

THE SITE OF THE AFFECTS: POLYPHONY OF VOICES AND URBAN FRAGILITY IN *LA ALAMEDA 2018* BY ROCÍO HUERTAS

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I. INTRODUCTION

One day in the spring of 2020, during Spain's first lockdown, the filmmaker and multidisciplinary artist Rocío Huertas was walking through the emblematic neighbourhood of La Alameda, to the north of Seville's historic old town. She had just been to visit her mother, and on her way home she came upon a small group of women "taking the air" in the street in front of their houses.¹ The sight of these women immediately reminded her of a bygone era; the days of a place which, although still very familiar, she felt had disappeared. It was a place that Huertas could no longer find anywhere in the streets that converged on the large garden square in the middle of that neighbourhood. With the absence of the usual throngs of tourists and the suspension of leisure activities brought by the pandemic, the materiality of the constructed space of that place remained, recalling the old La Alameda de Hércules: a theatre of

memories, a visible vector of life stories containing some lessons—and flagrant omissions—related to the urban development of the Andalusian capital (Díaz Parra, 2019). But who really remembers, and how? And what has been forgotten or lost?

La Alameda 2018 (Rocío Huertas, 2020) is, in the words of its director, a "memory device" (Morillo, 2020) that fuses the autobiographical with the collective, the subjectivity of testimony and dream reconstruction with the (supposed) objectivity of archives and journalistic formats, contrasting the evocation of the place against the official narrative of its transformation. At the same time, Huertas's film—her first feature-length work—represents the final stage in a creative process involving more than a decade of transformations of its own: from an unsuccessful fiction film project to her first unfinished attempt at non-fiction, and from there to an expanded cinema exhibition project and back again to linear non-fiction. This long journey was guided by Huertas's explic-

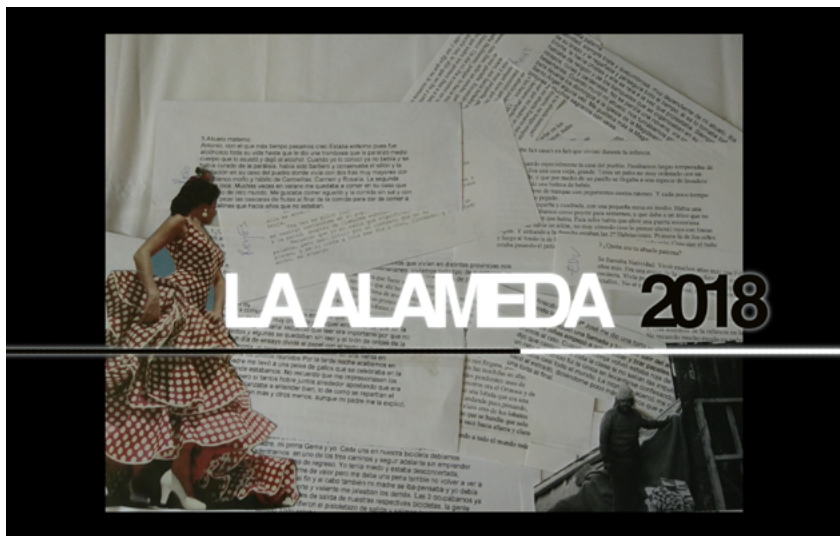


Image 1. *La Alameda 2018* (Rocío Huertas, 2020)

it affiliation with a local underground tradition of projects straddling the line between activism and art which, over the course of the past three decades, have explored La Alameda de Hércules as a site of lived experiences and an ideological battlefield.² *La Alameda 2018* thus brings together a plethora of discourses and memories that are associated with and embodied in an urban space endowed with symbolic value and a strong identity.

