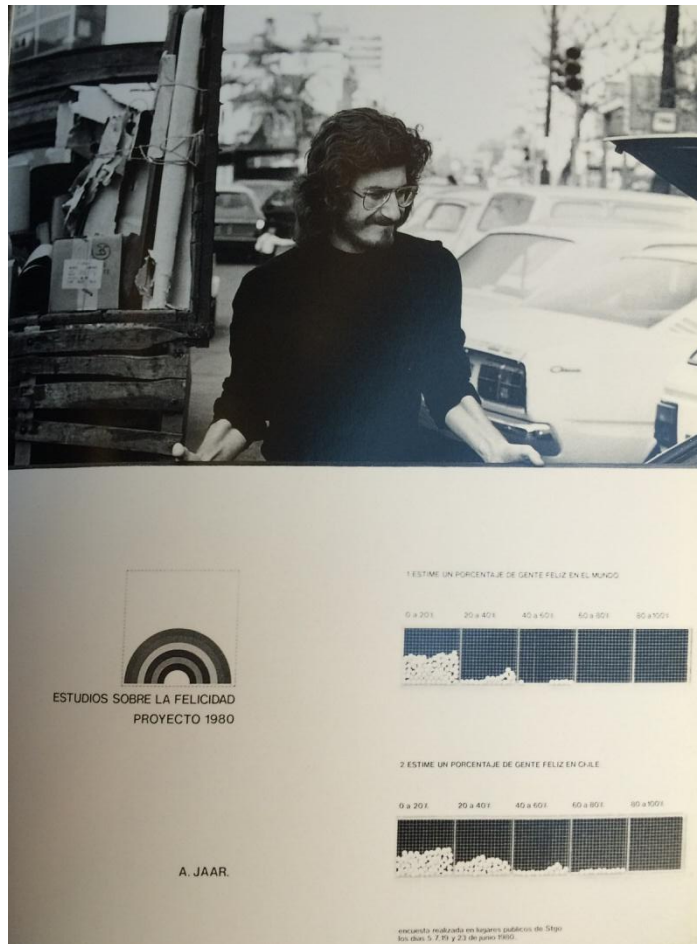
12. CADA, *Para no morir de hambre en el arte*, 1979. Page of magazine *Hoy*.



13. CADA, *Para no morir de hambre en el arte*, 1979. Photograph of the exhibition at the gallery Centro Imagen.



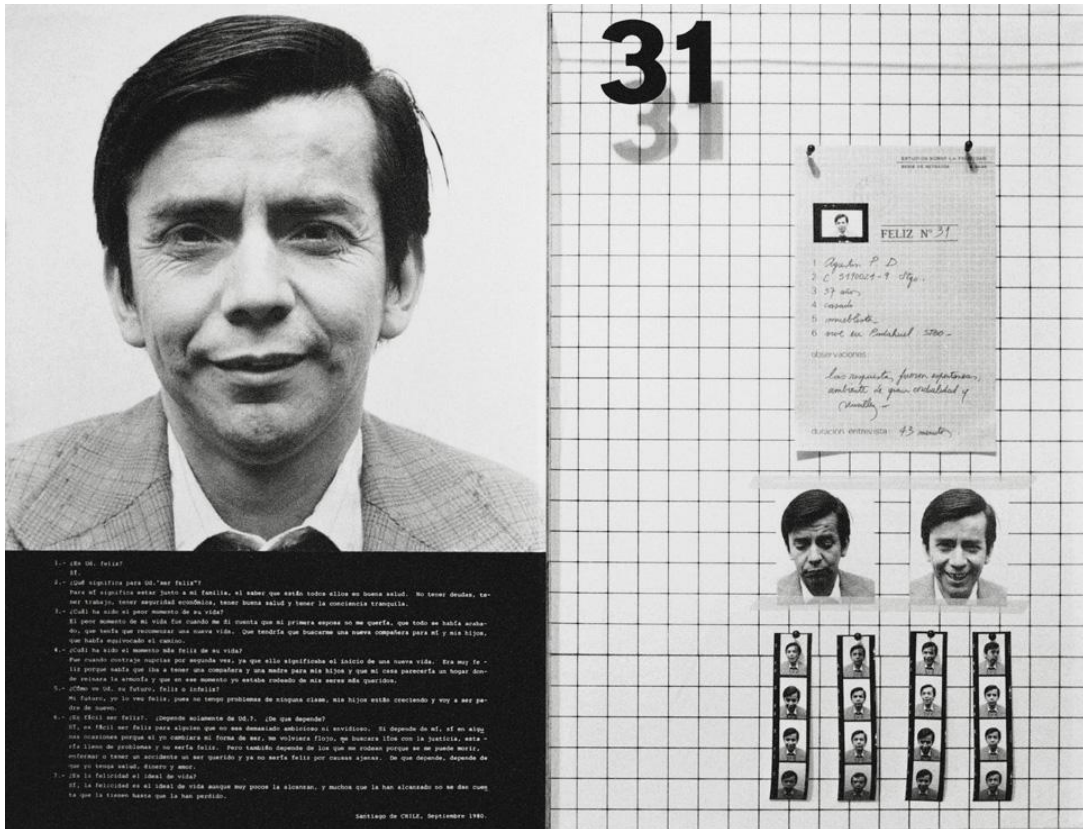
14. Alfredo Jaar, *Buscando a Kissinger*, 1983.



