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Heritage, Protests and Coloniality in Contemporary Latin America

Chilean street artists and instagrammable heritage activism: Movement intellectuals of O-18

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Abstract

This paper introduces Chilean *artistas callejeros* as powerful movement intellectuals (Eyerman, 1992, 2004) who curated the O-18 movement through their narration of the protestors' hopes for the future, grievances in the present moment, and a visual representation of their painful dictatorial heritage. Central to this paper is the elucidation of Jones, Mozaffari, and Jasper's (2020) newly postulated concept of Heritage Activism through a critical heritage studies lens. By focusing on the second, under-theorised element of their thesis – activists' utilisation of heritage while in pursuit of social change – this work establishes the pivotal role of heritage in the Chilean uprising. It explores not only the prominent role heritage can play in social movements generally, but also the increasing influence and authority that social media such as Instagram allows street artists to possess in modern protests. *Keywords:* Heritage, social movements, protest, urban art, Chile.

Resumen: Artistas callejeros chilenos y activismo de herencia instagramable: Intelectuales del movimiento del 18-O

Este artículo presenta a los artistas callejeros chilenos como poderosos intelectuales del movimiento (Eyerman, 1992, 2004) que comisariaron el movimiento O-18 a través de su narración de las esperanzas de los manifestantes para el futuro, las quejas en el momento presente y una representación visual de su dolorosa herencia dictatorial. Un aspecto central de este trabajo es la elucidación del concepto recientemente postulado por Jones, Mozaffari y Jasper (2020) de Activismo del Patrimonio a través de una lente de estudios críticos del patrimonio. Al centrarse en el segundo elemento, poco teorizado, de su tesis – la utilización del patrimonio por parte de los activistas en la búsqueda del cambio social – este trabajo establece el papel fundamental del patrimonio en el levantamiento chileno. Explora no sólo el destacado papel que el patrimonio puede desempeñar en los movimientos sociales en general, sino también la creciente influencia y autoridad que las redes sociales, como Instagram, permiten a los artistas callejeros en las protestas modernas. *Palabras clave:* Patrimonio, movimientos sociales, protestas, arte urbano, Chile.

Introduction

On 18 October 2019, the streets of Chile's capital erupted into what is now recognised as the most significant social movement in the nation since its dictatorship ended nearly 30 years prior. What had initially begun as an almost quotidian student fare evasion, in response to a 30 peso (USD 0.05) rise in transit fare, soon burgeoned into mass protests and riots throughout Santiago's streets and metro stations. What came to be known as the *estallido social*, *Chile Despertó*, the O-18/18-O movement, or the Chilean Spring for some English academics, the *manifestaciones* were, in reality, about so much more than a simple hike in fare for the public's daily commute. One of the protestors' first slogans of the uprising, *No son 30 pesos, son 30 años* (It is not 30 pesos, it is 30 years), revealed that the Pinochet dictatorship and the transition out of autocracy were still very much an active part of their collective consciousness. Despite the intervening decades separating them from Augusto Pinochet's resignation, the protests became a place where the cultural trauma from the violent dictatorship amalgamated with contemporary political and societal demands toward the current right-winged government. This fusion of dialogue quickly became an influential and significant component of the protests, as it appeared in artful displays on the streets and walls of Santiago's urban historic centre by Chilean street artists.

Even though street art has held cultural and political significance in Chile since the 1960s, in this age of hyper visualisation, the influence of street artists during the *estallido social* surged in prominence and cultural authority. If not already created in digital form and more easily reproduced, protestors quickly digitised the artist's work through a simple click of a cell phone camera. This digital heritage, represented through graphic delineations, spread like wildfire through both the streets of Chile's capital and the social media accounts of its citizens. Even those not adventurous enough to wander into the oft-times tear gas drenched *Plaza Baquedano* (colloquially named *Plaza de Dignidad* during the protests) were able to see these pictorial cultural commentaries, interact with them, and share them with others. As such, the cultural significance of street art produced marked changes in these *manifestaciones* compared with Chilean protest movements of the past.

The work of the street artists of the O-18 movement offered up a curation of the uprising, narrating the cultural trauma of their dictatorial past, their grievances of the present, and their hopes and desires for the future. This newly acquired authority led the Chilean street artists to become what Eyerman refers to as movement intellectuals (Eyerman, 1992; Eyerman & Jamison, 1995), acting as a narrating voice of the social movement's demands. Their creations and visual interactions with their heritage of dictatorship whilst fighting for social change are also powerful displays of the recently theorised concept of heritage activism (Jones, Mozaffari, & Jasper, 2017, 2020). More specifically, the development and theorisation of the use of heritage as a means of protest has led

to an advancement of the awareness of participatory heritage and its role in social movements of today. This paper will explore the pivotal role that street artists performed in the *manifestaciones* of the O-18 movement through their performative heritage and argue the intrinsic position that social media played in the participatory heritage of the Chilean *estallido social*.

