

# En Nuestra Pequeña Región de Por Acá

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## Voluspa Jarpa

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Archivo de Bogotá in partnership with the Centro de Memoria Histórica (Colombia)



Voluspa Jarpa, *Translation Lessons*, 2014

**Voluspa Jarpa** has recently found documents produced by legal experts stating that Salvador Allende, the late Chilean president, might not have committed suicide since his body showed gunshot injuries. It goes without saying that this version doesn't correspond to the official announcement made on the day of the coup d'état in 1973, and to the one then written in the history of Chile.

Because the poet was suspected of having been poisoned, Pablo Neruda's corpse was also the object of investigations and it is now alleged that Eduardo Frei, ex-president of Chile, has been poisoned with sarin gas. Similar facts have occurred in Brazil where Joao Goulart, Jocelino Kutbischek and Carlos Lacerda, died three

to six months apart in 1976-1977. Their disappearance opened the way to the political opposition and led directly to the advent of the Brazilian military regime.

In each case, the investigations have started only 40 or 50 years after the facts. The result of these investigations could change the official version of the national history in the concerned countries, and this is why contributing to highlighting those facts seemed crucial to **Voluspa Jarpa**.

*En Nuestra Pequeña Región de Por Acá's* main element is a portrait gallery of major figures of South America who occupied key positions either in the State administration or in religious organizations,

and whose deaths have been investigated or are still under investigation because of murder suspicions. The death of each of these men has triggered an upheaval in the political life of their countries, and therefore in the geopolitical order of the region. In a similar way, the cloud of suspicion around those cases has had many consequences on the local population and social relationships, setting up a climate of distrust between different groups of people.

The portraits constituting the core of the project are composed of contrasted archival images: on the one hand, digital prints witness the public life and political activities of these historical figures; on the other hand, paintings made after archival documents propose a new interpretation of their violent death and of their funeral. The global installation takes the shape of a historical timeline and a political genealogy of Latin America. The confrontation between these images respond to the idea that the course of history can be changed only by suppressing the leaders that don't fit in a predetermined system or stand in opposition to it.

The recent research carried out in the unclassified archives of the CIA (USA) have revealed that many of these crimes were the results of plots involving North American intelligence agencies and appear today as blatant actions of State terrorism. This is why, in addition to the portraits, ***En Nuestra Pequeña Región de Por Acá*** includes an installation made of tables on which archival files are made available to the visitors, allowing them to get to the original sources.

The third element of the exhibition is the ongoing video project ***Translation Lessons***. Its starting point is a Chilean artist (***Voluspa Jarpa***) hiring an English teacher (writer Nicolás Poblete) in order to be initiated to a language she cannot speak and which learning process has always seemed complicated to her. The artist proposes a strategy to her professor: learning English by translating together a series of declassified files from the CIA, following a chronological order. As part of this process, the artist will transcribe and read aloud the documents, and she will be tested on her understanding of the documents. This work will go on for several years, until all the translations have been completed.

In order to keep a formal similarity between the various sequences and to highlight the repetitive and traumatic nature of the action, the learning ritual will follow a precise pattern involving to keep the same place and same framing for the shooting, the same light, the same sound recording quality, as well as the same position for both protagonists who will always keep the same clothing style.

The video will include different chapters corresponding to every year of work, evidencing ***Voluspa Jarpa***'s progress in English and thus the improvement of her possibilities to access the information and non-information delivered by the documents. The first chapter is projected in the exhibition.