

*TRANSLATING FEAR IN
BORDER SPACES*

ANTONI MUNTADAS'ON

TRANSLATION:

FEAR / MIEDO/ JAUF

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to show how Antoni Muntadas' projects deconstruct the spaces controlled by economic powers, politicians, the media and government institutions. Most Muntadas' projects are site-specific and, therefore, focus on spaces like the city, public and private spaces or digital spaces. This article concentrates on those projects by Antoni Muntadas which show asymmetries of power in different spaces and moves on to focus on a concrete space, the border, in two projects: *On Translation: Miedo/Fear*, on the border

between the United States and Mexico, and *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* on the border between Spain and Morocco. These projects analyse how some people and others, those who are most vulnerable and those who are afraid of strangers, feel fear, depending on what side of the border they are on.

KEY WORDS

Muntadas; Borderlands; Fear; Stranger; Asymmetrical spaces.

TRADUCIENDO EL MIEDO EN LOS ESPACIOS FRONTERIZOS

TRADUCCIÓN DE ANTONI MUNTADAS: FEAR / MIEDO / JAUF

RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es analizar cómo los proyectos de Antoni Muntadas deconstruyen espacios controlados por los poderes económicos y políticos, por los medios de comunicación y por las organizaciones gubernamentales. La mayoría de sus proyectos se crean para un lugar concreto, espacios como la ciudad, espacios públicos y privados y espacios digitales. Este artículo examina aquellos proyectos de Muntadas que sacan a la luz asimetrías de poder en diversos espacios, para después fijarse en un espacio concreto, la frontera, tal y como aparece en dos proyectos, *On Translation:*

Miedo/Fear, relativo a la frontera entre Estados Unidos y Mexico, y *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* sobre la frontera entre España y Marruecos. Estos proyectos escudriñan cómo se sienten unos y otros, a ambos lados de la frontera, quienes son más vulnerables y quienes temen al extraño.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Muntadas; fronteras; miedo; extranjero; espacios asimétricos.

1. Introduction: Living in/between Global Asymmetrical Spaces.

Globalization started out as a phenomenon that seemed to bring about the breaking-down of borders, unlimited mobility around spaces, the universalisation of information and democratisation of discourses. Yet, opposite this idealised vision of globalization, many voices began to speak out against this globalizing model (Bielsa and Kapsaskis 2021; Held and McGrew 2000/2003; Robertson and White 2007; Elliot and Lemert 2014; Beck 1997/2000). These voices warn us against the spaces of global capitalism, arguing that they have given way to uneven geographical development (Harvey 2006). What has been globalised is the single thought of the strongest, the ubiquity of a security framework and a normalized infrastructure of gates and walls (Ghertner, McFann and Goldstein 2020), leaving by the wayside “wasted lives” (Bauman 2006) and asymmetrical spaces (Massey 1994).

The recast of globalization’s narrative is taking place in many disciplines such as sociology, politics, economics, and others, which reflect on broken promises and unfair trade laws (Stiglitz 2002/2017), on the consequences of economic globalization on new left and right political movements (Diamond 2018), on the reasserting sovereignty of free markets and the strengthening of borders (Green 2019), on the globalization of inequality (Green 2019; Milanovic 2016; Bourguignon 2015), on the paradoxes of global financial markets incompatible with democracy (Rodrik 2011); on politics, religion, terrorism and world wars (Kim 2020), global criminology, fear, social exclusion and cyber-hacking (Franko 2020).

Taking into account this state of the art, the aim of this article is to analyse how the art world has shown the negative consequences of globalization. I will do this by specifically focusing on the globalization of fear in Antoni Muntadas’ project *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf*.

There is no doubt that I could have chosen many other artists because the art world has reflected on the subject of globalization a great deal. Since the Johannesburg and Havana biennials, and especially the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* (1989), the art world has deconstructed “old geographical borders and reclaim[ed] narratives of place and displacement. In other words, new cultural practices that transfigure the relationship between the global and the local and articulate the discourse of difference” (Guasch 2018, 7). We must also underline the significance of the three-volume series by Hans Belting and Peter Weibel titled *Global Art and the Museum* initiated in 2001, as well as the exhibition at the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe (2011) called *The Global Contemporary*. *Art Worlds After 1989* (which led to the publication *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*). This exhibition focuses on the geo-political transformations of globalization and their influence on the art world, conditions of its production, dissemination and the working methods of artists. It is an exhibition which, opposite the traditional dichotomous idea of inclusion/exclusion, prefers translations and transfers from one culture to another, in a multilateral and multipolar world. This exhibition was important because it no longer argued for the hegemony of an

international art, but for the reevaluation of the local and the regional by witnessing the reentry of forgotten and unforeseen parts of geography. These and other exhibitions arise in response to the new questions posed by globalization in the art world in general and in the traditional museum space in particular. In the face of Eurocentrism, the art world is beginning to consider museums as “contested sites where the representation of a given culture becomes a political issue” (Buddensieg and Weibel 2007, 6). And more recently there is an increasing number of publications focusing, in this same line of thought, on the question of how official powers create representations of those who have no voice, especially of refugees and migrants (Bal and Hernández 2011; Marciniak and Tyler 2014; Pultz Moslung et al. 2015; Schimanski and Wolfe 2017; Ring Petersen 2017).

We could focus on this issue, therefore, from many other perspectives within the art world. However, I am particularly interested in Antoni Muntadas because he is, in the opinion of many art critics, one of the artists who currently best uses the concept of space to highlight the negative consequences of globalization and western capitalism. He performs all over the world, in a wide range of territories, towns and cities, networks, from Beijing to New York, passing through Barcelona or Tijuana. His works are site-specific, and when the work of art is no longer enclosed but is outside in the public space many questions arise: “How do the artists interact with the space? How are the interventions viewed and judged in the city? Can all this help to change the way in which the city is lived?” (Ladaga and Manteiga 2006: 47).

