

Videodance as political engagement in Latin America: Intersemiotic relationships between the body, images, and new media

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the intersemiotic relationships between the body, images, and new media, having as key reference the development of videodance in Latin America, as a politically and socially engaged artistic language. Our approach incorporates ideas from performance studies, as developed by Diana Taylor, and the embodiment perspective of Falk Heinrich and Celia Balbina Fernández, who reflect on the connection between performance and technology, how this implicates the participation of remote bodies and relates to faraway places. In Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America, the development of the interdisciplinary language of videodance is related to sociopolitical struggles, originating in narcotraffic violence, corrupt governments, guerrillas, and other complex realities. The semiotic configuration of situated videodance has a therapeutic function that allows us to imagine and construct new ways of living and coexisting. For this purpose, we semiotically analyze the local theoretical categories developed by Alarcón, Contreas, Celis, Mangieri, Monroy, Fernández, Vargas, and Arellano, among others, as applied to videodance works by Colombian and other Latin American choreographers, dancers, and filmmakers; showing how this artistic language constitutes an act of resistance and social transformation, which allows the healing of collective injuries and the revindication of synesthetic memories of bodies in violent contexts and territories.

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1. Some initial ideas

There is something unique when the body appears in discussion, expressing ideas, feelings, and sensations, in different art practices, especially in our time, because it is no longer connected with figurative narratives, as occurs in traditional forms of art (where the body is used to represent ideas of beauty, divinity, perfection, etc.). The body also becomes political; it directly shows that all actions have implications on subjects (concrete bodies are affected by different types of violence). But the body is not only understood as an individual entity; it is also a cultural and social manifestation (of institutions, ideologies, and governmental acts), which incarnates values, prejudices, identities, and other symbolic structures.

One key motivation for this paper relates to an inquiry about the body's role in common practices, and how the body relates to creative processes, especially where dance, technology, and new media intersect. In this context, we will examine: (a) the body's role in theoretical and practical perspectives; (b) the intersections between semiotics, performance studies, and embodiment; (c) experimentation with video as activism and as denunciation; (d) the poetic and aesthetic dimension of videodance in our time; and finally, (e) Colombian and other Latin American examples of videodance, as a mechanism for social catharsis and symbolic healing.

In analyzing the intersemiotic relationships between the body, images, and new media in Latin American videodance, we focus on diverse types of violence, seen from a local perspective, and their connections to the global sociocultural context. We will employ a semiotic approach to studying videodance, concerned with sociopolitical problems and critical perspectives, including an aesthetic perspective on the body transfigured into images, showing the relevance of contemporary art projects that connect technology, performance, and dance practices.

2. Embodiment and performance studies from our perspective

In pursuing the above objectives we bring into dialogue two theoretical perspectives. First, it is important to talk about the physicality and materiality of the body; this theoretical perspective shows the presence of the body as a phenomenal basis, as all experience is mediated by our bodies. This is so in performance art but also in dance, especially seen from a contemporary perspective, where the connections between action, movement, and space emphasize the body's presence and its creative possibilities: 'A large body of texts exists on the significance of the materiality of the body in performance art, many highlighting the body as the phenomenal basis and pure existence' (Heinrich 2012: 2).

Here appears the frontier between the internal and the external, private and public space, the intimate and the social. Through this, we may notice memories, sensibilities, tensions, disputes, and stories about individuals, and that is one reason why physical contact and touch is closely related to dance practices and movement experiences. In art practices, the role of the flesh leads the audience to no longer interpret a proposal as a representation. The semiotic distinctions between subject and object, and between performer and recipient, seem to collapse into the pure presence of existence.

When we focus on the body and its role in the construction of our experiences, we can see the significance of nonverbal languages, which enact complex semiotic systems of communication more directly and accurately than ordinary verbal language. In dance, just as in all performative arts, movements, corporal positions, bodily gestures, and facial expressions function as a complex system of communication, which is also connected to cultural, historical, and social contexts.

