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THE PERFORMATIVE POLITICIZATION OF PUBLIC SPACE: MEXICO 1968-2008-2012

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Peña Nieto: the TV is yours; Mexico is ours!
#YoSoy132 banner, June 2012

In May 2012, just weeks before the recent presidential elections in Mexico, a group of students at the Universidad Iberoamericana challenged the presidential candidate for the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Enrique Peña Nieto, during his campaign stop at the university.[1] Peremptorily dismissed as being mob infiltrators hired by Peña Nieto's political opponents, 131 Ibero students posted a video on YouTube displaying their university IDs and reiterating their outrage at the PRI's persistent autocratic spurning of everyday citizens.[2] The video sparked a spontaneous new grassroots political movement, "#YoSoy132" ("I am 132," following up on the original 131 students) that rejected the PRI's authoritarian neoliberalist platform and, in particular, its long history of collusion with powerful news media corporations.[3] In the following weeks, hundreds of thousands of #YoSoy132 protestors repeatedly took to the streets across the country, to demand the democratization of the news media and the liberalization of the political system in Mexico.

#YoSoy132 has regularly been compared to Mexico's 1968 student movement which, as many have argued, "undermined forever the foundations of authoritarianism in Mexico."[4] Like their 1968 counterparts, #YoSoy132 has mounted a powerful anti-systemic call for a renewed politics "from below" to counteract the longstanding autocratic cronyism and corruption of the nation's political leadership. Yet the comparison of #YoSoy132 with 1968 raises profound questions concerning the development of the public sphere in Mexico and its ability to foment a functional democracy. Whereas #YoSoy132 has been tolerated-slash-ignored by the PRI, its 1968 predecessor prompted violent government attacks ending in tragedy.[5] On October 2nd, just ten days before the opening of the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, a large student demonstration had gathered in a plaza in the Tlatelolco neighborhood of the city, to demand a democratization of Mexico's political system that would match the country's rapid industrialization under the so-called "Mexican Miracle." On orders from Interior Minister Luis Echeverría and President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, government troops opened fire on the rally, killing several hundred and wounding thousands more.[6] The PRI instituted an immediate information blackout, and mobilized its corporatized support networks towards a show of public condemnation of

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the students (Figures 1, 2). This act of state terrorism marked an abrupt end to the 1968 movement's powerful challenge to the political order imposed by the PRI, and initiated a level of political polarization not seen since the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920. Under the subsequent dirty war declared by the state, thousands were "disappeared," or were forced into clandestinity and exile.

In the aftermath of 1968, the combined use of repressive and ideological state apparatuses proved remarkably effective in the PRI's reasserting its control of the public sphere. Despite state pledges to prosecute those responsible for the massacre, no convictions have ever been handed down, and the PRI has remained extraordinarily powerful.[7] But the state's open use of brute force in 1968 plunged what has famously been called "the perfect dictatorship" into a crisis of legitimacy–one that even the election in the year 2000 of the first non-PRI president in more than seven decades could not overcome.[8] More than any other event in the twentieth century, the Tlatelolco massacre ruptured the state's claim as the self-declared heir to the Mexican Revolution's promise of social justice and political inclusion, to represent the nation's citizenry. Since 1968, the Tlatelolco killings have festered as an unhealed trauma in Mexico's public psyche. But they have also prompted numerous responses from civil society aimed at consolidating an operative democratic public sphere. What this essay proposes is to examine one such response–artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's performance-installation project, *Voz Alta*, commissioned in 2008 on the fortieth anniversary of the massacre–for what it can tell us about the intersection between performative aesthetics, contemporary civil collectivities such as #YoSoy132, and how they might be politically activated in the public realm.[9] My analysis, offered in four short sketches, moves along two principal axes. First is the relationship between aesthetics, social collectivities, and the problem of generating an effective national public sphere out of civil society. Mexico's historical tendency in the twentieth century to substitute political spectacle for the rational-critical discourse of a functioning democracy is especially pertinent here. A second axis takes up postcolonial theorist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's model of public space as the site of performative struggle between state and non-state collectivities involving an aesthetically-determined activation of language. Yet rather than assuming (as does Thiong'o) a public sphere from which concrete political gestures confronting the exercise of state power can be made, I argue that *Voz Alta* was a more fundamental address to the question of how a relationship between civil society and a democratic political culture could be articulated.

