Sociologica. V.17 N.1 (2023)
ISSN 1971-8853
https://sociologica.unibo.it/

Chile's *Estallido Social* and the Art of Protest

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Submitted: April 24, 2023 – Revised version: June 30, 2023
Accepted: July 3, 2023 – Published: July 24, 2023

Abstract

Chile's 2019–2020 social uprising, known as the *estallido social* or "social explosion," brought about radical changes in the socio-political landscape of the country. A minor subway fare hike of 30 pesos soon escalated into a major revolution, whose motto, "It's Not 30 Pesos, It's 30 Years," expressed pent-up discontent with the 30-year legacy of the brutal 17-year regime of Augusto Pinochet. Through massive mobilizations and artistic interventions, Chileans demonstrated against social and economic inequities born from the neoliberal model of the dictatorship, judicial impunity, and a lack of rights and protections for women, Indigenous peoples, and minority groups. In Santiago, youth occupied the site of Plaza Italia, "Ground Zero" of the protests, and the equestrian statue of war hero General Baquedano became a symbolic figure for the struggle for the city. This article focuses on the Chilean "art of protest," considering how Chileans drew on a vanguardist artistic ethos to enable a reformulation of the public sphere and a collective, new political paradigm.

Keywords: Baquedano statue; Chile; constitution; estallido social; Indigenous rights.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Jonathan Bach and Elena Pavan for inviting me to take part in this important and timely issue. I am grateful to the Chilean artists and activists who contributed to this project and to the two anonymous reviewers for their excellent suggestions. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

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1 Introduction

Chile's 2019–2020 social revolution, known as the *estallido social* or "social explosion," has altered the course of Chilean history. The social revolution brought to power former student leader Gabriel Boric and opened the door to a political process to jettison the 1980 dictatorship-era constitution and create a new one, a process that is ongoing today. The revolution was radical in form and intent. Protesters sought a complete transformation of Chilean society, one founded on the notion of "dignity." Massive mobilizations rocked the capital city of Santiago and spread to urban centers across the country, from Temuco and Puerto Montt in the South to Valparaíso and Concepción in central Chile to the port city of Antofagasta in the North. Like the popular uprisings in Hong Kong, Lebanon, and Iraq, the Chilean social revolt was a grassroots and leaderless movement fueled by youthful, creative energy (Brannen, 2019; Wright, 2019). As with earlier key historical junctures, the Chilean "art of protest" enabled a radical reformulation of the public sphere.[1] Through artistic interventions and the occupation of public squares and streets, Chilean activists sought to rewrite history and to reimagine the body politic.

This article examines how politics were forged at the intersection of public art and public space in the *estallido social*. It suggests that the deployment of activism through art — what became known as "artivism" — constituted a form of participatory politics that produced intersectional bonds of solidarity and collective identification. This study is based on six months of ethnographic research in the streets of Santiago at the height of the social revolution in 2019–2020. Data was collected through participant observation and a series of in-depth interviews with visual artists, street artists, and collectives. The article also draws on digital sites, such as Instagram and Twitter, and research in Chilean archives and libraries.

2 The Social Revolution

The *estallido social* was sparked by a minor trigger: a proposed subway fare hike of 30 pesos, the equivalent of .04 USD. In protest of the increasing precarity of everyday life, secondary school students began jumping subway turnstiles *en masse* and called on others to "evade" the fare. The situation turned violent on the night of October 18, 2019, when still unidentified hooded figures set fire to subway stations, public buses, Walmart-owned Lider supermarkets, and the Enel Green Power high rise headquarters. Surrounded by his generals, then center-right president Sebastián Piñera appeared on public television and extended a state of emergency. "We are at war," Piñera declared, "with a powerful, implacable enemy that has no respect for anything or anybody" (*La Tercera*, October 21, 2019). He established a nightly curfew for the

1. See Camilo Trumper's groundbreaking *Ephemeral Histories* (2016) on the relationship between public art, politics, and the contested space of the street during the fraught eras of the 1960s and 1970s in Chile. In the author's words, "Both left- and right-wing actors engaged in ongoing struggle over public space that led to a deeper transformation in where and, more significantly, how politics was done" (p. 6). Trumper (2016) draws on contemporary theory concerning gendered and social exclusion to reinterpret the public sphere, noting that modern thinkers "revise Habermas's unitary public in favor of a characterization of multiple open, unfinished public spheres in which the language of political communication and modes of political citizenship are continually being formed through various processes of dialogue, debate, and contest" (p. 8). See also Guisela Latorre's vivid analysis of street art in post-dictatorial Chile in *Democracy on the Wall* (2019). In her reading of muralist brigades, graffiti artists and public interventions, Latorre develops the notion of a "visual democracy," a "form of artistic praxis that seeks to create alternative images and messages to those produced and disseminated by institutions of power" (p. 4).

