

Claudia Joskowicz

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Claudia Joskowicz is an artist who works primarily with film, video, installation and digital media. Her practice centers on history and its narrative, considering how popular media circulates and shapes collective memory, contemporary history and social realities. Using long and slow video footage and oscillating between film and photography, she reproduces moments captured from global collective memories and personal stories (her own and others') that have a historical dimension and are anchored in her native Latin American landscape. For most of her career, she has focused on the Latin American landscape, producing work in her home country of Bolivia and South America at large. Her early video work was staged as minimalist reenactments - with attention to the figure and the landscape and honing in on gesture and subtle movement - and has moved towards re-imagined cinematic stagings of landscapes, urban and otherwise, where nuanced political drama unfolds in real time. The landscape and built environment are main characters throughout her work, as are the structural elements, drawing attention to the media's role in constructing historical events, and our memories of them.

Joskowicz has exhibited widely in the United States and internationally and her work is in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim Museum, NY; the Kadist Foundation, San Francisco, the Cisneros Fontanals Foundation, Miami, and the Banco Central de la República, Bogotá. Joskowicz has received numerous awards and grants including a NYFA Fellowship in film/video, an Anonymous Was a Woman Award, a Cisneros Fontanals Foundation Mid Career Artist's Commission, a Guggenheim fellowship in film/video, and a Fulbright Scholar award. She has been a fellow at Yaddo, the Latin American Roaming Art Project, Oaxaca, Mexico, the Sacatar Institute, Bahia, Brazil, the AIM program at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, NY and the LMCC's Workspace and Paris residencies.

All works in the following pages can be accessed through direct links in each page or through her website at www.joskowicz.com.



Video still from [Landscape and Memory](#), a web video/interview produced for the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative in 2015

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Parallels (2020); Two channel 4k video installation; ~20 minutes; color; sound.

Work in progress, the following excerpt is available as an example of image and rhythm and it will soon be updated with a longer rough cut with sound.

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/483200935> **Password:** parallels

This two channel video continues an exploration of the city of El Alto, Bolivia that I began with *Every Building on Avenida Alfonso Ugarte—After Ruscha* (2011) which documents everyday movement in the city five years after Evo Morales was elected President on the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) ticket bringing an era of dramatic social change in Bolivia. Morales' administration brought unprecedented economic growth, a new movement of individual pride and respect to all of Bolivia's ethnic group and did away with the homogeneity project of the previous half century. Ironically, the Morales era has also brought about a decline in women's rights, and a rise in LGTB hate crimes and femicide in Bolivia.

Using a Cholet* as setting and a match of female lucha libre wrestlers as narrative device, this piece focuses on the psychological construction of the city and, by extension, the construction of identity and superficial image of female empowerment that the government has exported abroad. Both the extravagant location and the event perform identity as the camera faithfully registers the spectacle along with audience reactions as a loose citation to Guy Debord's situationist film *In Girum Imus Nocte Et Consumimur Igni: a Film* (1978) of which Debord wrote: "the theme of the film is not the spectacle, but real life."



Video Stills



Production Photographs

Additional context for the film is that Morales' mandate has been framed in blatant machismo exemplified by the circulation of sexist jokes and questionable behavior by the president himself. Prevalent across party lines, these attitudes have extended to modifications of constitutional law that now enable suspected femicides, rapists and pedophiles to serve reduced sentences. A few months after this video was shot, multiple accusations of pedophilia and rape have surfaced against Morales himself as the country experienced political turmoil in the form of a coup and his return after a temporary exile.

The fabric of El Alto has also visually changed in the Morales era as a burgeoning bourgeoisie favors a new Andean architectural style specific to the city of El Alto that brings traditional Andean and Tiwanaku cultures into an urban setting that has served to reinvent a city previously aesthetically monochromatic. *These structures have been called "Cholets," a term derived from the word chalet [large house] and chola [indigenous woman]]. Cholets are now ubiquitous throughout the city thanks to an economic boom that Morales' government attributes to his macroeconomic policies.

Claudia Joskowicz

La niña de sus ojos (2020); Three channel 4k video installation; ~20 minutes; color; sound.

Work in progress, the following excerpt is available as a short example of image and rhythm in one of three channels, it will soon be updated with a longer rough cut that includes all channels.

