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Denouncing Gender Violence in Spain and Rewriting the Female Narrative

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Maria Alejandra Zanetta, PhD

Honors Research Project

16 March 2022

Contemporary Female Artists and Their Fight Against Gender Violence in Spain

The objective of this paper is to analyze how various Spanish female artists across Spain denounce domestic violence by exposing this abuse and the culture of women domination in public spaces. Gender violence is an important topic to analyze because it is a current issue in Spain, and globally, as there is a fight for gender equality currently taking place in Spain and in many countries around the world. I also believe this paper will further the discussion of gender violence and will continue to bring the issue to public light. Technically speaking, domestic violence includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse occurring between partners or within a family (Dutton). Many artists across Spain are now looking to reconstruct a new narrative for women because violence against women was often justified throughout the Spanish Civil War and the Franco Regime in various ways (Miguel Álvarez). A major turning point in Spanish history was the murder of Ana Orantes, whose victimization under domestic violence was televised both before she was murdered by her ex-husband, and after her murder in 1997 (Salvá). This murder brought about change in the laws, where men are now required to wear a bracelet that alerts the authorities if they get near the person who filed the restraining order (Salvá). Today, graffiti fills the streets of Madrid with stories of women who had similar tragic endings. The purpose of this graffiti is to take the private violence and expose it in the public space in an effort to fight against the normalization of gender violence in patriarchal societies of the capitalist world (@redescalles). This paper will look at how gender-based violence against

women was practiced throughout the Spanish Civil War, and continued throughout the Franco regime, through various practices and penal codes that were implemented for marriages (ADRIAN). Next, the research will look at how artists such as Raquel Riba Rossy and Sara Batuecas denounce this gender violence through their works. These works include Raquel Riba Rossy's cartoon character, Lola, and the "Tree of Women," which is dedicated to those who survived or were victimized by gender violence, and Sara Batuecas's poster series of physical harassment, which is an attempt to bring the issue to light and spark engagement and discussion on invisible violence (*Street art madrid*; Tolonen; Atienza). Finally, the paper will analyze how women like Carmela García are working to change the narrative of women by placing them in more empowering scenarios as liberal professionals without demeaning the male (Maria Cristina Masaveu Peterson Fundación). This can be especially admired and noted in the work "Memoria," which is replicating Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper," but with female figures, all admiring a book in the presence of two men (Maria Cristina Masaveu Peterson Fundación).

From 1936 to 1939, Spain fought a civil war, where women actively participated both on the Nationalist and the Republican side. Women on the Nationalist side were more conservative, meaning they tended to adhere to the traditional Catholic beliefs of what was expected of women, principally exercising the traditional role of wife and nurturing mother. Women could assist soldiers with laundry, meal preparations, and other traditional household tasks, but Nationalist women were not as active on the battlefield as Republican women, who wanted to do more for the war effort (Muñoz-Encinar). Not only did Republican women, known as *milicianas*, take responsibility for domestic spaces, but they also actively fought alongside the men, in equal terms, learning how to use the weapons and helping with the military missions, putting

themselves in just as much danger as the men. By definition, *milicianas* included “any armed woman who participated in combat, or who was trained and prepared to do so, in defense of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War” (Lines). More specifically, frontline *milicianas* actively fought where help was needed and conflict erupted, while rearguard *milicianas* stayed back in the domestic space and only fought in defense when the war came to them. While these actions demonstrated that the gender roles of society were changing, they were not necessarily revolutionized equally since women were still expected to take on the double duty of completing the additional domestic tasks at home (Lines). This contribution to the war resulted in different forms of violence when they were caught by the Nationalists, including execution, rape, and imprisonment (Muñoz-Encinar). To undermine this ideal of an independent woman, Republican women were humiliated in a manner that did not cause lasting physical effects: captured republican women were forced to shave their heads, take laxatives, and walk the streets, stripped of their clothing, in front of family and neighbors. During this “walk of shame,” they were forced to wear red ribbons, the brand of communists, and shout “we are communists,” while getting whipped if they were not vocal enough. Shaved heads stripped the women of their femininity, and unfortunately, after these parades, many women were raped to dishonor the enemy side (Iris Simón). Although this was not “domestic violence,” as earlier defined in the paper, the actions of the Nationalists against the Republican women implied that women were inferior to men and considered to be second-class to them (Muñoz-Encinar). By this societal conditioning, the idea of women second to men followed families into the domestic confined spaces.