greater Santiago region and called on the armed forces to keep order. This second trigger was a major one, catalyzing a collective traumatic memory. For many, the sight of the military in the street recalled the dark days of the brutal 17-year regime of Augusto Pinochet (1973–1990), in which some 40,000 people were detained and tortured and over 3,000 people were murdered or disappeared. As if to say, "Never again," people took to the street in droves, banging on pots and pans in the tradition of the *cacerolazo*. On October 25th, one week after the start of the revolt, over 1.2 million people gathered in the center of the capital city, the largest demonstration the country had ever witnessed. Chile had "woken up," in the popular protest parlance.

Within days of the outbreak of the social revolution, protest iconography centered around the catch phrase: "It's Not 30 Pesos, It's 30 Years" (Figure 1). The civic-military dictatorship came to an effective end in 1988, when a majority of the populace voted in a national plebiscite to reject an extension of Pinochet's presidency. Yet many of the elements of the Pinochet regime remained in force, such as the neoliberal principles enshrined in the 1980 constitution. What was at issue was not a 30-peso fare hike, but the 30-year legacy of the military junta. Protesters campaigned against economic and social inequities, police violence and a culture of impunity, and a lack of rights and protections for women, Indigenous peoples, and minority groups. In a rap song entitled "Cacerolazo," whose spoken beat echoed the steady sound of the banging of pots and pans in Chile's urban centers, French-Chilean hip hop artist Ana Tijoux encapsulated the ethos of the protests: "No son 30 pesos, son 30 años/La constitución y los perdonazos/Con puño y cuchara frente al aparato/Y a todo el estado, ¡cacerolazo!" (It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years/The constitution and the pardons/With a fist and a spoon in front of the machine/And the entire country, cacerolazo!) (Tijoux, 2019).

The social revolution reckoned with a longer legacy as well — the country's violent colonial past. Interestingly, the date of 18–10, which marks the start of the social revolution, reads visually as 1810, the year that Chile gained independence from Spanish rule. One protest poster played on this dual meaning: "18 October 2019: Día de la Independencia" (October 18, 2019: Independence Day). For decades, the Mapuche, Chile's largest Indigenous group, have been engaged in a struggle for autonomy, the recuperation of lands from the extractive forestry industry, and a return of ancestral territory, known collectively as "Wallmapu." "Wallmapu Libre!" (Free Wallmapu!) was a rallying protest cry. The Mapuche leader and activist Camilo Catrillanca, who was shot in the back of the neck by state agents one year before the start of the protests, became a martyred figure in the social revolution (Figure 2). The Mapuche flag (*Wenüfoye*) was a central protest icon as well, often flying alongside the black flag of the revolution and the multi-colored LGBTQI+ flag.