Voices become light; enlightened thought becomes words.
participant, *Voz Alta*, 2008

nes murieron el 2 de octubre de 1968", los transportes eran similares a los

de la paz. ■

El 2 de octubre de 1968, miles de asistentes al mitin en Tlatelolco escuchaban a los oradores del Consejo Nacional de Huelga en la Plaza de las Tres Culturas; instantes después, caerían las bengalas y se desataría la masacre ■ Foto Archivo

Courtesy of the Hemeroteca Nacional de México.

LA PRENSA 80 CENTAVOS

el periódico que dice lo que otros callan

Armas de Alto Poder se Utilizaron Contra las Tropas

TERRORISTAS EXTRANJEROS

(PAGINA TRES)

PARADOJA DE LAS CULTURAS

Courtesy of the Hemeroteca Nacional de México.

Figure 1 Photograph of 2nd October 1968 rally in Plaza de las Tres Culturas, reproduced in *La Jornada* (Mexico City, 2 October 2008).

Figure 2 *La Prensa* (Mexico City, 3 October 1968).

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Do not suppose that we [the Athenian state] shall… allow you [the tragic poet] to erect your stage in the agora, or introduce the fair voices of your actors, speaking above our own.
Plato, *The Laws*

A simple proposal: for several hours each night over the course of ten days in 2008, to transform the uncensored voice of the public into powerful light beams that would shine across the vast metropolis of Mexico City (Figures 3-5). Installed in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas on the site of the Tlatelolco massacre, Lozano-Hemmer's interactive light-sound project invited anyone to speak into a microphone on any topic, completely free of monitoring or censorship. The voices of participants stimulated a searchlight which flashed in response to their frequency and volume, beaming those illuminated voice patterns to the top of the former Ministry of Foreign affairs building (now the Centro Cultural Tlatelolco).[10] Further anti-aircraft searchlights relayed the flashing light beams to three other significant public locations, vastly increasing the project's visibility to the scale of the entire city: the Zócalo, the traditional political and social heart of the city and the nation since preconquest times; the Basilica of the Guadalupe Virgin, patron saint of Mexico; and the Monument to the Revolution, commemorating the violent 1910-1920 populist upheaval that launched the nation into twentieth-century modernity. The light flashes were then retransformed into sound, transmitted live by radio waves to a listening public via the National University's radio station. In the pauses between live presentations archival recordings of 1968 music were transmitted, as well as archival testimonials from 1968 survivors, intellectuals and public figures. Thousands from all ranks of society participated, commenting on everything from their memories of the massacre, to calls for political action in the name of freedom and democracy, to poetry and sound art, to marriage proposals. Many called for the prosecution of those responsible for the massacre; many also spoke on the relationship between everyday life and politics. Others pointed to the long-term and consistent state censorship and repression, and to the collusion between the news media and the government in controlling access to information.

Voz Alta's use of Tlatelolco's Plaza de las Tres Culturas, a locale deeply imbued with centuries of historical memory from the pre-conquest and colonial periods to the present, as the site of an unscripted performative appropriation of public space for public dialogue on the Tlatelolco massacre conjures up numerous theoretical arguments regarding the relationship between the public sphere and popular performative aesthetics. Participants' repeated focus on the nexus between art, politics, public space and the state recalls in particular Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's arguments regarding the artist and the state as rivals over the construction and control of public spaces of social interaction. Thiong'o invokes this conflict in terms of stagings of power: "the war between art and the state is really a struggle between the power of performance in the arts and the performance of power by the state—in short, enactments of

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Figures 3-5 Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Voz Alta. Relational Architecture #15* (Mexico City, 2008).

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power."[11] Central to the idea of performance understood in these terms are issues of time, content and especially place. Struggles over the control of access to spaces of performance, argues Thiong'o, must be seen in relationship to time—what precedes (history) and what could potentially follow (the future). "What memories does the space carry," he asks, "and what longings might it generate?"[12] Crucially, who controls spatialized memory also controls how political and social discourses are framed in the present and how those discourses shape a collective future.

Voz Alta clearly sought to reappropriate Tlatelolco, turning it from a site whose history had been carefully managed by a single voice of authoritative power—the Mexican state—into a public space whose history was the result of a multitude of citizen voices. Lozano-Hemmer's sound-light piece provided an expanding sensorial forum specifically aimed at bridging temporally and spatially between disparate private thoughts and a collective public discourse that would activate historical memory in the present in all its complexity. As person after person spoke into the microphone, individual soliloquies interwove with each other to produce an ever-thickening web of collective testimonial—a collective witnessing in the public sphere that shattered hegemonic state narratives blaming others—the students, "communists," rogue political elements—for the Tlatelolco massacre. Individual memories lost their isolated, idiosyncratic character, to become instead nodal points for drawing the past into the present and for marking experiential connections across previously-segregated arenas of civil society. Historical memory became a collective affair, such that even children could testify as community witnesses to events long past.