Muntadas’ projects are linked to a specific space, a space which influences the creative process. He works in parallel, not linearly, on projects that are at different stages and in different places. Many of his projects take place over a long period of time, like, for example, *On Translation* (1995-present), which has featured publications, lectures, installations in sites across Europe, North and South America, and Asia (Raley 2016) or *Political Ads* (which began in the 1980s in collaboration with Marshall Reese and continues to change with every electoral campaign in the United States). It is very important to be familiar with the context and that is why he carries out a great deal of background research on the place he is going to work in. Creating a project in Sao Paulo or in Istanbul, Seoul, New Delhi, Madrid or Beijing is not the same. Every place has its own times, and this is shown, not only in the type of project and in the final result, but also in its creation process, in the documentary research the artist needs to carry out before he starts and in the negotiations that take place with the institution hosting his project. For example, his project *On Translation: The Audience* is a panel on wheels (reproducing three juxtaposed images which changed every month) which moved around twelve different cultural institutions in the city of Rotterdam for a year. The same could be said, as we shall see below, of almost all his projects, which are intimately linked to the space they are going to interact with. That is why in the catalogue of the important exhibition held in the Reina Sofía Museum in Madrid in 2011, *Entre/Between*, we are told that his projects are inserted in nine constellations: microspaces, media landscapes, spheres of power, communal

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spaces, places of spectacle, field of translation, domain of fear, the archive and systems of art.

For Muntadas, it is not enough to be shut up in his studio. For him, it is essential that his art should be and should interfere in the public space, but also that it should influence and bother the private space. For him, the approach is very different when the project is going to be seen in a protected space like a museum or a gallery to when it is being seen in the streets of a city, on television or on the internet. Each space needs a specific kind of negotiation, but it also leads to different significs in different cultures. He understands space as a historical-political question, a dynamic field closely connected with identity formation (Papastergiadis 2000/2007: 4). His projects, "artefacts in the anthropological sense of the word, inasmuch as they are related to space and memory" (Villaespesa 2008: 215), show that the change of place, or adaptation to a different place, is, in fact, a kind of identity dislocation. I will now go on to analyse Muntadas' concept of space and its relationship with the power exercised by large corporations or the media. After examining the concept of space in his work, I will discuss two concrete works by Muntadas where the focus is specifically on border space and on how fear is represented in this space.

2. Antoni Muntadas' Spaces.

In a conversation with the artist, the critic Mark Wigley defined Antoni Muntadas as "a city". According to Wigley (2007: 561-562), Muntadas is not so much a person as a network of exchange spaces. Muntadas moved to New York in 1971 but has studios in several cities in the world and has created projects, exhibited and taught in many locations throughout the world. He has shown his art all over, from the MoMa and the Guggenheim of New York to the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, Documenta Kassel or Venice Biennale, OCAT Shanghai or Three Shadows Photography Art Center of Beijing. He has received many international awards and grants and has been Professor at the MIT for more than thirty years, apart from teaching seminars in Europe, the United States, Latin America and China. Currently he is Professor at the Instituto Universitario de Arquitectura del Veneto in Venice. This cosmopolitanism has given him the possibility of pointing at the growing homogenisation of our global culture and concentrating on those in-between spaces which are so dangerous for power, since they are spaces of separation but may turn into spaces of connection, transgression, change, dislocation and disruption of accepted narratives of utopia.

Muntadas is a conceptual and multimedia artist who analyses the mechanisms of power and how this power is exerted by institutions. He is interested in censorship, mass media, spaces, cultures and languages all over the world. In his opinion, the artist must carry out a social function in society by making the audience reflect on how power is exerted:

Media appear physically as neutral carriers of pure discourse are manipulated by invisible systems. Within the context of current political struggle, both dominant groups and those in opposition articulate and disseminate information through their understanding and manipulation of these 'invisible mechanisms'. Via media campaigns, posters, radio, and television, power is enforced not so much by the gun but by sound and image. (Muntadas in Danzker 2012: 60)

Muntadas does not act in spaces but absorbs them, incorporates them into his work, thus broadening the traditional definition of space to understand it as a topos of differences charged with heterogeneity. Indeed, although it is true that there are many contemporary artists interested in the philosophy of space, Muntadas is perhaps the one who, for many decades, in fact since the beginning of his career in the 1970s, has directly involved his art in political, ideological and social connotations of space, or rather, spaces. That is why Muntadas argues that "the real place of my projects is outside the gallery". He calls his artworks "projects", because those projects are constantly moving, never close, in progress, collaborative, open to input. In fact, he encourages public involvement -a project like *On Subjectivity* (1978) introduced the idea of participation as central to his work. He believes in different levels of interpretation which grow out of social, perceptual and cultural differences. He encourages his audience to have their own interpretations, but also to raise questions and to discourage absolute values. The audience is part of the translated reality in which, according to the artist, we all live. It is no coincidence, therefore, that one of his artworks is titled *Warning: Perception requires involvement* (2000).

Muntadas classifies his projects (Marí 2007: 86), in three categories according to their relationship with spaces: works which do not change their physical constitution but where the change of presentation space is what makes them different in their relation with spectators. Secondly, works which are recontextualised. And, finally, site-specific works, which originate and are presented where they have been produced. For example, the series *Asian Protocols* (2014-), a very visual series based on images, shows his idea that we live in a world translated through social, economic, political, media and cultural filters that force us to see translated reality in a different way: Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo have to do with spaces, with how these spaces are perceived from other spaces, by the outsider who is not very familiar with these cultures and bases his judgements on them on very often stereotyped reflections, a construction based on phenomena which are superimposed with a basis of truth.

