In the Archival Space of a Queer Supplementary:
Giuseppe Campuzano’s Museo Travesti del Perú

“Manuscripts are difficult but delicious.”
-- Giuseppe Campuzano

Pictured in De Tuddo’s piece above (fig. 1) is La Virgen de las Guacas, as performed by Giuseppe Campuzano. Campuzano returns to Guacas through a 1553 Limeño colonial manuscript, which describes a voyeuristic scene at a temple (guaca) where “on holidays and religious festivals, the masters and nobles have carnal and indecent intercourse with” cross-dressers. As a postcolonial figure returning to the shores, the virgin looks glorious in her starry cope, but her face divulges a pained glance towards the heavens. She has landed with sorrow from the Andes down to the rocky ocean shore where Pizarro and two hundred men arrived centuries ago. It is a diasporic migration. In
the postcolonial mantle of this *travesti* virgin we can discover an alternate universe expanding in space and time, in affect and gesture, in intimacy and belonging. This photo is a piece included in the “Museo Travesti del Perú,” (The Transvestite Museum of Peru) where Giuseppe Campuzano also plays the role of artist, archivist, designer, researcher, critic, and historian through his invention of the “museo travesti,” a museum of Peruvian transvestitism. He has combed through colonial texts and manuscripts in preparation and as he says in the epigraph, from an interview, “Manuscripts are difficult but delicious.”

My paper will look at where the postcolonial and the queer performative meet. At this point, queering performs a ‘lived’ insurrection of colonial spectrality, temporality, and productions of knowledge. Following Foucault's notion of the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges, I want to ask how is the queer archive performing alternate interventions in colonial history and postcolonial subjectivization in the nation-state? In turn, does this insurrection cross over into an alternate and anterior constellation? The expanse of this firmament is present in Peruvian artist Giuseppe Campuzano's notion of the "museo travesti." The "museo travesti" is at once a commentary on art and cultural imperatives of normalization and a reinsertion and spatialization of the *travesti* in history. How do queerness and the postcolonial cross paths in the documentation, art, and artifacts of the “museo travesti”? With this crossing, does it perform an alternate supplementary space through the temporal and intimate ties to the past? With this project, he produces a queer temporality and intimacy through a genealogical grounding in indigenous belonging. The “museo travesti” performs a specific act of archiving and in doing so it spins an anterior circuit of futurity.

The "museo travesti" is not an actual space, but an imagined one. It is a traveling
museum as a book and a concept. Campuzano’s performative move yields a palimpsest. He manages to mark a critique of the Lima art culture and national preservations of history, along with their normative affects around sexuality in the postcolonial and internal colonializations. In doing so he also reflects and extends new intimacies, interfaces, and temporalities with the inclusion of other *travesti* artists, accumulated newspaper clippings, and extensive readings of Andean artifacts, festivals, and colonial texts. As he tells it, he was “looking for a gallery, in order to exhibit, when I crashed, once again, into the stereotypical war museum: heroic/villain men and victimized women.” He developed the museum to not only tell the ‘truth’ but “to transform the concept of museum by retelling Peruvian history from the margins, [because] every history isn’t absolute.” To him, *travesti* is also a concept, much like ‘queer’, retained, reclaimed, and re-directed. The word points to a void created by colonist logic, where the “androgynous became the travesti, the false woman, the peripheral.” *Travesti* and museum interact in Campuzano’s research through “a collage or patchwork” of material. Gustavo Buntinx and Susana Torres of the MicroMuseo (another traveling museum out of Perú) write in their Prologue to the book, “The result is a distinct compilation and acute re-inscription of our history and its representations, writings, and glances. (El resultado es una recopilación distinta y una reescritura aguda de nuestra historia y de sus representaciones, de sus escritos y de sus miradas.)” (12). The "museo travesti" outfits a non-alienating space in seeking a *travesti* essence, an uncontainable, supplementary museum outside the walls of national and global narratives. Some have told Campuzano that it is a safe and protected space, one that generates and liberates narratives, and as he explains,
where travestis may retrace their memory but it is not about the past it is also a beginning. I decided to fight from where misconceptions arise. Travesti and museum, not escaping from words but dismantling them, expanding their semantic field, transforming them and then use them as a Trojan Horse, infecting everything official and meaningless.

