

Introduction Macarena Gómez-Barris

Good morning everybody, my name is Georgina Sánchez Celaya, I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Bern and I am also part of the Sinergia project “Mediating the Ecological Imperative” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Currently, I work in the Institute of Art History at the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, led by Professor Dr. Peter Schneemann. First of all, I would like to thank the organizers: Eva Bader, who unfortunately is not present today, Hannah Ambühl, Mike Toggweiler and Toni Hildebrandt. And of course, Prof. Dr. Urte Krass and Prof. Dr. Peter Schneemann and all the Institutions that made this possible. Today, I have the task and the honor of introducing Professor Macarena Gómez-Barris. But before going into the curricular details of her fruitful and prominent career, let me share some thoughts about the work of our first speaker of the Transhumanities Summer School 2022.

Professor Gómez Barris is a scholar and writer who works at the intersections of art, environment, feminist-cuir politics, and decolonial theory and praxis. This particular assemblage of knowledge has allowed her to create interesting research, where the deconstruction of the fatalistic paradigm of “no future” becomes possible. It is in this sense that the work of Macarena Gómez-Barris explores the fissures, the little cracks, “the hollows of the water” like in the archipelago thinking of the French-Martiniquais philosopher Édouard Glissant or “the shadows in the dark”, as in the decolonial imaginary proposed by American professor Emma Pérez. This is why we are here today to listen to Professor Gómez Barri's lecture, to explore the fissures created by the art and images she analyzes and to shake and excite our imagination, a very powerful tool constantly neglected in Academia.

Now please, let me begin with the curricular details of our first guest speaker. Macarena Gómez-Barris is currently Professor and Chairperson of Social Science and Cultural Studies at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York and she has been a teaching fellow at New York University and San Francisco State University.

She is also Director of the (GSC) Global South Center, a research institution that works at the intersection of social ecologies, art/politics, and decolonial methodologies. Together with Marcial Godoy-Anatavia, she is the current co-editor of *e-misférica*, an online trilingual journal on politics and hemispheric art, published at the New York University (NYU). She is also a member of the *Social Text* journal collective and together with Diana Taylor series editor of *Dissident Acts*, at Duke University Press Series.

Moreover, Macarena has received several awards and distinctions: The Social Science Distinguished Alumnae Award from the University of California, Santa Cruz (2021-2022), Pratt Faculty Recognition Research Award (2021-2022), Fulbright Research Award, Best Faculty of Color University of Southern California and the Raubbenheimer Award University of Southern California.

Professor Gómez-Barris has published several books. She is the author of *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (2009), *Beyond the Pink Tide: Art and Politics in the Americas* (2018) and *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (2017), recently translated to Spanish. Her corpus of work has helped to put Latin American experiences more centrally on the map and the United States academic discourse, and with doing so, she acknowledges that there is much to be learn in the ongoing efforts of socio-environmental activism and resistances (in plural) in Latin America.

The last-mentioned book, *The Extractive Zone*, focused on the artistic and activist responses to extractivism annihilation in mestizo, afro, and indigenous territories. This text is key to discussing several issues that concern the main topic of the Summer School: the ecological imperative, and I am sure it is going to be at the center of our following enriching discussions.

Perhaps, let me continue this introduction by mentioning one concept that is present in the whole development of the book *The Extractive Zone*. I am talking about the “submerged perspective”. The term indeed refers to a particular aesthetic technique that comes from the use of the camera in Francisco Huichaqueo and Carolina Caycedo's film projects. But, beyond that, I think it is also an invitation, an intimate and audacious one, that encourages of all us to immerse ourselves in the thinking, the creative process, and the projects of each of our colleagues present here today during the next days. As it may be, we already have a lot of questions in mind, but let me be the one who put the first question on the table. I am aware that many of us have different interests and backgrounds. Many of us come from different realities and parts of the world, as we say in Spanish “cada cabeza es un mundo” “every head is a world” but overall, the crucial question is: are we prepared to immerse ourselves in the thought and academic history of our fellows? This is what lays at the core of the “submerged point of view” the will to contribute with our approach in a respectful and tolerant way and the capacity to share but also to disagree. This is for me the main objective of the “submerged perspective” that Macarena Gómez-Barris brilliantly elaborates in *The Extractive Zone* “perceived life otherwise”.

I am pretty sure that we can learn so much from her instructional focus on Latinx and Latin American Studies, memory and the afterlives of violence, decolonial theory, the art of social protest, and “queer femme epistemes” a methodology developed by her. I am very much looking forward to Professor Gómez-Barris lecture today and also to hear the response prepared by Professor Dr. Hubert Zapf. I am delighted to welcome Macarena Gómez-Barris. Macarena we are ready to listen to you, please the floor is yours. (Applauses).