During Francoism, the dominant ideology after the Spanish Civil War ended in 1939 with the Nationalists triumph over the Republican side until Franco’s death in 1975, gender roles were strict and the Franco Regime expected women to live up to the social expectations set for them

by the Regime (“The Left and the Right: The Right.”). The dictatorship was controlled by the ideas of the Spanish Falange, which was a type of fascist party that found favor with the traditional, Roman Catholic views (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia.). To ensure that this would occur, the Spanish Falange created the *Sección Femenina* to have a manner in which to control the life of the women of Spain.¹ The concept was that if the organization could control the woman’s morals and values by which she chooses to educate her children by, then the Franco Regime could control everything in the home for the good of the Franco Regime (“The Left and the Right: The Right.”). The nationalist feminine ideal was a humble woman who demonstrated selflessness, sacrifice, submission to the husband and the regime, was confined to the domestic space, and prioritized her role as a mother and wife. This was something that men and women both knew was clearly expected of them in their dynamic as a husband and wife (Balinot). In fact, many publications from the Spanish Falange implied that women were guardians of the nation, nurturers of the future generations, and indoctrinators of their husbands and sons, while associating these expectations with the characteristics of hardworking and self-sacrificing (Ofer). By doing so, these women were embodying modesty and remaining devoted to the Catholic faith (Ofer). This was typical of a society where *machismo* prevailed.² From the lens of machismo, a woman is naturally expected to be a mother, who is initially a virgin and remains loyal to her husband, while never questioning more than the information that he chooses to disclose to her.

¹ This branch of the Franco regime was founded in 1934 by Pilar Primo de Rivera to support the cause of the falangist Nationalists. Women could take part in social action within the Franco regime by working with soldiers and orphaned children, promoting nutrition, sanitation, education, and physical fitness, and more practices centered around raising children (Pugh, 2012).

² This is defined as “the cult of the male,” which may be demonstrated through actions including “sexual prowess, zest for action; including verbal action, daring, and above all, absolute self-confidence” (Basham, 126).

Under this double standard, the woman is expected to be the binding force of the family, so she must turn a blind eye to any hint of infidelity (Basham, 126).

With the fall of the in 1975 and the transition to democracy, these gender roles were questioned and began to experience many changes. While the main objective of the *Sección Femenina* was to “return women to the home,” “La Movida” attacked the traditional feminine model from the Franco era (Balinot; Zaino).³ “La Movida” revised the new model of the woman to be one of an independent woman that would no longer be confined to the domestic sphere and would share the public space with her male counterparts (Balinot; Zaino). Youth across the country began to explore the new liberties of democracy with what would have been considered “taboo” during the Franco regime, such as the consumption of drugs, musical expressions like rock and roll, and homosexuality. Years of repression under the dictatorship led to an explosive counter-cultural movement as a reaction to the repressive gender norms of the Franco regime (Zaino). Contrary to the Franco Regime, “La Movida” had no political purpose except to provoke a reaction and to publicly question the ideals of the Franco regime through art, music theater and fashion. Women were no longer expected to comply to the gender roles that society had set for them, which shifted the dynamic between partners, as well as the newfound freedoms that would begin to expand for women.

Today, many policies in Spain are being revised because of the public discussion that is taking place and the public awareness of domestic violence. While domestic abuse rates appear to be rising, the reality is that the domestic violence occurring in private spaces is being uncovered and exposed to the public more so than in the past (Dutton). The Spanish Catholic Church associates the rising domestic violence rates to sexual liberation and the rising rates of

³ La Movida was a time period after the dictatorship fell where there was a cultural transition occurring in addition to the political transition from a dictatorship to a democracy (Zaino, 2017).

women in the workplace, and the decline of traditional families and traditional gender role expectations (Loewenberg, 464). Unfortunately, the Franco Regime destroyed historical evidence and any propaganda that provided a record of gender violence, limiting much of the research when it comes to historical cases. Therefore it is difficult to determine if in fact, domestic abuse cases are indeed rising or not (Muñoz-Encinar). Today, cases of gender violence are brought to public spaces by the increasing availability of technology, like through televising.

