

DESLICES

Daniella Valz - Catalina Barroso

Deslices es un proyecto en curso que comenzó en abril de 2019. La colaboración migra entre voces, cuerpos y geografías (Ciudad de México, Lima, Glasgow y Londres). La presente iteración reúne extractos de un diálogo vía WhatsApp entre les artistas Catalina Barroso Luque y Daniella Valz Gen y se manifiesta en una pieza de audio y un documento gráfico. La obra ofrece reflexiones a través de puntos de encuentro entre identidades y culturas, divergencias, malentendidos y una multiplicidad de nociones de género. Naciendo como una comisión para el festival de arte de Glasgow International, *Deslices* existe como texto en inglés con la intención de ser inteligible a una audiencia anglohablante.

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Canciones incluidas:

A la mañanita, Paloma del Cerro
Adiós Nonino, Astor Piazzolla
Cucurrucucú Paloma, Tomás Méndez, interpretada por Lola Beltrán
No soy de aquí, ni soy de allá, Facundo Cabral, interpretada por Chavela Vargas

Esta es una adaptación de la pieza hecha para [post\(s\)](#)

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20/03/2021 Ocoyoacac, Mexico,
Catalina

I tried to make a drawing for you. A body with a spud. *Una papa* growing out from the body's lower cavity with roots and a flower.

I held this watery image in my head – a line drawing in black ink which I could not bring into being. The body was too rigid. The potato, no more than a blob. The flower, a couple of scribbles over the figure's Venus triangle.

The drawing had breasts, hands and feet, and then that smudged out blob – a toxic cloud peeking out between the legs. And because I was not happy with it, I rubbed it out. Erased it.



22/03/2021 London, UK,
Daniella

(audio transcript from voice note)

I've been thinking a lot about this note you sent to me and this image that was trying to come through and ended up being erased, and this *frustración*. I've been a bit like a cloudy blob myself. Hmm, I'm thinking about that, and the possibility of that image coming through or ending up being erased. And that made me feel sad. In staying with that sadness today, what I did was to cook potatoes. I made chips at home, and I realized that this is something I do every once in a while. That's my comfort food, either mashed potatoes or oven chips that I make. When I was washing the potatoes, which were covered in soil, really caked up in soil, and I was brushing them with a vegetable brush, there were these crusty bits of soil that didn't come out, that I had to scrape out with my nails. And then I realized that I had all the soil under my nails, which somehow seems really apt. And I don't know apt for what, but I liked that. I liked the soil under my nails. Maybe what I'm trying to say is that there's something about you rubbing out an image and me cleaning off a potato and ending up with soil under my nails, and you just ending up with this cloud, toxic cloud as you called it.

I'm going to finish there.

24/03/2021 Ocoyoacac, Mexico,
Catalina

This image of fingernails soiled with earth makes me think of the hand having a severed relation with the ground which is both fertile and morbid. As if you were digging for food or digging a ditch, *una zanja* – a cut in the landscape to divert water into or out of fields, in or out of rivers and lagoons; a laceration into the earth that is really a border. An apt image of you, a Peruvian eating chips in London.

I was thinking about the toxicity of potatoes, solanine and chaconine, which cause cell disruption, leading to gastrointestinal symptoms: vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea. As a cloud, toxicity becomes pluvial.

In Mexica mythology, Tlaloc is the god of rain and thunder. Tlaloc is one and many (Tlaloques). In the month of Huey Tozoztli (late April to early May), boys aged from seven to nine, whose hair parted in two swirling eddies, were taken up to sacred hills and sacrificed to Tlaloc. The children would bring rain to water the crops. When the local people saw the sacrificial children being taken up into the mountains, the adults cried and lamented themselves. The children also howled and wept, filling everyone with joy, for these boys were the Tlaloques. Their tears would become rain.
[recording of thunder]

30/03/2021 Ocoyoacac, Mexico,
Catalina

Hi Daniella,

Please disregard my previous response to your voice note. It was a performance of a response from The South *y no desde el sur*. I understood you were asking me to hold close something fragile, but a genuine response was too painful to put down in words. I've had to wait a week to be able to write to you in the middle of the night, when no one sees me and I haven't spoken to anyone in hours, in order to hold onto that *precioso* crystalline clarity brought on by sadness. A voice that only emerges with lack of sleep. It floats. Suspended in the morning light.



31/03/2021 London, UK,

Daniella

(lyrics from a song shared with Catalina)

'A la Mañanita' by Paloma del Cerro, song 2011

A la mañanita y al atardecer

Qué lindo es querer cuando pagan bien

Toma un vaso, toma dos, vamos, niña, vámon

Carnaval alegre, ¿cuándo te veré?