Campuzano’s "museo travesti" presents an active topological study and in a geographical field in which to explore. The “museo travesti” contains nine sections in the gallery collection of works, plus a glossary, newspaper archives, and introductions. The introductions include several small articles that serve as a prologue for the universe of the “museo travesti.” The glossary at the back includes such travesti related words as berdache, chhullu, andrógino, enchaquirado, and maricón retold through Campuzano’s analysis of various national archives. I will be your museum docent for today on this postcolonial travesti archival exhibit within the "Museo Travesti del Perú." Along the way, notice what Ann Stoler refers to as the “tense and tender ties” of the pieces in this collection to a history of colonization and the more contemporary expression of the social, national, and political intimacies and desires retrieved. I hope to identity some of these knots as we go. The galleries in the collection were arranged in a particular thematic sequence by the curator, Giuseppe Campuzano. If you want, you can to refer to the layout in the directory to transit and choose where you want to go: terapéutica, poder, dualidad, plumaria, preceptiva, epopeya, mestizaje, coreografia, revolucion. Of course, we don’t have to go in order, but let us continue on to the first section: “terapéutica.”
This section intersects *travesti* antiquity and therapeutic remedies of Perú. As a study, it embodies Foucault’s notion of an “insurrection of subjugated knowledges.” This phrase describes both histories “buried and disguised” in other regimes of knowledge and perception and those subjugated knowledges that have been “disqualified” as “naïve knowledges” (81-82), in this case by colonial discourses. The pieces in this gallery engage in a genealogical emergence and connection leading to an alternate archive and the tactical performatives put to use today in the exhibit as a whole. *Fig. 2* displays a Moche receptacle from 500 or 700 AD. The Moche were an early civilization mainly located within the boundaries of Perú. Depicted on the pottery are a number of figures, of the human and animal worlds, partaking in a ceremony of sorts. On the side facing us, we see two figures under a roof, one mounted on top of another lying back with their legs in
the air (see fig. 3). With the highlighted drawing of the detail on the pottery we can make out what the curator gives an account of: a more masculine figure being taken by a “feline hairdo and belt of serpent.” He continues, “they establish berdache, in that the feminine and masculine attributes are combined, like the symbolic nexus with the magician.” This shamanistic figure is known to mediate between the earth and the cosmos, to provide therapeutic powers. The anthropological thesis of the “berdache” fleshes out an alternative gender in native societies, a person who carries out a sort of other, different from the feminine or the masculine. The travesti in this setting is no longer subject to cultural production of a void between pre-colonial and contemporary sexualities. Queering artifacts become a “lived” form of both spectral resurrection and insurrection of knowledges revealing multiple registers of intimacy and corporeality and, in turn, rendering a reversal of the subjectivization process of normalizing narratives and regimes of knowledge.

*Fig. 3 - Moche, Botella, Museo Larco in Lima (Detail), Drawing by Christopher B. Donnan.*

Genealogies have an “anti” aspect, they are “opposed… to the effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within society” (Foucault 84). Archiving and forming a collective of memory and resistances serve to further the work of genealogies. It becomes a way of
countering and attending to marginality and colonialism. As in a museum, Ann Cvetkovich notes, “great care must be taken with how they are exhibited and displayed” (271). Campuzano’s efforts show care, a rebellious care of transformation, of archival affect and animation, of historical knowledges in opposition. To accompany the pottery Campuzano includes a sixteenth century colonial text, which he notes as the first account of contact with the *travesti*. It is a colonial ordinance outlining the punishment of those caught cross-dressing. The more they are caught, the more their disciplinary public punishment worsens. By juxtaposing the two texts together in this display, Campuzano makes use of the genealogical force in rendering colonial regimes of truth a site of resistance—twisting colonial regimes of knowledge into ways of knowing and belonging. He reanimates the sacred, ephemeral, and supernatural and sustains what could otherwise become subsumed. Cvetkovich’s own work with AIDS activist archives presents a similar case: “these documents of activism are “magical” and “sacred” artifacts, the locus of fantasy and emotion, not just historical fact” (266). Along with the newspaper archives, which you will encounter more of later, of the *travesti* representations in the Peruvian media provide a social context for a conversation with the art, photo, documentation, and research. Campuzano performs the archive in the space of the “museo travesti” through a “rediscovery of struggles together with the rude memory of their conflicts” (Foucault 83). Crossing the theory and practice divide, Campuzano recovers alternate interventions in Peruvian history and we can begin to tease out the contingencies of colonial logic and the possibilities of an alternate impression.