From that day onward, Mexico was another country
Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsiváis [13]

Voz Alta's performative address to the question of spatialized memory grew out of both the history of 1968 and its effects on cultural production. The PRI's violent repression of the 1968 democratic movement prompted a sudden and total redefinition of the relationship between culture and the hegemonic political order, turning cultural production sharply from being primarily a state monopoly aimed at institutionalizing official ideologies, to being a form of resistance. As art critic Cuauhtémoc Medina has argued, the state's attack against the intellectual and middle classes—classes that had previously remained relatively immune to its systematic repression of peasants, indigenous peoples and workers—induced a wide range of aesthetic productions aimed at turning "the violent imposition of power [into] a cultural defeat" for the PRI.[14] Post-68 responses, from writers and intellectuals such as Elena Poniatowska, Octavio Paz, Carlos Monsiváis and José Revueltas, to renegade exhibition practices such as the *Salón Independiente*, to oppositional artistic actions by collectives such as *los grupos* and the *Superocheros*, managed to wrest the idea of culture away from restrictive official notions of citizenship and to begin the arduous process of separating the cultural concept of "nation" from the political concept of

"state," even as they largely could not do so on any other terms except the extremely local and marginalized.

Thus a principle task facing non-official culture after 1968 was that of constructing a national subjectivity along non-hegemonic lines, a citizen-subject outside and against an entrenched state rhetoric of revolutionary nationalism. After 1968, to be an intellectual or cultural producer meant recognizing culture as a category of resistance; it had become ethically inconceivable to endorse the state while engaging in artistic production. Yet while literature, graphics and photography were able productively to grapple with the crisis in the hegemonic cultural order, for the visual arts more generally this proved to be a very difficult, slow and often very negative process.[15] In the immediate aftermath of the killings, the state immediately and effectively moved to incorporate the massacre into its own national historical teleology, presenting it as a "communist plot" and repressing all other versions (Figure 2).[16] Precisely because of the repressive bases of that national teleology, implemented through a long history of state cooptation of the visual arts, it proved impossible for contemporary artists to rely on those discourses or institutions that had once given the visual arts their representative authority. In rejecting that teleology, contemporary artists found that until the late 1990s alternative models of national subjectivity *could not* be articulated through official channels at the level of the nation.[17]

A failure of monumentality.
Cuauhtémoc Medina [18]

This long schism, between official culture and contemporary artistic production that *de facto* placed itself in opposition to the state's cooptation of the public sphere and the national imaginary, forms the context out of which Lozano-Hemmer produced *Voz Alta* in 2008. Indeed, this divide has circled for decades around the question of monuments and monumentality. Tlatelolco is full of failed monumentalities; its plaza is delineated by works of great ambition that have singularly failed to live up to their aspirations. On the one hand, *Voz Alta* stands in deliberate contrast to the sole monument in the square to the 1968 massacre—a stone slab erected in 1993 carrying the few names of those officially confirmed dead (Figure 6). Whereas *Voz Alta* mobilized the ephemeral, luminosity, sound, and the active involvement of the spectator, the 1993 memorial clings to heavy sculptural anachronisms and a rigid separation of object and viewer. An inert monolith reiterating the outmoded tenets of commemorative statues and plaques, it has proved unable to rejuvenate the plaza as a symbolic public space. A much more spectacular failure of monumentality, however, is that embodied architecturally in the Corbusier-inspired housing complexes of Mario Pani built as shining examples of the Mexican Miracle's purported economic transformation of Mexico into a fully modernized nation. Pani's Nonoalco-Tlatelolco urban development reads as an architectural icon to the Mexican regime's ever more threadbare claim to being the official guardian of the Mexican Revolution's prom-

ise of social justice and democratic integration into modernity. A deliberate mix of massive functionalist modernism and architectonic references to the monumental imperial architecture of the Aztec, it spectacularized the glories of Mexico's past as part of a nationalist mythology used to underwrite the PRI's own grasp on political culture.[19] As sociologist Roger Bartra has argued, "government bureaucracy gives the seal of approval to artistic and literary creation, so as to restructure [that creation] in accordance with established canons" of national cultural identity. Generated principally from state mandates, cultural productions such as Pani's thereby served "an enormously important function in regulating the [national] consensus on which the state is based."[20] This was starkly in evidence when, on October 2nd, the military effectively used the high-rise housing complexes that border three sides of the plaza to pen in the students, and carry out a wholesale massacre (Figure 2). The sleek modernist buildings designed by Pani instantly dropped any pretense of being architecture for the masses to reveal their coercive role in authoritarian modernization.[21]