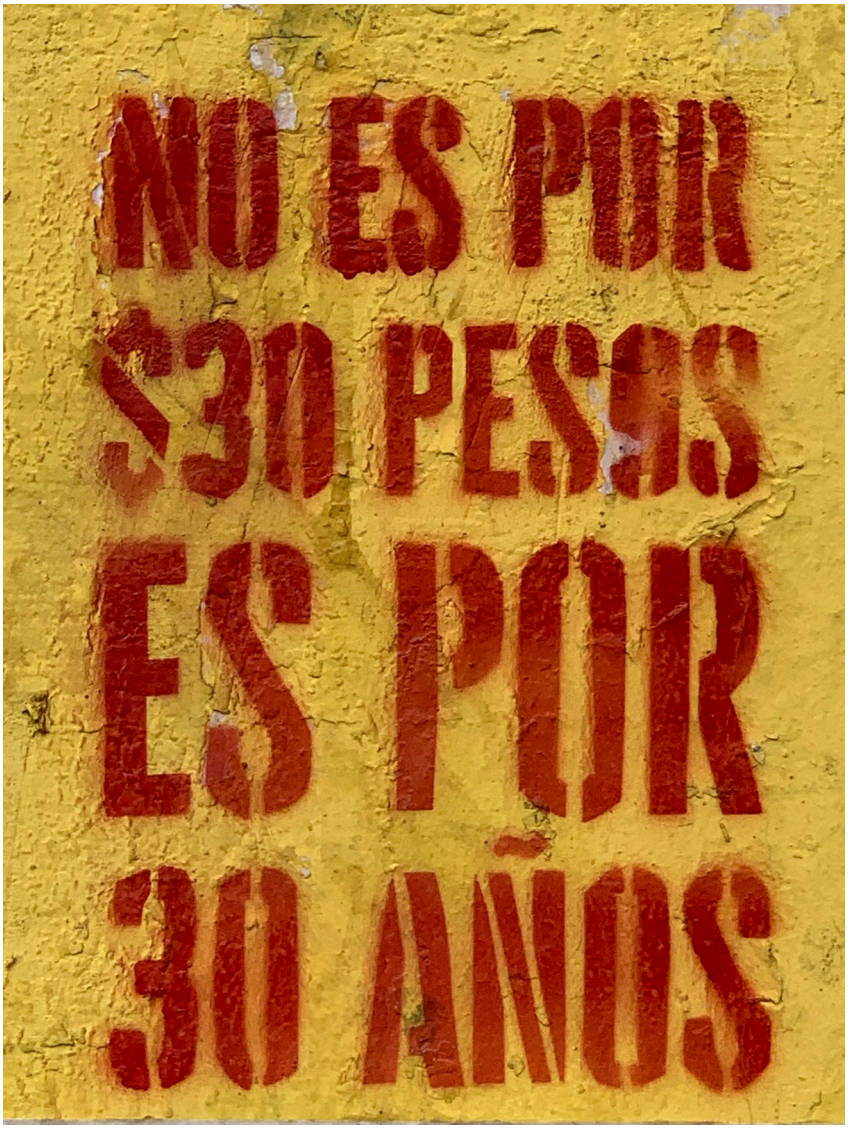

Figure 1: Stencil on Avenida Providencia in downtown Santiago. Photograph by Author.