Muntadas' projects show that space, or rather, spaces are not neutral topoi (De Certeau 1984/1988; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996; Harvey 2006), but related to ideology (Lefebvre 1976 1991; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Harvey, 2006; Gregory 1994; Burgin 1996; Crang and Thrift 2000; Minca 2001; Rumford 2008). His spaces are heterotopias (Foucault 1986) where he shows the connection between space and power and their links to other concepts such as deterritorialization, displacement, dispossession, expropriation, community, identity, panopticism, frontier or

marginalization. He thus seeks to deconstruct the intertwined structures of global, economic, racial, gender, and patriarchal power. An excellent example is *The Board Room* (1987), a video-installation presented for the first time in Boston and later in different parts of the world, which offers a disturbing reflection on the power wielded in the public space from a private space. The installation consists of a typical boardroom table with thirteen chairs (a reminder of the Last Supper), portraits of religious and political leaders on the walls, from the Ayatollah Khomeini to Pope John Paul II, or Rabbi Shneerson and the famous tv preachers of the United States. In the mouths of these personalities with power in society Muntadas placed small televisions “as mouthpieces” emitting recordings of fragments of their discourses and sermons which had been televised. Using this corporate room, Muntadas creates an analogy between political, economic, religious power and that of the media, a power created on many occasions in the private space of the board room (economic, political or religious power) but which shifts into the public space because the decisions taken influence people’s everyday lives. It is a reflection on panoptic power, which is exercised without being seen. And also, on the manipulation of the media when they publish some of the decisions taken in that private space.

In fact, one of the aspects Muntadas is most interested in is analysing the relationship between public space and private space. For example, in the exhibition *Intervenções: A propósito do público e do privado* (Fundació de Serralves 1992, Porto, Portugal), Muntadas makes a very interesting reflection which could be applied to some of his other projects: “The way the space is used and distributed in the public often recreates the hierarchical organization of the private. Public and private share structures of organization, power and decision-making, which apparently are similar. The memory of the private, based in the identification of places or spaces through designation (texts/images) should constitute the starting point of the reflection on the use and consumption of both the private and the public, as seen from a cultural viewpoint (once the political and social ones have been assumed)” (Muntadas, Porto 1990).

Muntadas’ first projects highlighted television as one of the main instruments of control: the installations *Acción TV* (1972) *Emisión/Recepción* (1974), *Confrontations* (Manhattan, 1974), the video-installation *The Last Ten Minutes* (1977), the single-channel videos *Liège 12/9/77* (1977), *Between the Lines* (1979), *Watching the Press/Reading Television* (with Hank Bull, 1981), *Media Ecology Ads* (1982), *Credits* (1985) *Cross-Cultural Television* (1987), *Warnings* (1988), *Video is TV?* (1989), *Political Advertisement VI – 1952/2004* (with Marshall Reese, 1984-2004), *Words: The Press Conference Room* (1991), among others. Some of his projects in Spain (he moved to New York in 1971), *Cadaqués - Canal Local* (1974) and *Barcelona Distrito uno* (1976) reflect on local, unauthorized and counter-information televisions broadcasting from marginal spaces such as a bar-kiosk. Years later, with *On Translation: sala de control* (1996), he focuses on the Raval district in Barcelona and shows how to give control of a city back to its citizens. Here, the city is a place “of appropriation-

reappropriation-destruction of spaces” (García Canclini 2007: 61). Just as it is in a later project, *On Translation: I Giardini* (Venice Biennale, 2005): Muntadas reflects in this project on the space where the Biennale took place, public gardens that the Biennale has been appropriating for three months every year for over a hundred years when the city loses a community space. The Biennale during this time turns into a microcity of art and has developed over time. For instance, he highlights the fact that I Giardini looked very different during the Mussolini era (for instance, the Italian Pavilion was reconstructed to suit the Duce’s taste and rebuilt after World War II, a translation of a space which was highlighted by Muntadas’ project). The project also talks about the relationship between space and power, focusing on how economic powers exhibited their power at the Venice Biennale, not through the works they exhibited but through the more or less important spaces their pavilions occupied:

I was interested in comparing this space with theme parks like Disneyland or Cinecittà in Rome and the project started as a film based on the parallelisms between film studios and theme parks. My attention was drawn to the space itself: it was like being in winter, it was desolation, in contrast to what it looked like during the Biennale. I was also interested in analysing the evolution of the buildings with regard to their façades, which underwent different facelifts according to the political content of each pavilion and different governments, who decided in each case to send their “official artists”. In recent years, the Spanish pavilion -built in the Franco era in the form of a bunker- now has plants, creepers and other elements. In the project I described it as the translation pavilion: *On Translation: Pavillion*, in the sense that it extended the space not towards representations and nationalisms but to a cultural translation situation. I used the following warning: “Attenzione; La percezione richiede impegno” [Warning! Perception requires participation] to transmit the idea of transient, aseptic spaces, a cross between a waiting room and an information centre, with decontextualized furniture people did not expect to find in an exhibition space but in other spaces. (Muntadas 2010)

His interest in exploring the connections between power and space is apparent in what he has coined “media landscapes” and “invisible environments”, in reference to a communication space directed and connected to those images produced by the media. Contrary to the landscape we see when we open a window, the media landscape, according to Muntadas, is the one we see after it has been translated by the media, realities which have been rewritten, constructed and transmitted through different technologies and strategies and which regulate the production of information.

Muntadas’ media landscapes (1979) can be related to Arjun Appadurai’s (1990: 296) “mediascapes”, one of the five dimensions of global cultural flow -the others are ethnoscaples, technoscaples, finanscaples and ideoscaples. The common suffix -scape points to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes. This common suffix indicates that these are not objectively given relations which look the same from every angle of vision, but rather that they are “deeply perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as

subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighbourhoods and families” (Appadurai 1990: 296). Muntadas’ media landscapes are projects which demonstrate how visible and invisible information is amplified or silenced in media spaces, spaces which are everywhere -for instance in markets, stations, streets as shown in his early projects *Mercados, Calles, Estaciones* (1973-1974) and *Media Eyes* (1981, in collaboration with Anne Bray), a hoarding on a street in Cambridge, Mass., where we read “What are we looking at?” above an anonymous gaze behind blind glasses.