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/483265434> Password: ojos

A companion piece to *Parallels* (2020), *La niña de sus ojos*, is a loose adaptation of a classic novel of Bolivian folk literature by the same name (Antonio Díaz Villamil, La Paz 1948), that tells the story of the daughter of an indigenous market vendor and a carpenter who returns home after years at a privileged catholic boarding school reserved for the Bolivian upper classes. A study of Bolivia's multiethnic composition, the story accurately describes scenes and customs of quotidian mid-century Bolivian life relying on the discourse of "mestisaje" (mixed ethnicity) popular amongst the intellectual elites of the period directly preceding the 1952 revolution (a revolution that brought universal suffrage to the country) who sought to abolish the country's racial and economic split creating a mestizo nation where economic and racial integration was crucial. The mestisaje project, both in the book and at large, was delivered through a perversely misogynist lens.

The story (in the installation and not the novel) follows the main character in the interiors and surroundings of her family's house set in El Alto, a satellite city of Bolivia's capital located in the highland plateau of the Andes and one of the largest and fastest growing urban centers in the country and South America at large. The character and her house both physically and psychologically manifest the discrepancies in the constructions of her idealized fictional persona, oscillating between the unrealistic physical spaces described in the book and the urban fabric of the city of El Alto. Using the home as the anchor of the story, this project simultaneously adapts and deconstructs the novel into a three screen installation. Each screen retells the book's story from a different point of view. The main, center screen is a single style interview shot from the perspective of a present day main character inside her family house who narrates and revises the book and offering hindsight commentary.



Video Stills

Claudia Joskowicz

Duelo (2020) Installation with wood, dirt, and chairs; variable dimensions

Essay film that accompanies this installation is currently in production

In August and September of 2019 the Bolivian Chiquitanía was devastated by forest fires which have become the worst environmental catastrophe in the history of the country.

Formally, this installation is located in the space between the two meanings of the Spanish word “Duelo” which is defined by the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy as:

1. n. Fight or fight between two, as a result of a challenge or challenge.

n. Confrontation between two people or between two groups.

2. n. Pain, grief, sorrow, mourning.

n. Gathering of relatives, friends or guests attending the mortuary house, driving the corpse to the cemetery, or funerals.

Using burned wood sourced from the forest fires of 2019, *Duelo* is a physical manifestation of loss and brings the site in confrontation with the viewer. This catastrophe, along with the government – which was led at that time by Evo Morales’ MAS party – having brokered a 70-year deal with Germany’s privately-owned ACI Systems to develop its massive Uyuni salt flat and build a lithium hydroxide plant, brought on massive protests and the eventual overthrow of the government.



Installation view at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Santa Cruz, Bolivia for the XXI Bienal Internacional de Arte de Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 2020

Claudia Joskowicz

Some Dead Don't Make a Sound (2015); 2K Single Channel Video; 10:30 minutes; color; sound.

3 Minute Excerpt Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/145823422>

10:30 Minute Full Length Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/123205104> password: llorona

'Some Dead Don't Make a Sound' (Hay muertos que no hacen ruido) uses the Mexican legend of the Weeping Woman, (La Llorona), as an allegory for a nation in mourning. La Llorona's myth is present throughout Mexican culture and Latin American folklore at large. According to the story, she is the ghost of a woman who has killed her children and now cries desperately while roaming cities at dawn from rivers to main squares, often causing misfortune to those who are near. In its different versions, the legend preserves elements of its indigenous essence (originating in Oaxaca) and represents time, the road to the underworld, death in the supernatural, and hopelessness in the everyday. La Llorona knows of the fate of her descendants and is impotent to do anything about it. Therefore, she is emblematic of despair- a reference to several violent events of the last decade that have taken place in the Mexican landscape, amongst them, the events of September 26, 2014, when 43 students of the Normal Rural School of Guerrero Raul Isidro Burgos were murdered and the violent protests of June 2006 after the eviction of a teachers' strike in the city of Oaxaca's main square. Registering shots of the city's quotidian life in a slow and powerful journey from Oaxaca's main square (el Zócalo) to the Teatro Macedonio Alcalá, this video captures the subtleties of pain and struggle present in those moments when the mundane is confused with the mystical.



Installation at Die Ecke Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago, Chile 2017



Video Stills

Claudia Joskowicz

Los rastreadores (2014); two channel digital HD video; 23 minutes; color; sound.