This article examines Huertas's film from a theoretical perspective that intersects film analysis with urban studies, drawing heuristic inspiration from an interdisciplinary field of research tentatively labelled *urban cultural studies* (Fraser, 2015). In consonance with the integrative aim of this perspective, this reading of *La Alameda 2018* combines analytical tools of the humanities with conceptual frameworks of social science. Thus, following a brief contextualisation of the filmmaker's career and her artistic project related to La Alameda, the film is analysed in two stages. The first stage focuses on the mechanisms of narrative and mise-en-scène used by Rocío Huertas to connect with the fertile and constantly evolving movement of first-person filmmaking (Lebow, 2012).³ As will be explored below, the use of a polyphony of voices and the filmmaker's (self-)place-

ment in the diegetic space results in a film that is at once an "autobiographical fable" and a "map of a neighbourhood's memory."⁴

Explicitly articulating the shift back and forth between micro- and macro-levels, a common strategy in non-fiction urban self-portraits (Villamea Álvarez, 2015: 103-152), the second stage expands on the strategies outlined in the first, linking them to an exploration of *fragility*. This concept is addressed in this study as a new category, a condition that expands beyond the spatial level to encompass the whole urban experience (Llorente, 2019a). Specifically, the focus of the analysis is on La Alameda's quality as a fragile *memory-scape*: a space at risk of disappearance, which Huertas's film helps to make visible and to preserve. As a kind of summary, the last section of the article outlines some considerations regarding the connections between the biographical approaches of first-person filmmaking, urban fragility and some of the trends of so-called feminist documentary, all of which inform Huertas's *La Alameda 2018* project.

2. CONTEXTUALISATION OF HUERTAS'S FILMMAKING CAREER AND GENESIS OF THE LA ALAMEDA PROJECT

Rocío Huertas is an unorthodox artist with experience in various fields (music, theatre, film, video art, etc.). Her extensive studies took her to various international locations: Berlin (Universität der Künste), London (the M.A. program in Performing Arts at Central Saint Martins College of Arts), Barcelona (the Master's in Digital Arts at Universitat Pompeu Fabra), New York (animation courses at NYU), Prague (performing arts) and Seville (theatre). She has written, directed and adapted plays including Harold Pinter's *Landscape* (Paisa-

jes, 1996) and Calderón de la Barca's *El gran teatro del mundo* (1998). Since 1998, she has been sharing the skills she has acquired in fields such as experimental film and animation in workshops and seminars. As a filmmaker her work includes short films that combine live-action with animation, and fiction with documentary, in titles such as *Muerte y resurrección* [Death and Resurrection] (2001), *Los desheredados* [The Disinherited] (2004), *Descubrimiento y caída de Europa* [Discovery and Fall of Europe] (2007), *Dadda Zeydam Brahim* (2007), *Poemario Normal* [Normal Book of Poems] (2008), *Simbad, el marino, ya no vive aquí* [Sinbad the Sailor Doesn't Live Here Anymore] (2011), and *Les Jeux* [The Games] (2013). Her work has been recognised with awards at film festivals such as Zemos98, Alcances, Peñíscola, Girona, San Roque, and Venézuela. Her productions have also been exhibited in numerous cities around the world, including Gran Canaria, Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, Paris, Tunja (Colombia), Saint Petersburg, Athens, Berlin, Guadalajara (Mexico), Osnabrück (Germany), Montevideo, Havana, Amsterdam, Leeds, and Manchester.

The film analysed in this article evolved over the years in parallel with the filmmaker's career and lived experiences, shaped by the effects of a context of ongoing crisis (from the Great Recession to the COVID-19 pandemic). It was in 2004 that Huertas drafted an initial synopsis for a fiction feature film that never came to be, with the working title *El cuento de las cosas importantes* [The Tale of Important Things]. The director's personal experience as a resident of Seville's popular La Alameda neighbourhood, her desire to explore the tumultuous social reality of the district and the inspiration of Juan Sebastián Bollaín's legendary film *La Alameda* (1978) were already evident in this seminal stage of the project. However, it was not until 2009 that Huertas received a feature film development grant from the Andalusian government to work on the film, which then received further support thanks to its selection for

