



**MAKING VISIBLE THE ACT OF WATCHING:
ARTISTIC RESISTANCE IN THE FACE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE I**

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Abstract

This study looks at a selection of artistic texts that serve as testimony to what is called “workplace harassment,” “mobbing,” or “workplace bullying.” This is the first part of a three-part series relating to harassment and also to the transformation that comes out of artistic communication. First, I establish a general approach in order to situate a number of artistic resistance works created during the process of workplace harassment and psychological violence, particularly in relation to surveillance and watching. Then, using the same methodological approach, the subsequent texts explore the topics of isolation and the collective dimension of creation as a means of overcoming situations of violence. Beginning with experiences that involved anonymous messages, along with situations of being watched and symptoms of hyper-watchfulness as a target of harassment, a series of works emerged, mainly as art objects, which take on a greater meaning when examined collectively in connection with a process of harassment.

Keywords: artistic resistance, psychological violence, collective art, workplace bullying

Introduction: We have come upon the Church, Sancho.

In Spanish we use this expression—*con la iglesia hemos topado*—to show our impotence and resignation when the ability to act is blocked by a greater power. Through social systems, many women throughout time and in many locations have been blocked from painting, sculpting, and visual expression due to their gender. I live with another kind of oppression.

The ability to express oneself publicly may pose a threat to the established power, especially when the creator is a woman, of a different social class and origin, whose discourse reveals the mechanisms of power employed by certain groups. The inverted pyramid of oppression offers a context for understanding how the system responds to the very problems it produces. Manzano (2012) describes this in the following sentences, written from the perspective of those in a position of power.

Nothing is wrong¹ [making invisible]. If something has happened, it is not an injustice [interpretation] because the cause is not human (naturalizing environment); the consequences do not affect humans (objectification); it is actually just (inversion); it's not what matters (relativizing); or the observation is false (de-legitimizing). If it's understood as an injustice, it's not because of the system [channeling], since the harm was caused by the group of people in question (victimization), or comes from outside of the system (external agent), and the system already has ways of handling this injustice (tokenism). If the injustice can be iden-

1. The reason for the difference between parentheses and brackets is that the words in brackets refer to one of the echelons in Vicente Manzano's pyramid of oppression (2012); the words in parentheses are actions included in the same level of the echelon previously named before in brackets. The author, Vicente Manzano, italicized the complete paragraph in order to differentiate it with the rest of his text.

tified to be part of the system's functioning, it's best not to do anything [immobilization] ... If those involved feel the inevitable need to do something, proper instruments which do not threaten the order will be made available [domestication] to encourage individual and isolated action (individual transcendence) ... If this does not ultimately work, the final step is to stop the movement [repression]. (p. 249)

In the case I will describe, the university system has passed through these different stages of oppression, to the point that I currently find myself in a workplace that has been the site of repeated situations of violence. I will review these situations briefly, using the definitions offered by Manzano (2012) to give a general idea of the events that marked my work and my life in the last few years.

In late 2006, I filed a public complaint regarding irregularities occurring over the years in the Painting Department, which is strongly nepotistic with many of the members coming from the same families. After the complaint was filed, though I was threatened with litigation, it didn't materialize. Rather, I faced attacks, violence, discrimination, humiliating treatment, limited access to materials, etc., and with my subsequent complaints to the rector's office, my harassers (and university administration) said that nothing was wrong [*making invisible*]. Comments like "That's how the university is" (*naturalization*), "She deserves it" (*inversion*), "She's crazy" (*de-legitimization*), and so on were enabling an *interpretation* such as "It's not an injustice." The use of *channeling* permitted affirmations that avoided responsibility: "In any case, the university is not responsible, as the issue relates to one department with such behavior..."; "She was the one asking for harm" (*victimization*); "She doesn't want to fit in" (*external agent*); "We're doing our job well, since we have the Service for Prevention of Workplace Risks" (*tokenism*). This became *immobilizing*, and along with the impossibility of changing departments, especially from 2011 to the present I have been waiting for "the approval of a protocol against harassment" (*solution underway*), although "the ones who should handle this is the Service for Prevention" (*specialization*); I am told "In that department, there's no solution" (*fatalism*); "The

harassment is an isolated case in the university" (*considered anecdotal*); and, "Best not to make a case against those making false accusations about Inmaculada, because the remedy would be worse than the disease" (*undesired solution*). *Domestication* is still in process by means of the university administration: an endless cycling through different services and an immense individual effort throughout the years, without success: appealing to the Service for Equality, the University Ombudsman, the Service for Prevention, etc. This *domestication* has not prevailed, since we have continued to denounce situations of workplace discrimination and violence, especially against women, using the *Platform Against Harassment and for Democracy* in the University of Seville, which grew out of my case. The last stage of oppression is already in motion (repression), seen in the last few years with my professional portfolio being deliberately concealed in a much more focused way than before. This repression manifests itself in the impossibility of exhibiting my paintings in Spain with competition submissions returned unopened.