Background and context

In 1970, the campaign of the soon to be elected Marxist president Allende toured Chile with musicians such as Víctor Jara under a massive poster entitled *No hay revolución sin canciones* (There is no revolution without songs) (Alonso, 2014, p. 6), referencing the powerful link between politics and the arts, especially in Chile. However, despite the power and momentum of the leftist movement and its subsequent election of Salvador Allende's government, the Chilean revolution quickly ended within three short years of his election. On 11 September 1973, the US-backed Chilean military *junta* led by Pinochet led a *coup d'état* against the world's first democratically elected Marxist president, Allende. For years, the Chilean left experienced discrimination, forced imprisonment, torture, and murder, launching Chile into a state of military domination and curfews. Chilean culture also suffered during the military *junta*. In addition to the exile and murder of musicians such as Víctor Jara, and in reaction to an episode wherein the military burnt books and other materials in downtown Santiago shortly after the *coup*, ordinary citizens either destroyed or hid much of their revolutionist music collection in fear of it being found by the military, (DDHH, 2020¹; Espectacular Allanamiento, 1973²).

Also during his tenure, Pinochet implemented an extreme neoliberal economic model and enshrined these policies into a constitution that remained in effect throughout the protests (Ansaldi & Pardo-Vergara, 2020). Although Chile was trumpeted as the Latin American economic success story, or economic jaguar, it also resulted in one of the greatest divisions between rich and poor in the OECD (Income Inequality, 2019³). The devastation from the dictatorship's violent *coup* and the resulting inequality that ensued from one of the world's strictest neoliberal economies left an indelible mark on the Chilean psyche, as evidenced by the numerous protest movements and *manifestaciones* that continued to resurge on the streets of Chile since the 1970s.

In 1990, after years of protest, Pinochet's official leadership ended after a plebiscite voted him out of power two years earlier. Nearly 30 years after Chile's return to democracy, another social movement began, yet again profoundly altering the nation. As described earlier, on 19 October 2019, the masses returned to Santiago's streets. What began as a modest student-led fare evasion rapidly devolved into destructive nationwide riots and mass demonstrations, resulting in a return to mandatory curfews and the military once again on the streets, similar to the days of the dictatorship. While a fare hike instigated the original upheaval, the protestors continued to return to the streets over a

multitude of issues, primarily focused on human rights and better equality of power and resources. Within a week, and with social upheaval raging throughout the nation, Chile's largest ever demonstration, estimated at approximately 1,200,000 people (nearly 20 percent of Santiago's population), gathered in the heart of Santiago's historic district. Soon, the focal point of many of the demonstrators was on the removal of Pinochet's Constitution, and by mid-November, the Chilean government had agreed to a national plebiscite the following April on its removal. Protests naturally waned during the following months, typical during the hot summer months in Chile, but predictably regained their momentum the following March, albeit muted by strict COVID-19 restrictions. It is in these days and months, those following 19 October 2019, that the Chilean street artists also took to the streets, using its walls as a means of articulating and chronicling the movement's intergenerational trauma and demands. Once again, like the music of Jara and other revolutionaries, the arts began to be a leading force in political transformation. Their graphics, as found on the material walls of Santiago's historic district and the virtual spaces of social media, helped escort the Chilean demonstrators through their *estallido social*.

From participatory heritage to heritage activism

For years, much of Heritage Studies has centred on official heritage as propagated through official government agencies or organisations such as museums. Although significant, in recent years a new focus has emerged in academic circles responding with a "heritage from below" perspective (Robertson, 2008). Participatory elements of heritage are often built from grassroots movements through community involvement (Roued-Cunliffe & Copeland, 2017), which are central components when researching heritage outside of official networks. Often only associated with community bodies such as local history or genealogy groups (pp. XVI-XV), this paper argues that protestors should also be included within this realm. During *manifestaciones*, protesting Chileans have often "aggressively negotiated" (Giblin, 2014, p. 500) with their difficult past, leading to heritage-rich grassroots movements often heightened by an "us" versus "them" mentality (Harrison, 2010, p. 246). In a society already rent with stratification between memoryscapes (Stern, 2004) and class (Otero, Volker, & Rozer, 2021), the cultural heritage of those suffering collective trauma from the dictatorship can be easily viewed through the protestors' gaze.