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the European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE) program in 2010. The journey continued a year later with another selection at the 8th Sofia Meetings, and the entry of the project into the script development workshop with the Katapult-European Script Centre in Budapest and the Sources workshop, both of which belong to the MEDIA Sub-programme of Creative Europe. In 2011 it received yet another grant, this time from Spain's Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (ICAA) for international co-productions of feature films. Despite all this support, production of the film was halted following the withdrawal of its German co-producer from the project. After this setback, in 2015 the project shifted to the production of a documentary, but still using many of the ideas previously developed for the fiction film. That same year, the project applied unsuccessfully for support from the Andalusian Agency of Cultural Institutions under the title *El otro cuento* [The Other Tale]. This was when the filmmaker defined the hybrid approach combining animation and documentary that would characterise the film's subsequent development, and she began filming with the support of friends and colleagues. By this

stage, the idea of offering a portrait of La Alameda had turned into a project mixing a punk ethic with an experimental approach, without funding of any kind and constituting a clear expression of collective creativity under precarious conditions.

In 2019, an early version of the film was presented as a parallel activity in the context of the 16th Seville European Film Festival with the title *El otro cuento. Proyecto expositivo de cine expandido al espacio público* [The Other Tale: Film Exhibition Project Expanded to Public Space]. According to the filmmaker, it was because she was initially unable to find a satisfying linear form that she decided to develop *El otro cuento* as an immersive experience guided by residents or ex-residents of the neighbourhood. To this end, the film was edited into short pieces organised under different labels and posted on a YouTube channel. These pieces in turn serve as source texts that can be accessed using QR codes inserted into ceramic markers created specifically for the purpose and placed at different points around La Alameda de Hércules. By the year 2020 the project had turned into *La Alameda 2018*, a non-fiction feature film that premiered in an online exhibition format at the Alcances Festival in Cádiz, Spain, followed by its first public screening at the Seville European Film Festival of 2020.

The long process from conception to completion and release of *La Alameda 2018* reflects a number of realities that are implicitly conveyed in the film. These include the difficulties that many female filmmakers face in accessing stable sources of funding and forums for distribution and recognition, especially for experimental works or departures from the traditional fiction format (Oroz, 2018). Although Huertas's film could potentially have a place in the circuit of the so-called *Other Spanish Cinema* movement, there is another obstacle of a different kind that must also be taken into account: the position of Andalusia as a peripheral region outside the *centralist centralism* and *peripheral centralism* that shape the dynamics

of cultural legitimacy of independent, minority or auteur cinema in Spain.

3. A VOICE THAT SPEAKS TO/FOR US: MECHANISMS OF NARRATIVE AND MISE-EN-SCENE IN LA ALAMEDA 2018

The stylistic devices and narrative strategies applied to the enunciation in Huertas's film are based on an autobiographical approach sustained by the filmmaker's presence on both the soundtrack (voice) and the screen (body). This points to a key concern of any documentary, which, as Nichols points out, focuses on the quest for a voice: "[t]he 'vision' of the documentarist is more likely a question of voice: how a personal point of view about the historical world manifests itself" (Nichols, 1991: 165). From this perspective, the voice represents both the filmmaker's subjectivity and the inclusion of information and a certain degree of "textual authority" in the interpretation of the film (Piedras, 2014: 83).

According to Nichols (2001), the voice is a basic technique in the rhetoric of the documentary genre. Whether or not it is based on the filmmaker's personal experience, the nature of the voice affects the enunciative construction of the work.⁵ It is an element that has acquired key importance in the wake of the "subjective turn" (Lagos, 2011: 65) in contemporary documentary. It is precisely the quest for a voice that has the effect of blurring the boundaries between the private and the public in many new non-fiction formulas. For theorists like Plantinga, the construction of the documentary depends on three types of voices: formal, open, and poetic.⁶ Voice is thus related to point of view, although these two concepts are not "co-extensive", as point of view is one of the most hotly debated concepts in film theory (Plantinga, 1997: 139). In contrast to the historical authority assigned to a male narrator in the traditional documentary, in Huertas's film the female voice is constructed on a personal, familiar level,



