

Names and Coordinates Series, 2020-2022

33 artworks

Ink on tracing paper

Brought together here for the first time for public exhibition, this series of works reflects on gender violence in Mexico. On a sheet of tracing paper, Gina Arizpe has handwritten the names of women who have been murdered in each state of the Republic of Mexico, as well as the coordinates where their bodies were found. The timeline of the entirety of works that comprise this project stretches from 1985 to 2022.

This series initiated with *Ciudad Juárez (1985-2019)*. By surfing the Internet, Arizpe researched data gathering sources in order to produce her own work: a compilation of the names of murdered women listed on a variety of non-official media. This was initially based on *These Women Have Names*, a digital cartography of feminicides committed from 1985 to the present date. Arizpe also references *I Speak Your Name: A map of feminicides in Mexico*, by María Salguero Bañuelos.

For the next work in the series, *Estado de México (2016-2019)*, Arizpe reduced the timeline of her investigation. While the percentage of women who disappeared may seem similar, unlike Ciudad Juárez, the time period covered here is significantly shorter. Here, she added blogs to her investigation like *Hey, Claudia and The Seawitches*, comprised of women on social networks who register their searches for the missing.

The textured quality of these drawings references textiles and embroidery; the interweaving of fibers becomes a metaphor for the social fabric of the nation. How might visual arts be used to materialize such data? The question here is the visibility of the topic at hand: through these works, Arizpe has shared the efforts of others and signaled a nationwide problem of violence towards women.

Temporary Employment (Access), 2019-2021 Installation

Temporary Employment (Access) is an accumulation of artifacts commissioned by Gina Arizpe from Don Tomás, a blacksmith from the Miguel Hidalgo district of Mexico City. The context of these elements is violence. "*Ponchallantas*", or tire punchers, are used by criminals in various states nationwide to cause damage to pneumatics during kidnappings or high-speed car chases.

Their formal characteristics are evocative of the danger and vulnerability of transit throughout the Republic of Mexico. The title of the piece echoes the precariousness characteristic of labor conditions for a large sector of the population.

This installation puts the relationship between body and work into play in order to declare the impossibility of making progress through personal effort, as well as the implications of dedicating one's life to a trade that revolves around the body. Likewise, the capitalism and neoliberalism that compel someone to do this out of necessity are referenced, which does not necessarily mean that Don Tomás himself is a criminal. The chain of command in organized crime is questioned, while the viewer's gaze is directed at the subject in charge of carrying out this task. How many individuals today would describe their tailored or "custom" work as their only means of survival?

Without a Trace, 2012

Wall projection

In 2012, The Ford Foundation invited Gina Arizpe to participate in *Migrant Suitcases*, an exhibition organized in collaboration with the Museo Memoria y Tolerancia in Mexico City. The artists' task was to intervene a suitcase with a budget of \$500 pesos. Given the complexity of the migratory phenomenon, Arizpe declined to purchase production materials and intervened instead in a sculpture, using the budgeted amount to fill the suitcase with foodstuffs and objects that might be necessary during a migrant's border crossing. As a political gesture, she delivered these goods to Carlos Guzmán Pineda, a migrant from Honduras on his way to Houston, Texas. Her refusal to produce an artwork related to the migrant crisis responds to an urgent need to signal the impermanence of bodies in transit, lives that escape one abyss only to find themselves on the verge of another.

Progress, 2019

Color video

17'47"

Gina Arizpe's main artistic tool is the street. Outside the studio is where she finds a more suitable arena for reflection. *Progress* portrays a boy from Oaxaca who learned to play the trumpet in the Esperanza Azteca orchestra, and who currently works with his father playing on the streets of Mexico City. He was asked to play the Mexican Military Taps along Progreso Avenue in the Escandón neighborhood, which crosses streets named Prosperity, Commerce, and Patriotism before reaching Revolution Avenue.

Progress calls into question the achievements of modernity and development projected from the start of the 20th century through the construction of neighborhoods that at the time, were a symbol of progress and advancement. The boy, as a beneficiary of the social welfare system, is compelled to convey the knowledge he has acquired in order to survive. Dystopia takes the form of child labor on the streets, where a boy's preparations for a better future, like those of his parents, have been obliterated.