In 1997, the case of Ana Orantes, whose domestic violence was televised both before she was murdered by her ex-husband, and after her murder, served to be the catalyst for the biggest feminist movement against gender violence in the history of Spain. Although divorce in Spain was legalized shortly after the fall of the Franco dictatorship, divorced women's rights were still constrained under penal law, which had not been changed. For example, under the divorce decree, Orantes was still forced to live with her husband for up to a year following the court ruling, so when she shared her abuse testimony on television from her 40-year marriage, her ex-husband killed her 13 days after the show aired. This murder brought about many changes to the law, notably that men are now required to wear a bracelet that alerts the authorities if they get near the person who filed the restraining order against them (Salvá). In addition, the penal code was revised many times following this event. As of December 28, 2004, a constitutional act specifically against gender violence was passed to include a more in-depth insight to the rights of a victim of gender-based violence. This includes the rights to information, the right to social and legal assistance, among other rights (Government Delegation for Gender Based Violence). As of today, gender violence continues to be a prevalent issue in Spain (Salvá). In response to this epidemic, Spanish female artists are contributing to the fight against gender violence by exposing the violence in open spaces and revising the narrative of the female through their art.

Currently, Raquel Riba Rossy denounces gender violence through her illustrations that follow Lola Vendetta, a cartoon character whose adventures challenge hidden machismo, social conformity, and traditional gender roles, as well as through her art, like the mural “Mujeres Arbol” (la arteria; FNAC). She was born in 1990 into a creative family, the daughter of an architect and artist in the province-of Barcelona. She completed her studies in Fine Arts at The University of Barcelona and her studies in illustration at Escola de la Dona (Riba Rossy). Aside from unwanted touching at nightclubs and normalized “catcalling” in the streets, Riba Rossy often found herself uncomfortable and not able to express herself about this discomfort. Furthermore, when Riba Rossy began to work as a student intern, she was frustrated at the machismo experiences that she came across. For example, many events that she worked at were hosted around intellectual people, yet men made up the majority of the guest list and participants, while the few women who were present were only there as hostesses who greeted these men at the door while dressed in heels. What bothered her most was that these sexist situations were normalized and socially accepted. One day, while Riba Rossy was meant to be taking client notes, she was actually writing out her frustrations. What Riba Rossy did not realize was that she was talking about feminism, as she was only seeking dignity and respect for women (Atienza). In one interview, Riba Rossy explained that it was inevitable to encounter the concept of feminism when viewing the workforce through the lens of a 21st century woman (Preparats, Ilestos, universitat!).

She graduated in 2012, and by 2014, she experienced machismo so frequently that she began to express her frustrations through a fictional cartoon character known as Lola Vendetta. It can be inferred that Lola was born from these events that Riba Rossy attended. In this fictional world, this cartoon character, Lola, gets into a toxic, romantic relationship, when she suddenly has

epiphanies about machismo, which Riba Rossy portrays through her illustrations. Lola decides that it is better to be alone, so she takes control of her own life and empowers herself (Atienza). Initially, Riba Rossy kept the illustrations to herself and, eventually uploaded them to social media. As time passed and she began to share more material on social media, the social interactions with her illustrations began to rapidly increase, and she received many messages from people. Riba Rossy was touched and deeply moved by how her drawings resonated with many people (Preparats, Ilestos, universitat!). Although Riba Rossy's character addresses a variety of topics, she often addresses abusive relationships in her Instagram posts to bring awareness to the issue, like the post that was uploaded on November 25, 2021



Figure.1 Illustration of an abusive relationship by Riba Rossy posted in Instagram (Riba Rossy, [lola.vendetta]).

where a woman is crushed by a cemented sculpture that reads, “te quiero” (Fig. 1). In this illustration, the man, most likely her partner, like a modern Pygmalion who dreams about molding women to his desires and expectations, literally and metaphorically, crushes the woman that he claims to “love.” The “te quiero” is cracked, possibly representing all of the emotional trauma that the woman endures, simply because the man reassures her that despite his aggressions and verbal abuse, he “loves” her. The man appears to be unbothered in his face, yet the woman almost dead from everything that he puts her through. Reading the description of the post, the reader understands that this is the reality for some women, who wake up every day in