The dominant organizational variable central to the environment of harassment that produced the works described in this article is the heavy presence of nepotism in the department. Among the points included in my complaint was the fact that no official criteria were used in the promotion of the department chair's son, in addition to the several attempts to make me lose my job so that the daughter of a senior lecturer would benefit professionally. These and other complaints occurred well before the harassment began. Although the department received prior complaints from a male, unlike in my case, his career was promoted, not obstructed. García de León (2011) writes about the deep tensions that shape this issue in Spain and explains that despite formal equality won by the new society constructed in the *Platform Against Harassment and for Democracy*, the obstacles to change maintained by the patriarchal society have been monumental. In my work environment, the positions of power were established in the time of Franco, and we have seen the continuation of

family dynasties connected through power.² The power is masculine, respectful of women only when they submit to commands or when they are heirs. This involves a system of incongruity, which includes gender violence, and prevents women from developing as equals among men. García de León (2011) suggests that, as a society, we are playing a gender game, which calls for deep and significant changes. The patriarchy, seeing the risk of losing legitimacy, responds by renewing itself with new versions of the same basic pattern.

The historical context of the fight for women's rights in Spain has changed greatly in the last 30 years. At the end of the 1980s, feminist intellectuals moved from pamphlets to the academy, creating gender studies departments in Spanish universities. Yet, today there is a void in the social sciences, as feminist authors have hardly been salvaged from oblivion, though their counterparts have been in other countries in close cultural proximity. Thus, we are missing the legitimacy of biography and autobiography—and remain dependent on English-language texts—seeing that *power is memory*.

In terms of the current situation, García de León (2011) describes the presence of “mirage spaces”—that is, public and cultural spaces where everything would lead us to believe that equality between women and men is real. Yet, these mirages specifically perpetuate an androcentric filter and consequently perpetuate historical discrimination against women.

The ultimate objective of the feminist movement, to unmask supposed “normality,” reemerges when this normality appears strictly in terms of legal achievements and does not correspond with social realities (Pujal, 2007). The negative perception of feminists as frustrated, hysterical, or

2. The University of Seville has itself displayed strong favoritism in the repeated appointments of administrators. The rectors being appointed have been vice-rectors of the previous administrations. From my point of view, there is certain obedience enforced by these dynasties, so that if a harasser has been a vice-rector, it is more likely that the institution will cover up any irregularities, like what happened in my case. The overall practice in Spanish universities, including many of the most important ones, is to use a system of universal suffrage to elect rectors. In Andalucía, the University of Seville is the only university that does not use this system of universal suffrage to elect rectors.

crazy is due to the fact that any group or individual defending a position of protest will disturb the people in power, who want nothing to change.

Such oppression occurs both at the level of social movements and at the individual level, as in the case of harassment. Any kind of feminism requires a re-reading of reality. Making the mechanisms of patriarchal power visible in the Painting Department is a disturbing re-reading that has led to violence toward those who make visible patriarchal power. Making visible the favoritism and nepotism ingrained in the university is a subversive action.³ Transgressive subversive action is also not exempt from social reaction and punishment: rejection, physical and psychological violence, ostracism, etc. As Pujal (2007) states, in order to keep such fears from being paralyzing, it is important to find contexts and participants capable of recognizing transgressive action. That is the social condition for possibility.

The Power of an Anonymous Message

The persona “Doctor Xin” was created by the artist Eva Guil. In the section on health and beauty in her blog, *Vidadada* (2007), Guil became Doctor Xin and responded to questions with surreal and Dadaist ways. Reading this blog, now gone, allowed me to experience the change in perspective, which I relate here.⁴

From the first event that triggered the most clearly aggressive stage of harassment in the workplace (in December 2006) to the present, I have received a number of anonymous messages. One of them was dated De-

3. It must be noted that another important factor in the workplace where this harassment has occurred is connected with the local power of the city of Seville, where images for Holy Week are a source of work, and funds are provided by the city patrimony (both public and private). In my department, there are not only painters, but also experts in restoration and preservation who have important contacts with *de facto* powers in the city: associations, brotherhoods, and others who possess religious effigies for the processions of Holy Week. When Sancho said, “We have come upon the Church,” he meant, “We have come upon power.”

4. This webpage no longer exists. The references have been taken from Rodríguez-Cunill, (2008) and from the materials left from the installation piece *Anonymous Sender*.

December 3, 2007 (Figure 1).

How can the artistic experience (exemplified by Doctor Xin) be connected with the anonymous message? Are there artistic means of healing and



Figure 1. Anonymous message (3 December 2007). Printscreen.

defense which can face the violence inflicted by power? Can concealment, falseness, and anonymity be made visible so as to stop the harassment, or does the process of making them visible serve only as a psychological aid? The harassment was not stopped, but it was transformed. The psychological support from artistic creation is undeniable in this case because it led to the creation of university networks which revealed violent harassment.

Workplace harassment is a psychosocial phenomenon in which isolation of one of the members is aimed at pushing the member out of the group system. Morale is damaged, and for this reason, part of the healing process involves creating a network of support so that the victim does not feel isolated. Collaborative art is often an instrument of healing. This essay is part of a long-term project to revisit modes of artistic creation occurring during and after the evolving process of harassment. The images

generated throughout this experience serve as resistance to the so-called glass ceiling—though now I prefer the image of a “glass rooftop”, since seeing the ceiling implies that you are inside the building and belong to a system that turns you into an “observer of ceilings,” while the ability to see the rooftops means that you can also see beyond.