5 Minute Excerpt Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/120809272>

23 Minute Full Length Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/100538742> password: rastreadores

Los Rastreadores is set in Bolivia and very loosely inspired by John Ford's American Western classic film *The Searchers*. It does not attempt to recreate the film but adapts its major themes where the similarities lie in the use of landscape and depictions of race and alienation. Thematically, although particular to the physical and psychological American landscape, the questions of race, kinship, identity, status, and responsibilities in *The Searchers* are akin to those in present day Bolivia. Since the colonial period, native Bolivian Indians have pursued integration to a white/mestizo society and land (and landscape) plays a large part of their existence. The coca plant has been a vital part of their religious cosmology from the pre-Inca period through the present, used for medicinal, cultural, and religious purposes. As the source for cocaine, it has also become a large source of unaccounted income for the country, bringing millions of dollars to the informal sector of the economy. Bolivia is the world's second largest producer of cocaine having produced its share of infamous drug lords. Cocaine is usually fabricated on the other side of the country, the Bolivian amazon, and the economic influx has helped shape the modern metropolis that is now my hometown of Santa Cruz. The main character in *Los Rastreadores*, Ernesto Suarez, is a drug lord who, recently released from a Miami prison, returns to his home in Santa Cruz only to immediately depart in search of his family's only surviving members after a home invasion. The search taking him towards the opposite side of the county. Ernesto's character is modeled after Roberto Suárez Gómez, a Bolivian drug trafficker nicknamed "king of cocaine" and the most powerful drug lord in Bolivian history.

Los Rastreadores merges and distills issues of race, belonging, class systems, and alienation into a minimal narrative that condenses the massacre of Ernesto's family, the kidnapping of his daughter, and his departure to search for her. Using silences and voice-overs rather than traditional dialogue it centers on the power of myth where literal events operate as a displacement for the political discourse in the country.



Installation at CIFO Art Space, Miami, 2014

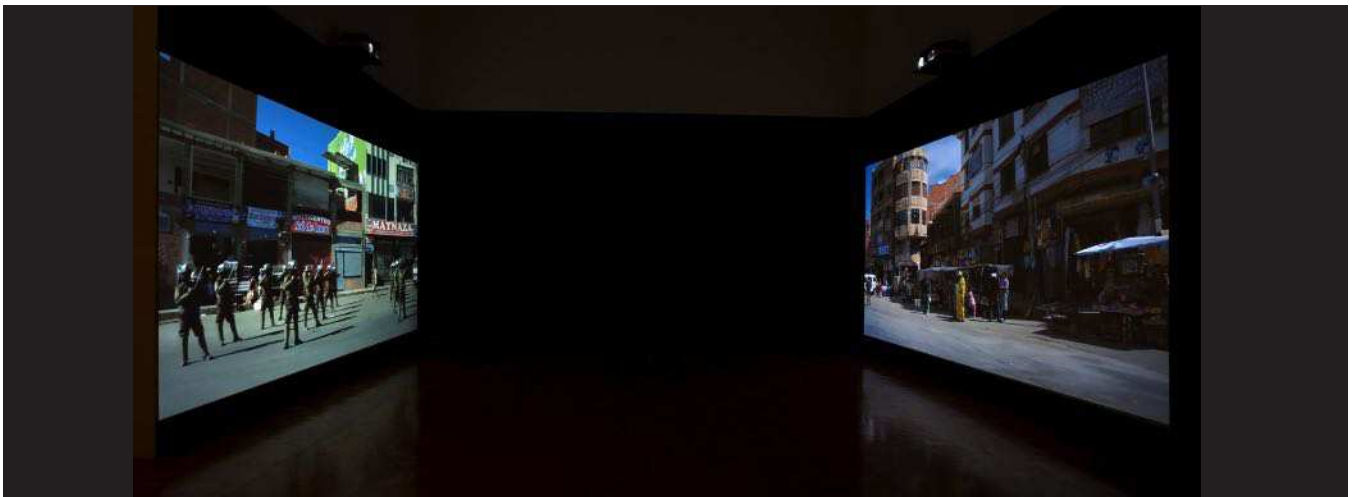
Claudia Joskowicz

Every Building on Avenida Alfonso Ugarte- After Ruscha (2011); two channel digital HD video; 26 minutes; color; sound.