Image 2. *La Alameda 2018* (Rocío Huertas, 2020)

an essential feature of feminist non-fiction (Mayer, 2011: 14). One of the opening scenes reflects this affiliation unequivocally: the recounting of a ludicrous anecdote about a girl being kept on a leash. The episode is based on and built out of the filmmaker's memory and the combination of diverse elements. This approach responds to the use of "the internalized child's voice" as a "hallmark of women's fragmented consciousness" (Lesage, 1999: 347). As the mentor-filmmaker Agnès Varda observes in another of the scenes in the film, contemporary life appears (to us) as a puzzle, a series of overlapping impressions. This poses a challenge to anyone attempting to reconstruct identity through filmmaking. In *La Alameda 2018*, this quest always points towards the declension of the "I" in the collective form and draws on various resources in the process, including animation as an aesthetic-mnemonic support.

Animated footage is used in various ways in non-fiction film, most notably as a means of addressing the complexity of expressing certain top-

ics, either because of an absence of images or because of "the subjectivity of experiences lived on the emotional or psychological level" (Fenoll, 2018: 47). From this perspective, animation has become organically linked to documentary film in recent decades as a preferred means of narrating what cannot be filmed, consolidating the presence of the subjective dimension. *La Alameda 2018* embraces this tradition when its director chooses to use animation to illustrate the dreams shared by the film's social actors as one of the structural principles of the narrative. The construction of the voice enters the realm of the unconscious, abandoning the representation of the real to explore the reality of desire. This transcoding of dream testimony into an animated sequence gives added depth to the profiles of the voice addressing us from the film. As an additional effect, it also enhances the narration, because "the stylization that animation bestows can intensify our perception of the events, as metaphors and vivid imagery in a written memoir do" (Bordwell, 2009). In this way, the decision to reconstruct memories through animation reinforces

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this idea of the difficulty of representing memory and intersubjectivity.

The film is divided into five blocks that structure the narrative episodically, but which are dialogically interconnected through an overlapping of the debates and social actors involved. This approach reinforces the articulation of a polyphonic voice based on the combination of voices, on the empathetic framing of the faces and on the depiction of fantasy and dream through the limited animation technique of cut-out figures. The first of the episodes, titled “*Identidad colectiva*” (“Collective Identity”), begins with the testimony of Rosa María Martínez Moreno (an anthropologist who lives in La Alameda) and alludes to the process of identity construction as something “unique, variable, and personal.” Identity here is a collec-

tive, fragmentary, and disjointed construction that signals community as one of the essential features of feminist documentary (Mayer, 2011: 29). This voice emerges through an aggregate effect, through the heteroglossia resulting from the combination of Huertas’s voice-over and the voices of her friends whose bodies appear on screen. In this respect, the director’s frequent appearance in reverse shots is striking; for example, in the interview with writer, playwright, and musician Fernando Mansilla, the chronicler of the *vidas perras* (“dog lives”) of La Alameda, a legend of the neighbourhood and, by extension, of the alternative artistic scene in Seville. Beyond its aesthetic significance, this strategy underscores the value of the interview as a communicative act articulated between the filmmaker’s ethics and the authority of her voice (Plantinga, 2005). What Nichols (1991) would define as *metaobservation*, meaning the presence in front of and behind the camera, is combined with *feminist epistemophilia*: the filmmaker is not positioned or framed alone, because filming is a collective act. It is not merely a question of including testimonies; the intention is to establish a dialogue through the creation of intersubjective spaces that will work on the memory and the understanding of both the filmmaker and the spectators.