The anonymous message reveals a supposed group action, or at least the intention of turning a particular “offense” into a group matter. After reporting this anonymous message to the authorities at the University of Seville, the university failed to act. I was worried that these real events might affect my sleep and my dreams. It had already happened not long before. One of the most aggressive stages of harassment came in March and April of 2007. I decided to escape my environment, to the extent that I could, and seize any opportunity to travel. Such an opportunity arose with the university expedition to Palestine between the 20th of April and 1st of May. The other women that I shared a room with had trouble sleeping from the very start of the trip on account of my screaming and crying while I slept. Before that, because I lived alone, I knew that I was waking up in bad shape, but ignored what was happening while I slept. My trip-mates recommended seeing a specialist. Getting away from my workplace was nevertheless beneficial. I found greater peace in my involvement with international cooperation in Gaza and the West Bank than I could in the Painting Department at the University of Seville.

With this history, I wondered if the anonymous message was affecting my unconscious. I tried using play, transforming with words. Alongside Jesús Forja (2007-2008) I had already delved into the *complaint form as a literary genre*, an experiment about distorting different perspectives on reality as they relate to the same problem.⁵

5. We knew from past experience that such complaints would not be resolved, since the process involved higher levels of favoritism and injustice. For this reason, knowing that the attempt to end an injustice would meet with a process that was even more unjust, at a certain point we decided to sit tight, but denounce the injustice in such a way that would make it visible, including through methods and comparisons which were surrealist, absurdist, and Dadaist. Throughout 2007 and 2008, we implemented these types of experiments in our daily lives.

I thought that the use of play would allow me to relativize the importance of the anonymous message and would be the first element of an exquisite corpse. So, with the objective of creating a distorted reading of the anonymous message, I made up a dream and sent it to Doctor Xin for her commentary. Of course, I did not tell her that the dream was actually made up. During this stage of psychological violence, I attempted to distance myself from the anonymous message, analyzing it from a perspective of non-victimization. The message I sent is seen in Figure 2.

The connection between the anonymous message and the dream is based on a series of distortions which are made clear in Table 1.

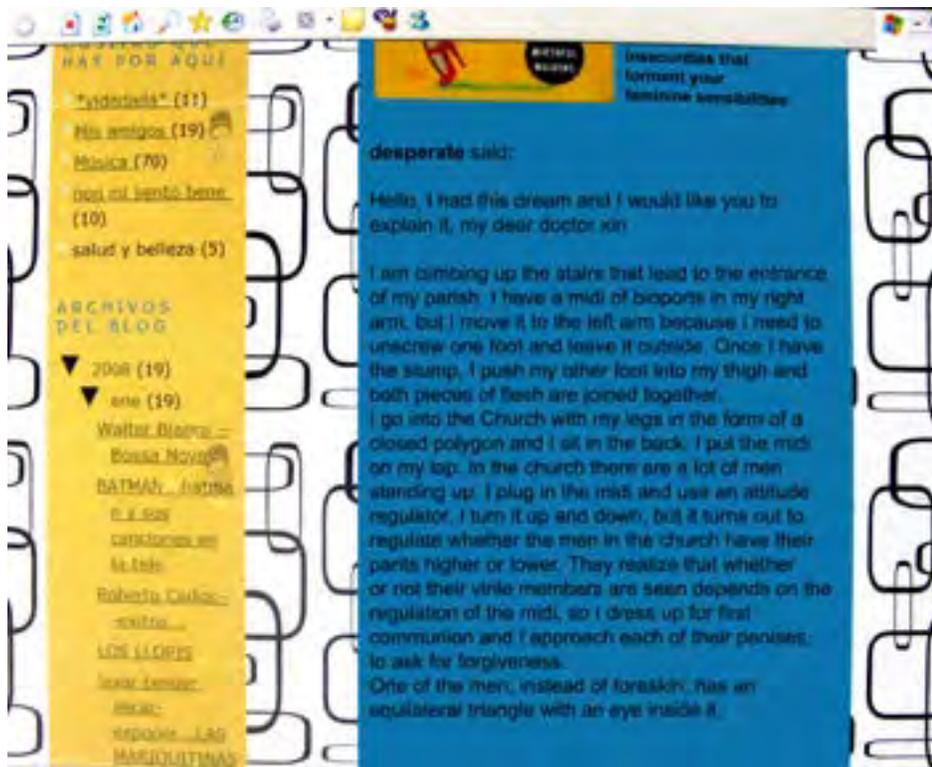


Figure 2. False dream (free version based on the anonymous message). Fragment of the mixed installation Anonymous Sender (2008).

Table 1
Corresponding Segments Between the Anonymous Message and the Made-up Dream

Text from the anonymous message	Text from the dream sent to Dr. Xin
I think you should modify your way of handling this issue.	I am climbing up the stairs that lead to the entrance of my parish. I have a midi ^a
Right now you have one foot inside and the other in the street .	of bioports ^b in my right arm, but I move it to the left arm because I need to unscrew one foot and leave it outside . Once I have the stump, I push my other foot into my thigh and both pieces of flesh are joined together.
I hope you moderate your attitude	I go into the Church with my legs in the form of a closed polygon and I sit in the back. I put the midi on my lap. In the church there are a lot of men standing up. I plug in the midi and use the attitude regulator .
because all of us in the department feel offended, and I hope that at the first opportunity, you ask the members for an apology .	I turn it up and down, but it turns out to regulate whether the men in the church have their pants higher or lower. They realize that whether or not their virile members are seen depends on the regulation of the midi, I dress for first communion and I approach each of their penises , to ask them for forgiveness .
Think about God .	One of the men, instead of foreskin, has an equilateral triangle with an eye inside it .
Using the revolutionary email service Opera : http://www.opera.com/mail/	Singing from the Opera, Carmen begins.