4 Minute Excerpt Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/54030296>

26 Minute Full Video Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/156721786> Password: avenida

Every Building on Avenida Alfonso Ugarte- After Ruscha, takes as its inspiration the American artist Edward Ruscha's photo book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) in which he photographed four kilometers of the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles with a motorized camera mounted on the back of a truck. *Every Building on Avenida Alfonso Ugarte- After Ruscha*, a two-channel video installation, uses a continuous tracking shot that takes inventory of a quotidian Bolivian landscape (and just as Ruscha's book could be the reproduction of the urban landscape of any industrialized city, this could also depict any contemporary third world city). It documents and simultaneously recreates the Avenida Alfonso Ugarte, a major thoroughfare in El Alto, a satellite city of the of La Paz - a site of a significant event in Bolivia's recent history. El Alto, one of the largest urban centers and fastest growing in Bolivia is also one of the sites where violent protests related to the Bolivian gas conflict in October 2003 took place. In a 26-minute long, continuous take, *Every Building on Avenida Alfonso Ugarte* juxtaposes the mundane with ritual and social conflict inserting one single still scene of violence into the register of the typical scenery of daily Bolivian life thus capturing the variegated reality of El Alto, and, by extension, also that of all developing countries.



Installation at Project Space Galerija Gregor Podnar, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2014



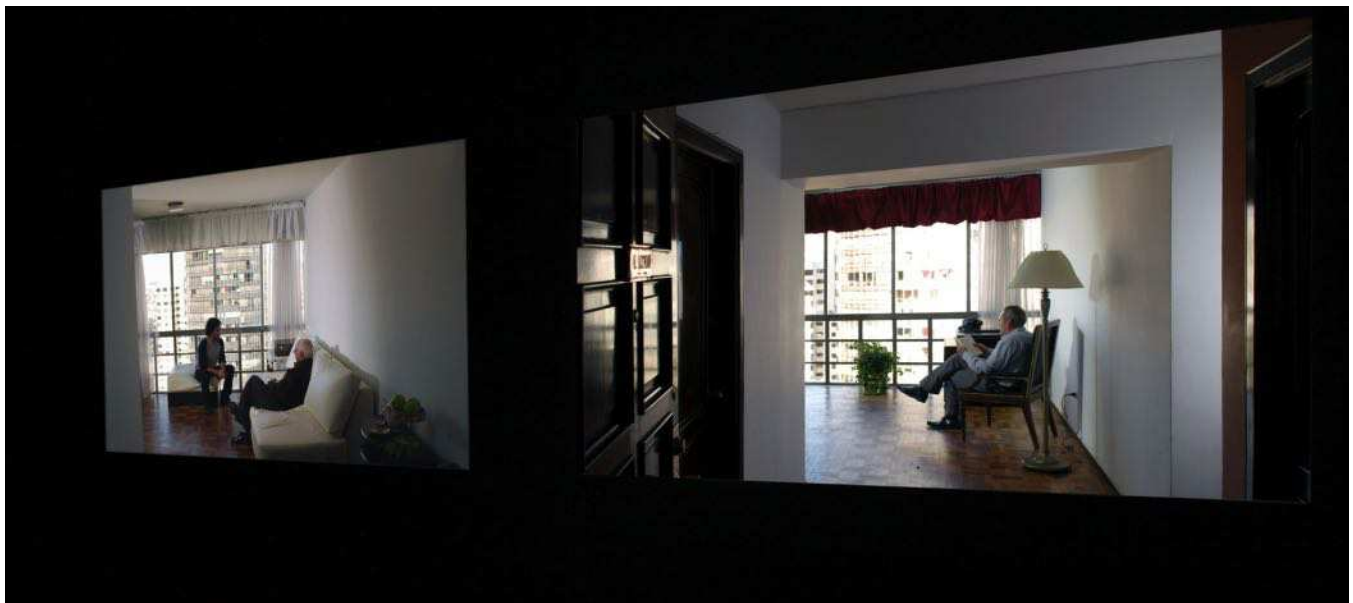
Installation at Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York, 2016

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Sympathy for the Devil (2011); two channel digital HD video; 8 minutes; color; sound.

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/33950273>

Sympathy for the Devil can be understood as a reflection on space and its influence on the human social dimension. Using the iconic view of the Illimani (a prominent mountain in the Bolivian Andes) two synchronized screens narrate an anecdote from 1970s Bolivia. They each depict the daily encounter between a Polish Jewish refugee who arrived in Bolivia during the Second World War and his upstairs neighbor, the former Nazi Klaus Barbie (who lived under an assumed identity) in a building in a well to-do neighborhood in the city of La Paz. Both men lived parallel lives as neighbors and as European immigrants in exile in Bolivia, mutually aware of each other's presence in the building, meeting daily in the elevator. The cold landscape of La Paz serves as backdrop to highlight the contrast of the lives of these two men who left behind opposing destinies in Europe and shared the same view in Bolivia. This simple interaction serves to highlight a recurring situation in Bolivia and Latin America at large in the postwar period when the region offered asylum to both persecuted Jews and Nazi Germans, antagonistic communities in Europe, which would coexist in relative lull in Latin America.