Image 3. *La Alameda* 2018 (Rocío Huertas, 2020)



The second block or episode, titled “*Arqueología de la prostitución*” (“Archaeology of Prostitution”), attempts to geographically locate the places that were centres of prostitution in La Alameda de Hércules. The episode begins with a narration by Deborah Santa Cruz de la Jara, a transsexual prostitute who used to work in the neighbourhood, and who still lives there. This block connects with the third, “*Feminización de la pobreza*” (“Feminisation of Poverty”), which engages more explicitly with the economic violence perpetrated against women, examining the debate between abolitionism and the regulation of prostitution, with Hilario Saéz Méndez (a sociologist who belongs to a group called Men for Equality), Erica Bredy (an anthropologist who lives in La Alameda) and Vanesa Casado (a lawyer specialising in gender violence). This is the only place where the filmmaker is not present in either the reverse shot or the audio. In this way, Huertas seems to adopt the distance of an observer, leaving the conversation to the interviewees in the composition.

The fourth block, titled “*Especulación inmobiliaria*” (“Real Estate Speculation”), begins with Luis Moisés Heredia Maya, one of the children born in La Alameda in the 1980s who was subsequently displaced from the neighbourhood. This interview leads into archive footage from *La Alameda* (Juan Sebastián Bollaín, 1978), making the dialogue between the two films explicit. After this brief foray into the archives, Rocío, Vanesa, and Carmen, who live in La Corrala de la Ilusión (a property in the neighbourhood that was temporarily squatted), explain the precarious nature of their existence in the context of the Great Recession. These interviews reflect on the right to housing and constitute one of the most emotive parts of the film. The last block bears the title “*Cultura underground*” and again documents the recollections of friends and mentors of the filmmaker. The film’s final shot, with Rocío Huertas shown on a street of La Alameda with her daughter, closes

es the quest for and representation of a voice: the filmmaker’s voice speaking through others. This conclusion underscores the familiar dynamic of transmission, the need to keep talking over time, as an individual and as a community.

4. LA ALAMEDA AS A FRAGILE MEMORY-SCAPE

The particular polyphony of voices that informs the narrative construction conceived by Rocío Huertas and her co-writer and co-editor, Ana Álvarez Ossorio, is linked from the very beginning of the film to the cartography of La Alameda de Hércules. The credit sequence includes footage from the two group walks through the neighbourhood to present the expanded cinema activity of *El otro cuento*. In addition to serving as an audiovisual record of the event and a guide to the self-referential nature of the project, this sequence clearly establishes its role as a portrait of a community and a space (or a community *in* a space). From this perspective, the literal walk we are shown at the beginning also possesses a figurative or metaphorical meaning: an allusion to the film itself as an urban *memory passage*.

This dimension of the film will be made more obvious immediately afterwards, still in the first episode. In this scene, the filmmaker, while speaking in a voice-over, marks and draws on a map of La Alameda to indicate the diegetic space, the key themes of the film, and the mnemonic power of the enunciation. As Huertas explains in this reminiscence in the form of an animated collage, her original identification with the neighbourhood is situated between references to two local landmarks of popular religious significance and sacred iconography (the images of the basilicas of La Macarena and of Jesús del Gran Poder) and her childhood memory related to social and gender stigma. It is therefore the lived experience of a girl (Huertas herself) that explains the empathetic connection that inspired the La Alameda pro-

ject: the desire to explore the memory of the neighbourhood, with a focus on the endemic precarity and violence suffered by women. However, as the film itself reveals, this core of human interest is indissociable from the demographic transformations and speculative real estate transactions that are reconfiguring the space of La Alameda de Hércules, precipitating an intense activity of erasure. The ordered nature of the change masks the eradication of the traditional dwellings of the district and their memories, which from that moment are no longer acknowledged. The transitory space is thus also a place where the “filmmaking operation” tracks down the evidence of displacements and disappearances, of enforced invisibilities, evoking the city’s lost past and making it present (Comolli, 2007: 504). This is why, when the Great Recession of the early 2000s led to the acceleration of the urban processes already under way, the two dimensions of the project aligned in the form displayed in *La Alameda 2018*.