The performative and participatory nature of protests are central tenets to analysing social movements. It is in this function of heritage, that of a performative "creative force", Jones et al. (2020, p. 61) have only recently introduced the concept of heritage activism. Heritage activism contends that social movements have always played a vital role in the "generation of heritage" (Jones et al., p. 837). While research and commentary have thus far significantly focused on heritage activism as pertaining to those "who advocate for the

preservation of heritage” (p. 993), that aspect is notably less germane to the topic at hand than the second component of their definition, “the use of heritage by activists who are advocating for or against social change” (p. 993). It is this second part of their definition that will be the focus of this research. By studying how heritage manifests itself within – and is indeed used as – social protest, we are introducing a critical heritage lens to a topic that is becoming progressively more relevant to countries throughout the world. This process is especially beneficial when observing countries dealing with difficult heritage, such as Chile, as protests offer up a microcosm of societal issues and concerns, many of which have been developing for generations.

A country engaging with its difficult heritage is especially poignant when dealing with a post-conflict nation specifically (Giblin, 2014). The collective trauma resulting from societal violence and repression, like those found in Chile, must be confronted for cultural healing to progress. The word “post-conflict” may be somewhat of a misnomer, as it in no way refers to an absence of conflict; it more simply refers to the durations between extended periods of “physical violence and *more* peaceful ones” (emphasis added) (Giblin, 2014, p. 503). Giblin incorporates the cultural processes of symbolic healing from cultural trauma with his concept of post-conflict heritage. Neither a positive nor negative element, Giblin argues that heritage is simply a component of post-conflict renewal (2014, p. 501). A nation’s painful legacies yield unique characteristics, especially in how it engages with its heritage, and Chile is no exception to this. Giblin specifically theorised these relationships in his description of post-conflict heritage as a process that is “better understood as a common element of post-conflict renewal, a part of a healing complex, which becomes intensified as the past is aggressively negotiated to provide healing related to conflict trauma” (2014, p. 500).

This research focuses on how the protests beginning in October of 2019 were part of this post-conflict renewal, as it investigates how the Chilean street art offered a means of confrontation and healing throughout the movement. The cultural trauma suffered by Chileans during Pinochet’s rule encompassed many facets due to the consequences of Pinochet’s attempted erasure of the political left. Cultural trauma, in essence, describes the effects of a violent or horrific past and how that trauma can influence a culture’s collective memory and, indeed, their collective future identity (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, & Sztompka, 2004). Building on Erikson’s theory of collective trauma (1976), Eyerman refers to cultural trauma as “a tear in the social fabric, when the foundations of an established collective identity are shaken by a traumatic occurrence and are in need of re-narration and repair” (2011, p. 455).

The importance of cultural repair and healing is a common thread underpinning many theories surrounding difficult pasts. While often occurring through official channels such as government reports, museums, or official acknowledgements such as Chile’s Truth Commissions, this paper will instead investigate how those bottom-up unofficial communities process their cultural

trauma. Protests, especially those of post-conflict societies such as Chile, serve as an ideal case study in which to examine this phenomenon as they often epitomise a society in the throes of societal introspection and realignment. The digital impact on protests is becoming an important field of study and one that is emerging within South America specifically (Magallanes-Blanco & Treré, 2019). Unfortunately, a study contrasting the *estallido social* street art against other worldwide protests, or even past Chilean protests, remains outside the realm of this project. Nevertheless, present on both the physical streets and within the virtual space of social media, Chilean O-18 street artists were able to harness the social capital of both the material and virtual space (McGarry, Erhart, Eslen-Ziya, Jenzen, & Korkut, 2019, p. 21) of the protests due to the visual nature of their medium. This is especially true because of the increasing popularity of the photographic based medium of Instagram throughout Chile and indeed worldwide. While the correlation between Instagram and street art has recently begun to be studied on the academic front (MacDowall & de Souza, 2017), the qualities of “instagrammable” heritage (Sterling, 2020), its effects on digital heritage (Grimaldi, Rosa, Loureiro, & Oliveira, 2019), and the interplay Instagram has on protests are nascent fields. It is here, at the intersection of digital participatory heritage and protest in a post-dictatorial nation, that this research will be able to offer a rich theoretical analysis.

Method and methodological framework

The relatively unexplored research at the carrefour of critical heritage studies, protests, cultural trauma, and digital heritage warranted a carefully designed methodology. Mozaffari and Jones advocate for the application of social movement theories when studying heritage’s interaction within protests due to the “methodological weakness, if not gap, in the understanding and conceptualizing of activism in heritage studies” (2020, p. 40). The addition of social movement methodologies to a critical heritage structure provided a rich framework on which to base this research. By virtue of the visual nature of both the art and social media studied, the newly theorised approach to social movements, aesthetics of protest, was also particularly advantageous to this endeavour (McGarry et al., 2019). This specific methodological approach was expedient to this undertaking, not only because of its emphasis on the aesthetic nature of social movements but also in its approach to space. Their methodology to both the virtual and material space offered an unparalleled cogency in the recognition of the materiality of both spatial elements in contemporary protest. While addressing the research from a social movements’ perspective is valuable, the development of heritage’s participatory and performative nature is also intrinsic to this methodological approach.

