

# Politics of the Imagination: Historical Remembering

## Latino/Latin American Studies Spring 2019 Series

### Theater of the Oppressed and the Politics of Memory

Tuesday, January 29, 4:30-5:45 pm, Gorecki Conference Center, 204BC, CSB



What memories do our bodies hold? How can we bring forth those memories to better understand the realities that we live? To what extent are my memories related to those of others? Making use of Theater of the Oppressed (TO) methods, we undertake an aesthetic investigation of oppressions: exploring individual memories, we discover the connection to collective memories as a necessary step toward understanding the structural nature of oppressions. We will share our recent experiences along the Guatemala-Mexico border with the "migrant caravan" and how an aesthetic exploration reveals an historical relationship to the territory and the fear that it imposes on migration.

Lorena Roffé (actress born in Argentina and trained in Israel) and Stéphane Gué (social clown born in France and trained in Latin America), reside in Guatemala where they are the founding *artists* of METOCA, which means "It's my turn [to act]" and "[reality] touches me," while also being the acronym for the organization: [www.metoca.org](http://www.metoca.org). Over the last 10 years, they have used aesthetic processes with political impact to work with community groups (women with HIV, indigenous youth, and migrants) and supported those groups in becoming the protagonists of their own realities. They have trained in Theater of the Oppressed (TO) methodologies in Brazil, India, USA and Germany with the field's leading practitioners and have organized two Latin American TO gatherings.

### Dr. Yansi Pérez: A Cartography of Material Memory of the Central American Diaspora in Los Angeles

Tuesday, March 12, 7:00-8:15 pm, Gorecki Conference Center, 204 AB, CSB



Dr. Pérez's current project is to write a material history of memory in the diaspora. The traumatic legacy of war in El Salvador and genocide in Guatemala includes the millions of people forced to abandon their countries due to these conflicts. The central question she proposes is: how does one relocate and reinvent the memory of a traumatic event in a new geography, language, and culture? She is interested in highlighting the voice of an *ethnos*, of a community, its memory, its multiple histories, but she is also interested in tracing maps of their many paths through the city, their itineraries through Los Angeles. She is writing an ethnogeography of the Central American diaspora in one of the world's largest cities.

Dr. Yansi Pérez was born in El Salvador and moved to the United States in 1982. She holds an A.B. from Stanford University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Princeton University. She is an Associate Professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Carleton College in MN. Her book *Más allá del duelo. Otras formas de imaginar, sentir y pensar la memoria* (Beyond Mourning: Other Ways of Imagining, Feeling, and Thinking Memory) will be published in 2019 by UCA Editores in El Salvador.

### Xavier Tavera: Collective Memory and Borders

Wednesday, April 3, 7:00-8:15 pm, Quad 264, Centenary Room, SJU



While the concept of nations is modern, the actual physical and geographical space of the borderlands carries generational scars of collective memory and identity. The political character of the border as a wound materializes in a wall with sentiments of nationalism, protectionism, and absurdity. Most Latinas/os living in the United States are deeply marked by the notion of the border. The concept of the border as material or ideological barrier is part of our identity. As protagonists of Latina/o history it is up to us to define and preserve jointly that memory however we choose to remember. Photography is a way of remembering.

After moving from Mexico City to the United State, Xavier Tavera learned what it felt like to be part of a subculture: the immigrant community. His experience focuses his photography on sharing the lives of the marginalized. Images offer insight into the diversity of numerous communities and give a voice to those who are often invisible. Tavera has exhibited his work extensively in the Twin Cities, nationally, and internationally, including in Germany, Scotland, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and China. His work is part of the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Plaines Art Museum, Minnesota Museum of American Art, Minnesota History Center, and the Weisman Art Museum.