Taken together, the common coordinates of reality framing the social actors of Huertas’s non-fiction film can be encompassed in the concept or context of fragility. In the sense it is used here, fragility refers to the experiential and temporal forms of uncertainty that condition not only the human plight, but all the expressions and representations that signify it, as well as the environments in which it exists (Llorente, 2019b: 5-7; Bitrián 2019: 143-144). As Llorente suggests, “through the fragility of lives, of things and of actions, the space itself is infused with fragility” (2019b: 8). This constant transfer between the anthropological and material-territorial dimensions of the city is de-regulated in the contemporary context of neoliberal



Image 4. *La Alameda 2018* (Rocío Huertas, 2020)

eral municipal governance, based on a conception of power with socio-spatial implications in terms of commodification and its silenced effect, *fragilisation*. This creates the context conducive both to the eradication of memories favoured by the management model for urban policy and to its opposite: the reinforcement of grassroots *counter-memories*. As Bitrián argues, these “non-hegemonic memories” contain a promise and a potential derived from their “capacity to introduce discursive variables into the space that are not agreeable to the social groups directing the process of spatial construction” (Bitrián, 2019: 159).⁷

Huertas’s documentary facilitates the emergence of this local counter-memory through the recovery of the *situated* subjectivity of interpellated bodies. Whether in their condition as displaced or still as residents in the neighbourhood, all these bodies share the same purpose of restoring lived experience. The interweaving of their testimonies, dreams, and perceptions reveals the history hidden inside the urban imaginary of La Alameda de Hércules. In this way, the evocation of children’s playing, of paternal and maternal figures, of prostitution, of trafficking and addiction, of existence as survival, *re-shape* the location, bringing to the time of reception the space made absent by

the establishment of the new *branded city*. This evocative portrait opens up a crack in the ongoing present of consumption and festive evasion in the gentrified and touristified La Alameda.

The challenge to the prevailing narrative of the redevelopment of La Alameda thus emerges out of the attempt to combine a series of life stories that expose the human cost of the *fragilisation* process affecting the neighbourhood. Through their combined effect, these stories rise above their distinctive individual features to acquire a sense of collective agency rooted firmly in the location. The *memory map* becomes a way of responding to this imposed fragility, an intervention in the space realised through the sharing of oral histories. In this sense, life stories are used as a technology of political imagination (Labrador, 2012). The cinematic operation of Huertas's film facilitates this productive collective work of the imagination through mediating strategies: from the adoption of the role of participating documentary maker/(self-)ethnographer by the film's director and crew, to the use of cameras, animation, and archive footage as technologies aimed at revealing a critical imaginary. This mediation is concerned less with establishing a mythical memory of the place than with exploiting the contradictions and emancipating possibilities of nostalgic discourses about it.

Following the relational logic that guides the whole project, the depiction of urban fragility in *La Alameda 2018* steers this act of collective im-

agination in the specific direction of an activism of connections and feelings. It is precisely this affective dimension that has been obliterated by the official discourse of modernisation of this old neighbourhood of Seville. This discourse needs to *externalise* the human cost and to elide everyday life to achieve its objective of management as an abstract operation. The technical, distanced view of urban planning is contrasted with the *passage* of the collective of residents who *remember*. Consequently, the journey proposed by the film embraces a temporality and an ethics in opposition to those of the authorities. La Alameda as filmed by Huertas is rooted in the conception of a different kind of city and urban visuality from the iconic voraciousness of tourist promotion campaigns and videos posted on social media by *prosumers* of urban experiences.

