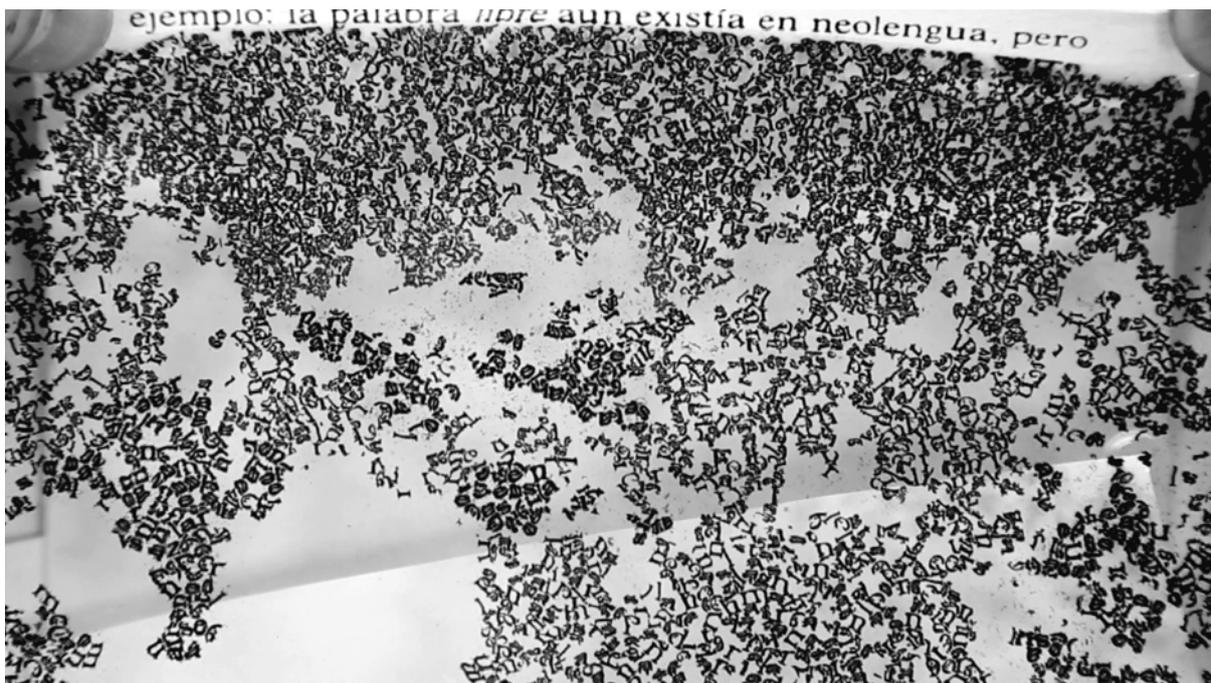


# Les testaments trahis

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Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Milena Bonilla, Chen Ching-Yuan,  
Voluspa Jarpa, Bouchra Khalili, Teresa Margolles, Oscar Muñoz

July 2nd - August 8th, 2020



Oscar Muñoz, *Distopía*, 2014 (video still)

Borrowing the title from a collection of essays by Milan Kundera —where he reflects, in an auto-referential way, on the art of the novel— this exhibition aims to explore artistic practices in which certain texts, messages, ideologies or images from the past are subverted (“betrayed”) in a sort of *détournement*. Artists explore this kind of strategies and their enormous agency to transform reality from non hegemonic positions. In the face of manifestations of power that present themselves as established and impenetrable, it exist a capacity to find fissures that will allow deconstruction. The selection of works is strongly determined by the references to literature, writing and language in general, as a producer of reality and meaning.

To Jean Genet —the French author that inspires the film *The Typographer*, by **Bouchra Khalili**—, typography is a metaphor of the literary practice. Typography was, on the other hand, the result of the labor of highly specialised workers, and became a key element in the circulation of revolutionary ideas. For this work, Khalili puts together the last published sentence by Genet, that he had chosen personally to be the epilogue/epitaph to his work.