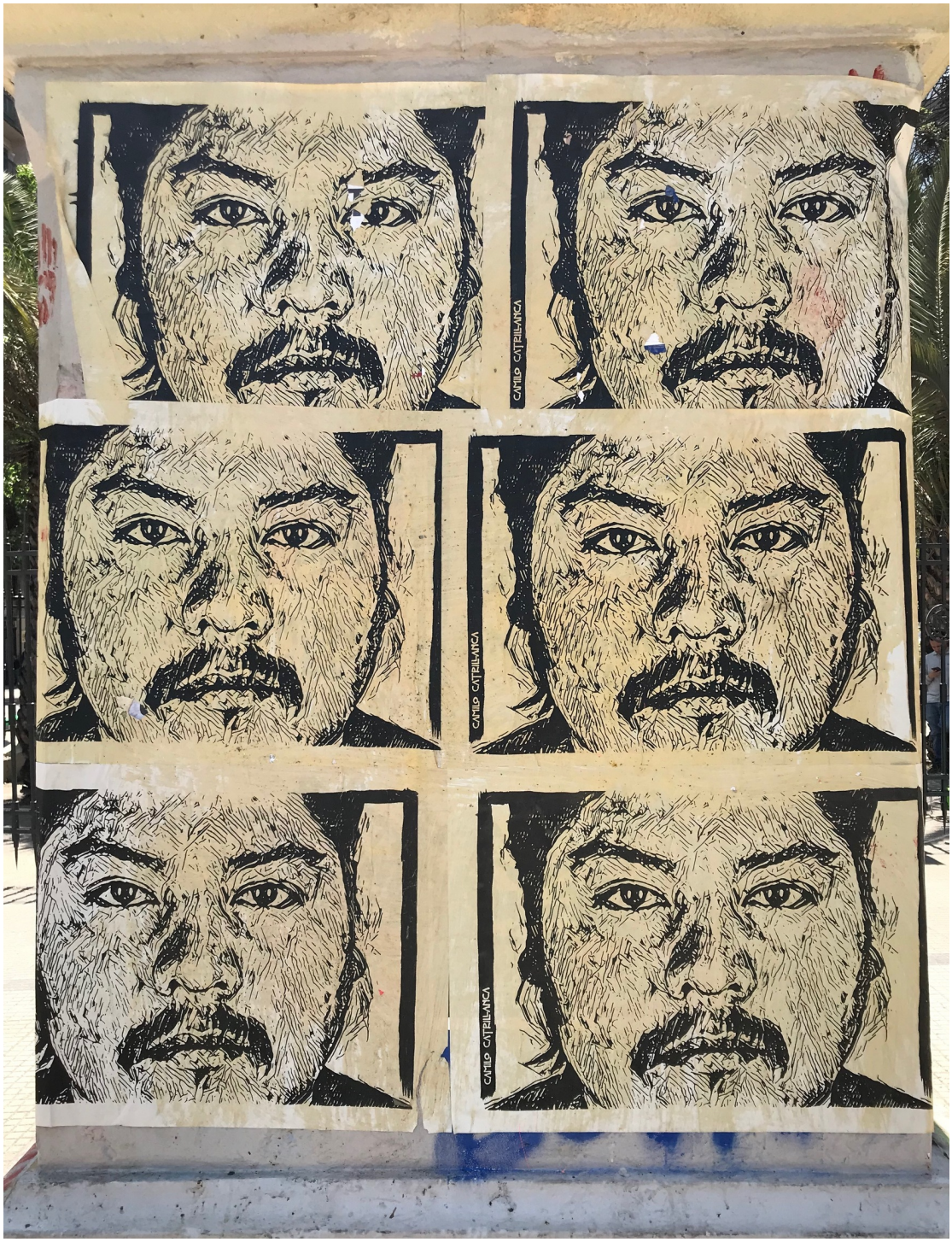

Figure 2: Silkscreen poster of martyred Mapuche activist Camilo Catrillanca. Poster by the Colectivo de Serigrafía Instantánea. Photograph by Eric Zolov.

Over the next five months, the social revolution unfolded in a series of dramatic turns. The force of the outcry against the presence of the military caused the government to backtrack. President Piñera lifted the curfew and recalled the armed forces. While demonstrations were largely peaceful, acts of material violence, such as the burning of the Vera Cruz Church (Iglesia de la Vera Cruz) in the Lastarria neighborhood in Santiago, were carried out by anarchic elements.[2] The city largely drew to a halt. Businesses shuttered and schools closed, inducing an economic crisis. Desperate to resolve the situation, the government made a major concession on November 14th, announcing a referendum on a new constitution in the following spring. The next morning, large white sheets covered Plaza Baquedano, "Ground Zero" of the protests, the word "PAZ" (peace) painted in oversized letters on a waving banner. Yet, protests continued unabated.

Police violence exacerbated the tensions surrounding the social revolt. From the outset, the Carabineros de Chile (the national police force) responded to protest activity with disproportionate force, using chemical water canisters, tear gas, and hardened rubber bullets to disperse crowds. Reports of gender-based violence occurring in police cars and police stations were commonplace. Women and gay men were subject to verbal and physical abuse, including forced nudity, cavity checks, and sexual assault. Over 400 grave ocular injuries were sustained over the course of the social uprising, many of which caused blindness in one eye (McDonald, 2019). One case that garnered attention was that of Gustavo Gatica, a 21-year-old psychology student who was shot in the face while taking photographs at a peaceful demonstration at Plaza Baquedano. Gatica, who lost sight in both eyes, gave a moving message that became a testimonial slogan: "I gave my eyes so that Chile would wake up" ("Regalé mis ojos para que la gente despierte").[3] The violence was so extreme that a special United Nations commission led by former president Michelle Bachelet was dispatched to Chile. The commission found "a high number of serious human rights violations," including "excessive or unnecessary use of force that led to arbitrary deprivation of life and injuries, torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence, and arbitrary detentions" (OHCHR, 2019, p. 29). Rather than cowing people into submission, the excessive violence on the part of the police served to fuel the flames of the protesters. It was only with the appearance of the Covid-19 pandemic in South America that the government was able to gain control of the country. On March 18, 2020, President Piñera declared a three month "state of catastrophe," and state forces occupied the city center of Santiago, erasing virtually all of the signs of the unrest.

3 The Battle for Public Space

The symbolic center of the *estallido* was Plaza Italia or Plaza Baquedano, so named after the monumental, equestrian statue of 19th-century military hero General Manuel Baquedano that presided over the square.[4] Protesters renamed the site "Plaza de la Dignidad" and held onto

2. At the one year anniversary of the outbreak of the uprising, two churches in Santiago were set on fire: La Iglesia de la Asunción and the St. Francis Borgia Church (also known as the Carabineros Church). See *Guardian News* (2020, October 19). A protester posted a photo of himself inside the burning church, accompanied by a saying by Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin: "The only church that illuminates is a burning church." See Matheson, 2020.