Performance studies analyze all kinds of actions, like the configuration of identity, belonging to certain communities, socializing with others, constructing complex systems of symbols, ways of creating meaning, and semiosis. Performance not only relates to humans; it also appears in the development of other natural species, like flowers, fungi, and nonhuman animals. And performance is even key to mechanical and artificial processes, like those of machines, robots, computer programs, and artificial intelligence. For Richard Schechner (Madeira et al. 2002: 2), this entails an open and complex perspective on performance: 'I think of performance not only in relation to human life, but the life of Gaia, of the planet, the life of the animals on it, the life of the trees, even the life of the rocks. They are all performing, in my sense of performing – that is, they are doing something.'

We also take as background theory Diana Taylor's study of *memory* and *repertoire* in different everyday and artistic contexts. Taylor reveals different ways of comprehending the idea of performance in all kinds of practices, and how the repetition and preservation of certain actions relate to social and cultural paradigms. In this sense, performance studies are connected to embodied perspectives, involving processes of recognition, memory, interaction with others, and self-formation: 'Embodied expression has participated and will probably continue to participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory, and identity pre- and postwriting' (Taylor 2007: 16).

We incorporate Taylor's notion of *archival memory*, which has been adapted and expanded by the Latin American academic scholars and videodance creators we discuss in this paper. We are interested in how Taylor conceives the archive as a living being, and not only as a mausoleum of the past, which travels through different times, spaces, and cultures. She also clearly distinguishes different types of archives, which are not reduced to texts, documents, or ancient manuscripts; for there are also living memoirs, stories, and cultural manifestations, which now also adopt video recording, digitalization, and new media technologies (ibid. 19).

This allows us to develop a theoretical perspective that connects the role of the body to the development of art practices, which is fundamental to understanding dance as a discipline, but also to understanding the connections between the body, images, and new media. We believe that an comprehensive theoretical approach to understanding the aesthetics and politics of videodance requires a hybrid perspective combining semiotics, embodiment, and performance studies. This allows an expanded vision of dance, which allows us to explain the theoretical and practical aspects of performance practices in daily life, and their connections with art practices in recent times.

3. Videodance in sociopolitical contexts in Latin America

Videodance in Latin America has transitioned from a period of formal experimentation to a consolidated apparatus for resistance and memory. While European traditions have frequently prioritized the aesthetics of kinetic movement, the Latin American trajectory has developed a hybrid language that goes far beyond this by not merely documenting but actively co-constructing a political discourse centered on territory. This genre serves as a critical mechanism for the visibility of bodies that have historically been marginalized by dictatorial regimes (Motavita 2021), extractivism, and systemic social crises, positioning the moving image as a living archive of contested identities.

In Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, for example, videodance maintains an inextricable link with post-memory and the denunciation of human rights violations. Following the Southern Cone dictatorships, various artists and collectives utilized the screen to render visible the very bodies that the state apparatus sought to erase. By integrating choreographic explorations for the camera, emphasizing trauma and absence on the sites of former clandestine detention centers, these works intervene in the cultural semiosphere. This process of local adoption and experimentation with videodance transforms sites of historical violence into spaces of aesthetic significance and collective resilience (Tambutti and Gigena 2023).

On the other hand, in the Andean and Central American contexts, artistic productions frequently examine the relationship between the body and the land, emphasizing the consequences of rural violence and forced displacement. In Colombia, for example, videodance facilitates the narration of armed conflict through “sensitive research,” whereby the dancer’s movement engages directly with landscapes scarred by war, foregrounding flesh as *body* and *territory*. This approach allows the body to function as a seismograph of social tensions (Celis 2022), translating territorial trauma into a visual grammar oriented toward symbolic reparation and the development of a pedagogy for peace.

Likewise, the resurgence of feminism, gender issues, and political activism over the last decade has infused regional videodance with a renewed political urgency in

exploring these topics. Contemporary productions investigate bodily sovereignty, reproductive rights, and the denunciation of femicide, utilizing accessible technologies and digital networks. This also shows the advantages of technological networks and digital practices in complex social contexts, where it is necessary to move away from official circuits and dominant narratives. Within this framework, the screen functions as a semiotic battlefield where patriarchal representations of desire are systematically challenged. Feminist videodance in Latin America (Flores and Campillay 2021) transcends aesthetic concerns, operating instead as an act of self-expression that fosters bonds of sisterhood and enhances the visibility of gender struggles within the virtual and the public spheres.