By contrast, *Voz Alta* presented a deliberately anti-monumental "architecture" that countered the authoritarian spectacle of Pani's complex with an ephemeral "spectacle" of light and sound generated by popular participation.[22] Against Pani's use of monumental architecture and urbanism to underwrite a state-sponsored social order aimed at channeling and neutralizing popular power, *Voz Alta* offered an egalitarian model of civic association structured through unscripted collective engagement in public space that articulated the conditions of contemporary civic engagement in public space without monumentalizing them. Light and sound formed a principle measure and structure of that engagement, displacing the tectonic solidity of Pani's architecture of containment in favor of a spatial demarcation that dialectically detourned spectacle into ephemeral critique. *Voz Alta* revealed the surreptitious investment in the semiotics of state-sponsored nationalist spectacle upon which the value of the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing project was based. It undid the authoritarian nature of that state nationalism through postulating a reversal of the state's conception of Mexico's civic masses as passive receivers of the state's wisdom.

Luminosity translated from sound became the means through which citizens activated their participation in social space. In speaking about his consistent use of light, Lozano-Hemmer has invoked scientific models, particularly contemporary quantum physics, that have a "flexible understanding of the phenomenon of light" in which "observation is complicit with what is observed." He correlates this with Duchamp's maxim, "le regard fait le tableau," to posit an explicitly interactive art that foregrounds the "performative role of the observer."[23] This sets his work in sharp contrast to precedents such as Krzysztof Wodiczko, who focuses on deconstructing the authoritative power narratives of specific buildings, or to the "cathartic intimidation" of coercive political spectacle embodied in Albert Speer's Nuremberg "cathedral of light," even as Lozano-Hemmer uses similar technologies such as powerful anti-aircraft searchlights. Rather, he argues, "personal interactivity [transforms] intimidation

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Figure 6 Monument to the Fallen at Tlatelolco (Mexico City, 1993).