15. Photograph of Alfredo Jaar with his poll in the streets of Santiago.



16. Alfredo Jaar, Estudios sobre la felicidad, 1979-1981. Photograph of the interviews.



17. Alfredo Jaar, Estudios sobre la felicidad, 1979-1981, photograph of portrait.



18. Alfredo Jaar, Estudios sobre la felicidad, 1979-1981. Photograph of public intervention.



19. Alfredo Jaar, *Estudios sobre la felicidad*, 1979-1981. Photograph of public intervention.

## **Appendix 1. Biography Guillermo Núñez**

Guillermo Núñez (Santiago, 1930) is an artist who after having studied theatre at the Universidad de Chile and later at the Escuela de Bellas Artes, became known as a painter. Núñez travelled to Europe in the 1950s where he was introduced to the work of many famous poets, artists and cinema directors. He studied at the Arsenal Library and the Opera in Paris in 1953 and also travelled through Italy, Romania, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium. In that year he also participated in the World Youth Festival in Bucharest and the Congress for the Rights of Youth in Viena. In 1959 he was granted with a study engraving at the School of Applied Arts (UMPRUM) in Czechoslovakia by the Czech Ministry of Culture. He was later expelled for being too 'abstract'. Núñez was during the 1950s directly influenced by the work of Chilean surrealist Roberto Matta. Núñez left Europe to live a few years in New York in the 1960s. In 1966 he returned to Chile and he became director of the MAC in Santiago in 1971, a position he held until 1972. He went into exile to France in 1975 and only returned in 1987 to Chile (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo). Núñez is now living and working in Santiago (Gómez-Baris 2009).



## **Appendix 2. Biography Diamela Eltit**

Diamela Eltit (Santiago, 1949) is considered an important female writer in the cultural scene of Chile. She began her career in 1970 and gained fame in the late 1970s due to her literary work and performances with CADA. Her work has been described by Richard as part of the Avanzada scene (Richard 1986). Her first book published was *Lumpérica* in 1983. After that she wrote a few other books, such as *Por la patria* (1986), *El cuarto del mundo* (1988), and *El padre mío* (1988). After the transition into democracy in Chile, Eltit did not publish work for a few years and went to Mexico to work as a cultural attaché at the Chilean Embassy under the government of Patricio Aylwin in 1990 until 1994. Eltit has played an important role in by contributing to the cultural scene with essays in important Chilean magazines such as *Revista Crítica Cultural* in the years after the dictatorship. Also, her work as an artist and as a cultural critic is considered as a valuable contribution to feminist theory and cultural criticism. Eltit has been awarded by several prizes, of which one is the Guggenheim Fellowship. Also, she held several writer-in-residence positions at Brown University, Washington University in St. Louis, Columbia University, UC/Berkeley the University of Virginia, and others. She is currently Distinguished Global Professor of Creative Writing in Spanish at NYU (HemisphericInstitute).



### **Appendix 3. Biography Alfredo Jaar**

Alfredo Jaar (Santiago, 1956) has gained international fame because of his engagement as an artist with issues concerning humanity. Jaar has made several works that relate to the political situation in Chile too. During his career he has developed himself as an artist, architect and filmmaker. In 1982 he left Chile for New York City, where he now still lives and works. Jaar has participated in many biennales all over the world, such as the Biennale of Venice(1987, 2007, 2009, 2013), Sao Paolo (1987, 1989, 2010) and also in Documenta in Kassel (1987, 2002). He had many solo exhibitions in museums such as The New York Museum of Contemporary Art, New York Whitechapel in London ,the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and many more. In 2014 the most extensive retrospective of his work was organized at the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in Helsinki. In 1985 Jaar became a Guggenheim Fellow and in 2000 McArthur Fellow (Alfredo Jaar).