In the Costa Rican videodance (Sancho 2024), the female body is configured as a chronotope of violence, where historical patriarchal structures converge with the critical femicide statistics, as reported by the national judiciary. The “staggered violence” inherent to this body-time, as exemplified in the choreographies of Cristina Gigirey (1940–2006), translates into a bodily semiosis where movement is decoded through pre-established power structures. Consequently, the feminized body on stage becomes a dynamic sign that seeks to dignify the position of women in dance. By stripping away traditional male authority – which has historically dictated rhythm and movement – the performer reclaims the capacity to convey messages of protest, subverting the objectifying gaze and reframing vulnerability as a form of political agency.

In these works, the female body exists as language and protest. Interaction on stage generates a profound dialogic semiosis, in which the dancer’s body simultaneously serves as the sender and receiver of power discourses, effectively marginalizing the traditional role of men in choreography and dance practices. According to the frameworks proposed by the Costa Rican choreographers Mireya Barbosa and Elena Gutiérrez (Sancho 2024), the performance intensifies this phenomenon, as the body is often “spoken for by others” in an environment where the gaze is mediated by a reality of systemic inequality. Choreography thus functions as a meaning-making process that allows the body to transition from an “object of violence” to a “subject of discourse,” challenging the cultural disadvantages exposed.

The current state of the discipline reveals a significant trend toward the decolonization of the gaze and the integration of ancestral knowledge through new media. The convergence of cinematic performance with the demands of indigenous peoples is generating an audiovisual archive that interrogates notions of modern progress while celebrating epistemic diversity and embodied experiences. In Latin America, videodance has emerged as a robust interdisciplinary field. Far from being a niche genre, it functions as a powerful catalyst for discussing predominant narratives, performing identity and a critical reflection on freedom, justice, and identity within a constantly transforming continent.

4. The roles of video, images, and art practices in our time

Interest in new media and technology is one of the reasons why access to video cameras became so popular in the 1960s and 1970s and remained so until the present day. After the popularization of this medium, movements and projects appeared that addressed social and political issues, moving away from official broadcast networks, defending autonomy, critical thought, and independent networks. This phenomenon lasted from 1968 to 1972, with the formation of groups and associations using video as a mechanism to empower minorities and denounce abuses, with the goal of defending human rights.

These historical antecedents explain the social and political dimensions of technology and new media, and why they are still so important in our time. Video may be used to resist oppressive narratives and to generate public debates and popular consciousness. From the very beginning of artists' experimentation with video, there appears a desire to denounce and politicize, as well as an intention to humanize technology. To be clear, this does not mean that every video work is devoted to political concerns and activism, but it has certainly become a powerful medium, extending worldwide (Gonçalves 2022: 10–11).

The idea of the image is no longer restricted to an epistemic or biological context, but extends to a social, cultural, and historical background, where images are created, consumed, and interpreted. From a semiotic perspective, the system of images that surround us deeply affects our habits and practices. Images are no longer reduced to the idea of copying reality, representing, duplicating, pretending, faking, etc.; thus, they have transcended the ideas of mimesis and simulation (Avram 2018: 2).

Since images have an ontological existence, they may be considered as objects, constructs, structures, nonverbal languages, and systems of semiosis, among other things. This implies that the duality and separation between image and reality is no longer useful and makes no sense. The role of the body, in particular its perceptions, actions, and manifestations, is key to understanding the meaning of images. In short, this implies that the world of images is intrinsically connected with the human body and its performative possibilities.

It is important to emphasize the role of the moving image, which has a long history and trajectory in cinema and visual arts. The mystery and attraction of moving images have captured the attention of audiences since the invention of cinema, and the complexity of this medium has evolved, inspiring interest in experimentation with video and the visual arts until the present day. Horea Avram reveals two key aspects of moving images: the first is their *capability of displacement* to different contexts, circuits, and networks, as they may be viewed and experienced from various times and spaces. The second is the inconstant nature of moving images, which affects the audience's perception and interpretation of them (2018: 3).

Nowadays we transition from one type of screen to another, hundreds of times a day, to different moments and places; switching our attention from one device to another: computers, televisions, monitors, video games, cinema screens, etc. We are also surrounded by a system of cameras and surveillance, which directly affects our ways of acting and being. This is fundamental to understanding the connection between video and art practices, and for analyzing the relationship between technology, dance, and performance that occurs in videodance.