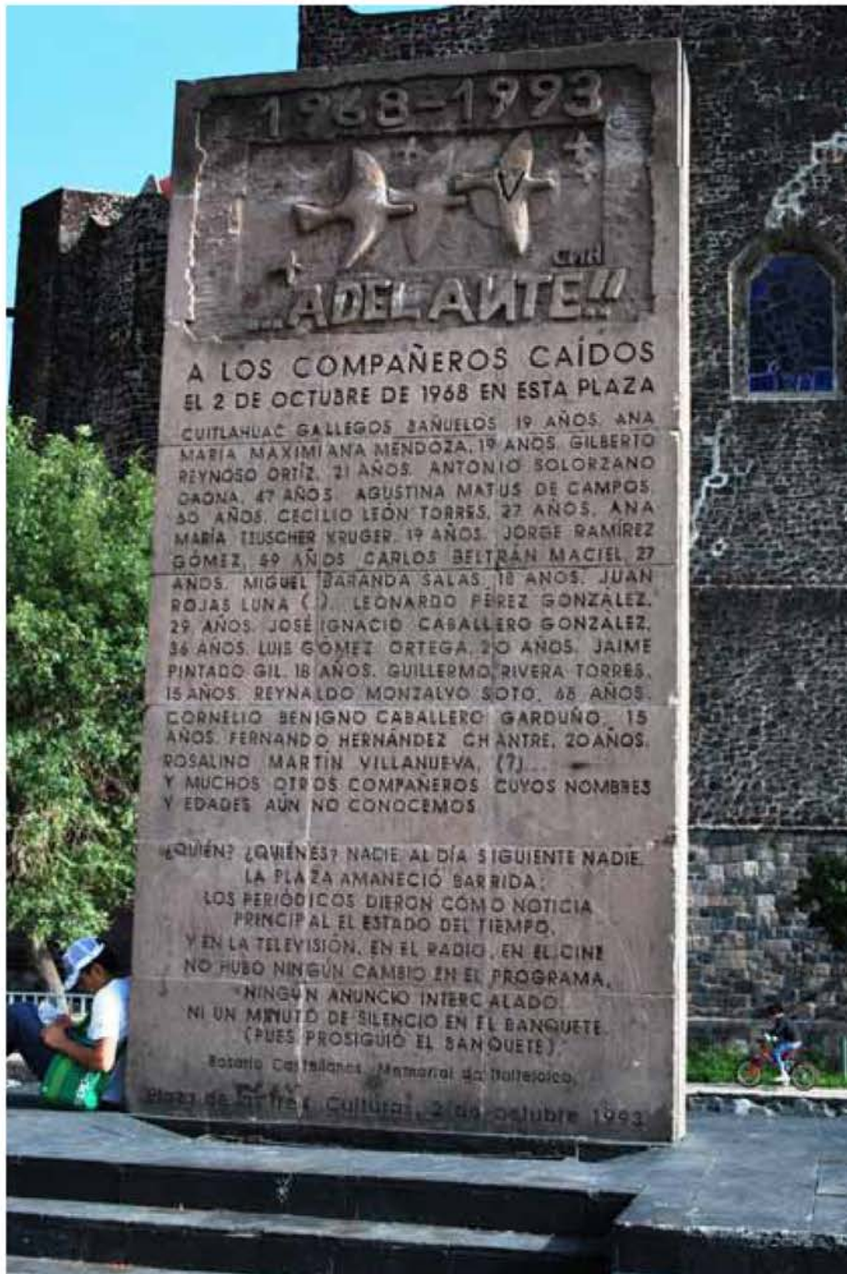

Photo Thelma Datter, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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into 'intimacy': the possibility for people to constitute new relationships with the urban landscape and therefore to reestablish a context for a building's social performance."[24] Spaces of social control historically engineered through aestheticization of scientific technological regimes are inverted in *Voz Alta*: opened outward versus closed-in; fragile, ephemeral pulses of light and sound versus monumental concrete, glass and steel; performative versus static; anti-hierarchical, inclusive and collective versus coercive models of mass society.

The choice to situate *Voz Alta* in Plaza de las Tres Culturas while simultaneously transforming that situatedness into waves of light and sound that transcendentally enveloped the whole of Mexico City, positions the work within Lozano-Hemmer's "relational architecture" series. In contrast to Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of "relational aesthetics," however, Lozano-Hemmer underscores the effects of place in interpersonal interactions, arguing that his works serve as "platforms for participation where the relationship to the political history of the site is as important as the microrelational event between two people who meet in the space."[25] "In relational architecture," he continues, "buildings are activated so that the input of the people in the street can provide narrative implications apart from those envisioned by the architects, developers, or dwellers." In the case of *Voz Alta*, this "technological ac-tualization of buildings with alien memory" positioned it in unmistakable opposition to Pani's architecture, to generated public engagements that differed dramatically from the encounters traditionally authorized within Plaza de las Tres Culturas.[26] The phenomenological immediacy of converting human voices into light beams is posited as an emancipatory experience. Yet the participants in *Voz Alta* effectively upended any residual reference to Minimalism's claims to the "radical neutrality of phenomenology" and its dehistoricization of space, to reposition the liberatory phenomenological experience precisely in historical terms that reached simultaneously and collectively towards the past and the future.[27]

The sewers of the PRI are still intact.
Anonymous donor of newly uncovered photographs of the 1968 massacre, 2001 [28]

The system has not disappeared; nevertheless, yes, there has been a partial democratization of the State.
Gilberto Guevara Niebla, 2008 [29]

Let us now return to Thiong'o's contention that performative "enactments of power," which define the nature of the public sphere in terms of a struggle between state and civil actors, are functions of time, content and especially "the performance space: its definition, delimitation, and regulation."[30] For Thiong'o, however, these elements of performance only acquire their power in relation to audience. Audience provides the connection to "other centers and fields of [social existence]" that activate space, transforming it into "a magnetic field of tensions and conflicts … a sphere

of power … [in] actual or potential conflictual engagement with all the other shrines of power, and in particular, with the forces that hold the keys to those shrines."[31] Like Thiong'o, *Voz Alta* also posited the power of the audience, explicitly rupturing the boundaries between audience and performer in order to bring the disparate fields of social existence represented by its participants together in Plaza de las Tres Culturas. In the process, Lozano-Hemmer's work transformed what for decades had been a clandestine political memory, and more recently the open subject of journalistic exposés and academic interpretations (but not of legal declarations of guilt), into a larger interrogation of the struggle between state and non-state actors over Mexico's public sphere. But whereas Thiong'o's model presumes an already-articulated public sphere over which clash state and civil polities with pre-determined identities, *Voz Alta* hypothesized deeper systemic questions concerning the definition, formation, and correspondence between civil society and the public sphere.