With its vindication of networks of mutual support and community recognition, the film engages with the critical program of feminist urbanism (Col-lectiu Punt 6, 2019). This program invites us to imagine spaces of coexistence where the awareness of the inherent interdependence and vulnerability of existence can mitigate the fragility imposed by the socio-spatial dynamics of neoliberal capitalism. By extension, in the specific case of the image, in *La Alameda 2018* this project to combat zombie capitalism is inspired by the new "poetics of patience and care" described by Martínez Luna (2019: 158). In Huertas's documentary, this patience and care are expressed through a capacity that is not so much contemplative as empathetic, the capacity of the image to capture a space in intimate connection with a public imaginary, thanks to the way the film reactivates threads of the past, bringing them into the present and infusing them with desire. What is at stake here is a place and the memory of its historical habitation. In this context of disappearances, the film is offered as a chorus of *situated* voices. La Alameda itself is spoken and reconstructed through an imaginary that incorporates

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and transcends the materiality of the physical environment to become a framework for restoring identity. As its own reading suggests, Huertas's film is a voyage that can only be taken collectively. Only in this way is it possible to release the flow of public creativity capable of reconfirming that "the image is still our shared world. It will therefore be through the image that we can elaborate other ways of giving, receiving, and giving back, of engaging with others in the present, of taking time to look at the world" (Martínez Luna, 2019: 161-162).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The information sheet handed out to participants in the two walks presenting the expanded documentary project *El otro cuento* included a statement by Rocío Huertas that left little room for doubt. In just a few lines, the Sevillian director described the project as a contribution to the construction of La Alameda's identity. The same document also referred to the route through the places recovered in the film in terms of a funeral rite, but also as an exoneration of "guilt", a feeling arising from the filmmaker's awareness of her own role in the transformation of La Alameda de Hércules. The "guilty" conscience is the product of the filmmaker's affiliation with a specific demographic and cultural group: local youth of the late 20th century with musical and artistic interests. As Díaz Parra (2019: 125-127) points out, the impact of this group on the process of displacement of the neighbourhood's previous residents marks one of the episodes in the complex chain of migrations that explains the progressive conversion of La Alameda into a middle-class neighbourhood. However, as the film itself shows us, this guilt is assuaged when the story of the individual is fused with the stories of others; when it is inserted into the emotive narrative of bodies to produce a kind of shared knowledge of the fragilisation of living spaces. This is the unique direction taken

by the "distinctive epistemophilia" of the feminist documentary as represented by *La Alameda 2018*: a reinforced sense of ethics, the creation of an affective vortex to "meet the community through a film, to know that you are not alone" (Mayer, 2011: 39).

Huertas's affiliation with feminist documentary is also evident in the reconstructive approach she takes to the dilemma of identity. As has been outlined in this article, the first person in *La Alameda 2018* is articulated in plural, in a collective expression that brings together fragmented voices embodied in the inhabited space of La Alameda de Hércules. This use of the "formal dualism" of first-person filmmaking (Lebow, 2012: 2) clearly overlaps with the ephemeral condition of the urban landscape, upon which layers of memory, dream, and desire are superimposed. In this way, the profound connection between the exchange of life stories and the location turns into an almost literal interpretation of the idea of the subject of the enunciation as a "place" (Cadenas Cañón, 2019: 276). In Huertas's film, the intersubjectivity constructed using various formal devices is also the voice of the place, the gateway, the *memory passage* through La Alameda.

The imaginary commemorated by the film captures not only the traumatic signs of uprooting but also a subversive, joyful call for collective action. This voice of the place calls to us, speaking of the fragility of those who remain in other neighbourhoods, in other cities besieged by consumer logic and the rationalism of late-capitalist urban development. It is in this sense that *La Alameda*

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2018 embarks on a quest for other voices and becomes an intervention, a kind of *affectionate manifesto*: at once a programmatic vindication and a declaration of feelings about the disappearance of a lived space. ■