Installation at Kiosko Galería, Santa Cruz, Bolivia 2012



Installation at Forever & Today, Inc. New York, 2012



Video Stills

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Untitled (Evidence) 2013-ongoing is a photographic series that recreates press photographs published in the Bolivian press of found objects that are documented as evidence from the cocaine factory seizures discovered by the FELCN Bolivia (Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra el Narcotráfico) or drug-related incidents in the past three years reflecting on the complex social relationship between drug trafficking and the social, economic, and political structure in Bolivia. With an emphasis on the shapes and patterns that emerge when the items seized (cocaine, vehicles, money, weapons, etc.) are documented images are created that are photographic but which by their nature, rawness, repetition and variation, point beyond the medium that represents them to the uncontrollable character of the drug trade.



Untitled (Evidence) 2013. Digital C-Print. 40" x 30"



Untitled (Evidence) 2013. Digital C-Print. 40" x 30"



Evidence Installation at Espacio Simón I. Patiño, La Paz, Bolivia 2013

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Round and Round and Consumed by Fire (2009); single channel HD video; 8 minutes; color; sound.

Vimeo Link: <http://vimeo.com/33467186>

Third in a trilogy of videos based on events in Bolivian history and their effect on the country's mytho-historic landscape.

Round and Round and Consumed by Fire is a reenactment of the shoot-out and subsequent death of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, nineteenth century American outlaws and leaders of the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang. Historians believe that Butch and the Sundance Kid died in a shoot-out in San Vicente, Bolivia, a town in southern Bolivia where they had fled after robbing the payroll of the Aramayo Mining Co. The story was fictionalized in the 1969 film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, a film only loosely based on historical fact that popularized the legends of Butch and Sundance. Shot as a slow moving circular tracking shot, the camera tracks a circle around the entire periphery of a generic small Bolivian town main street during the gun fight. Broadly referencing the film mentioned above, this recreation of its final scene results in a diluted rendering of what may have been the original shoot out, if it, in fact, ever happened.



Installation at the 29th São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil, 2010



Video Stills

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Vallegrande, 1967 (2008); single channel HD video; 8 minutes; color; sound.

Vimeo Link: <http://vimeo.com/33034388>

Second in a trilogy of videos based on events in Bolivian history and their effect on the country's mytho-historic landscape.

Vallegrande, 1967 reenacts the display of guerrilla combatant Che Guevara's corpse for the media after his assassination by the Bolivian army in La Higuera in 1967. The display of his mutilated corpse for journalists and selected spectators by the Bolivian military was meant to serve as proof of the guerrilla's demise before his remains were buried in a secret, unmarked grave. The Christ-like figure of the posthumous Che lying on a concrete slab in the laundry room of the Nuestra Señora de Malta hospital in Vallegrande was filmed as a slow moving tracking-in shot in the same laundry room where Guevara's body, in fact, was laid. The small building, now covered in memorial graffiti written by Che admirers has become one of the most venerated stops on the "Che tourist path" and thus, part of the Che myth.



Installation of the Reenactments Trilogy (*Vallegrande, 1967* pictured here) at Centro Cultural Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2012



Video Stills

Claudia Joskowicz

Drawn and Quartered (2007); single channel HD video; 8 minutes; color; sound.

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/32189604>

The first in a trilogy of videos based on events in Bolivian history and their effect on the country's mytho-historic landscape.

Drawn and Quartered is a recreation of a diorama on permanent exhibition at the Museo Costumbrista in La Paz, Bolivia that depicts the execution of Tupac Katari, a leader in the rebellions of indigenous people in Bolivia who was executed by the Spanish colonialists in 1781. Shot as a slow moving tracking shot, the camera moves across Plaza Alonso de Mendoza in La Paz and happens upon the execution. The urban fabric, and the execution's effect upon it, are manipulated by a limited set of images which occupy the camera and reorganize the landscape.



Installation of Drawn and Quartered at the 10th Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba, 2009



Installation of the Reenactments Trilogy at Centro Cultural Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 2012



Video Stills



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