

Breached Walls in Mexico: Art, violence and public space in Teresa Margolles' Walls



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With the title *Psychobuildings* Martin Kippenberger published in 1988 a peculiar photography book. It deals with architectural structures that are incomplete, either because they are not finished or because they have been subjected to a demolition process. Such buildings, which conjure up eccentric and idiosyncratic spaces, could be thought of as psychotic because of the ruptures caused in the regulated fabric of the modern urban landscape.

In 2008 (May 28-August 25) the exhibition *Psycho Buildings* was held at The Hayward, (London, U.K.). The participating artists aimed to reanimate and explore the diverse ways in which we inhabit our environments, not only from a phenomenological point of view, but foregrounding the complex social and cultural nuances of architecture. There is an essential change in relation to Kippenberger's work: it is no longer about unfinished or demolished buildings recorded photographically, but artistic works that manifest a clear fusion between sculpture and architecture, whose purpose is to highlight Kippenberger's initial concern: the psychological dimension of architectural products.

The artistic search of Mexican artist Teresa Margolles (Culiacán, Sinaloa, 1963) has evolved from a phase related to the victims of general violence in Mexico, with the group SEMEFO (1990-1993), to a stage focused almost exclusively on the victims of confrontations between criminal groups. For this very reason, it is surprising that despite such a radical approach, the artist became the national representative at the Venice Biennale in 2009 with a work alluding to this type of violence: "What else could we talk about? Since then she has become an international referent of what Walter Benjamin called the "politicization of art" as opposed to the "aesthetization of politics".

The main purpose of this research is to analyze the following works by Margolles, in order to understand the important art-city-violence relationship in contemporary Mexico: *Muro baleado* (Culiacán, 2009), *Muro baleado Ciudad Juárez* (2010), *Decálogo* (2008), *PM 2010* (2012).

Biography:

Antonio Sustaita. Ph.D., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2011. Professor Sustaita focuses his research on the relationship between body and language in contemporary art. His first book, *El baile de las cabezas* [Dance of the heads] (Fontamara, 2014) investigates the similarities between the display of violence in Mexico at the beginning of the century and contemporary art. Sustaita is a full-time professor and researcher at the department of visual arts at Universidad de Guanajuato since 2011. He is member of CONACYT-SNI (National Council of Science and Technology-National Research System) level 1 since 2016. He has received the Sabatical fellowship CONACYT 2018-2019. In addition, he is member of Editorial Board of American Research Journal of History and Culture (ARJHC) and member of Colegio Referees CSACA Centro Studi Americanistici Circolo Amerindiano, Perugia, Italia. He has held more than 300 conferences around the world. His research has been published in books and journals in America and Europe. Sustaita is presently at work on a book called *Necroestética. Cuerpo y violencia en México contemporáneo*, which considers three models of sceneries of violence in contemporary Mexico. He is also interested in shamanism and what he calls early shamanic scene.