3. See Gustavo Gatica's essay in *Time* (Gatica, 2020, October 15) and the interview with Gatica in Hermosilla & Valverde (2022).

4. Baquedano played an instrumental role in the subjugation of the Mapuche in the Araucanía region of Chile and was Commander-in-chief of the armed forces in the War of the Pacific.

it as one would hold a military position. In a *New Yorker* article entitled "Chile at the Barricades," Daniel Alarcón develops the martial metaphor, referring to "the front-line protesters, who risked nightly beatings, arrest, tear gas, and rubber bullets in order to hold the Plaza Dignidad" (Alarcón, 2020, p. 4). The nearby subway station was decimated and reduced to rubble, the entry a rash of colorful graffiti: "ACAB" (an acronym for "All Cops Are Bastards"), "En Chile, Matan Al Pueblo" (In Chile, They're Killing Their Own People), "Estado Asesino" (Killer State), and "Viva la Revolución." On Friday evenings, Plaza de la Dignidad was the site of rowdy, youthful demonstrations and provocations. Protesters continually occupied the statue of Baquedano, covering it in graffiti scrawls, colorful sketches, banners, and flags. As a counter-monument, three wooden sculptures carved by artists of the *Colectivo Originario* (Aboriginal Collective) were installed in the square. Representing the Indigenous Mapuche, Diaguita, and Selk'nam peoples, the sculptures looked out toward the city, serving as symbolic foundational figures.

As soon as the government issued its Covid-19 stay-at-home orders, it seized control of Plaza de la Dignidad, painted over the statue and plinth, and removed the three Indigenous statues. The latter in particular provoked distress and outrage. The Department of Anthropology at the Universidad Alberto Hurtado issued a statement condemning "this act of strong symbolic and political violence": "It is worrisome that those who undertook this act of erasure do not understand that the city, as well as society, can no longer be understood from a single vantage point or narrated with a single voice" (Departamento de Antropología, 2020). In a brazen move, President Piñera posed for a photo in front of the newly conquered statue. Yet, the government's conquest of the square was short lived. At the one-year anniversary of the social uprising, the monument was again in play. While protesters painted the statue red by day — to symbolize the blood spilled in the uprising — authorities restored it to its original state by night.[5] The statue was such an important symbol that the state eventually removed it entirely.

It would be hard to overstate the significance of this occupation of the center of the city. The struggle for the statue of Baquedano is in essence a struggle for the soul of the nation — its history, its narratives, its memories, its myths. Who owns public space? Who makes Chilean history? Whose stories are told, narrated, remembered? A poster of a monument of Mapuche warrior Lautaro, who lead the Araucanian resistance against Spanish conqueror Pedro de Valdivia, asked pointedly: "Who are the HEROES of Chile?" Across the country, protesters demanded alternative historical narratives, toppling, defacing, and decapitating colonial and nationalistic statues. During the *estallido*, over 300 monuments were subject to symbolic violence (CMN, 2020). In the southern city of Temuco, for example, a bronze statue of Valdivia was pulled unceremoniously to the ground, and the decapitated bust of Chilean military pilot Dagoberto Godoy was tied to the arm of a bronze statue of a Mapuche chieftain (Blair, 2019). This movement to expose and reject violent foundational myths was part of a global campaign, one which took on even greater momentum with the Black Lives Matter movement in June 2020.

As Puneet Dhaliwal (2012) points out in an excellent article on the Indignados movement in Spain, Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space provides an instructive model by which we may understand the significance of the occupation of public squares in resistance movements. For Lefebvre, artistic or cultural interventions may disrupt dominant political and economic orders embedded in and enabled by spatial configurations. While planned or

5. On October 17th, 2020, journalist John Bartlett tweeted: "The statue has been painted blood red this evening" (Bartlett, 2020).

"conceived" space is "tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose," lived space "[embodies] complex symbolisms [...] linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). As a planned space, Plaza Baquedano, a roundabout which separates different socio-economic sectors of the city, was originally developed in 1875 as Plaza La Serena. It took on the features of a hegemonic hub in 1928 when military dictator Carlos Ibáñez del Campo oversaw the installation of the statue of General Baquedano, and the square has been a hotbed for political activism since.[6] Through the real and symbolic occupation of the square in the social revolution, protesters disrupted the socio-political valence of the urban center and rendered it a counter-cultural space, articulating an alternative national history and an alternative social model based on transversality, inclusivity, and governance from below. The empty plinth that now stands in Plaza de la Dignidad is itself significant, a stark symbolic marker of the transformational moment in which Chile finds itself.