## Works Cited

### **Books**

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, California: Stanford UP, [1995] 1998.

Arriagada, Genaro. *Pinochet. The Politics of Power*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988.

Barros, Robert. *Constitutionalism and Dictatorship. Pinochet, the Junta, and the 1980 Constitution*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.

Bohn, Willard. 'From Sign to Signature in Apollinaire's "Le Cheval"'. In: *Understanding French Poetry: Essays for a New Millenium*. Ed. Stamos Metzidakas. New York/ London: Garland, 1994, 69-84.

Brugnoli, Fransisco. 'Arte Experimental en la Colección del MAC. Un Aporte para el Bicentenario.' In *Chile años 70 y 80. Memoria y Experimentalidad*. Eds. Alessandra Burotto and Caroll Yasky. Mus.cat. Santiago: Andros Impresores, 2012, 16-24.

Burotto, Alessandra (ed.), *Ximena Cristi por Ximena Cristi, DADA Comunicación*. Santiago de Chile: MAC, 2010. Elkins, James. Ed. *Is Art History Global?* New York/Oxon: Routledge, 2007.

Ensalaco, Mark. *Chile Under Pinochet. Recovering the Truth*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 2000.

Galaz, Gaspar. 'Arte y Política. Los Años Sesenta y Setenta.' In: *Arte y Política*. Eds. Pablo Oyarzún, Nelly Richard, Claudia Zaldívar. Santiago: Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2005, 63-68.

Giunta, Andrea. 'Notes on Art History in Latin America'. In: *Is Art History Global?* Ed. James Elkins, 289-298. New York/Oxon: Routledge, 2007, 27-40.

Goldman, Shifra M. *Dimensions of the Americas. Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1994.

Gómez – Barris, Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells. Culture and State Violence in Chile*. Berkely, California: California UP, 2009.

Green, Mary. *Diamela Eltit. Reading the Mother*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2007.

Machuca, Guillermo, and Maria Berríos. 'Art and Context. Three Decades of Aesthetic Production in Chile.' In *Copying el Eden*. Ed. Gerardo Mosquera. Santiago: Puro Chile, 2006, 84-102.

Neustadt, Robert. *CADA DÍA: La Creación de un Arte Social*. Santiago: Cuarto Propio, 2001.

- Novoa, Soledad. 'El context local como problema para una reflexion sobre vanguardia/postvanguardia.' In: *Arte y Política*. Eds. Pablo Oyarzún, Nelly Richard, Claudia Zaldívar. Santiago: Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2005, 75-84.
- Núñez, Guillermo. 'Mirar por detrás de un espejo algo sucio. ¿Autorretrato?'. In: *Retrato Hablado*. Ed. Daniela Serani. Santiago: Editorial Antártica.
- Pollitzer, Patricia. *Fear in Chile. Lives under Pinochet*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.
- Richard, Nelly. *Margins and Institutions. Art in Chile desde 1973*. Melbourne: Art and Text, 1986.
- Richard, Nelly. 'Margins and Institutions: Performances of the Chilean *Avanzada*.' In *Corpus Delecti. Performances Art of the Americas*. Ed. Coco Fusco, 203-218. London: Routledge, 2000, 203-218.
- Richard, Nelly. 'The Escena de Avanzada and its Historical/Social Context.' In *Copying el Eden*. Ed. Gerardo Mosquera. Santiago: Puro Chile, 2006, 112-119.
- Sakari, Marja. 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must make art. On the early works of Alfredo Jaar.' In: *Tonight no Poetry Will Serve*. Eds. Patrik Nyberg and Jari-Pekka Vanhala. Mus.cat. Kiasma: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2014, 217-226.
- Sigmund, Paul. E. *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile. 1964-1976*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh UP, 1977.
- Siitari, Pirkko. "I need to understand the world before acting in the world". In: *Tonight no Poetry Will Serve*. Eds. Patrik Nyberg and Jari-Pekka Vanhala. Mus.cat. Kiasma: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2014, 65-79.
- Valdés, Adriana. *Alfredo Jaar. Studies on Happiness. 1979-1982*. Barcelona: ACTAR, 1999.
- Valdés, Adriana. *Memorias Visuales. Arte Contemporáneo en Chile*. Santiago de Chile: Metales Pesados, 2006.
- Vylder, Stefan de. *Allende's Chile. The Political Economy of the Rise and Fall of the Unidad Popular*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, [1974] 1976.
- Waissbluth, Verónica. 'Instalaciones.' In: *Grandes Artistas Contemporáneos Chilenos. Guillermo Núñez*. Ed. Cecilia Palma, 56-59. Santiago: RR Donnelley, 2012, 56-59.
- Zijlmans, Kitty. 'An Intercultural Perspective in Art History: Beyond Othering and Appropriation.' In: *Is Art History Global?* Ed. James Elkins, 289-298. New York/Oxon: Routledge, 2007, 289-298.

