

Carolina Caycedo presents **REPRESA – REPRESIÓN (DAM - REPRESSION)**.

This photographic diptych is the image of the Magdalena river¹ diverted from its original course for the construction of the mega-infrastructure hydroelectric dam *El Quimbo* in Colombia. Carolina invites us to think about containment and flow processes; she captures this image and with it reveals visual analogies that unfold in a chain of meanings that bounce back and forth between politics and the gaze. The containment of the river as a transformed landscape, the containment of the inhabitants of the area for the sake of new flow of capital, the water containment, the energetic flow for the global trade of resources, make evident that in these processes of contentions and flows there is a reorganization of visuality; it is a process of disciplining the gaze. Looking at this image we encounter our typical activity of landscape contemplation, but applied in favor of the market's new shifts.

Let's recall earlier strategies of the 'Democratic Security and Defense Policy'²; a policy that inscribed the more than 50 year old Colombian conflict into the global war on terror. The DSDP mobilizes as their ideal the unitary image of the nation-state while performing within the global counterinsurgency project. The DSDP's strategies speak of containment and flow processes. The first one is the creation of *rehabilitation and consolidation areas*, and the second a government-sponsored advertising campaign. Let's consider both as a whole and in parallel, one a military strategy and the other in the realm of image creation. Two different strategies but both framed in processes of containment and flow conformation. The advertisement campaign call "Vive Colombia, Viaja por Ella" (Live Colombia and travel through her) invites Colombians to travel across the country's territory with confidence, to "a paradise where everything is ready to be discover," "a paradise called Colombia" with "two coasts where one can breath the air of freedom and fulfillment," and with "more than 43 million souls who sing in unison to life, grateful for being part of a country like this" (Vive Colombia, Viaja por Ella). Over the weekends, military convoys accompanied the vehicles leaving the cities and heading to the countryside, monitoring through land and air for any suspicious movement along the roads. This strategy of retaking territory by means of civilian occupation is not based on permanent presence in the land of the enemy but rather it is based on movement across the enemy's territory. This flow was

¹ The Magdalena River is the principal river of Colombia, flowing northward about 1,528 km (949 mi) through the western half of the country. Its drainage basin covers a surface of 27.3 million hectares, which is 24% of the country's area and where 66% of its population lives. Also 86% of Colombia's gross domestic product is generated there.

² Democratic security or Democratic security policy refers to a Colombian security policy towards a State of Control, implemented during the administration of President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010). It was unveiled in June 2003.

designed specifically to create a movement from the city to the countryside and back. This strategy of temporary flows from the cities to the countryside was accompanied by its opposite: a strategy of closure. In the countryside, the government of President Uribe established areas called "rehabilitation and consolidation zones" defined as those areas particularly affected by actions of criminal groups. In order "to ensure institutional stability, restore the constitutional order, and protection of civilian population in these zones," the DSD policy allowed the application of emergency measures. In these zones, military personnel were granted special powers to restrict movement, impose curfews, perform arrests, raids, house searches and wiretapping without prior judicial authorization. These strategies of movement and closure entail a spatialization of power that recruited geography in order to unify a sentiment of patriotism, of one Colombia to Colombians (a category that excludes those contained in military or humanitarian sieges). This transformed geography allowed the Government to feed and generate vulnerability from the center to the other, towards all that was outside of its range, a range of global markets.

The mastering of this land can only be possible by the symbiosis between the military strategy and a cinematic experience, which starts by leaving the city accompanied by helicopters and military convoys and ends in the construction of the landscape as a paradise, from which flows milk and honey / flows of capital. This is where Caycedo's intervention invites us to think about the chain of processes where the Magdalena river's diversion and the construction of the dam, are more than just an infrastructure project: they reflect like mirrors a visual and a political strategy.

Claudia Salamanca, 2012.

Claudia Salamanca is a Colombian artist whose main interest is at the intersection between the image and the political. She is assistant professor at Universidad Javeriana de Colombia in the department of Visual Arts. She is a Ph.D candidate in the Rhetoric Department at UC Berkeley. She received her B.F.A from the Universidad de Los Andes, and an M.A. in Science, Technology and Culture from the Liberal Studies Department at Rutgers University, NJ; her M.A. was done through a Fulbright Scholarship for Graduate Studies in the USA. Her work has been exhibited in Brasil, Canada, Germany, Spain, and Colombia, among others and has gained recognition in different festivals like Artrónica (Colombia), File (Brasil) and grants from Umbral-Arte Público (Colombia), IDCT, and Ministry of Culture in Colombia