4 The Art of Protest

While Plaza de la Dignidad served as the epicenter of the protests in Santiago, the occupation of public space was far-reaching, encompassing massive marches in the city streets, street art on the walls of buildings and store fronts, and performative politics in the public squares of the capital city and urban centers across the country. Digital space also took on an important dimension, particularly during the pandemic, providing a platform for the production and dissemination of graphic images and an archival register of ephemeral cultural production.[7] This multi-faceted "art of protest" has a long history in Chile (López, 2019).[8] A number of important social protests preceded the *estallido*. There were two major student mobilizations, one in 2006, known as the "Penguin Revolution" because of the students' black-and-white school uniforms, and a 2011–2013 movement, in which students engaged in a protracted struggle for "free, public and quality education." In 2018, a sexual harassment case at the University of Chile Law School triggered a Chilean *#MeToo* movement that became known as the "Feminist May." Feminist activists occupied universities and took to the streets, calling for reproductive freedom, gender parity, LGBTQI+ rights, and an end to a culture of machismo in general. These protests drew on a wide range of creative activity. One particularly memorable intervention was "Thriller for Education" (CanalFech, 2019), a flash mob dance staged in front of La Moneda Presidential Palace on June 24, 2011. Outfitted in elaborate zombie gear and makeup, thousands of students performed a synchronized version of Michael Jackson's "Thriller," metaphorically suggesting the death of education.

The same creative ethos characterized the 2019–2020 *estallido social*. There was such an explosion of creative energy that the *estallido social* also became known as an *estallido artístico* (Rodríguez, 2020). "I find it amazing how the artistic movement — the 'artivism' — has overtaken the streets," claimed visual artist Paloma Rodríguez in an interview, "and how these

6. On the importance of Plaza Baquedano, Trumper (2016) writes, "It is difficult to overstate the symbolic place the plaza occupied in the city's social and political landscape" (p. 49).

7. During the pandemic, the Chilean collective *Delight Lab* (2009) carried out a series of light interventions, projecting words such as *Renace* (Rebirth), *Humanidad* (Humanity), and *Hambre* (Hunger) on high rise buildings in Santiago.

8. Chilean artistic interventions date to the 1960s, with the formation of muralist brigades, such as the *Brigada Ramona Parra* and the *Brigada Chacón*. These collectives were active in the Allende period and operated clandestinely during the dictatorship. See Latorre (2019, pp. 28–63), and Trumper (2016, pp. 93–127).

provisional walls... have turned public space into a veritable museum of people's revolt" (Interview with Paloma Rodríguez by T. Gordon-Zolov and E. Zolov, New York–Santiago, 1 July 2020).

Artistic figures, such as poet laureate Gabriela Mistral and legendary folk singer Víctor Jara, who was tortured and killed at the Estadio Chile, became guiding spirits of the revolution. Jara's "El derecho de vivir en paz" (The Right to Live in Peace) became a protest anthem, and stencils of his face could be found on walls, posters, and t-shirts. Visual artist Fab Ciraolo put a larger-than-life paste-up of Mistral qua protest figure on the walls of the Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center (GAM), the de facto epicenter of protest iconography. Clad in jeans and a t-shirt sporting the title of a protest song by the 1980s Chilean rock band Los Prisioneros, "Nous sommes rockers Sudamerican" (We are South American Rockers), Ciraolo's Mistral holds a black revolutionary flag. So significant was this piece to the cultural memory of the country that the museum rescued the paste-up along with the piece of wall on which it had been mounted.

The "artivism" at the heart of the social revolution represented a cross-section of the arts. Within days of the outbreak of the social revolution, the walls of downtown Santiago and other city centers were covered in silk-screen posters, stencils, graffiti murals, and tags signaling a wide range of social demands. In Santiago, known visual artists took to the streets, and the oversized paste-ups by Lolo Góngora, Paloma Rodríguez, Fab Ciraolo, and the street artist known as Caiozzama took on iconic status. Longstanding collectives such as the *Colectivo de Serigrafía Instantánea* (Rapid Silk Screen Collective) and the *Brigada de Propaganda Feminista* (Feminist Propaganda Brigade) produced artisanal quality silk-screen prints and stencils, most of which were anonymous. Downtown Santiago was so full of visual expression that it took on the features of an open-air museum. In a particularly novel way to capture the open-air museum feel of the streets, the founders of a new entity entitled the "Museo de la Dignidad" (Dignity Museum) placed gold frames around emblematic protest pieces representing "dignity" in a peaceful manner.