Sociologist Craig Calhoun has argued that the idea of "civil society" is too often conflated with the idea of democratic political culture in the public sphere, without sorting out how each is defined or how the one relates to the other.[32] Against misleading claims of synonymy, contends Calhoun, it is important to maintain certain conceptual distinctions between "the general discourse of civil society and the more specific notion of a 'public sphere'." The two concepts are not equivalent. "Indeed," he continues,

the importance of the concept of public sphere is largely to go beyond general appeals to the nature of civil society in attempts to explain the social foundations of democracy and to introduce a discussion of the specific organization within civil society of social and cultural bases for the development of an effective rational-critical discourse aimed at the resolution of political disputes.[33]

Analogously, *Voz Alta* assumed neither the existence of civil society institutions with predetermined identities nor a direct equivalence between civil society and the public sphere. Rather, it tapped into latent potential communities, unlocking possibilities for those communities to articulate themselves in the public sphere. By opening the microphone to anyone, and refusing to script who could speak on what topics, *Voz Alta* posited non-hierarchical enactment of political community in the public sphere as a "product, not simply a precondition," of action in the public sphere.[34] In this model, participation represents not simply the capacity to act or to resolve disagreements; it also embodies the potential for civil groups to transform their own identities and conditions of existence.[35] *Voz Alta* was never just a performative mnemonics meant to activate the memory of the Tlatelolco killings. Rather than evoking a "necrophiliac" recollection, Lozano-Hemmer argues, time and space come together to link historical precedent to potential futures: "I turn the emphasis onto a living public that may create new memories and relationships, including connections to contemporary massacres that are taking place today."[36] In other words, the work was also, perhaps

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even primarily, a deeper investigation into how to translate civil society to the public sphere, how the social conditions of memory are linked to generating political communities, and how the enactment in the public sphere of those political communities creates in turn the potential for transforming civil identities.

Voz Alta's aim to form democratic political communities through activating social memory in the public sphere takes on heightened importance in relation to the historical conditions of public engagement in Mexico. Anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz has noted the longstanding control maintained by the Mexican state over the nation's purportedly "democratic" public realm. As the corporatized state party, the PRI has for decades commanded a sophisticated system for administering that realm as a space, not of democratic debate, but of spectacularized political ritual aimed at bolstering its own power. "Until very recently," writes Lomnitz, "Mexico has been a country in which public opinion is subsidized and dramatized by the state."[37] By contrast, *Voz Alta* continues the equally long tradition in Mexico of intellectuals and artists representing national sentiment by "giving meaning and direction to the cacophony of popular social movements."[38] Channeling such movements bestowed upon intellectuals the authority to represent the broader polity apart from and against governmental representations of public opinion. "In times of unrest," writes Lomnitz, "appeal to social movements and to revolutions as the privileged sites of public opinion is quite extended, while the capacity to build legitimacy on the productive effects of a state culture of governmentality declines, turning the [agents of the state] into objects of ridicule."[39] In this regard, both *Voz Alta* and, subsequently, #YoSoy132, tapped into the energies of popular unrest in the face of government manipulation, providing those energies with a conduit to a generative presence in the public sphere.[40]

But as much as this process is about popular voices struggling against the state to enact a public political identity, so too is it about the changes the state must undergo. Like civil society, the state is neither monolithic nor conflict-free, despite all its efforts to present itself as such. Nor is its hegemony ever fully or irrevocably consolidated. Even as Peña Nieto's election signals a triumphantly resurgent PRI that shows every sign of reinstituting its form of "politics as usual" with a vengeance, movements like #YoSoy132 have opened new—if fragile—parameters for contemporary civic engagement in public space. *Voz Alta*, in plumbing such ongoing dilemmas around social justice and political democratization, reveals the dialectical conditions of performative social engagement as an imperative for mounting a non-spectacularized citizen reclamation of public space.

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My thanks to Michael Orwicz for helping me think through these issues.