inconsistent “love” and insecurity. According to Riba Rossy, this couple in particular has been “in love” for six years, yet the man finds ways to tear this woman down by yelling at her for little moments like when she laughs too loud, followed by “loving” acts like a hug, forehead kiss, or a big breakfast in bed the morning following the fight. These loving acts are represented by the mortar beside him. This post is captivating in that because of the nature of social media, hundreds of women commented with their own experiences revolving around a similar theme, while other women and men commented with support and encouragement for those who are currently suffering through such relationships. One women (username @palentina1976) commented, “Por favor, si alguien se siente reconocida en esto, SAL CORRIENDO. Eso no es amor. Yo salí, es difícil, de hecho tengo hijos con esta persona, lo cual me hizo más difícil salir. Pide ayuda, haz lo que sea, pero vete.”⁴ In other words, if anyone reads this post and relates to it,



Figure 2. Picture of “Mujeres Arbol,” located at Calle del Humilladero, 7, Madrid, in memory of those who died from domestic violence and in honor of those who survived (L’Artéria; *Street art madrid*).

she encourages them to do the difficult thing and leave, since this is not love (Riba Rossy, [lola.vendetta]). Riba Rossy’s post is sparking conversation on the topic of gender violence on social media, which has the ability to reach millions of women all over

the world, and not just Spain. Through this platform, women are able to share experiences and women who are in a

relationship with some form of violence may recognize that this is not normal, it is not love, and

⁴ This translates to “Please, if anyone sees herself in this, get out quickly. This is not love. I left, and it is difficult. In fact, I have children with this person, which made it harder to leave. Ask for help, do what you have to do, but leave.”

that they deserve better. Perhaps, these illustrations will work to eliminate future gender violence by encouraging women to leave and not to tolerate domestic violence, whether physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or verbal.

In addition to the Lola Vendetta character, Riba Rossy is also the creator of *Mujeres Arbol*, mural that one can find at Calle del Humilladero, 7, Madrid, Spain (Fig. 2). While Riba Rossy created the tree and the idea behind it, Marta Lapeña is credited for helping to paint the mural in the center of Madrid and making this painting come to life in a public space. The tree itself is dedicated to those who survived or were victimized by gender violence, and it portrays the individualized struggle that each woman who is living under domestic violence goes through. At the same time, these 19 women come together to symbolize the collective support that they find in each other to grow together, yet in their own direction, like the branches of a tree. While the tree is created around the unfortunate concept of violence, its focus is to demonstrate constant growth out of this initial state of violence and suppression (L'Artéria). While bringing the violence to public light, the tree also has a double meaning by implying that the strength and empowerment of the women is greater than the violence that they have endured. Furthermore, this painting is significant if we consider the financial support it received from the City Council of Madrid, which demonstrates the city's advocacy for equality. In fact, on the day that the painting was formally presented to the city, many council members attended the event in support, including Pepe Anierte, the delegate of families, equality, and social welfare, who remembered 1006 women who have already been murdered since the state began to formally count in 2003 (Miguel). Complimenting the mural, Jana Pachón, an art therapist, social educator, and

audiovisual communicator, wrote an empowering piece to accompany the art piece in Madrid (saludterapia; L'Artéria).⁵ In the original poem, Pachón writes:

Las mujeres árbol fueron semilla, fueron mujer asustada
Mujer chiquitita encogida sobre sí misma
Que ya no veía la luz, ni salía su voz.
Sobre ella capas y capas de tierra que caen con cada desprecio,
con cada amenaza, con cada exigencia, cada insulto o menosprecio.
Sentirse no valer por no encajar en lo que se espera de ella.
Rendirse ante la decepción de que el amor no lo puede todo
como tantas veces le contaron hasta que llegó a creérselo.
Pero la savia se agita en su interior y dice ya basta.
El volcán erupciona.
¡Merezco vivir!, ¡Bienvivir! grita por dentro.
Y levantó su cabeza como un brote tierno.
que al abrir los ojos se encontró otra mirada, desconfiada, perdida, cansada,
pero con una chispita vital en el fondo de su pupila.
Otra mujer, una igual, otra hermana.
Renacen juntas con tallo erguido,
Fortalecen su tronco común junto a otras
que al mirarse frente a frente se espejan,
y al abrazarse crecen juntas y son para las siguientes, peldaños.
Son diversas pero ya no están solas.

⁵ The poem was published on L'Artéria. This is an online blog focusing on art therapy while being run by six women who specialize in art, health, and humanity (L'Artéria).