^a MIDI is the acronym for Musical Instrument Digital Interface, a protocol for standard serial communication enabling computers, synthesizers, sequencers, controllers, and other electronic musical devices to connect to each other and share information in order to generate sounds.

^b Like in the movie *eXistenZ* (1999), directed by David Cronenberg, a bioport is a port (with the same uses as a computer port) made of biological material.

The response of Doctor Xin is also included here, which I mistakenly believed would be the last element of the collective work (see Figures 3 and 4).

From that point, a series of fantastical texts were generated with airs of psychiatric terminology. In addition, part of the documentary *Jordi Mancat i Trèpanat* involved recordings related to this topic (Rodríguez-Cunill, 2011). The documentary portrays the vision of Doctor Xin, who explains that with all of the documents generated, the recipient of the anonymous message manages something which no other artist had done, “to make an anonymous aggressor participant in a work of art” (Rodríguez-Cunill, 2011). That was the origin of the installation piece *Anonymous Sender*, which has the type of dressing table that Snow White might have—or rather, the Queen—surrounded by delicate walls of cottony white, promising the appearance of a mirror. Hovering over this small altar, this place of anonymous communication adorned as in a fairy tale, there is a dark knot. As Gilbert and Gubar (2000) noted at the end of the 1970s, the Queen’s mirror on the wall illustrated the need felt by many women writers and artists to examine their own image and overcome the reflection of “the other” imposed by the canon of male writers. The subject line “Dear Imposter” begins by imposing a reading on the identity of the person who receives the anonymous message, reading which comes from a position of power, the power to silence and even to threaten the loss of the recipient’s job—“one foot inside and the other in the street,” as the anonymous sender claimed (Figure 1). Though it begins with an actual anonymous message, the journey of examining self-image in the installation piece *Anonymous Sender* reflects a journey of establishing myself as the subject of the text, with my own identity. Figure 5 outlines the creative steps that emerged after receiving the anonymous message.

Mobbing, Harassment, Workplace Bullying, Psychoterror, Victimization

Is there any correlation between the development of the visual idea and the stages described by psychologists regarding workplace harassment?



Figure 3. Introduction page for Doctor Xin's Consultancy. Fragment of the mixed installation *Anonymous Sender* (2008).

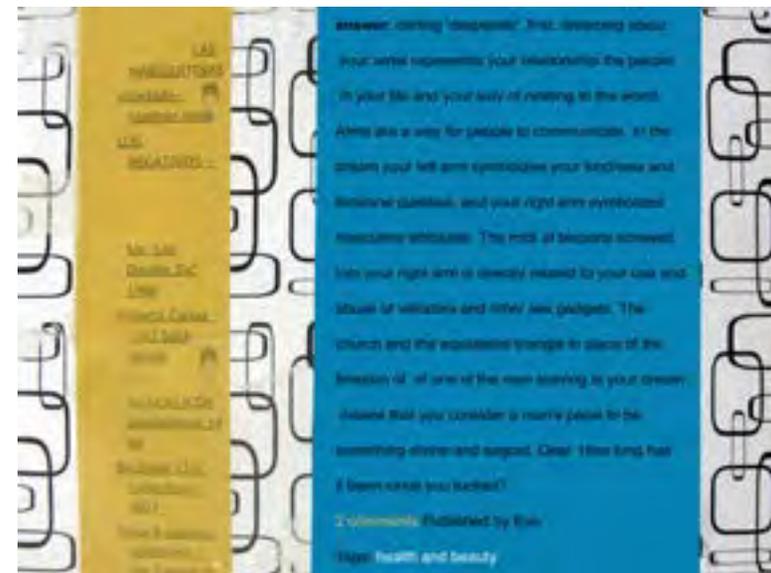


Figure 4. Doctor Xin's first interpretation of the false dream, by Doctor Xin. Fragment of the mixed installation *Anonymous Sender* (2008).

ing the victim’s work process, and ultimately getting the victim to leave the position.

In the developing research about workplace harassment, many authors have come to describe a stage prior to harassment in which not even the target is aware of the situation. The switch from this initial stage to one of clear violence is created by a triggering event. As early as 1996, Leymann described “critical incidents” in speaking about unresolved conflicts where stigmatization would lead to mobbing. Further research has described an initial stage of “seduction” (Parés, 2007), during which the victim is not aware of the web being woven through her interactions with members of the group. Most experts identify a change in the state of personal relationships from good or neutral to negative. This is explained by a prior stage of seduction. According to Parés (2007), a workplace conflict will not necessarily turn into harassment unless one of the parties initiates a strategy to influence, defeat, or oppress the other. For Parés, it is poor conflict resolution that leads to harassment. If occasional conflict is not resolved, it becomes chronic and then transforms into what we understand to be harassment. Such conflict is linked to the future victim’s questioning the authority of the leader. It is no coincidence that this questioning of power is present in the feminist struggle and is likewise at the source of the repressive stage of harassment.