From the projects of the beginning of his career to his most recent, *On Translation in Beijing*, Muntadas shows a constant interest in analysing how power translates reality and how it rewrites reality in visible and invisible spaces, particularly in the context of urban spaces. We can see this, for example, in *This is not an Advertisement* (1985), an intervention in Times Square, the best example of public space of the Western world. Also in *Stadium* (1992), a long-term project focusing on the official nature of spaces used by institutions for public celebrations. Or in *The Limousine Project* (1990-1991), another city-specific project for New York, where the limousine is a symbol of power. Here Muntadas projects words and fragmented images decontextualized from advertisements, headlines, and political slogans onto the limousine’s windows. He selects these words and images in order to reformulate discourse on current events and the media. He chooses words -such as “corruption”, “gender”, “violence”, “gentrified”- and sentences related to the corporative use of the limousine: he turns the limousine’s black passenger windows into screens as the limousine is driven around famous landmarks in New York: Wall Street (*finascape*), past a UN building (*ideoscape*) and night clubs (*ethnoscape*). These projects offer the audience the possibility of rethinking the experience of the spaces of cities through the use of images in motion. The city Muntadas shows encloses “a complex mixture of places, non-places, pedestrian zones, abandoned areas, new and old constructions, routes” (Ladaga and Manteiga 2006: 47). With these and other city-specific projects, Muntadas denounces the most inhuman side of contemporary cities, reminding us of the distinction Sennett (2018) makes between *ville* and *cit *: the former refers to constructed spaces, the space imposed by the economy and politics, and the latter to the emotions and feelings of people in the spaces they live in and to the space where people want to construct their collective life. According to Sennett, the ideal situation would be that *ville* y *cit * coincided, that the way in which people wanted to live coincided with how urban spaces were constructed, and that these spaces were places of equality and welcome and inclusion of diversity of languages, races and beliefs. This is, without a doubt, a utopia, especially if we consider urbanistic models to be those closed, heavily guarded residential areas which resemble more a panoptic than a space of freedom. Muntadas’ projects remind us that the large cities of the West are spaces that reflect more and more inequality in a geographical development which generated gated societies, “bourgeois utopias” or “privatopias” where people

voluntarily imprison themselves (Harvey, 2000, 148). This shows that walls are not always felt as ominous but as something which offers shelter: human beings build walls of impalpable shadows to comfort themselves with the illusion of protection (Bachelard 1957/2008). The war against strangers and risks to personal safety is now waged inside the city. Residents without means are seen as potential threats to other residents' safety. Mixophobia manifests itself "in the drive towards islands of similarity and sameness amidst the sea of variety and difference" (Bauman 2007: 87).

For many years now, Muntadas has also shown an interest in digital space, what Appadurai calls "technoscape", "the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology, both high and low, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries" (Appadurai 1990: 297): for example, in *Media Sites/Media Monuments* (1981) Muntadas points out spaces where relevant political and social events have taken place and then have been forgotten. For instance, in *Sao Paulo his On Translation: Urban Commemorations* deconstructed the city's urban renewal master plan by installing a number of pseudo-celebratory wall plaques (which named the mayors in charge of the projects dating back 40 years) -replicas of traditional commemorative ones- in relevant public locations throughout the city. He thus reflects on memory and silence, on the power of the media to hide information related to historical events and on the role of architecture as witness of events that should not be remembered. He overlaps a photograph which portrays past events with another in the same place but with its contemporary use. Memory is here an important concept regarding the (de)construction of space: in fact, this project, which was developed in Washington (1981), Budapest (1998), Buenos Aires (2007) and Rome (2017), acquired most relevance in its Argentinian translation due to the country's involvement with collective memory: using archive images, Muntadas focused on highly emotionally charged places, such as the Plaza de Mayo, the Avellaneda train station (where, in 2002, the police killed two unarmed demonstrators), or the República Cromañón nightclub where 194 people died in a fire in 2004. Alongside these, he shows photographs of these places in the present. Another project concerned with technoscapes is *The File Room* (1994), whose main theme is censorship from the point of view of the collaboration of spectators through digital space, thus showing how what has traditionally been private becomes public. *The File Room* took place in the Chicago Cultural Center, a building dating back to 1897 which was formerly home to the largest network of libraries in the city. For this reason, Muntadas locates his work in a space which is halfway between the public space of the street and the specialised space of the museum. But also in the internet space, because it is a project made up, above all, of archives referring to censorship, and through computer networks is how they can best be consulted: <http://fileroom.aaup.uic.edu/FileRoom/documents/homepage.html>. *The File Room* is a Kafkaian space, barely lit, with 7 computers, 138 metal filing cabinets and 552 glass cases. From the computers, spectators can access censorship cases but also, using

a computer located in the centre of the room, input their own examples of censorship.

Muntadas is also very much interested in the global spaces occupied by money, and in this sense it is useful to refer to what Appadurai (1990, 298) calls finanscapes, since “the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed”. In *On Translation: The Bank* (1997-2002), Muntadas extends the theme of translation to the exchange of national currencies in a collage originally conceived for a Canal Street Bank Office in New York City. He shows an image of a one-thousand-dollar bill with the following question at the centre of the image: “How long will it take for \$1000 to disappear through a series of foreign exchanges?”. He suggests that as it is exchanged/translated for its counterpart in another currency and the process continues through many translations its value can eventually come to zero due to the vagaries of the different finanscapes.