The link between video and performance concerns how recording oneself is connected to an introspective and autobiographical dimension. Video allows anyone to zoom in or out, to enclose certain gestures, to notice what is hard to perceive by a simple gaze. In Bruce Nauman's exploration of his own body, the camera works as a scanner of movement and self-reflection, generating an extension of time and space, as seen in works like *From Mouth to Hand* (1967).

It is no coincidence that Nauman studied theater and dance before his exploration of performance, indicating that he was interested in the role of the body in art practices and scenic contexts. This is crucial to comprehending the relevance of the body, time, and space in further experimentation with dance and video. So, we contend that this previous use of video, body art, and performance was relevant to the origins of videodance and its system of significance.

5. The poetics of the body are transfigured into images

The poetics of the body transfigured into images is a concept that emphasizes aesthetic possibilities and their application to practices in the visual arts. In this sense, we will discuss what happens in videodance's configuration and experimentation, how it connects the body's physicality with its fictional appearance on the screen, how the audience perceives and interacts with these art forms, how the choreography and the sequence of movements are transformed by the camera, and how movement, time, and space are perceived in this new expressive language (Vite 2021).

There is a magnetic relationship between dance and cinema, and this fusion reveals other aspects not limited to the scenic dimension of choreography. Since the experimentation of avantgarde film, there has been interest in exploring the possibilities of dance outside theaters and in fictional spaces, which was only possible on the screen. So, dancers' movements and sequenced actions are transfigured into the realm of image, where video edition and postproduction generate creative ways of moving and expressing oneself through the screen (Cerbino and Brum 2016: 109–110).

Rocco Mangieri describes the characteristics of a semiotic approach to the field of dance, which implies a connection between a theory of action and a theory of movement, where there emerges a reconciliation between the continuity and discontinuity

of time, space, body, and movement. Mangieri argues that semiosis in dance involves a cultural and social construction, which implies the generation of a sequence of actions by the dancer, involving plastic qualities of moving bodies, and the construction of a series of visual experiences, where all these elements directly connect with the audience's participation, stimulating their perception and interpretation of the visual and choreographic system of dance performance (2010: 19).

To understand these poetics, it is necessary to analyze the concept of "choreography for the camera," which contrasts with traditional dance performance, in that the construction of movement is only made for the screen. The dance space is now translated into a fictional and imaginative space, which is no longer restricted to a theater or a white box, such that physical laws are defied by new possibilities of body and movement. As we mentioned before, there is a close connection between how time and space are perceived in videodance, as seen in the elongation of movements, the freezing of action, and frenetic acceleration, among other examples.

María Contreras argues that *estesia* (*aisthesis*) is directly related to a semiotic approach to the body and, in consequence, to dance and videodance, which connect sensible human experience with the somatic cognitive process (2012: 14). We affirm that the body is the unique locus where empirical perceptions and human emotions are semiotically integrated with signs and meanings; thus, the body is the medium for interacting with other subjects and their bodies. From this perspective, the aesthetic configuration of videodance involves experimentation with synesthesia, a somatic perspective on memory and oblivion, and a reflection on haptic experiences.

Including the body in semiotic studies allows us to understand the local contexts and social conditions of individuals and their cultural backgrounds. Contreras discusses how the semiotics of the body exceed the limitations of structural and generative semiotics when analyzing cultural practices (2012: 16). The body is no longer a mere accessory or prothesis, or even a simple vehicle for cognitive processes and the construction of meaning, either discursively or in the field of action. It is instead the incarnation of the subject, the place for developing one's personal identity, and the condition of possibility of one's relationship with oneself and with others.

6. Videodance as political engagement, aesthetic apparatus, and performative incarnation

In Latin America, videodance is closely related to contemporary political practice; so, it is conceptualized as a form of semiosis through which subjects constitute their political identity within a specific context. Its historical dimension facilitates a process wherein the subject, through movement, critically projects against hegemonic discourses and predominant narratives. Valeria De Luca (2017) examines the shift in contemporary semiotics toward the passionate and corporeal dimensions of meaning. This transition has enabled dance to be interpreted beyond its traditional configuration, allowing it to be understood as a semiotic process through which the subject generates novel meanings. While the discipline has integrated concepts such as intersubjectivity and bodily practices, a theoretical lacuna persists regarding dance. This gap concerns dance's capacity to serve as a practice that challenges the meaning of political action within a defined territory.