Alpresa (2013) recently examined the painted works that I produced prior to the triggering event. Alpresa’s study considers the relationship between the surrealism evoked in the series *Crónicas Submarinas* and the pre-harassment situation. In that series, the place that represents my emotional base and my home, Cadiz, ended up being portrayed underwater in the year 2060. One painting showed a dark man waiting on the rooftop of the Santa Catalina Castle in Cadiz, unaffected by the coming of the tsunami. In others, I was portrayed with a hypertrophied head as everything became submerged in the water; in another, I had the head of a flying

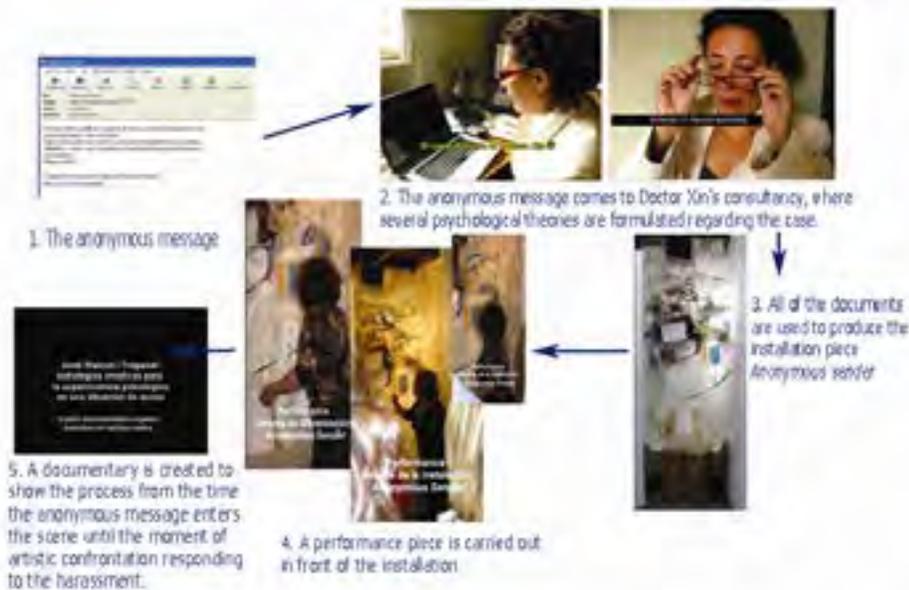


Figure 5. Creative examples stemming from the receipt of the anonymous message. Shots of Eva Guil acting as Doctora Xin in the film *Jordi Manca i Trèpanat* (2011) and images of the performance *Everyone looking for its nook and cranny* (2008).

The specialists describe certain stages, but also certain behavior or strategies that are put into practice, and as these continue over time, they become a part of the harassment itself. Leymann (1996) coined the term “mobbing” to characterize violence in workplace relations as a psychosocial problem. He also used other terms to describe this phenomenon such as “psychological terror” or “group harassment”. Today, the term “bullying” is the norm in English-speaking countries. Yet both terms refer to the same phenomenon, a process by which a group carries out extreme psychological violence against another person or persons. This is carried out systematically and repeatedly (once a week on average) and over a prolonged period of time (an average of six months) and is aimed at destroying the victim’s network of communication and reputation, disturb-

chicken.⁶ A few slight figures had been flattened, as if they had been run over by a steamroller, though they were nonetheless there (Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9). Beginning with the triggering event, my work started to be different, corresponding with my new situation. *Crónicas Submarinas...* fell into oblivion. I didn't even show it.

Appendix A offers a list of tactics that are employed in workplace harassment. Beginning with Leymann (1996), many authors have described these practices in order to distinguish between harassment and other toxic environments. The works respond to the instances of surveillance and watching.

My experience with the University of Seville's *Platform Against Harassment and for Democracy* confirms that there is a connection with being a woman and workplace harassment. In Spain, there is a problem related to judicial categories. Made a law in 2007, *The Act for Equal Opportunity for Women and Men (Ley Orgánica para la Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres)* defines sexual harassment and gender-based harassment, but it does not give comparable treatment to psychological harassment—or mobbing. The major difference is that one single act of sexual harassment is enough to be considered harassment, whereas workplace harassment or mobbing must go on for six months to have any legal repercussions for the harassers.

Matud, Velasco, Sánchez, del Pino, and Voltés (2013) explain that while workplace harassment negatively affects the mental health of everyone who suffers it, the effect is much greater in women than in men.

6. Alpresa (2013, p. 42) describes: “The theme of the chicken is connected to the ‘evil chicken,’ the ‘bare chicken,’ a mythological animal that announced the misfortune of the people. There is a parallel to the misfortune brought by this chicken in the misfortune that affects Inmaculada; her bad luck is evident as, *the sea level began to rise*; the intention was to harm her by ‘taking her life’ by drowning, leaving her unable to breathe. Our artist’s capacity for ‘flying’ is expressed in her daily experiences, her capacity for making us ‘fly’ and see through her canvases the birds-eye view shows us her essence as a masterful creator.”



Figure 6. *The Dark Man* (2005). Acrylic painting. 73 x 60 cms.



Figure 7. *The Soul Delivers Itself to the Water* (2005). Acrylic painting. 78 x 65 cms.



Figure 8. *Self-portrait as a Flying Chicken* (2005). Acrylic painting. 73 x 60 cms.

While the reason for this is unknown, the authors discuss the possibility that women might also be suffering from sexual harassment, which is still much more common for women, and the impact on mental health of sexual harassment is much greater than with other forms of workplace violence. However, this question calls for additional research and was not a factor in my case.⁷

Even with its severity, the psychological persecution that constitutes harassment is often developed with the acquiescence of the other members of the organization, who despite being fully aware of the abuse of power and injustice of the situation, opt for not interfering. The silence of the victim's coworkers is sometimes due to their own complicity or fear.