3. Fearful Spaces: Fear / Miedo / Jauf.

Fear is an emotion which, implicitly or explicitly, is present in many spaces generated by globalization and by western capitalist society. Muntadas has created projects on spaces where fear is exercised through incommunication, through the manipulation of communication by the media, through censorship, through the subjective or through brutality. On the fear of technology which has altered spaces in terms of human relationships and with regard to private/public concepts and on fear of not being permanently available and the consequences this has for individuals, he created *On Translation: Listening* (2005). In *The Construction of Fear* (2008) and in *Fear, Panic, Terror* (2010) he warns against the media’s use of the semiotics of fear, especially after 11/9. He also analyses the impact of fear on private and public spaces in such works as *Cercas* (2008) or *Aphaville e outros* (2010), “reflecting the concern of certain social groups with safeguarding their economic status, and consequently regarding city space as closed to the outside world”, we read in the catalogue of the exhibition *Muntadas: Entre/Between* (Madrid, Museo Reina Sofía 2012: 202). The artist sums up the aim of his analysis in a series of key questions which appeared on panels of the *Symposium Public Space* held at MIT in 2014: *Who?, What?, Why?, How?, Where?, When?, For Who?, How Much?* And “Miedo” [Fear] is precisely one of the most featured words in one of his latest projects (“Palabras, palabras...”, Madrid, *El País* 26 February 2020).

However, perhaps the most characteristic fear-charged space of globalization is that of the border. Globalization has not made borders disappear but, on the contrary, they have proliferated (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 62). Ours is a culture of borders, of “thresholds, dead and transitional times, places of encounter, crossing and conflict, relationships that require unprecedented translations and exchanges” (Agier 2013/2017: 156). Borders work as filters to separate people. They are “asymmetric membranes” (Rumford 2008: 3), a “firewall” that hits and selects (Walters 2006: 197). And they are also invisible, inner borders, located everywhere and nowhere (Balibar 1997/2011: 78-84). Borders are not merely geographical edges

but also metaphors of a newly emerging culture-space where displacement is a daily reality for many people. They determine inclusion and exclusion. They are zones that separate “us” from “them” (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002), the space of “the losers of globalization” (Beck 1997/2000) and of “wasted lives and outcasts” (Bauman 2004). The border is a “global frontier-land” (Bauman 2007: 37), a realm beyond the control of states where “global outcasts” like refugees, migrants or asylum seekers reside in a state of ‘permanent transitoriness’ [...] Global borderlands are the ‘spaces of wonder’ (Rumford 2014: 69-89) where “normal” rules do not necessarily apply and, as a consequence, human beings are deterritorialised (Deleuze and Guattari 1975/1986; 1980/1987) and fear is institutionalised:

Fleeing their worlds of places rendered uninhabitable, persecuted both at home and from afar, they have come to be in places where they were never supposed to be without invitation, and where their presence is undesired. It is very difficult to claim that rounding them up and sidelining them in this way is being done to in their best interests. After detaining them in camps, placing them in limbo, and denying them the status of possessing human rights, the aim is to turn them into objects that can be deported, stopped in their tracks -or even destroyed. It must be repeated that this (which aims to hunt down, capture, round up, process, segregate, and deport) has only one goal. It is not so much about cutting Europe off from the rest of the world or turning her into an impenetrable fortress, but rather about granting Europeans alone the privilege of the rights to possession and free movement across the whole of the planet -a planet on which, in truth, we should all have the same entitlements. (Mbembe 2016/2019: 103)

Given this situation, border spaces could not be ignored by an artist like Muntadas, always on the lookout for all kinds of power asymmetries within contemporary spaces. In the series *On Translation*, a series starting in 1995 which today includes 69 works and is still open, Muntadas creates in 2005 and 2007 two television interventions -as he defines them- where he aims to examine fear in border spaces: one 30 minute televised intervention based on the production of a video filmed on the border between the United States and Mexico, *On Translation: Fear/Miedo* (2005), to be broadcast by public television in Tijuana, San Diego, Mexico City and Washington D.C. and in the fifth edition of *inSITE*, a pioneer in the exhibition of “in situ” artistic projects along the Mexico -USA border. Since 1992, “inSITE has invited artists involved in site specific, public art and the new media to design installations that dialogue with the geographic and psychological limits created by the territorial border” (Ladaga and Manteiga 2006: 59). The other project is a 40-minute film produced by BNV Productions, *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* (2007), on the border between Spain and Morocco, to be broadcast in Rabat and Madrid, the centres of power where political decisions that affect borders are taken.

It is interesting to point out the fact that the latter project is a kind of translation of the former, but always taking into account that Muntadas understands that no translation is the equivalent of the original but that translating implies translating cultures: How the world we live in is a totally translated world; everything is always filtered by some social, political, cultural, and economic factor, by the media, of course by context and by history.

For Muntadas, every language is also site-specific: that is why he leaves the word *fear* in the language of the place (English, Spanish, Arabic): Fear/Miedo/Jauf, just as he does in the second part of the title of many installations in the series -*On Translation: I Giardini* in Italy, or in Russian in Moscow in 2011, in Chinese in Beijing in 2013 or in Japanese in Tokyo in 2015. In both projects, *Fear/Miedo* and *Miedo/Jauf*, Muntadas uses subtitles because he wants spectators to hear the different accents. When the interviewer speaks in Arabic, the subtitles appear in English and in Spanish, when he speaks in Spanish, the subtitles are in English and Arabic. Faced with monolingualism, which is a political strategy of globalization, one of the few things the migrants can keep is their language. Their different accent sounds threatening when heard by the culture that receives strangers unwillingly. Their accent makes us aware that strangers are at our door (Bauman, 2016). The sound is political. Sounds have political and spatial meanings which need to be interpreted. Muntadas shows the political possibility of sound, what Voegelin calls (2018: 21) "an echography of the inaudible": the power of silent voices that open politics to the possibility of the political, outside a harmonic singularity.