Consequently, De Luca's (2017) conceptualization of the "gesture" is revisited as a fundamental bridge between physical movement and cultural imagination, and this is also connected to our perspective of performance studies and the role of rituals. Given that contemporary politics is increasingly characterized by its iconic nature and laden with symbolic gestures, this landscape has become a primary source of creative inspiration for performers. In videodance, the gesture functions as a semiotic unit, rooted in the iconic, through which primacy is established in the political significance of bodily movement. In Latin American contemporary dance, the gesture has emerged as a distinct sign of protest, facilitating a critique that directly challenges the hegemony of current political structures.

Performances by women in Chile, such as those by the collective LasTesis, have been fundamental to politicizing the female body, transforming it into a space for re-signifying the historical debts incurred by past governments against women in that country (Vargas and Arellano 2021). The body is understood as a semiotic mode (Pardo 2012), from which state control over women's reproductive rights emerges as a semiosis of protest. Through choreographies that translate texts from feminist anthropology into movement, these performances expose the "pedagogy of cruelty" and demand autonomy in the face of legal restrictions on abortion. These actions not only occupy public space but re-signify the pelvis and the womb – historically associated with compulsory motherhood – as territories of sovereignty and desire (Flores and Campillay 2021).

Furthermore, in Chile, the phenomenon of mass performances and collective embodied practices, during the 2018 Feminist May and the 8 March strikes, demonstrates a poetics of resistance that links contemporary dance with visual activism.

This performance was so powerful that it went viral and was enacted and incarnated by female bodies in other Latin American countries, like Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil, among others. The use of green scarves integrated into the choreography functions as an icon of the “green wave,” where rhythmic movement and collective synchrony seek to break the isolation of the body’s private experience and transform it into a collective body, and a demand for civil rights (Jeria and Gonzalez 2025).

In this approach, the body is not merely a medium but the central axis around which meaning is formed. The National Centre for Historical Memory in Colombia has supported various dance collectives in developing their reflections on the burden of war, through the question: ‘At what speed do memories move?’ These collectives have taken this question to express some very slow movements, following the rhythm of the gaita and the marimba in some cases, so as to demonstrate on stage how war leaves bodies so heavy that they can only move slowly to resist the traces it has left in the affected communities.

Videodance is also a mechanism of documentation, preservation, and living memory. In this regard, Ximena Monroy argues that video is more than just a recording of ephemeral and performative experiences, by implying a *corporal archive*, recorded on the skin of the dancers as a living memory. Monroy considers videodance to go far beyond the dialectics of the danced image, instead presenting the dancing bodies as living archives, intimate memories, and movement repertoires, connecting with the theoretical approach of Diana Taylor, but from a local and heterogeneous perspective (Monroy 2019: 8).

Visual experiences are combined with haptic experiences, and the image in movement is closely related to tactile sensations, which reveal different types of approach among the dancing bodies. In dance, the skin and the flesh are relevant to self-formation and the role of embodied experiences. Mónica Alarcón (2015: 130-140) argues that the *human touch* is key to developing bodily consciousness and the perception of movement. For us, the significant paradox of the combination of visual and tactile experiences in videodance is that it simultaneously plays with proximity and distance.

In this framework, time is conceptualized as a semiosis (Lotman 1999) through which the body generates meaning, facilitating an exercise of artistic creation aimed at addressing the intensity of armed conflict in contemporary politics. Temporality enables the subject to construct a language through which pain, the loss of a loved one, and the linguistic impossibility of processing grief are enacted. As noted by a Colombian choreographer: ‘The duration of this dance allows people to realize that memories possess weight. If we are unable to release them through choreographic movement, they persist as lifelong burdens, manifesting as symptoms of a new illness’ (Ramírez, 2020, personal communication).

Furthermore, videodance utilizes another form of semiosis critical to political engagement in the local context: the synesthetic nature of the body (Urueña 2023). This semiosis is informed by the construction of movements and cinematographic shots, arising from responses to ontological inquiries such as ‘How does bitterness move through the body after a guerrilla attack?’ or ‘What is the color of the heaviness of memory?’ (Urueña 2025). This suggests that meaning is constructed by taking sensory inputs – such as taste, touch, and sight – and semiotically translating them into movements and gestures.