Quizás más ya nunca o al año, tal vez

01/04/2021 London, UK,

Daniella (audio transcripts from phone videos)

[Videos x 4 clips]

Em... estoy en mí... I'm in my studio and I braved it, I braved it out to record this little video in response to you. When you sent me those two last messages, those two responses, the one that you called the performance response about the potato, and then the real response and a drawing, it took me a while to process them both and in relation to each other.

I was here the other day and I couldn't bring myself to record this.

This is a plaster cast of a potato I grew and I have a few boxes of the cast potatoes. I had grown them in my back garden. They are a variety called Pink Fir Apple. Then there are these prints, a sort of linocut print. So they're all here. And this is me, like... Sorry, the mess...

Some older work that is also potato based. These are drawings on papyrus in this sculpture box. And here's like a nest of potatoes. This is part of a sculpture. And if I look into my sketchbooks, I'm sure I'm going to find more and more and more stuff like this. Just endless amounts of potato stuff. So I guess I wanted to show you, because this is something that I've been... Sorry this is an embroidery based on one of the potato drawings. I don't know if you can see.

I realized the extent of, and the depth of, the potato. I don't know, like a relationship. And I don't want to enter into this conceptualizing space and tell you, 'oh, you know, the potato is an avatar to look at, or to talk about migration and assimilation because it's assimilated into most world cuisines'. And yet I can really do that. And it's way deeper than that. Or I guess I just did that. I was also disavowing it and saying there's more. There's more, and there's a language that I haven't learned. I have no Aymara and I haven't learnt Kichwa; I only have broken words and terms here and there. So I created this visual language, a language that's actual food and language. I was growing a *papa* language, making language and image, a ritualized language of the potato. This is all to replace the actual spoken language in a way. And more than that. Maybe that's enough now.

[contd.]
01/04/2021 London, UK,
Daniella (audio transcripts from phone videos)
[Videos x 4 clips]

There's something else I want to show you. It's dusty, but yeah. It's just been so present for a long time, to the point that I started getting worried that, like, my mental health was going a bit loopy. I was literally having dreams and speaking to this potato god a few years ago. I feel like I've only turned a corner more recently about not just being in this potato space, underground. And so when I shared that film with you 'La Teta Asustada' – 'The Milk of Sorrow' – and you picked up on the potato in this really strong way I think it just brought me into it again and it's making me look all around me and realize the evidence.

09/04/2021 Mexico City, Mexico,

Catalina

I've been thinking about spaces underground, familial spaces ...

My grandmother Maria is eighty-nine. Since my return to Mexico City in December, I've been visiting her in her garden on a weekly basis. During these visits, she tells me about her mother, Luz Valencia Vidrio, born 14 August 1904, Cocula Jalisco. I know my great-grandfather's life story *como un Padre Nuestro*. Hers has been kept somewhere dark.

A conversation with a genealogist reveals Luz's Sefardic ancestry. Like a precocious child, my grandmother embarks on a quest to recuperate this lost matrilineal identity. *Luz. Lucero*. Light.

I join her in the pursuit. We embark on an excavation. Accompanied by my aunt Maria, we draw a family tree. Dig out its roots and a list of surnames: Valencia, Machuca, Cabeza de Vaca, Vidrio – colourful patronymics chosen as if those lacking one were in a hurry, caught in a moment of flight.

Exile is neither Joseph nor Moses. Exile is female and was born in Cocula, Jalisco. Hidden under a church. Baptized. Meztizx. Entombed for four-hundred years under our syncretic Catholic rituals – *Noche Buena, el niño Dios, La Virgencita y La Guadalupana. Comemos rosca de Reyes con tamales y chocolate caliente, celebramos Pascuas, decoramos con cempaxóchitl y ponemos un altarcito.*

12/04/2021 Ocoyoacac, Mexico,

Catalina (audio transcripts from voice recording)

My throat is raspy sour. Skin pale with insomnia. Body heavy. Muscles dense and closely compacted.

I sink into the arid ground. Joints spasm with discomfort, limbs cocooned by dry mud.

Gradually penetrating the earth is easier than scrambling. Scrambling between sand and dust.

[sound of digging into sand in the background]

15/04/2021 London, UK,

Daniella

Thank you for sharing this. I feel moved by the names of your ancestors and the names of the places they come from. I feel moved by the rituals and the altars, moved in the resonance, the proximity. I know these syncretic ways intimately. *Como un ave maria.*

Here's a rosary of places:

Arequipa, Tacna, Arica, Moyendo, Huacho, Chorrillos, Lima, Tarma, Jauja, Rapallo, Piamonte.