And while he was working on this border, Muntadas was continually receiving news about what was happening on another, that of those who were trying to enter Europe via the Strait of Gibraltar. As Muntadas considers that artists must bear witness to their era and give an account of what is taking place and should try to see what is not seen, he decided to reinterpret, translate, rewrite the project, by relocating it in another similar but different space, taking into account the differences that spaces have with regard to ethnoscapas, finanscapas and ideoscapas. As in the first work, Muntadas interviews people conforming very different ethnoscapas, landscapes of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: "tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons [who] appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree" (Appadurai 1990: 297). In fact, Muntadas focuses on the fact that the border space between Morocco and Spain has important political implications, because it does not only separate two countries but two continents, with the resulting consequences in international politics and in the world economic order and the North-South rift and its differences concerning religion, power structures, world visions, and (post-)colonial orders. The space of *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* is the Strait of Gibraltar, a liminal territory at an extreme post of Europe where some of the major weaknesses of EU policies are revealed (see Bouachrine 2011; Ferrer-Gallardo *et al.* 2015: 126):

From 2003 to 2005 I was working in Tijuana and San Diego on a project I titled *On Translation: Fear/Miedo*. The work process made me think of the similarities with the area between southern Spain and northern Africa, for the latter represents "the door" to Europe just as the former represents "the door" to the USA. While obtaining information and compiling data in the region of the Strait from the beginning of 2006 I have perceived a number of similarities but also great differences. Similarities in displacements, crossings, survival, the search for a better life, the idealization of consumption, of the construction of what is often a media reality. Differences due, on the one hand, to the added complexity of religion and its influences, and on the other, to the problems caused by terrorism [...] *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* is not a work on African/European emigration/immigration. Nor is it a work on religion or on terrorism. Two different realities separated not by the sea but by border fences and boundaries on both sides.

The search for the North, with its man-made paradises that for many remain lost; fear as an emotion/sensation inserted in the decision of crossing. The construction of the South as a fiction/reality linked to the phenomena of the unknown, exoticism and difference. The attraction (and rejection) of two different realities in which information circulates from person to person via the media and through stereotypes. (Muntadas 2008: 214)

At the beginning of *On Translation: Fear/Miedo*, fear is presented as a generic emotion, but soon other very concrete issues are referred to: fear of the other, of the stranger or of immigration on the part of those who consider themselves to be superior because they lead privileged lives. Those interviewed discuss issues like drug trafficking, femicide in Ciudad Juárez or power that favours the increasing of the wealth of some over others. Muntadas defines fear as a cultural and sociological construction based on politics and economics. As he demonstrates in both projects by means of a number of interviews recorded on each side of the border and a visual collage of contextual and archival images, quotes, press headlines and film excerpts, fear is “a translated emotion that appears in very different ways on each side of the border” (Romero and Villaespesa 2008: 195).

Muntadas’ interviewees, for completely opposing reasons, share a feeling of uncertainty and fear of the other, perhaps because “These are border landscapes, in which encounters and experiences bring into relation a here and an elsewhere, a same and an other, a ‘local’ fact and a ‘global’ context, simply meaning someone or something that comes from ‘outside’” (Agier 2016: 8). Fear is always the “Other”:

The Other is the one who must, each time, prove to others that he is a human being, that he merits being taken for a fellow human, that he is, as Fanon did not stop repeating, “a man akin to others,” “a man like others,” who is like us, who is us, who is one of ours. To be the Other is to feel oneself always as being in an unstable position. The tragedy of the Other is that, due to this instability, the Other is constantly on the alert. He lives in the expectation of a repudiation. He does everything so that this repudiation does not take place, all the while knowing that it will necessarily come and at a time over which he has little control. As a result, he fears showing himself such as he really is, preferring disguise and dissimulation to authenticity, and convinced that shame has been brought upon his existence. His ego is a knot of conflicts. (Mbembe 2016/2019: 132)

However, Muntadas’ projects show that the South translates fear of the Other in a different way to the North. The rewritings of emotions and representations are very different. Those from the South seek a possibly idealised representation in order to improve their lives, whereas people from the North are generally not familiar with the other, who is a stranger in terms of language, beliefs or ways of life. The North needs the South both with regard to the public and the private, argues Muntadas in an interview and he quotes the film *A Day without a Mexican* (2004), but it needs the South from the perspective of asymmetry.

In these projects, the words chosen by the characters forming the different ethnoscaples who speak about fear from opposite sides of the border are as important as what they do not say or are afraid to say:

On Translation: Miedo/Jauf is undertaken as a personal construction that endeavours to speak of a specific reality and, at the same time, create a metaphor of the situations in which translation, interpretation, what is left unsaid and silence all form part of the narrative. (Muntadas 2008: 214)

And images are equally important, Muntadas argues, because they make the invisible side of the image visible. They expose us to acts of recognition, invite everybody to discover our relative foreignness in the gaze of others, as Julia Kristeva (1991: 192) states: "To discover our disturbing otherness, for that indeed is what bursts in to confront that 'demon', that threat, that apprehension, generated by the projective apparition of the other at the heart of what we persist in maintaining as a proper, solid 'us'".

The words and images of the interviewees are mixed with archival television images and documentary and journalistic materials. As mentioned above, those who speak in Spanish are subtitled in Arabic in *Miedo/Jauf* and in English in *Miedo/Fear*, so translation is added as an element of complexity and cultural difference in order to highlight strangeness and asymmetry. Twenty-nine people from both sides of the border and from different social, economic, generational and gender types, translate through the interview technique what the border means to them. But both through language and through images it is clear that each side of the border experiences fear in very different ways. That is why, perhaps, Étienne Balibar (1997/2011: 92) states in a now classic essay on border that the border does not have an essence that can be valid to different places and times, to different individual and collective experiences. Balibar talks of the heterogeneity of borders, and he describes them as shifting zones which are polysemic, because they mean different things and are experienced in different ways by individuals with different backgrounds, social status, beliefs, etc. So, Muntadas' interviewees show very different emotions towards borders and strangers. The fear experienced by the wealthy is not the same as that experienced by those who have nothing. Those who speak on the wealthy side of the border talk about their fear of being robbed by the other, or losing their job to them or being attacked by them. Those who speak from the less privileged side are those described by Aimé Césaire in his *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1955) as the millions of men whose minds have been filled with fear, inferiority complexes, despair, servility. Muntadas wants a plurality of voices to be heard talking about the most primitive and subjective forms of fear but also about the construction of fear on the part of economic and political powers. In these projects, as in many others by Muntadas, discourse is not unique but fragmented. His approach to reality grants priority to contingency, openness, transversality and collage, in order to offer different interpretations of the same conflict.