Through this action, the artist reactivates the message, recontextualises it in the present, and amplifies the anti-colonialist subtext within. **Teresa Margolles**, with the series of photographs *El Capital te culea* (“The Capital screws you”), also reactivates a message —anonymous in this case— and provides it with a much larger platform. The phrase, found in the form of a graffiti in the area of San Antonio del Táchira, in the border between Colombia and Venezuela, points out in a harsh and straight forward manner the neoliberal policies in Latin America. Following in the steps of thousands of Venezuelan migrants, the message is inserted in the public space of Santiago de Chile, just a few weeks before the outbreak of the social crisis in the country. Margolles underlines with this action the gigantic unbalance in a nation that was long considered an “economic miracle”.

The previous examples show a relation of complicity, of affinity with the message they quote. In other cases, however, we’re confronted with strategies of *détournement* that subvert the dominant language. **Voluspa Jarpa** builds a great part of her artistic practice as a meticulous exercise of compilation, analysis and

reappropriation of archival materials. She combines the strategy of denunciation —creating consciousness about the historical reality of the secret policies of the United States— with the subversion of those documents to become a new material: a tool for resistance. *An Endless Present*, by **Milena Bonilla**, is a collection of scientific publication in which the artist has modified the original titles, authors and abstracts. They open questions about the manipulation of life, with implications that connect political history and current crisis. The artist challenges the institutionalised authority of scientific texts, presenting the idea of science as a machine that corroborates facts, while also reflecting on the ideological beliefs that this machine might produce.

Two works by **Oscar Muñoz** are also relevant on this subject: first, the video *Distopía*, that comments on the deconstruction of the message and the evanescence of text; and *El método de Ludovico*, that evokes the idea of

forcing the gaze through a device. The two pieces are based upon literary texts —*1984* by George Orwell and Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, both of them describing profoundly dystopic realities— and manage somehow to transform them. **Chen Ching-Yuan** also draws inspiration from Orwell's novel in one of his latest paintings from the *Card Stunt* series. The setting is very appropriate for Chen Ching-Yuan's symbolic visions of present-day political drifts. However, it is interesting to find in the composition the possibility of highjacking the system of power and control through small actions of resistance.

Lastly, the subtle variables of language, specifically the spoken word, and its consequences upon reality, center **Lawrence Abu Hamdan's** interest in *Disputed Utterance*. This installation reveals the importance of interpretation of the message in cases where someone's culpability or innocence is hinged upon it.

## List of works

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### Upper floor

#### Milena Bonilla

***An Endless Present***, 2013  
Installation of 15 fictional books, c-print covers, shelves  
190 x 27 x 80 cm  
Edition of 3 + 2 AP

#### Teresa Margolles

***El Capital te culea***, 2019  
Series of three C-prints on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag paper  
150 x 225 cm each  
Edition of 6 + 1 AP

#### Bouchra Khalili

***The Typographer***, 2019  
Installation, 16 mm film, B/W, silent  
3:30 min  
Edition 5 + 2AP

### Lower ground

#### Oscar Muñoz

***El método Ludovico (I)***, 2018  
Video projection on plastic screen with metallic blepharostats.  
17:00 min, loop, mute  
9,5 cm x 7 cm  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

***Distopía***, 2014  
HD video, mute  
15 min  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

#### Voluspa Jarpa

***De las ruinas y letras II***, 2019  
Installation including 12 plasterwork plates on metallic structures and frames and 10 polyester resin plates with steel printer types.  
287 x 157 x 30 cm  
Unique piece

#### Chen Ching-Yuan

***Card Stunt XXII (1984)***, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
38,5 x 46,5 cm  
Unique piece

#### Lawrence Abu Hamdan

***Disputed Utterance***, 2019  
14 laser-cut dioramas, c-prints mounted on cardboard with wooden cases, 7 texts printed on plexiglas plates  
Dioramas : 7 x 10 x 6 cm each  
Text plates : 23 x 6,6 cm each  
Edition of 5 + 2 AP