1 The PRI, under a variety of different names, had continual control of the presidency and the state from 1929 until 2000, when it finally lost the presidency (but not control of key states) to the conservative PAN party. For the sake of brevity, therefore, I will sometimes use "PRI" and "state" interchangeably—with a plea to my readers to recognize this as a tactic of rhetorical necessity not conviction. It should also be noted that the PAN, during its twelve years in the presidency, did little to open up the authoritarian political structures the PRI had set into place.
2 The original video is posted in YouTube, see "131 Alumnos de la Ibero responden," accessed 21 November 2012, http://youtu.be/P7XbocXsFkI.
3 The inclusion of the hashtag in the movement's name indicates its use of Twitter and other social media as organizing tools. In June 2012, *The Guardian* reported evidence that Peña Nieto bought favorable television coverage from Televisa while he was governor of the state of Mexico, adding that "The relationship between Televisa and the PRI is as close as it is old. More than three decades ago, Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, father of the incumbent CEO of the firm, defined himself as "a soldier of the PRI." Luis Hernández Navarro, "Televisa should apologise to Mexicans for its Peña Nieto election bias," *The Guardian* 12 June 2012, accessed 21 October 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/12/televisa-mexicans-tv-bias-pena-nieto. Peña Nieto's presidential campaign is widely seen to have been firmly backed by Televisa, something that is illegal in Mexico. See "Televisa y su candidato atrapados," *Proceso* no. 1858 (10 June 2012).
4 Adolfo Gilly, "Opinión: Este domingo y después," *La Jornada* (27 June 2012), accessed 29 June 2012, http://indignados.jornada.com.mx/recientes/opinion-este-domingo-y-despues-adolfo-gilly.
5 #YoSoy132 mounted a presidential debate attended by all candidates of the major parties except Peña Nieto. The #YoSoy132 movement has been characterized by professional politicians from the major parties as a "youth awakening"—a characterization that the venerable historian of the Mexican Revolution, Adolfo Gilly, noted said more about the false sincerity of the "serious" professional politicians than it did about the students. Gilly, "Opinión."
6 It is now widely recognized that Echeverría was principally responsible for orchestrating the massacre. Casualty figures vary enormously and have never been fully confirmed. John Rodda, "The Killer Olympics," *The Guardian* (18 August 1972) concluded that more than 300 had been killed, a number that has since been frequently cited. See Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsivaís, *Parte de guerra, vols. I and II* (Mexico City: Nuevo Siglo/Aguilar, 1999-2002).
7 President Vicente Fox (PAN) was elected against the PRI in 2000, in part on his pledge to prosecute the Tlatelolco criminals—a promise that remained unfulfilled. See "Las promesas incumplidas del presidente Fox" *El Mundo* (9 December, 2001), 28; Carlos Monsiváis, *El 68. La tradición de la resistencia*, (Mexico City: Editorial Era, 2008); Alfredo Méndez, "Echeverría ni siquiera ha sido llevado ante un juez federal de primera instancia," *La Jornada* (2 October 2008), 9. Mexico remained a one-party state for another three decades, losing the presidency momentarily to the conservative PAN party (2000-2012) before regaining it with Peña Nieto's recent election to office.
8 See Matthew Gutmann, *The Romance of Democracy: Compliant Defiance in Contemporary Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 67.
9 In Spanish, the term "en voz alta" means roughly, "aloud," "out loud," or "in a loud voice." Commissioned by new UNAM Tlatelolco Centro Cultural Universitario—CCU Tlatelolco; inaugurated in late 2006, in space previously occupied by Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE)—that includes the permanent exhibition, Memorial de 68. A short documentary film of Voz Alta can be seen at Lozano-Hemmer's website, accessed 28 October 2012, http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/voz_alta.php.
11 Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space," *TDR* 41, no. 3 (Autumn, 1997), 12.
12 Thiong'o, "Enactments of Power," 13.
13 Julio Scherer García and Carlos Monsiváis, *Parte de guerra: Vol. I: Tlatelolco 1968: documentos del general Marcelino García Barragán. Los hechos y la historia* (Mexico City: Nuevo Siglo/Aguilar, 1999), 4.
14 Cuauhtémoc Medina, "A Ghost Wanders About Mexico: Tlatelolco 1968-2008," unpublished talk, Harvard University, February 2009.
15 For example, Grupo Proceso Pentágono's response to the Sección de Experimentación in 1979 of "hoy no habrá nada" ("today there will be nothing"). On artistic production in response to 1968, see Olivier Debroise, ed., *La Era de la Discrepancia/Age of Discrepancies* (Mexico City: UNAM and Turner, 2007); Alvaro Vázquez Mantecón, ed., *Memorial del 68* (Mexico City: UNAM and Turner, 2007); Medina, "A Ghost Wanders About Mexico: Tlatelolco 1968-2008."
16 The mass media colluded with the state to present the violent encounter at Tlatelolco as having been provoked by armed communists and "foreign terrorists" under the influence of Chinese and Cuban communist infiltrators of the student movement. See Gilberto Guevara Niebla, *La Libertad nunca se olvida. Memoria del 68* (Mexico City: Ediciones Cal y Arena, 2004); Alberto del Castillo Troncoso, "El movimiento estudiantil de 1968 narrado en imágenes," *Sociología* 23, no. 68 (September-December 2008), 63-114.
17 A major effect of this was that for almost three decades, official institutions did not collect contemporary Mexican art. Not until the late 1990s was this rift between official

institutions of culture and contemporary artistic practice overcome, in large part because of globalization and the international art market rather than from dynamics internal to the country.