Visualizing the Act of Watching

Since the harassment is denied by almost everyone who participates in the mobbing, being able to see the harassment means that it is already at an advanced stage. In the initial stage, it is not recognized as mobbing even by the victims. For this reason, visualizing toxic communication and hostile contexts opens a certain path to healing by acknowledging the conflict before it can be concealed.⁸

7. However, rumors about my sexual orientation started.

8. Beginning with Leymann (1996) and allowing for some variations, mobbing is described in terms of four stages: conflict; stigmatization or mobbing (about six months); organizational intervention (being negative or positive); and expulsion or marginalization. If the process of mobbing is prolonged, this tends to increase the sense of culpability and leads to deterioration in the health of the person being harassed. The victim cycles through leaves of absence and reincorporation, increasing the stigmatization from the organization, which will then have more reasons to blame the conflict on the psychological problems of the victim. In this sense, the final resolution of the conflict is in many cases the expulsion of the victim from the position, and sometimes from the job market as a whole. This might happen in any number of ways: completely and definitively isolating the victim; repeatedly changing her position and responsibilities, dismissing her with compensation; granting an indefinite leave of absence; or requesting that the victim be admitted for psychiatric care.



Figure 9. *Soul, Dome and Tower* (2005). Acrylic painting. 78 x 65 cms.

Through a number of works created during the worst part of the harassment, I can now see a connection between the development of my artistic codes and the expression of distress already identified by psychologists in the process of harassment. This is explored in Figure 10.



Figure 10. *Lamp of Watchfulness* (2007) Object sculpture (sea urchins, iron and plastics, diameter of 40 cms.) and the email that accompanied it (printscreen).

Dreams of Marina D'Or was an installation piece shown in 2008, nine months after the creation of the *Lamp of Watchfulness*, which was placed on a bedside table as a watch guard for nightmares in the bedroom. This installation also included another work dedicated to surveillance, *The Watch Guard of Anal and Vaginal Orifices* (Figure 11). Conceived as a bedroom object close to our dreams, it is placed among nocturnal experiences. The sensation of being watched was a constant element in my dreams. Even in the most private moments, in the middle of the night, I would go to the bathroom, and I would still feel intimidated by surveillance even in the most private places.



Figure 11. *The Watch Guard of Anal and Vaginal Orifices* (2007). Composition with the object sculpture. Spittoon and polyester. Diameter of 21 cms. 32 cms high.

This devastating effect on the security and privacy of my personal experience was greatly shaping my life. As such, it is fitting to end the description of works about surveillance with a self-portrait, *The Hyper-watchful Watched Woman* (Figures 12 to 16).

One of the most devastating psychological effects in cases of workplace harassment is the feeling of being constantly vigilant, of trying to be more watchful than the watchers in order to avoid future blows, learning through the repeated situations of harassment. The installation piece *The Hyper-watchful Watched Woman* was developed with the strong presence of this alertness. Hyper-watchfulness is associated with highly traumatic situations and post-traumatic stress. Such alertness may occur in many overwhelming situations, and episodes of harassment repeated in a short space of time create such a state of hyper-watchfulness as a logical defense mechanism, where because of the repeated attacks the victim is watching out for any sign that something is wrong or could go

wrong in order to be prepared to face danger or run. Hyper-watchfulness can be extremely unhealthy and may remain present for years even after the situation of stress or danger has subsided. Taking on a state of hyper-watchfulness is common in war and in situations of continued conflict.

This is one of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress that I learned about through the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, an NGO that provides mental health services to people who live in the Gaza Strip. The organization aims to help women and children who have suffered from torture or human rights violations. If after a continued period of harassment in my workplace (a war against one person), there is a period in which war does not seem to be present, it is because of the existence of politics, which as Foucault (1987) explains, serves to sanction and maintain the inequality of force that manifests itself during war. In this sense, surveillance is a tool imposed by political control, the control of bodies, as with the panopticon.⁹

The self-portrait installation *The Hyper-watchful Watched Women* has a centralized structure. The head is made of glass; it is transparent (the gaze of others can pierce her mind), and she watches everything happening around her because she feels watched, just as the individuals locked in the cells of the panopticon know that they can always be watched, even if they are not actually being watched all the time. The permanence of the state of being watched creates in the prisoner (and in the target of harassment) a psychological effect, which ultimately causes the prisoner to carry out self-surveillance. It was this horrible sensation, this state of

9. Foucault (1977) describes a panopticon as follows:

... at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. (p. 200)



Figure 12. *The Hyper-watchful Watched Women*. Varying dimensions. Head: diameter of 120 cms. Total height 180 cms. Glass, polyester, doll eyes and legs, sea urchins, hair, mussels, fishing nets, sand. This piece was also part of the event in the Cultural Center of Villa de San José de la Rinconada, as *Our Lady of Metamorphosis and All Changes*.

being watched that I wanted to make visible in the work. Just as with the panopticon, where any common project that might arise among those locked up is made impossible, contact with others is likewise impossible in the self-portrait. The sharp spines of the sea urchins prevent it. The self-surveillance described by Foucault becomes hyper-watchfulness, where we are not physically locked up, but locked in time (in the sense that the workplace relationships that existed previously are gone). It is a type of mobile watchfulness, in the space of relationships rather than in physical isolation.