The social revolution was sonorous as well. The air was filled with the sounds of the *cacerolazo* and car horns drumming out a rhythmic ta-ta ta-ta-ta/ta-ta ta-ta-ta. In massive demonstrations, people marched and chanted protest slogans, such as "Evadir, no pagar/Otra forma de luchar" (Evade, don't pay [the metro fare]/Another way to fight). On October 25, the annual "Mil Guitarras Para Víctor Jara" (1,000 Guitars for Víctor Jara) musical tribute was recreated in front of the National Library. Two days later, Chilean soprano Ayleen Jovita Romero sang Jara's "El derecho de vivir en paz" from her balcony at curfew, her voice ringing out in the still night (Perseus999, 2019). Chilean folk singer Nano Stern wrote a song entitled "Regalé mis ojos" (I Gave Away my Eyes) in honor of Gustavo Gatica (Stern, 2019). An ode or lament, the first verse captures the spirit of the song: "Canto desde el negro más oscuro de la humanidad/Canto con la fuerza de los pueblos y su identidad/Canto desde el fuego de la lucha por la dignidad/Canto por la sangre de los ojos que no sanarán" (I sing from the darkest depths of humanity/I sing with the strength of the people and their being/I sing from the fire of the fight for dignity/I sing for the blood of the eyes that will not heal).

Finally, performance art was a central protest strategy. The use of nudity and body art served as a potent device to register feminist messages (Grau et al., 2020). The Chilean singer Mon Laferte made a powerful statement at the Latin Grammy Awards on November 14, 2019, when she bared her breasts to reveal the words: "En Chile Torturan, Violan y Matan" (In Chile, They Torture, Rape and Kill). It was not uncommon to see shirtless women marching in contingents, reclaiming the body that has been the subject of patriarchal violence and con-

trol. Holding signs calling for a feminist revolution, such as "Aborta el sistema heterocapitalista patriarcal" (Abort the heterocapitalist patriarchal system), activists often donned balaclavas or the green bandana symbolizing reproductive rights and solidarity with feminists across the Global South. The most important performance piece of the period was "Un violador en tu camino" (A Rapist in Your Path) by the Valparaíso-based Chilean collective *Las Tesis* (Guardian News, 2019, 12 June). Drawing on Argentine anthropologist Rita Segato's formative work on structural violence, the feminist anthem calls out the patriarchal state and its institutions. Performers carry out a series of synchronized and symbolic movements punctuated by the steady beat of a drum. On December 4, 2019, over 10,000 activists gathered in front of the notorious National Stadium to perform the flash mob dance. "A Rapist in Your Path" became a global phenomenon, reaching over 400 sites in 50 countries within a year.[9]

In its deployment of art in the service of revolutionary ends, the social uprising had the features of an artistic vanguard.[10] Activists drew on avant-garde and neo-avant-garde aesthetics. The common protest lingo, *No* + (meaning "No More"), such as *No* + *Miedo* (No More Fear) and *No* + *Abusos* (No More Abuse), derived from the "art actions" of the 1970s artistic collective CADA, which seminal literary critic Nelly Richard has characterized as a "neo-avant-garde" (Richard, 1994, pp. 37–54). Pop Art and popular culture were also central components of protest iconography. Protesters drew on a wide range of popular figures, from Superman to The Joker to Pokémon's Pikachu mouse. A dancing protester dressed in a yellow Pikachu costume became a symbol for joy, and the figure of Pikachu then became integrated into protest iconography.[11] A muscular, shirtless male protester who used a stop sign as a shield became known as "PareMan" (*parar* means "to stop") and inspired a comic strip with the same name. In one paste-up from Paloma Rodríguez's "It's a Match" series, a pin-up with a retro coke bottle-spray can is paired up with a male protester in a gas mask, the words "Front Line" written in gothic script on his chest (Figure 3). The city streets were covered in a series of humorous depictions of aliens dropping out of spaceships, accompanied by messages such as "Aliens al poder" (Aliens Take Power), an ironic repost to former First Lady Cecilia Morel's off-the-cuff remark that the social revolt was like "an alien invasion." As I have suggested elsewhere, these tongue-in-cheek, second-degree interventions perform an important critical function. They add humor and joy to a bleak political landscape and allow people to feel a sense of freedom, hope and solidarity (we are in on the joke). On a collective level, they have a seductive, binding appeal, creating the effect of a young, sexy, hip force that is the voice of the future (Trumper, 2022).