18 Medina, "A Ghost Wanders About Mexico: Tlatelolco 1968-2008."

19 Pani's Nonoalco-Tlatelolco complex was championed by President Adolfo López Mateos as a centerpiece of officialist "revolutionary nationalism" in architecture. For a critique, see Cuauhtémoc Medina, "La lección arquitectónica de Arnold Schwarzenegger // The Architect lesson of Arnold Schwarzenegger," *Arquine. Revista Internacional de Arquitectura*, no. 23 (Spring 2003), 68-85.

20 Roger Bartra, *Oficio mexicano* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1993), 32, 102.

21 See Rubén Gallo, "Modernist Ruins: The Case Study of Tlateloloco," in Michael Lazzara and Vicky Unruh, eds., *Telling Ruins in Latin America*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 107-118.

22 "There is this intention of amplification to an urban scale. Yet although its there, it's very frail, ephemeral, and has a tendency to disappear." Rafael Lozano-Hemmer with Marie-Pier Boucher and Patrick Harrop. "Alien Media" *Inflexions* 5 (March 2012), 150.

23 Geert Lovink, "Real and Virtual Light of Relational Architecture. An Interview with Rafael Lozano-Hemmer," in *Uncanny Networks. Dialogues with the Virtual Intelligentsia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 305. *Voz Alta* also capitalizes on the history of popular performativity generated in response to the government censorship that erased almost all traces of massacre from the official news media. Students formed ad hoc news brigades, staging street theatre plays and producing posters and flyers to counter the PRI's disinformation campaign and to disseminate their own concerns and views. Participants in las brigadas noted the connection between performativity, public space, and information circulation: "We were like mobile newspapers." Ana Ignacia Rodríguez, quoted in Celeste González de Bustamante, "1968 Olympic Dreams and Tlatelolco Nightmares: Imagining and Imaging Modernity on Television," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 23. Of course, the interesting parallel of las brigadas with #YoSoy132's savvy use of social media, particularly Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, should also be underscored.

24 Lozano-Hemmer quoted in Lovink, "Real and Virtual Light of Relational Architecture," 306.

25 Lozano-Hemmer, "Alien Media," 150. For Bourriaud, art's job is to produce "a specific sociability," in which the art 'object' is made subservient to social exchange. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002), 16.

26 Lovink, "Real and Virtual Light of Relational Architecture," 306.

27 On Minimalism and the "radical neutrality of phenomenology," see Benjamin Buchloh, "Detritus and Decrepitude: The Sculpture of Thomas Hirschhorn," *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no. 2 (2001), 44.

28 Quoted in Andrea Noble, "Recognizing Historical Injustice through Photography: Mexico 1968," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, nos. 7-8 (2012), 193.

29 Gilberto Guevara Niebla, quoted in Rosa Elvira Vargas, "Los líderes del 68," *La Jornada, Special supplement on 2 October 1968* (Mexico City, 2 October 2008).

30 Thiong'o, "Enactments of Power," 12.

31 Thiong'o, "Enactments of Power," 13.

32 Craig Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 5 (1993), 267.

33 Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," 269.

34 Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," 280.

35 Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," 279. This is especially evident in the several marriage proposals proclaimed by participants. On the surface, these proposals had nothing to do with politicizing the memory of the Tlatelolco massacre. But it could be argued that they had everything to do with conceptualizing the public sphere as a space for transforming one's identity and conditions of existence. Calhoun (278) argues that actions like this bring to the fore questions that are fundamental to generating an operative public sphere out of civil society: "How is social integration to be accomplished? How can civil institutions organize themselves such that they might alter patterns of integration or overall exercise of power?"

36 Lozano-Hemmer, "Alien Media," 149.

37 Claudio Lomnitz, Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico, An Anthropology of Nationalism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 233.

38 Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*, 198. Lomnitz charts the historical circumstances of Mexico's independence that led to this dichotomy between intellectual and state representations of Mexico's populations, and its extension into the twentieth century because of the Mexican Revolution.

39 Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico*, 208.

40 It remains to be seen, however, if #YoSoy132 can bridge from its origins in elite urban youth to a wider democratic political constituency. In this regard, the movement must grapple with, to cite Calhoun, how "participation in a democratic public sphere obligates us to develop a good account of the identity of our political communities that faces up to necessary problems of inclusion and exclusion." Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," 279.

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