The eyes of *The Hyper-watchful Watched Woman* already form part of her, as she attempts to see not only from the eyes of her face, but also all

Figure 13, 14. Detail from The Hyper-watchful Watched Women.



Figures 15 & 16. Details from The Hyper-watchful Watched Women.



Figure 17. Our Lady of Metamorphosis and All Changes, altarpiece for the false Basilica by the same name where the alter ego of the performer, Jordi Mancat i Trèpanat was baptized. 25 x 30 x 20 mtrs.

Figure 18. Detail from Our Lady of Metamorphosis and All Changes. (2008). Photographies, fishnets, plastics.



the way around the freestanding sculpture. Crying as a healing element comes down through the tray, which collects all of the tears from the thousand eyes embodied in the sea urchin spines, and continues down to the marine base, where healing mussels catch the cries as they reach the sand. The adaptation of the initial elements (sea urchins and eyes) serves as a way of visualizing what was described by Eysenck (1992). In the state of hyper-watchfulness, our attention is distracted by any irrelevant stimuli, and our sight is affected by a high rate of rapid eye movement. The eyes of each sea urchin, used for watching, are also pierced by now-stiff spines that were once moving when the sea urchins were alive.

This piece, *The Hyper-watchful Watched Woman*, along with the healing effects of crying and the tiny sea mussels, mark the beginning of the final shift in the visual codes relating to surveillance and hyper-watchfulness that developed in the works created during the process of harassment. Recognizing in myself the state of hyper-watchfulness, I began a process of transformation. The image of healing cries reach the beach, the base, where soothing mussels appear, offering massages of a certain kind of healing from the depths of the pain.

A year after showing *The Hyper-watchful Watched Woman*, the same sculpture became part of a pseudo-religious altarpiece. Placed as the Virgin in an altar constructed in a cultural center in San José de la Rinconada, the sculpture inspired the name for the structure: The Basilica of Our Lady of the Metamorphosis and All Changes (Figures 17 and 18). Rising from below, as a sacred effigy that will crown all future performances, this is the last example from the set of works created during the most aggressive stage of workplace harassment in 2007 and 2008.

Conclusions

In the creative process, something anecdotal (images, smells, sensations, episodes) may serve as the starting point for the genesis of an idea. With situations of violence, it is easy to be left with the traumatic memory of what happened. So, what can be done with this? As workers of image, we have means of expressing everything that affects us, both positively

and negatively. Art once again reveals itself as recourse for healing even when violence is psychological. This psychological violence is the *Lamp of Watchfulness*. It is the constant surface of pain. It is the stare of power with malicious intent that helps push the creation of a cycle of even greater watchfulness to the point of becoming *The Hyper-watchful Watched Woman*. From a feminist perspective, psychological violence is marked by the androcentric stare of power developed as with the panopticon. What can be done? We begin to see our capacity for forging images that serve as defense. In this sense, social movements are a great source of knowledge. Before the triggering event of the harassment happened, in the summer of 2006, I explored the abilities of the Mexican people who were fighting for their rights using artistic expression (Rodríguez-Cunill, 2007). Sharing such knowledge is essential to realizing the depth and breadth of codes and sensibilities among beings all around the world. When there is a common objective or a common situation of oppression, the fight of communities becomes part of a struggle for social transformation. Yet this logic of transformation also corresponds to the resistance against those who hold the privilege of power. This game of power is based on oppression rather than on the development of our abilities (ability to be, ability to do). Such violence is hard to detect in the most fine-tuned actions of certain groups, as in the University.

Why is this period of creation of works of watchfulness ending? Once the surveillance is made visible, those who apply it change their behavior, but this endless process continues in the oppressive patriarchal system. The control currently in place is carried out through the limitation of my professional career. The system itself promotes further surveillance; the department chair accesses information about your studies, your research, and your administrative processes and the situation is tainted with the episodes of harassment.

Women have used art as a means of overcoming and healing, as well as strengthening, in situations of extreme crisis¹⁰ that may include the injustices of dictatorships, wars, repression, and discrimination and now harassment and gender-related violence in day-to-day life, in the workplace, at home, in the street.

When I decided to file a complaint, the pre-existing social equilibrium generated by a dominant social order fell apart. In examining feminism or any type of social transformation, there is a presupposed life crisis produced by the imbalance, the ambiguity and the disorientation which are provoked by the distress and suffering of transition. As Pujal (2007) states “This critical dimension—this personal distress—is the result of breaking the previous social balance (through subversive practice) and, if the transformation is to succeed, it must go hand in hand with a critical vision of the previous balance” (p. 12).

For this reason, it was important to analyze my own subjectivity. The situation prior to the harassment *appeared* to be equal, which was made clear when I brought up that there had been a failure of equality and after that when I began to receive violent responses. As I noted in my blog: “They don’t hate me for what I said but for having said it at all” (Rodríguez-Cunill, 2009). The nepotism was *not allowed* to be seen, even if the injustices, which favored members of family dynasties, were obvious.

It is likewise important to examine my actions during this period of surveillance: state of shock, creation (during my first leave of absence), impotence, urgent need to clear up every single accusation against me, sedentary state (yet an extraordinary amount of paperwork from the different complaints, both inside and outside of the University), state of hyper-alertness. I experienced physical and psychological deterioration, anxiety (post-traumatic stress), insomnia, reliving instances of violence

10. During the dictatorship in Chile, *Mujeres por la Vida* brought together many women to participate in acts of symbolic disobedience (Reyes, 2011). Prison experiences in Mexico have caused women to join the Festival de la Palabra in awareness programs such as the one in the Femenil de Readaptación Social (Ferrini, 1983), the protests of the WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise), and Amnesty International, turning into other artistic acts all over the world (Rodríguez-Cunill, 2009).