On Translation: Miedo/Fear and *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* present the themes of displacement, border crossing, survival, or the search for personal improvements, shared among people interviewed at both sides of the border. Borderlands are created as unsafe areas that should be kept empty for control purposes, resulting in feelings of fear found in the citizens living in borderlands and these areas. "In this

way, deterritorialization and disconnection among citizens and the territory under control is established, something which increases disintegration and marginalization" (Cimadomo 2017: 371). *On Translation: Miedo/Fear* and *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* show the artist's interest in otherness and difference, his interest in giving voice to different territories and geographies, different geobody storytellings, histories, herstories, ourstories and transtories from different translocal subjectivities. These projects are based on dualities such as public/private, reality/media, visibility/invisibility "that associate fear with the mass media and approach its political exploitation, or the ways in which power uses fear to control citizens" (Romero and Villaespesa 2008:196).

By concentrating on border spaces and building connections among different territories, these projects disturb the totality from which the global is mostly perceived and offer both resistance and *re-existence*. It is the resurgence and insurgence of re-existence today "that open and engage new venues and paths of decolonial conviviality, venues and paths that take us beyond, while at the same time undoing, the singularity and linearity of the West" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018: 3). *On Translation: Miedo/Fear* and *On Translation: Miedo/Jauf* are practical examples of Mignolo's "border thinking", the transformation of the hegemonic imaginary from the perspective of the excluded, and of "borderscapes," as spaces for liberating political imagination from the burden of the territorialist imperative while opening up spaces within which the organization of new forms of the political or the social become possible (Brambilla 2015: 22). Muntadas, following border thinking, brings marginalized voices into the conversation, showing the importance of listening to all voices, "to the multiple diversity of local histories" (Mignolo 2000: 39) and thus understands borders not as peripheral matters but as nuclear political processes (Schimansky 2015).

These two projects look for the "cracks" of the West, those referred to decades ago by Aimé Césaire (1955/2000) and Frantz Fanon (1967) as spaces, places, and possibilities of and for decolonization; or for Gloria Anzaldúa's "rajaduras", which, as she argues, give us a Nepantla perspective to reconfigure ourselves as subjects outside the us/them binary and, on the contrary, inside the in-between spaces. The "rajaduras", the "cracks", will allow us "to construct alternative roads, create new topographies and geographies, look at the world with new eyes, and rewrite identities" (Anzaldúa 2015: 82). Widening the spaces of the cracks and the rajaduras is Muntadas' aim. Like Anzaldúa, Muntadas' projects speak of the cracks between the worlds, of dwelling in liminalities, of seeing through the holes in reality from las rendijas, the crevices, choosing to perceive from multiple angles.

4. Final Remarks.

Muntadas' projects make us aware of liminal space, a space more explicitly understood as "a site of transitivity, a point of entry into another zone [...] a space of opening, unfolding, or becoming figured in the form of the Deleuzian nomad living

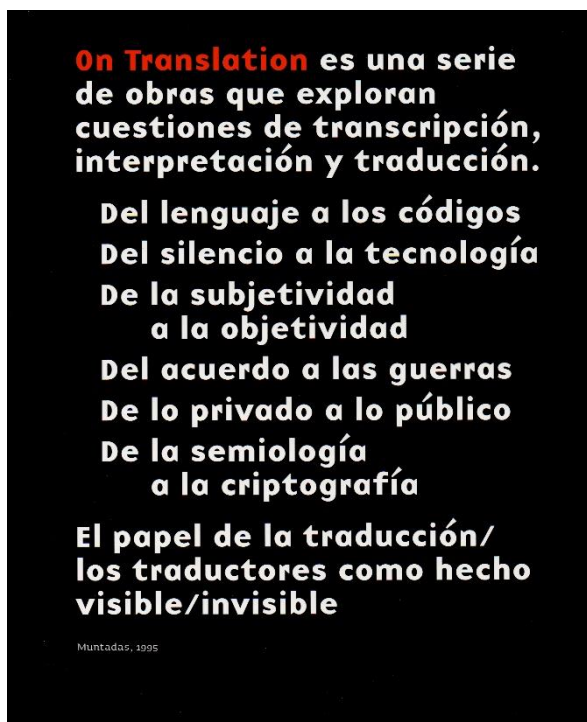
in the intermezzo, ever deterritorializing without reterritorialization" (Downey et al. 2018: xi). Soja's third space, "the space where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear; but also a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood" (Soja 1996: 56). Muntadas approaches reality from "unbelonging", and thus turns into art projects Bhabha's reflections on border lives, when he argues that in-between spaces "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation" (Bhabha 1994: 1-2). The interstitial spaces of borders "open a possibility of cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 1994: 4). Biography is now a topopoligamia (Beck 1997/2000) which inhabitates ethnoscapas, those spaces where people are always in constant movement (Appadurai 1996).

Muntadas' projects aim to be spaces of negotiation and interrogation, multifaceted spaces of transition that contest binarisms and boundaries in order to question status quo worldviews and to show that globalization blurs our perception of diversity and therefore, far from leading to a reduction of walls, makes some spaces more equal than others. For Power, having control over space is essential. That is why the spaces shown in these projects are mapped by power as texts which are written asymmetrically depending on a very diverse series of political and economic interests. On Translation: Miedo/Fear and On Translation: Miedo/Jauf show that contemporary space is not a smooth, homogeneous, neutral territory, but rather an extremely complex one due to all the differences it embraces, in terms of races, beliefs, ways of life and languages. Like Homi Bhabha (1990), Muntadas suggests that asymmetrical spaces should be interrogated and erased. From the art world, he joins the collectives, communities and activists who, from different spaces and territories, try day after day to counter the project of violence of contemporary neo-colonial and patriarchal orders. His interest is, rather, with what Mignolo (a sociologist whose ideas he shares) and Walsh (2018: 2) call pluriversal decoloniality and decolonial pluriversality as they are being thought and constructed outside and on the borders and fissures. Muntadas' projects show his insurgence and decolonial praxis, and his will to act "from the fissures and cracks and to make cracks with the spaces, places, institutions, and structures of the inside". His projects act "with and from the insurgent constructions, creations, practices, and subject-actors that, from the outside, the borders, edges, and cracks challenge and defy modernity/coloniality", since border thinking "is necessary for both dewesternization and decoloniality" (Mignolo and Walsh 2018: 84, 125).