## Articles

Esberg, Jane. 'Democracy's Effect on Terrorist Organizations: Regime Type and Armed Group Behaviour in Chile.' *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2014): 1-25.

Gómez-Barris, Macarena. 'Torture Sees and Speaks: Guillermo Núñez's Art in Chile's Transition.' *Contra Corriente* 5.1 (2007): 86-107.

Polgovsky Ezcurra, Mara. 'Zona de Dolor: Body and Mysticism in Diamela Eltit's Video-Performance Art.' *Latin American Cultural Studies: Travesia* 21.4 (2013): 517-533.

Wright, Thomas C., and Rody Oñate Zúñiga. 'Chilean Political Exile.' *Latin American Perspectives* 34.4 (2007): 31-49.

Ziarek, Ewa Plownoaska. 'Bare Life on Strike: Notes on the Biopolitics of Race and Gender.' *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107.1 (2008): 89-105.

## Websites

Alfredo Jaar. 'Biography'. Web. 25 March 2015. <<http://www.alfredojaar.net/main.html>>.

Bergson, Henri. 'Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic'. 1 August 2003. Web. 26 March 2015. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4352/4352-h/4352-h.htm>>.

Haacke, Hans. 'Lessons Learned'. *Tate's Online Research Journal*. Web. 20 March 2015. <<http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7265>>.

Hemispheric Institute. 'Entrevista a Diamela Eltit (2007)'. Web. 10 March 2015. <<http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/enc07-interviews/item/1794-interview-with-diamela-eltit>>.

May, Catalina. 'El regreso de Guillermo Núñez. Primero Nacional de Artes 2007: El Artista que por Hacer Jaulas Terminó Enjaulado.' 26 July 2009. *The Clinic*. Web. 3 March 2015. <<http://www.theclinic.cl/2009/07/26/el-regreso-de-guillermo-nunez-premio-nacional-de-artes-2007-el-artista-que-por-hacer-jaulas-termino-enjaulado/>>.

MAC. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. Facultad de Artes. Universidad de Chile. Web. 17 January 2015. <<http://www.mac.uchile.cl/exposiciones/index.html>>.

Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos. Web. 17 January 2015. <  
<http://www.museodelamemoria.cl/>>.

Santiago Times. 'Linking Art and Politics in Chile.' 4 June 2004. *Santiago Times*. Web. 6 March 2015. <  
<http://santiagotimes.cl/linking-art-and-politics-in-chile/>>.

Sharon A. Lloyd and Susanne Sreedhar. 'Hobbes's Moral and Political Philosophy.' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. 18 December 2015.  
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/hobbes-moral/>>

Wright, Thomas C., and Rody Oñate Zúñiga. 'Flight from Chile: Voices of Exile.' *Memoria y Justicia*.  
Web. 18 January 2015 < [http://www.memoriayjusticia.cl/english/en\\_issues-exile.html](http://www.memoriayjusticia.cl/english/en_issues-exile.html) >.

### Sources

Centro de Estudios Miguel Enríquez. *El Testimonio de Nieves Ayress Moreno Se Levanta Con la Fuerza de La Verdad Frente a Los Cobardes Que Niegan La Tortura en Chile*. 18 January 2015. <  
[http://www.archivochile.com/Derechos\\_humanos/testimo/hhddtestimo0006.pdf](http://www.archivochile.com/Derechos_humanos/testimo/hhddtestimo0006.pdf)>.

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. *Colección: arte experimental. Guillermo Núñez (Santiago, 1930)*. 10  
February 2015.  
<[http://www.mac.uchile.cl/educacion/coleccion\\_arte\\_experimental/guillermo\\_nunez.pdf](http://www.mac.uchile.cl/educacion/coleccion_arte_experimental/guillermo_nunez.pdf)>.