I want to tell you my full name: Daniella del Carmen Valz Gen de las Casas.

I want you to know of my patron saint, la Virgen del Carmen, on whose feast I was born.

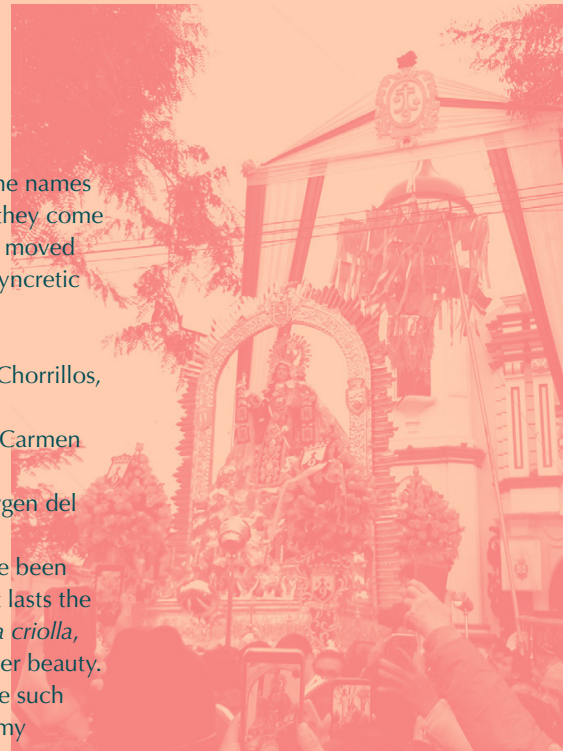
My mother offered me to her. It's odd to have been offered at birth, dedicated to a virgin. Her feast lasts the whole month of July, she's the patron of *música criolla*, and the songs written to her are flirty odes to her beauty.

I used to dislike my long name and it took me such a long time to accept it and use it. Reclaiming my name has also been a process of becoming close to *mi patrona*, la Virgen del Carmen. I'm still not comfortable talking about the details of that relationship, yet I can say I have a patrona and I'm dedicated to her. Some might be able to imagine what that implies.

16/04/2021 London, UK,

Daniella

'Adiós Nonino' by Astor Piazzolla, composed 1959, song performed 1997



15/04/2021 London, UK,

Daniella

(audio transcript from a voice note)

When I was buried, just before the sun rose, all my body under the soil and only my head sticking out, I had both heightened sensation and also numbness.

I could feel the whole surface of my skin in contact with the soil, every little bump, stone or root leaving an indentation on my flesh.

Every little bug or ant that my body upset fighting against me, biting, cutting.

All of it at the same time, under the soil.

All this movement and also all the stillness.

The weight. The weight of all that soil on my body, its humidity, its dryness as well.

The clay of British soil drawing up the moisture of my body, of my skin, off my flesh.

I'm rambling.

What I want to say is that there was so much movement, so much suction, and also so much numbness, all at the same time.

Under the weight I lost sensation.

It's quite an odd thing to have a heightened sense of feeling and at the same time numbness. It's a paradox.



17/04/2021 Ocoyoacac, Mexico,

Catalina

(lyrics from a song shared with Daniella)

'Cucurrucucú Paloma' by Tomás Méndez, song written 1954, performed by Lola Beltrán, 2001

... Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay cantaba

Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay gemía

Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay cantaba

De pasión mortal moría

Que una paloma triste

Muy de mañana le va a cantar

... Cucurrucucú, paloma

Cucurrucucú, no llores

Las piedras jamás, paloma

¿Qué van a saber de amores?

18/04/2021 Mexico City, Mexico,
Catalina

I didn't know how to respond except with Maria; my grandmother is a poet, or as much as time(s) allowed her to be. Six sons and a husband obscured her verses from me ...