On to the second room: poder (power). In this room we delve further into the strategies, procedures, and systems of power produced through colonization. The pieces
in this section seek to upturn and redefine assemblages of power relations for the *travesti*. Speaking with Campuzano, he mentions Homi Bhabha as an influence in thinking about (post)colonial regimes of truth that produce locations of culture. To further investigate the “museo travesti” in relation to queer notions of the postcolonial, I will be employing Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* throughout the tour. However, before we begin I want to define the way in which I am referring “postcolonial” before we continue. The postcolonial is a constructed but haunted space of categories, imperatives, and narratives that circulate the globe. The haunted aspects contain the processes of colonization that still function in their anterior form today. As Ann Stoler posits, they are “domains of the intimate” that have permeated the body and “habits of heart and mind” (2). These colonialisms shore up in the postcolonial. To name and investigate these intimate ties and conditions of power, the hegemonies embedded in the present, and how they affect the “microphysics of daily lives” (7) reframes and relocates possibilities outside the forces of production. One question the “museo travesti” asks is, how does the past critique the present in postcoloniality? Colonialism, Ann Stoler points out, “is a gendered history of power” (19) that produces and enforces binaries and differences nationally and globally. A postcolonial reading tracks the dynamic and environmental discharge that lingers across the globe in a planetary orbit. Rebecca Romanow reframes this space with a queer scope; in essence, the postcolonial “can be seen as inhabiting queer space and time” (7).

It seems apropos then to travel now to the preceptiva room to witness displacements of some colonial precepts and rules. Cecilia Noriega Bozovich’s project work with the national presidential armchair promotes resistances in art. From Bozovich’s website, “this object is transformed into a “traveling social sculpture” that moves and acquires a series of experiences in specific places of Lima (este objeto se va transformando en una “escultura social itinerante” que se desplaza y adquiere una serie de vivencias en lugares específicos de Lima.).” “The Last Brunch” (fig. 4) sets up a collective presidential panorama where anyone can situate themselves in the seat of its sovereignty. The actual hierarchies in the nation-state become pronounced in this version of the twelve apostles. In addition, the project itself highlights the lack of social engagement as well as the rules that define Western notions of art and the fetish of colonial and aesthetic regimes.

Theorist Jacques Rancière outlines how “art and politics are contingent notions” (51) in his book *The Politics of Aesthetics*. The two form interdependent regimes of production and class through a global network of aesthetic. He suggests, “the aesthetic regime of the arts invents its revolutions on the basis of the same idea that caused it to invent the museum and art history” (25). This circulation pulses in the “museo travesti” via an outmaneuvering of its inventions. In its performativity, the “museo travesti” demonstrates the possibilities and the points where a *travesti* coup might be possible in a queer temporality. Pictured below in an armchair detail, Bozovich embodies and names the queer ephemerality in discourses of art and power.
I want to take us back to the third section, dualidad (in between the duality of the masculine and the feminine) to define more of what I mean by “queer.” Campuzano, in his effort to re-coup the *travesti* body that once mediated between the natural and supernatural worlds, chronicles how “gender lost its breadth, depth, and elasticity during the colonial exchange of beliefs and ideologies.” Although he is specifically addressing the *travesti*, or rather “transvestitism” in general, his methods are “queer.” Lisa Rofel, in her recent book *Desiring China*, comments on how “queer” has “extended in theory and practice to reveal the lack of ontological substance in sexual identities and therefore the contingent fabrication of gender” (79). Campuzano considers these contingencies in the postcolonial context to expose the construction of gender’s limitations and fragility, but also the possibilities of queer frame to locate other dimensions and temporalities. José Esteban Muñoz argues for this kind of (re)animation of the past as a performative move, one that brings “the past to bear on the present and the future” (458). This is when alternate temporalities and geographies emerge that supplement or re-circuit a network of knowledges. In Haberstam’s *In a Queer Time and Place*, he uses “queer” to refer to “nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and