(in memories and nightmares), psoriasis, etc. With the distance offered by time, it all seems terrifying. I’m glad I am able to tell the story.

I wonder if those who harass or who normalize harassment are aware that it is not this or that episode which defines the harassment, but rather the overall experience of the process, and its effect on the physical and psychological deterioration of a person. Seeing this over time begs the question: How is it possible for a person with an impeccable professional trajectory to find overnight that every project at work is failing, that she is given bad references, that there are rumors of unfulfilled professional responsibilities? Facts speak, and so do results. In my department, many people are aware that my story revealing all of this discrimination would be harmful to them, since they were favored by the system.

What have I personally learned while examining the act of watching during my process of artistic resistance?

Resilience. Now, as I have suggested, the surveillance is much more refined. When some occurrence returns me to a state of anxiety, now the echoes do not last two or three weeks, but rather two or three days at most. As a result, my health is improving. Resilience can even establish art as a way of life. My only option was to transform with the blows, gaining greater flexibility, which was useful for someone who would make the role of the artist one of social transformation. I create liquid art, which manifests in different shapes. For me, the traditional and androcentric vision of the artist is failing, as painting has become an object of consumption, just another product. The forms of the future are others, not yet ruined by the idea of male genius, which will allow for the expression of voices once silenced, the voices of women. The demonization of silenced women will take on other shapes in the complex societies in which we live.

Furthermore, my ability to make harassment visible (through my participation in distribution lists and media outlets) has connected me to visual codes that go beyond what was strictly painting. I have learned from the transformative connection generated by collective works.

What have I learned about the culture of visual arts in which I live? We need to work harder to unveil the mirages. No matter how developed our laws on equality for women are, the regulations do not stand up to the force of a normalized and unjust reality. Work done in Spain in the last decade has marked the next steps, with the pioneer *Manifiesto Arco 2005*, which demanded that the public administration adopt practical measures for implementing gender equality in the arts, in addition to the work of organizations such as the Institute of Women, and the MAV (Women's Visual Arts Association) that are working on this issue. "The second challenge—developing simultaneously—is how to be part of an exercise of power in the symbolic order of language, and in the real system that constructs the world (Méndez, 2001).¹¹

In Spain, despite evidence that speaks of anonymous women in the arts, the main social players insist on denying that gender or race or ethnicity have anything to do with which artists or works receive recognition and status. In the arts, there is still a guiding principle of authority. Certain predecessors set the measure, and the imitators follow, and in every activity, our societies continue to assign men with the role of setting the measure (Méndez, 2011).

There are things that have changed in the last 30 years. In addition to a majority of female students in the university, women gallery workers and curators are no longer an exception. Yet, the internationally recognized galleries only dedicate about 11 to 23 percent of their exhibitions to women artists. This scarce presence in exhibitions limits the acquisition of works by women and comes as a result of the androcentric bias in the politics of exhibitions (Méndez, 2011). For this reason, it is essential to create a vision of and visibility for women as visual creators. I believe that this must be on the agenda of the Spanish feminist movement.

To conclude, I want to share a comment (M. Soler, personal correspondence, January 4, 2014), from the first version of this essay. Like a

11. Because of this, in my current painting classes, I have taken a side, and most of the examples I use come from the hands (heads and bodies) of women. When I was a student, this kind of positive discrimination was not used in any of the classes, even though women formed 65 percent of the student body.

manifesto, it offers an important and unifying vision regarding the need to visualize the resistance and transformation implied in adopting a role as a woman creator in the area of the arts (Figure 19).



Figure 19. *Manifiesto* (2014). Marta Soler.

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Appendix A: List of Tactics Present in Workplace Harassment

A study from the Workplace Bullying Institute found that the following tactics are the most common in workplace harassment (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2013). In addition, a number of other experts and institutions name similar tactics as abusive behavior in the workplace. These are widely available on the Internet.

1. falsely accused someone of “errors” not actually made (71%)
2. stared, glared, was nonverbally intimidating and was clearly showing hostility (68%)
3. discounted the person’s thoughts or feelings (“oh, that’s silly”) in meetings (64%)
4. used the “silent treatment” to “ice out” & separate from others (64%)
5. exhibited presumably uncontrollable mood swings in front of the group (61%)
6. made up own rules on the fly that even she/he did not follow (61%)
7. disregarded satisfactory or exemplary quality of completed work despite evidence (discrediting) (58%)
8. harshly and constantly criticized having a different “standard” for the Target (57%)
9. started, or failed to stop, destructive rumors or gossip about the person (56%)
10. encouraged people to turn against the person being tormented (55%)
11. singled out and isolated one person from co-workers, either socially or physically (54%)
12. publicly displayed “gross,” undignified, but not illegal, behavior (53%)

Author Note

This article includes some of the images from the catalog *Felicidad en el Inmozo* (Rodríguez-Cunill, 2008); however, these are presented here as part of a study on oppression and resistance with a scope that goes beyond the texts and images presented in the catalog, created as a compilation of pieces from daily harassment in my workplace, the Painting Department of the University of Seville.

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