## List of Illustrations

Illustration 1: Carloes Leppe, *El Perchero*, 1975. Installation of three photographs hanging on a rack.

Photo: <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/coleccion/obra/perchero> .

Illustration 2: Guillermo Núñez, *Objodido: Aquí y en la quebrada del aji*, 1975. Installation. Photo:

Waissbluth, Verónica. 'Instalaciones.' In: *Grandes Artistas Contemporáneos Chilenos. Guillermo Núñez*. Ed. Cecilia Palma, 56-59. Santiago: RR Donnelley, 2012, 61.

Illustration 3: Guillermo Núñez, *Objetado: Homenaje a Lucio Fontana*, 1975. Installation. Photo:

Waissbluth, Verónica. 'Instalaciones.' In: *Grandes Artistas Contemporáneos Chilenos. Guillermo Núñez*. Ed. Cecilia Palma, 56-59. Santiago: RR Donnelley, 2012, 60.

Illustration 4: Guillermo Núñez, *Libertad Condicional*, 1979. Drawing and serigraph. Photo: Gómez –

Barris, Macarena. *Where Memory Dwells. Culture and State Violence in Chile*. Berkely, California: California UP, 2009, 86.

Illustration 5: Guillaume Apollinaire, *Le Cheval*, c. 1918. Poem. Photo:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a3/Guillaume\\_Apollinaire\\_-\\_Calligramme\\_-\\_Cheval.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a3/Guillaume_Apollinaire_-_Calligramme_-_Cheval.png).

Illustration 6: Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/ Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil. Photo:

<http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003448706.html>.

Illustration 7: Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/ Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil. Photo:

<http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003448706.html>.

Illustration 8: Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/ Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil. Photo:

<http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003448706.html>.

Illustration 9: Diamela Eltit, *Zonas de Dolor I/ Maipu*, 1980. Filmstil. Photo:

<http://hidvl.nyu.edu/video/003448706.html>.

Illustration 10: CADA. From left to right: Juan Castillo, Lotty Rosenfeld, Raúl Zurita, Diamela Eltit,

Fernando Balcells, date unknown. Photo: <https://bienaldeformes.wordpress.com/2009/05/19/40/>.

Illustration 11: CADA, *Para no morir de hambre en el arte*, 1979. Photograph of art action. Photo:

[http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object\\_id=120306](http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=120306).

Illustration 12: CADA, *Para no morir de hambre en el arte*, 1979. Page of Magazine *Hoy*. Photo:

<http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/es/modules/item/499-cada-para-no-morir>.

Illustration 13: CADA, *Para no morir de hambre en el arte*, 1979. Photograph of the exhibition at the gallery Centro Imagen. Photo: [http://www.artnexus.com/Notice\\_View.aspx?DocumentID=21421](http://www.artnexus.com/Notice_View.aspx?DocumentID=21421).

Illustration 14: Alfredo Jaar, *Buscando A Kissinger*, 1983. Photo: <https://jaquealarte.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/buscando-a-kissinger001b.jpg>.

Illustration 15: Photograph of Alfredo Jaar with his poll in the streets of Santiago. Photo: Valdés, Adriana. *Alfredo Jaar. Studies on Happiness. 1979-1982*. Barcelona: ACTAR, 1999.

Illustration 16: Alfredo Jaar, *Estudios sobre la felicidad*, 1979-1981, Photograph of interview. Photo: Valdés, Adriana. *Alfredo Jaar. Studies on Happiness. 1979-1982*. Barcelona: ACTAR, 1999.

Illustration 17: Alfredo Jaar, *Estudios sobre la felicidad*, 1979-1981, photograph of portrait. Photo: Valdés, Adriana. *Alfredo Jaar. Studies on Happiness. 1979-1982*. Barcelona: ACTAR, 1999.

Illustration 18: Alfredo Jaar, *Estudios sobre la felicidad*, 1979-1981, photograph of public intervention. Photo: Valdés, Adriana. *Alfredo Jaar. Studies on Happiness. 1979-1982*. Barcelona: ACTAR, 1999.

Illustration 19: Alfredo Jaar, *Estudios sobre la felicidad*, 1979-1981, photograph of public intervention. Photo: Valdés, Adriana. *Alfredo Jaar. Studies on Happiness. 1979-1982*. Barcelona: ACTAR, 1999.