Ahora entienden lo que les pasa.

Se arman juntas de coraje, seguridad y confianza.

Van tomando caminos distintos para explorar de nuevo el mundo y todas sus opciones.

Se bifurcan en ramas para hacer brotar cosas hermosas, flores y hojas.

Aquellas cosas que una vez atrás les hicieron creer que no sabrían hacer,

Que nunca llegarían a ser.

Pero toda esa potente y fuerte belleza estaba ahí y ya no hay quien la pare.

Algunas quedaron atrás y no lo lograron.

Y el machismo acabó con ellas y con sus hijos e hijas.

Ahora son sustrato de este gran árbol que es imparable,

Que empieza a dar sus frutos y diseminar semillas

de amor, de paz, de esperanza,

igualdad, justicia y tolerancia (L'Artéria).

[The tree women were once seeds, they were scared women.

A tiny woman had hunched over herself

She no longer saw the light, nor spoke out.

More layers and layers of dirt fall on her with every scorning,

With every threat, with every demand, every insult or disdain.

Feeling worthless for not being what is expected of her.

Surrender to the disappointment that love cannot do everything

As she was told enough times to believe it.

But the sap stirs inside and she decides this is enough.

The volcano erupts.

I deserve to live!, Live well! She screamed from deep inside.

And she raised her head like a new sprouting plant.

And when she opened her eyes she found another look, mistrusting, lost, tired,

But with a vital spark in the back of her pupil.

Another woman, just like her, another sister.

They are reborn together with an upright stem,

They strength their common trunk by uniting with the others

So that when they look at each other face to face, they are mirrored,

And when they embrace they grow together and leave steps for the next ones.

They are diverse, but no longer alone.

Now they understand what happened to them.

They assemble together with courage, security and trust.

They are taking distinct paths to explore the world again and all of its options.

They diverge into branches to sprout beautiful things, flowers and leaves.

Those things that once made them believe that they did not know how to do it,

They will never be.

But all of this powerful and strong beauty was always there and now there is no one to stop

It.

Some were left behind and never achieved this.

For machismo put an end to them and their sons and daughters.

Now they are the substrate of this great tree that is unstoppable,

That begins to bear fruit and spread seeds

Of love, peace, hope,
Equality, justice, and tolerance.]

In her poem, Pachon explains that initially, the women were like seeds that were scared and consistently covered under layers and layers of dirt. These layers symbolize the threats and insults endured by domestic violence, which buried the women so deep that they had no voice. When these women, or seeds, realize that they deserve better, they begin to rise from the ground and, in a hopeful light, they find each other. Although each woman has a similar experience and is tired in her own way, the poem goes on to say that these women empower each other by growing in number and strengthening the trunk of the tree. By hugging each other in this tree, they provide support for each other, as well as for the next woman that comes along. Although there is diversity and no woman is the same, the beauty in this image is that they are stronger together in courage, security, and trust. Unfortunately, the poem goes on to say that not all of the seeds made it to this point, as they lost the fight to machismo. Yet these seeds that did not make it still contribute to the base of the tree, which now bears fruit, is full of leaves, and continues to spread seeds by each woman that is a survivor and has found a greater purpose in this freedom so that love, peace, hope, equality, justice, and tolerance can flourish (L'Artéria).

In her contribution to the fight against gender violence, Raquel Riba Rossy effectively uses her character, Lola Vendetta, to provide a platform to share her frustrations with machismo while providing an open space for women to share their stories and encouragement on social media, in addition to the awareness that she brings to open public spaces, like the mural of the “Mujeres Arbol” in the center of Madrid, where both men and women call all see it and reflect on its

meaning. Another active artist who is denouncing gender violence by placing a series of posters about physical harassment in the public streets of Madrid is Sara Batuecas (Tolonen).