NOTES

- 1 Much of the information on the *La Alameda* project contained in this article was obtained in correspondence with the filmmaker herself, who provided important sources for our research (dossiers, early edits, etc.) and also gave a long interview recorded with audio notes between the months of June and September 2020. We would like to thank Rocío Huertas for her generosity, and for the opportunity her film gave us to join this collective passage through a neighbourhood and a memory that is also dear to us.
- 2 A full overview of this field of collective reflection, creation, and action can be found in the project *El gran pollo de la Alameda* (Various Authors, 2006), coordinated by Santiago Barber, Victoria Frensel, and María José Romero.
- 3 Although other terms exist for this concept, such as “autobiographical” (Lane, 2002; Renov, 2004) and “subjective” (Rascaroli, 2009), we have chosen the term used by Alisa Lebow. In consonance with Lebow’s argument, we believe that the use of “first person” offers a clearer and more open identification of the multiple hybrid forms of this type of documentary making (from the essay film to autofiction to filmed diaries).
- 4 These two descriptions appear in different documents and reports on the *La Alameda* project.
- 5 In his essay titled *The Voice of Documentary* (1983), Nichols uses the term “voice” in a broad sense; in subsequent publications, he would replace it with the term *argument*. This author contrasts the notion of argument against ideas like objectivity, neutrality or deference (Nichols, 1991: 349).
- 6 According to Plantinga, the construction of voice corresponds to how the filmmaker includes the spectator in the story. The formal voice is associated with

the traditional notion of truth; the open voice questions concepts of reality; the poetic voice, on the other hand, focuses on aesthetic questions.

- 7 In the case of Seville, the successive actions on the perimeter of La Alameda expose the contradictions of urban development in pursuit of the *hypertrophy* of memory described by Huyssen (2002). In contrast to the property frenzy that promotes the preservation and commercial thematisation of many historic districts, the north-east quarter of the now all-but-vanished working-class neighbourhoods in the heart of Seville (*Sevilla Roja*) offers an example of an area subjected to a decisive reconfiguration in the consolidation of the city (Díaz Parra, 2019; Díaz Parra & Jover, 2019; Jover & Díaz-Parra, 2019).

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THE SITE OF THE AFFECTS: POLYPHONY OF VOICES AND URBAN FRAGILITY IN *LA ALAMEDA 2018* BY ROCÍO HUERTAS

Abstract

In the non-fiction film *La Alameda 2018*, artist and filmmaker Rocío Huertas reconstructs a memory-scape of the emblematic Sevillian neighbourhood of La Alameda de Hércules based on her own lived experiences and those of other (former) residents. The film uses a variety of compositional techniques and devices (from animation to interviews and dialoguing with archive footage) to construct a collective, polyphonic voice that speaks of the radical transformation of an urban area besieged by gentrification and mass tourism. This article presents an interpretation of Huertas's film that explores the mise-en-scène and narrative construction of a plural voice (the "I-We") that addresses the audience, while at the same time drawing on the conceptual framework of urban fragility to reveal the intimate connection between the quest for identity in the film and the memory of a place in the process of disappearing.

Key words

Feminist documentary; Non-Fiction; Voice; Polyphony; Urban Memory; Urban Fragility; Animated Documentary.

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EL SITIO DE LOS AFECTOS: POLIFONÍA DE VOCES Y FRAGILIDAD URBANA EN *LA ALAMEDA 2018* DE ROCÍO HUERTAS

Resumen

La Alameda 2018 es una obra de no-ficción en la que la artista y realizadora Rocío Huertas reconstruye un mapa de la memoria del emblemático barrio sevillano de la Alameda de Hércules a partir de sus propias vivencias y las de otros (ex)habitantes de la zona. La película utiliza una variedad de técnicas y recursos compositivos (de la animación a la entrevista y el diálogo con el material de archivo) para componer una voz colectiva y polifónica acerca de la radical transformación de un entorno urbano asediado por la gentrificación y la masificación turística. El presente artículo propone una interpretación de la película de Huertas atendiendo, por un lado, a la puesta en escena y elaboración narrativa de la voz plural (el yo-nosotros) que interpela a los espectadores; por otro lado, se vale del marco conceptual de la fragilidad urbana para desvelar cómo la búsqueda de la identidad, y su manifestación concreta en *La Alameda 2018*, está íntimamente ligada a la memoria de un lugar en trance de desaparición.

Palabras clave

Documental feminista; No-Ficción; Voz; Polifonía; Memoria urbana; Fragilidad urbana; Documental animado.

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