According to Nicola Dusi (2015), *intersemiotic translation*, or *intermedial transposition*, is the creative crossing of media boundaries between distinct sign systems, transforming a source text while expanding its semiotic possibilities. Applied to videodance, this process bridges *choreographic syntax*, such as bodily movement and spatial rhythm, and *cinematographic syntax*, such as framing, camera mobility, and editing. The camera selects, magnifies, and recontextualizes gestures, making bodily shuddering or subtle shifts resonate in entirely new ways. This deliberate mediation creates fresh semiotic layers, proving that videodance operates as a distinct aesthetic language, rather than a simple reproduction of live performance.

A notable example of this intersemiotic translation is the work of the Colombian collective El Cuerpo Habla, based at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Antioquia. Their videodance pieces specifically examine the body in contexts following the signing of the Colombian peace agreements. When these works are analyzed through the lens of Iuri Lotman’s (1999) semiosis and the principles of synesthetic semiosis (Urueña 2025), the dancer’s body constitutes a “text” within the semiosphere of Latin American culture. This text seeks to translate taste, color, and other semiotic variables into the physical presentation of bodies through the camera and the body transfigured into images, projected on screen.

For instance, the bitterness of memory is semiotically translated into shots where bodies are enveloped in blankets, reminiscent of the *amarres* or bundles discarded in the Medellín River. This imagery reveals a state of passive decomposition, from which the subject can only be liberated as the internal body initiates movement, loosening its bonds, and reconstructing a physical path toward healing and renewal. In this sense, videodance is a liminal space where cinematic and choreographic languages converge. This work functions as a mechanism for generating meaning that translates social trauma into an aesthetic structure, allowing collective memory to be reconfigured through the semiotic “explosion” that occurs when art intervenes in rigid political discourses (Lotman 1996).

Another interesting example of how this kind of intersemiotic translation has been explored in videodance is *No Azara* (2023), by Lobadys Pérez, a Colombian dancer and choreographer who has experimented with contemporary dance and

videodance on several occasions. For this work, Lobadys based his choreography on the song *No Azara* (2021), composed by the Colombian singer La Muchacha. This song addresses the violent police oppression of legitimate protests generated by COVID in 2021. It denounces the brutal use of force in the pursuit of young students, the disappearance of people, and arbitrary imprisonment, among other manifested forms of violence. The title of the song is a local Spanish expression, which could be translated as “You do not disturb me” or “Not overwhelmed.”

The choreography created by Lobadys, in collaboration with the Periferia Dance Company, connects the forceful images of the lyrics with the expressive language of contemporary dance and its sequences of movements. This videodance was filmed in a *finca* in the countryside; a type of place which in the local imaginary is associated with disputed territories, where displacement is common, as are guerrilla and paramilitary forces, which are part of local sociopolitical conflicts. This place’s symbolic connotations are also connected with the ideas of proximity and distance, demonstrating the relevance of proxemic experimentation in audiovisual productions.

The camera interacts with the dancers, sometimes as another dance partner, sometimes following their bodies’ trajectories, sometimes zooming out, and at other times confronting the dancers and even the spectator. In some scenes, it is possible to perceive the dancers’ breath, to sense their contact, and to see their gestures up close, expressing anger, sadness, fear, joy, and liberation. One visual metaphor that continually appears is the ritual of saying goodbye and the idea of forced displacement; so, there are poetic images that portray involuntary travel and emotive farewells.

The political value of videodance resides in its capacity to act as a semiotic frontier and a liminal space for constructing identity and community: a site of translation where social exclusion or “noise” is transformed into comprehensible and resilient information. The Colombian works examined here show bodies fragmented by violence being reintegrated into a new fabric of meaning, challenging the centers of power within the dominant semiosphere and reconfiguring new poetics of the body transfigured into images. Ultimately, videodance may promote a form of cultural self-communication that reinforces identity and the agency of human rights in disputed bodies and territories.