Batuecas studied at La Cuarta Pared, a theatre school located in Madrid, which focuses on social criticism (Mbomío). Social criticism is a concept where social structures are determined to be flawed, so it seeks solutions that include radical reform, specific measures, or revolutionary change (City Vision University). In April 2018, when the court failed to try the men of ‘La Manada’ [wolf gang] as rapists, Batuecas began to put her feelings of outrage and helplessness into starting a poster series on physical violence (Tolonen). Her school’s teaching of social

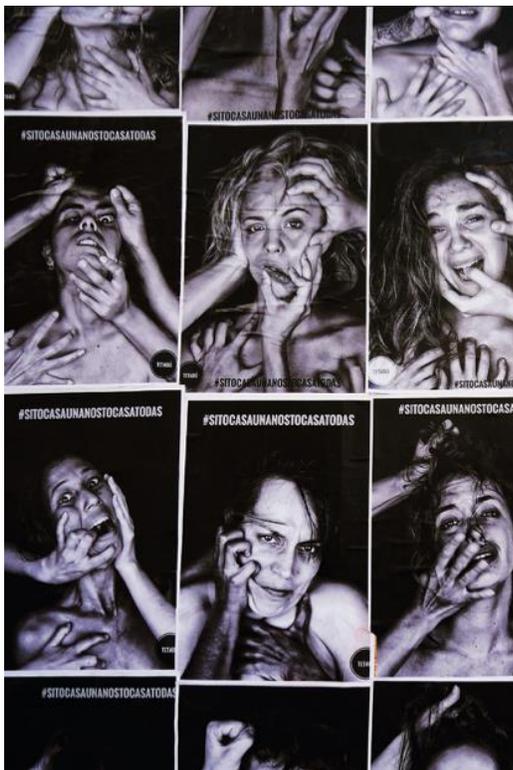


Figure 3. Examples of Sara Batuecas’ shots from the series #SiTocasaUnaTocasaTodas (Tolonen).

criticism is seen in her work as she created this project to denounce gender violence in public spaces and call for reformation in the Spanish judicial system (Mbomío; Tolonen). The case of ‘La Manada’ refers to five men who gang raped an 18-year-old woman during the festival of San Fermín in Pamplona in July of 2016. Instead of sending the men to jail as ‘rapists,’ the verdict stated that they were doing time for ‘continuous sexual abuse.’ Batuecas as well as many others across the nation were outraged (Tolonen). One day, Batuecas and three close friends met up to recreate the aggression while being photographed. To simulate similar conditions of abuse, Batuecas photographed the facial expressions and reactions of the woman from the waist up, half-naked, while two other women continuously grabbed different parts of the body of the woman.

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Initially, Batuecas' volunteers were close friends, but eventually, she began to photograph volunteers who were complete strangers, as many other women wanted to be a part of this project (Fig. 3). In these sessions, the women first choose a song. Throughout the entire session, the women were asked to look directly into the lens of the camera. Batuecas focused on capturing their expressions before being touched, during the sudden and unexpected contact with the body, and the end, when the music ceases and the hands move away. While critics say that this confuses the message of the project, the hands belong to other women to create an environment that is more comfortable, allowing the women to be more intimate with each other. In response to the critics, Batuecas points out that the session in itself is already a strong and violent experience for women to voluntarily be a part of. What the photographs fail to capture is the environment and the difficult feelings that everyone in the session experiences, not just the person who is being photographed. The women who do the attacking cannot bring themselves to look at the body, let alone not shed a tear for the pain that they are causing the woman who personifies the victim. Batuecas shares that she often gets chills or cries during these photo sessions, as she has also participated as the one being photographed. The experience of reenacting the violent act of rape establishes a deep empathic bond between Batuecas and these woman while at the same time makes her reflect about how this is a tragic reality for many women in the real world. Each woman who participated in Batuecas project assumed the role of how each victim responded differently. While some women's faces showed sadness, other women responded with a straight face, or complete blockage of what was happening in the moment. To date, she has photographed over 70 women, who have brought many stories and moments to Batuecas and the viewers. Initially, Batuecas uploaded these photos to Instagram, under the hashtag #SiTocasaUnaTocasaTodas, [if you touch one of us, you touch all of us] but

Instagram began to sensor her photos, and she realized that society saw these as provocative, which motivated her to continue doing this work. While Batuecas is happy to have opportunities to share her work in professional exhibits, she prefers to post to Instagram and other social media platforms where people who are aware about the issue of gender violence will go to admire her work, and those who normally do not think about such topics can also see the images.