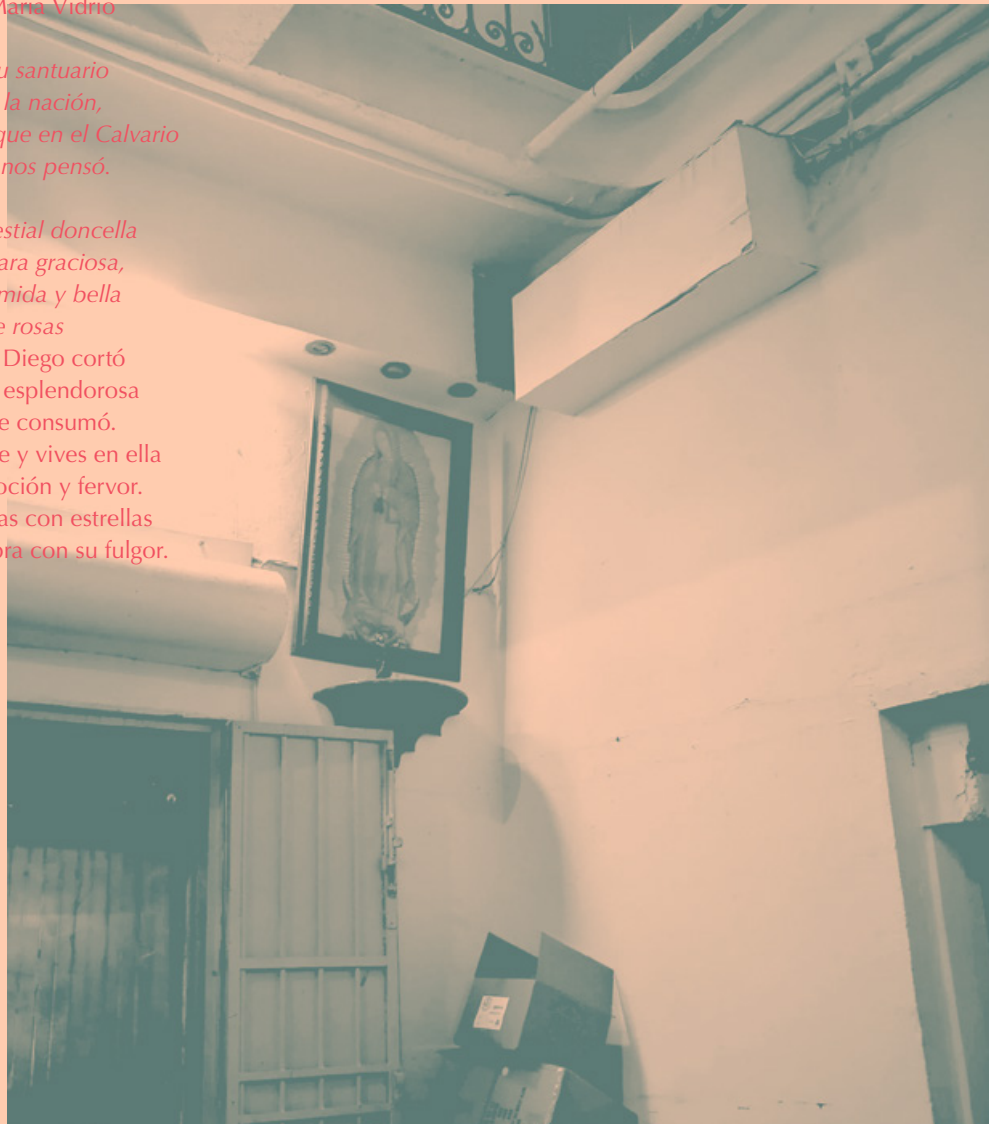
Guadalupe by Maria Vidrio

*Guadalupe, es tu santuario
urna sagrada de la nación,
Virgen Morena que en el Calvario
y en el Tepeyac nos pensó.*

...

*Hija del sol, celestial doncella
de dulce mirar y cara graciosa,
con tu sonrisa tímida y bella
miras el ramo de rosas
que para ti Juan Diego cortó
aquella mañana esplendorosa
que el milagro se consumó.
Una casa pediste y vives en ella
rodeada de devoción y fervor.
Tu manto adornas con estrellas
y el sol te alumbra con su fulgor.*

...



29/04/2021 Mexico City, Mexico,
Catalina

I want to write about my grandmother's poem, '*sobre el hijo, la belleza, Dios y la salvación*'. But my tongues are tied. I want to write about community, which for me always equates to family – an extended family, in a clannish sort of way. I want to write about how hard it's been to negotiate my belonging to "*la tribu Barroso*" while skirting round the traps of prescriptive femininity.

My aunt Maria says I look just like her, except I am white. My aunt Maria, while grappling with homosexuality in her own kin, says that motherhood will make me complete. And so I write to you again in the middle of the night ...

(lyrics from a song shared with Daniella)

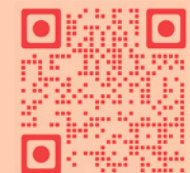
'No soy de aquí, ni soy de allá' by Facundo Cabral, song written 1970, performed by Chavela Vargas 2002

*... Me gusta el sol, Alicia y las palomas
El buen cigarro y las malas señoras
Saltar paredes y abrir las ventanas
Y cuando llora una mujer ...*

No soy de aquí, ni soy de allá
No tengo edad, ni porvenir
Y ser feliz es mi color de identidad ...

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