Muntadas' projects make us aware of the alienation of audiences in spaces of violence (for instance from the Colombian context in On Translation: el aplauso 1999), or the spaces of international organizations in a range of fields including the military, technology or the arts (On Translation: Social Networks 2005). But he also pays attention to that which remains in interstitial places, in fissures:

Those intermediate spaces of communication (the frame, the translation process, the architecture, the interface, the advertisement, the sign) that also create discourse; spaces, in short, that often conceal the Gordian knot, the *punctum* of the discourse itself, sometimes even the whole discourse [...] Muntadas continues to draw our attention to that which does not arouse us, that which we overlook or fail to notice, that which we see yet do not read or read without translating. (Borja-Villel 2012: 8-9)

Anexo I



On Translation. 1995- presente. Notas sobre el proyecto.



Asian Protocols. Lugar: Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, 2018. Fotografía: Chen Xinyi



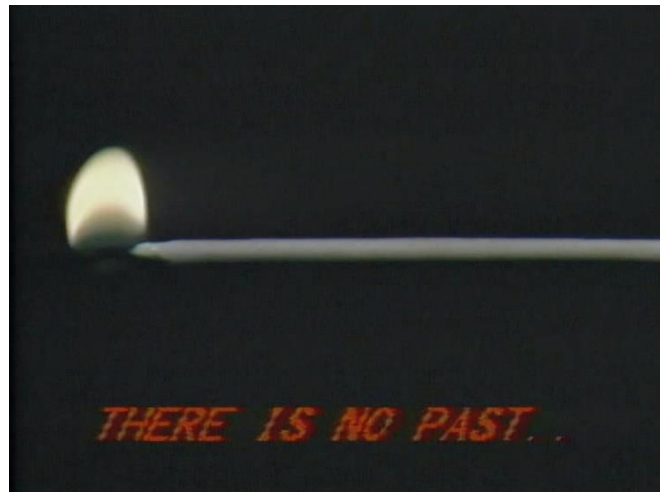
On Subjectivity, 1978. Exposición: Muntadas. Informação >> Espaço >> Controle, 2011. Lugar: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo. Fotografía: Andrea Nacach



On Translation: Warning (1999-...). Exposición: Muntadas Bs. As. Lugar: Espacio Fundación Telefónica, Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2007. Foto: Oscar Photographer: Balducci



Words: The Press Conference, 1991. Exposición: *On Translation: La Alameda. Muntadas. Proyectos.* Lugar: Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Ciudad de México, México. 2004. Fotógrafo: Magdalena Martínez Franco.



Media Ecology Ads, 1982.



The Board Room 1987.
Exposición: *Muntadas Bs.As.*
Lugar: Espacio Fundación Telefónica, Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2007. Foto: Oscar Photographer: Balducci.



Cross Cultural TV, 1987. In collaboration with Hank Bull.



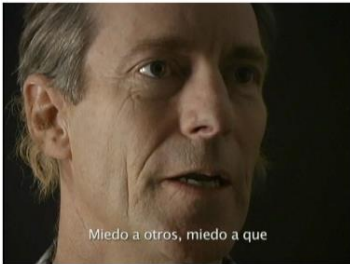
Confrontations.
Automation House,
1974. New York.



Media Eyes, 1981. Cambridge. Muntadas in collaboration with Anne Bray.

ON TRANSLATION : FEAR / MIEDO

Fear is an emotion present in humans since the beginning of time.
El miedo es una emoción que ha acompañado al ser humano desde su origen.



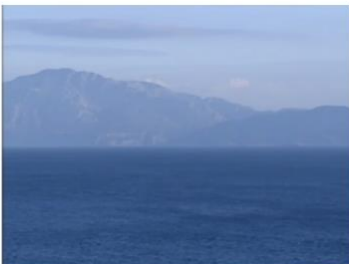
Fear doesn't live outside us, it's the specific way through which one responds to danger.
El miedo no habita fuera de nosotros, es el modo específico de cómo respondemos al peligro.



On Translation: Fear/Miedo, 2005.

ON TRANSLATION: MIEDO / خوف

Miedo. (Del latín metus) m. Perturbación angustiosa del ánimo por un riesgo o daño real o imaginario.
Diccionario de la Lengua Española, 22ª Edición
خوف (باللاتينية متوس): اضطراب محقق للنفس بسبب خطر أو ضرر واقعي أو خيالي.
منجد اللغة الإسبانية: الشرة القلبية والمضروبون



On Translation: Miedo/Jauf, 2007.



The construction of fear. Exposición: *The construction of fear.* Lugar: Kent Fine Art, 2008



Fear, Panic, Terror. 2010.



Palabras, palabras...2017. Exposición: *Muntadas. Elkarrekiko loturak, interconexiones, interconnessioni,* 2019-2020. Lugar: Artium, Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo Cortesía Artium de Álava. Vitoria-Gasteiz © Gert Voor In 't Holt.



Projecte / Proyecto / Project, 2007. Exposición: Muntadas: Entre / Between, 2011. Fotografía: Román Lores Riesgo; Joaquín Cortés.



On Translation: El aplauso. 1999. Exposición: Proyectos. Laboratorio Arte Alameda, Ciudad de México, México. 2004. Fotógrafo: Magdalena Martínez Franco. ©Muntadas



On Translation: Listening, 2005.

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