Javy, Chris, George, and John, 2011

Textiles

These works form part of the project *Social Cost* developed in Los Angeles, California. In this series, Gina Arizpe conveys her artistic practice once again through urban dynamics, shedding light on what tends to go unnoticed. For nearly three months, Arizpe explored the streets of Los Angeles, reflecting on homelessness. She carried out an exchange with the people who were sleeping rough: she offered to trade their clothes for new ones, using them to fashion mats placed at the entrance of buildings and sites that represent power in the city, such as a bank, a museum, or the headquarters of a newspaper.

Through the series *In their Shoes*, the artist questions hierarchies of might, contrasting the mat as a decorative item with cardboard carpets —where the people whose clothes she used to fashion the mats sleep. Arizpe positions us before the doormat as a truly invisible object, given that the act of obliviously stepping over it is representative of the asymmetric social relations by which a sector of the population can be made to disappear without a trace.

On the Street/Covered Body, 2014

Action in ten tempos

Digital print

Gina Arizpe lived for nearly seven years between Los Angeles, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, and Monterrey in a state of instability that caused her to interrogate survival on the streets.

A constant in the work of this artist is the use of her body as a vehicle for reflection regarding absences and issues related to historically vulnerable and vulnerated groups. Likewise, a recurring praxis in her work is concealment, thus signaling that something else has been covered up as well.

In this series of photographs, a prostrate body, covered by a sheet, is captured on the streets of Los Angeles. By portraying herself covered on the ground this way, Arizpe becomes an absent subject.

Roll Call, 2012

210 pieces of fabric on a stretcher

Gina Arizpe's processes involve long-term investigations and bonds. *Roll Call* forms part of a project that reflects on dropping out of school; hence, the artist invited boys and girls who find themselves in that situation to exchange their worn clothes for new ones. She initially contacted Colectivo La 15, who promoted her collaboration with students and teachers of Universitario Bauhaus, as well as a group of parents from the Enrique Rebsamen elementary school in Puebla; groups of weavers were formed to create *On the Carpet* out of the material they had gathered.

On the other hand, the name of each child was transcribed on small sections of fabric in order to name these affected minors and make them visible. Arizpe's objective here was to reflect on unequal access to education. At the time, Puebla was the state with one of the highest school dropout rates in Mexico.

Structural Fragility, 2021-2022

Installation

Parting from an immersion in urban dynamics, Gina Arizpe perceives here the fissures present in social structures. This installation, completed *ex profeso* for this exhibition, emerged out of the consequences of the pandemic for Lupita Miranda who, before the outbreak of the public health emergency, worked as a cleaning woman in the construction industry. After she lost her job, she started to fashion these houses in order to exchange them on the streets for household necessities.

This series materializes the instability, disorder, and improvisation that a precarious public housing system leads to, not to mention an impoverished peripheral economy. Arizpe imagines both the fault lines at the core of society and how this structural fragility could very well cause everything to collapse.

Without a Trace, 2013

Action

Digital print

Starting in 1999 and over the course of 13 years, Gina Arizpe's initial artistic stage took place as a member of the collective *marcelaygina*. Parting from this project, her creative focus began to gravitate toward themes such as identity, the body, labor, borders, migration, and exclusion. However, at the start of 2011, she decided to embark on a solo career.

In 2013, she initiated an action in the desert of Samalayuca, on the outskirts of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Parting from the idea of disappearance, the artist walked into the desert dragging a tire tied to her waist in order to erase any trace of her footsteps in the sand, thus modifying the trail her body left behind while walking in order to question the concept of transcendence. Through her performance, registered in this series of photographs, Gina Arizpe returned to actions, using her body to make visible the vulnerability of walking through the desert alone, under the sun, erasing the imprint of her feet on the sand, as well as any chance of retracing her own steps. This also symbolized a ritual regarding her own disappearance as a member of a collective creative entity.

A Question of Time, 2018

Projection over a woven stretcher

For Gina Arizpe, art holds the possibility of questioning the circumstances of our lives. This installation is one of the results of a research project that lasted from 2014 to 2018. The action we observe in the video took place at SAPS and consisted of a space where two women, Yina Santos and Liliana Chávez Chávez, transformed cotton fibers into thread using a spindle. Weaving this material little by little, the stretcher gradually concealed the bodies of the women from the gazes of passersby. Through this nearly imperceptible gesture, the artist signals the gravity of the violent context that has been experienced by women in this country for a long time.

For many years, Ciudad Juárez was considered to be the only place where feminicides took place while in reality, they were occurring all over the country. The title is a reference to the current status of gender violence and its latent risks, as well as its relentlessness.