5 Conclusion

Social movement theorists have emphasized the power of artistic interventions to convey social and political demands, produce a sense of solidarity, create empathetic bonds, strengthen local and transnational networks, and bring about collective action (McCaughan, 2012; Stites Mor & Suescun Pozas, 2018). Recent scholarship emphasizes the *active* role of art, the ways in which creative cultural practices may be constitutive of public discourse, identity, ideology,

9. The global network *Geochicas* (2019) created an open-source map of performance sites of "A Rapist in Your Path."

10. For a discussion of avant-garde and pop art influences in the political graphics of the *estallido social*, see Gordon-Zolov and Zolov (2020, pp. 173–224).

11. "Tía Pikachu" Giovanna Grandón became a representative for District 12 in the Constitutional Convention.

Figure 3: *It's a Match 2.0* by visual artist Paloma Rodríguez. Photograph by Author.

and political formations. In the case of the 2019–2020 Chilean social revolution, the deployment of artistic strategies across different cultural fields had a synergistic and multiplying effect, producing a "protest landscape" that was threatening to the state because it constituted an alternative public sphere (Márquez et al., p. 100). Protesters exercised political pressure without relying on traditional political parties, traditional media sources, and traditional methods of campaigning. The city walls and streets served as vehicle for the dissemination of information concerning past and present injustices and an array of intersectional demands, and social media enabled protesters to communicate and coordinate without an official platform. "We are in a moment that is historic for Chilean art and culture," said street artist Miguel Ángel Kastro in a video. "I'd go as far as to put it next to France in 1968 or to what happened with the Berlin Wall, where art had a central role in saying things that the official media isn't saying" (CGTN America, 2020). The creative mobilization was energizing and unifying, enabling an ethos of solidarity that cut across different interests and sectors. For example, Caiozzama emphasized how the social revolution led protesters to identify with the Indigenous cause. "A nice thing is that Chileans are putting themselves in the role of the Mapuche. Before, people were like, 'Araucanía, the Mapuche — terrorism.' Now we realize that what [the state] is doing to us today is what they have done to the Mapuche all their lives. I saw a crude but powerful tag that said: 'Chilean, what does it feel like to be Mapuche?' And that was it, now the whole world is with the Mapuche... It's nice because we are finally united in a cause" (Interview with Caiozzama by E. Zolov, Santiago, 10 December 2019). The process of *making* itself had a unifying effect. Artists and activists consistently attested to the collective nature of cultural production. Whether it be a graphic silkscreen workshop or a flash mob dance which gathered momentum through WhatsApp groups and was rehearsed en masse, creative endeavors often brought activists together physically and spiritually.

The first constitutional process reflected the ethos of the social revolution. On October 25, 2020, Chileans voted overwhelmingly in favor of the creation of a new constitution, one to be drafted by an entirely elected citizen body. The 155-person constitutional assembly that was elected in May 2021 was composed of an equal number of men and women, and 17 seats were reserved for Indigenous peoples. This was the first time in history that a constitutional body adhered to the principle of gender parity. Mapuche linguist and activist Elisa Loncón was elected as inaugural President. The draft constitution produced by the assembly was one of the most progressive and visionary charters ever created (Bartlett & Schmidt, 2022).[12] Defining the nation as "plurinational" and "plurilingual," the proposed constitution recognized 11 Indigenous groups and gave Indigenous peoples the rights to autonomous regions and self-governance. Feminist protections included gender parity in government and institutional bodies, reproductive rights, and a life free from violence. Along with the guarantee of fundamental human rights, the charter ensured the right to free education, health care, housing, and clean air and water. At a national plebiscite held on September 4th, 2022, the new constitution failed by a large margin, a failure that analysts have attributed to concerns about plurinationalism, the leftist bent of the charter, and a disinformation campaign to instill fear in citizens about the security of their property and pensions (Bell, 2022; Hiner, 2022). Chile is now in a second constitutional moment, and the pendulum has swung to the right. In this historic instance, the 50-year anniversary of the coup d'état against the socialist government of Salvador Allende, Chile stands at a political crossroads, and it is unclear how its ongoing political narrative will

12. At 388 articles, the proposed Constitution rivaled the maximalist Constitutions of Bolivia and Colombia. In order to ensure that people would read it, the draft charter came with a separate guide "con peras y manzanas" (literally "with pears and apples," an expression used by school teachers to indicate a simplified explanation).

unfold. One thing is certain, however. The waves of political protest that culminated in the *estallido social* will not be without consequence.

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