(Mbomio). After Instagram censored her postings, Batuecas decided to post her photos throughout the streets of Lavapiés and Malasaña, which are neighborhoods in Madrid (Mbomio; Tolonen). The day after the images went up in Malasaña, Batuecas found the images torn down because people were annoyed by their provocativeness (Mbomio). These images represent what happens behind closed doors, hidden from the public eye. Exposing the hidden reality of gender violence caused anger. To Batuecas, this damage to her images added to the meaning behind her photos, in that now the tears in her posted pictures were a product of violence, just like the violence experienced by the women in the photographs. Batuecas explains that she chooses to focus on faces because the face alone transmits information about what is happening to the body without showing the body itself, and the viewer can walk away without an eroticized version of the picture in their mind. She also points out that if the pictures of the face alone are torn down and vandalized, then the reaction to photos of the women from the waist-up would be even more extreme (Mbomio). With the images that are a part of the series, #SiTocasaUnaTocasaTodas, Sara Batuecas denounces gender violence by bringing the art to the streets to spark conversation behind the pain, injustice, and suffering of machismo that these images represent.

While Sara Batuecas and Riba Rossy denounce gender violence in their art and bring the issue to public spaces, Carmela García uses her art to re-write the narrative of women. García creates an alternative version of history by placing women as protagonists, a role traditionally

reserved for male characters (García). In her photograph titled “Memoria,” which belongs to the series entitled, “I want to be,” García uses historical photos as an inspiration and incorporates a



Figure 4. Carmela García’s “Memoria” (Maria Cristina Masaveu Peterson Fundación).

new discourse into the meaning behind it (Fig. 4). She does this without denying or rejecting the past, but rather changing the art to resemble her idea of a world without patriarchy (Artium Museoa). García is a photographer and feminist researcher whose photography has always focused on gender and has tried to change the narrative by reflecting on the idea of a world where each gender is autonomous and equal with men (Ordóñez). In a visit to the Museo Arte Contemporáneo ENAIRE in Santander, Cantabria, during October 2021, I came across-García’s “Memoria.” The scene, environment, and character placement make a direct reference to the iconic painting of Leonardo da Vinci, “The Last Supper,” a religious work where only men are present. In García’s reinvention of the Biblical scene, women, not men, dominate the table, yet men are still present at the table. It is important to note that these men are not portrayed as inferior to women, but rather they seem to pass on the protagonist role to the women and their presence demonstrates this in a respectful manner. These women are assumed to work in liberal professions, as they are all staring attentively at a book, which is strategically placed in the center, as they appear to be collaborating intellectually and independently from the men

new discourse into the meaning behind it (Fig. 4). She does this without denying or rejecting the past, but rather changing the art to resemble her idea of a world without patriarchy (Artium Museoa). García is a photographer and feminist researcher whose photography has always focused on gender and has tried to change the narrative by reflecting on the

(García). By placing this book in the center and having both men and women focus on it, the work represents the idea that education is the great equalizer between gender inequality and the answers may lie within this book. In reference to the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, both Adam and Eve ate of the Fruit of Knowledge. If we take into consideration the punishment of Eve for her desire to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, Garcia's photograph seems to allude to the exclusion of women from knowledge and education throughout the centuries. In "Memoria," Carmela García effectively acknowledges what "The Last Supper" would resemble in a contemporary world where gender equality exists and patriarchy does not dominate history.

This paper shows how gender violence is being denounced by the analysis of Raquel Riba Rossy's cartoon character, Lola, and the mural "Tree of Women," which is dedicated to those who survived or were victimized by gender violence, and Sara Batuecas' poster series of physical harassment, which is an attempt to bring the issue to light and spark engagement and discussion on invisible violence. (*Street art madrid*; Tolonen). At the same time, there is an active effort to change the patriarchal narrative by placing women in empowering scenes, like in Carmela García's "Memoria," where women are portrayed as professionals in liberal fields while focusing their attention on education in a collaborative manner with the presence of men (Maria Cristina Masaveu Peterson Fundación). This re-written narrative expresses the equality that these artists and women around the world are striving to achieve. By historically observing how gender-based violence against women was practiced throughout the Spanish Civil War, and throughout the Franco regime, one can explain how gender violence against women was often justified and normalized in Spanish society (Miguel Álvarez). By analyzing how various Spanish female artists across Spain denounce domestic violence by exposing this abuse and the culture of women domination in public spaces, we recognize the importance of these artistic initiatives to

further the discussion of gender violence and bring the issue to public light with the hopes of one day achieving gender equality.

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