7. Symbolic healing, political education, and social transformation

Videodance may function as a ritual of symbolic reparation, addressing enforced disappearance and the trauma of past dictatorships, healing, and catharsis. An example of this is *Videodanza... y el mar* (2012), a choreographic piece filmed at the geographical sites around Argentina where the remains of the disappeared – victims of the “death flights” – were historically recovered. Produced under the artistic direction of the choreographer Aurelia Chillemi, with music by Osvaldo Aguilar, and direction by the filmmaker Adolfo Cabanchik, this work was developed in Partido de la Costa during the 2012 Week for Memory, Truth, and Justice. The collective sought to construct a “semiosis of forgiveness,” re-signifying the coastline through a choreographic sequence representing the pain of victims moving through the waves, eventually allowing the body to “settle” and to be reborn as a “seed in the sand.”

In a similar vein, Pollini (2026), in *No tiene entidad*, explores the search for identity and ethical positioning amidst the vestiges of the past. This work is elaborated as an exercise in tactile and visual memory, where flesh becomes a living archive, and video acquires the status of a historical and political document. Produced in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1976 Argentine coup, this piece utilizes the body as the primary vehicle for ‘embodied and incarnated memory.’ Rather than aestheticizing horror, the choreography employs the language of movement to process the voids and silences left by the dictatorial regime.

According to the Lluvino collective, in their work *Recuerpo* (2016), videodance functions as a mechanism for healing, or at least achieving catharsis, where physical praxis allows for the processing of trauma that exceeds linguistic expression, aiding victims in ‘re-composing their history.’ This work proposes a semiosis of healing by reconfiguring the body – traditionally viewed within the conflict as a passive receptacle of violence – into a system of regenerative signs and a way of empowering individuals. In this process, the scars, traces, and traumas incarnated in flesh are transformed from stigmata of victimization into indices of a history that demands narration and transformation.

From our perspective, healing occurs when the body, through research-creation, achieves a re-signification of its own semiotic codes: the gesture that once symbolized defense or pain shifts to a language of autonomy and care. Thus, videodance articulates a grammar of “symbolic healing,” where movement serves as a vehicle for transitioning from the wound to reclaimed territory, allowing sovereignty to be regained. This restorative semiosis is further validated by the National Center for

Historical Memory, and is evidenced in the multimodal production *Dance, Memory, and Peace* (2016), which examines how dance in Colombia narrates dispossession while fostering hope. So, videodance ensures that bodily resistance is not ephemeral, but instead becomes a permanent testimony of human dignity, facing different types of barbarism and defending justice and human rights.

8. Conclusions

In conclusion, the body in motion, captured by the lens, becomes the definitive archive of Latin America's sociopolitical struggles, challenging official oblivion and censorship through the moving image. The camera becomes an active witness to complex and intimate histories, allowing artists to communicate the sociopolitical problems of heterogeneous people and countries. In the examined works, it is possible to find topics related to dictatorial governments, acts of femicide, gender conflicts, patriarchal structures, armed conflicts, and other forms of violence, which are located on specific bodies and carved on their flesh, or even evinced by bodies' invisibility and absence.

Videodance, as an artistic language, is capable of symbolically and poetically expressing the incarnated horrors of these sociopolitical struggles; thus, it is deeply connected with activism. In our research for this paper, we have discovered that the aesthetic dimension of videodance in Colombia is associated with these artists' political commitment and their need for public denunciation but also serves as a medium for healing the affective and psychological wounds of our context.

Since the beginning of their experimentation with video, artists have appropriated it and other audiovisual technologies for political purposes, and to effectively amplify their voices, with the goal of connecting with other people and communicating, over a wider range, similar problems around the world. The use of video might be a strategy to oppose predominant narratives and generate awareness in people, and a way to activate social catharsis in such collective situations.

There is a therapeutic aspect to videodance, which is very salient in a wide range of the Colombian and other Latin American works we have analyzed. This is also connected with the idea of the body's synesthetic nature, and the construction of a grammar of holistic healing, where movement, touch, and gesture allow the subject to regain sovereignty over their body and make room for new possibilities of being.

Finally, a semiotic approach to videodance, as a cultural and social phenomenon in Latin America, requires a perspective that combines the theoretical perspective of performance studies – explaining the construction of cultural identity, the place of living memories on bodies, and the performative dimension of creative processes –

with the incarnation of different types of experiences and the relevance of the body in research processes, as occurs in the embodiment perspective. The convergence of these theories allows us to clearly explain the intersemiotic relationships between the body, images, and new media in our time, and how these principles interact in local contexts and regional practices.

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