Due to the centrality of the perspectives and viewpoints of those involved in the protests, a qualitative approach was chosen. A triangulated methodology was elected to provide deeper insights when dealing with the traumatic events

of both the culture's dictatorial past and recent protests (Towns, 1996). This triangulated methodology included a focused, short-term, multi-sited ethnography on the streets of Santiago's heritage district, a digital ethnography (Pink et al., 2016) concentrating on the Instagram accounts of the movement's street artists and those popularising the protest's street art, and semi-structured interviews with the artists themselves. As an Anglo-Australian/Canadian living and researching in Santiago before, during, and after the social outbreak, I was able to perform interviews as well as in-person ethnographic observation over the course of 18 months. While legally prohibited from attending an active protest because of my foreign status, onsite research was performed outside of protest hours. Ethnographic observation of street art on the urban walls of Santiago was often done the morning after a large protest when lingering tear gas still burned the eyes, and police and firefighters were sometimes still in place addressing the aftermath of the protests.

Most street artists were contacted using a cold contact method, usually through their social media accounts. Identification and contact with the remaining artists were completed using the snow-ball effect, with interviewed street artists often encouraging connections with other specific artists in their small network. Interviews, both in-person and virtual due to the realities of COVID-19, encompassed a small focus group of some of the Santiago protests' most prolific and well-known street artists. Many of those interviewed were established in Santiago's artistic community as professional artists (outside of Santiago's street scene) before turning their art to the city's walls during the protests. Others had already established themselves as *artistas callejeros* on Santiago's urban scene years before the O-18 movement began. While all interviewed artists supported the *manifestaciones*, each was raised in varying political and demographic backgrounds. Some came from Pinochet-sympathetic families living in some of Santiago's wealthiest municipalities, while others grew up in Allende-supporting families, amongst some of the most impoverished *comunas* within the metropolitan region.

Intergenerational trauma: “Our legacy is to end your legacy”

During the dictatorship, Chilean street art played a fundamental role in the cultural trauma surrounding Pinochet's military rule. Street art, as a form of artistic expression, went from being revolutionary propaganda during Allende's presidential campaigns to an expression of collective traumatic memories during the dictatorship. Defying retribution, they would use street art as a means of sharing information with their neighbours, such as how to defend oneself, who was missing, or remembering those who had been murdered by the dictatorship (Cortés & Olavarría, 2016; Trumper, 2016). In an interview with one such historic street artist, Pochy describes how he simply painted propaganda in the brigades during Allende's campaign, but the “biggest work [he] did was to the paint the faces of the detainees” during the dictatorship (Pochy, personal

communication, December 2, 2020). While he felt that he has metaphorically passed the torch onto this new generation of street artists, some of his work lives on through its lingering visibility on a home in one of the leftist-supporting *poblaciones* of Santiago. The O-18 movement, which centred on the social injustices as an inseparable consequence of their traumatic past, allowed Chilean street artists to voice their contemporary demands in their role as movement intellectuals (Eyerman & Jamison, 1995, 1998) alongside their trauma from the *junta*'s rule. Contemporary artists, like those street artists of generations past, continued to use the faces of the maimed, killed, and disappeared as integral parts of their O-18 work. References to the *junta*'s torture, violence, and loss of freedoms also became a common sight throughout Santiago's street art scene.

Image 1. Left: Photo of a disappeared man painted by Pochy in his local community. Centre: Painting of Víctor Jara, alongside a verse of his poem *Somos cinco mil*. Right: Contemporary faces painted like the disappeared during the dictatorship



A witness to the beating and torture of Víctor Jara at the *Estadio Nacional* before the musician was transported to his death, Pochy's vivid memories of his own imprisonment and torture at the stadium, along with the subsequent years of dictatorship, have resulted in these scenes being forever imprinted on his memory. The damage from these events, and his eventual political involvement, has persisted through constant fear, exhibiting itself through "despotic [and] careless" periods where he gets into "very ugly things... with all [his] family against [him]" (Pochy, personal communication, December 2, 2020).

The trauma resulting from Pochy's torture and imprisonment not only affected himself but was also transmitted intergenerationally to his children and grandchildren. Ros describes how this heritage can be transmitted both actively, with parents sharing their trauma and experiences dialogically, and also passively, with their traumatic past emerging in "silences, voids, and symptoms" (2012, p. 10). Whether transmitted passively or actively, the reality of their intergenerational trauma can manifest itself in a variety of ways. For Pochy's children, it evidenced itself through a terror of becoming involved politically:

My children saw... lived that, but from end to end. I could never hide anything from them... They knew everything that happened. They saw it, they saw our frustrations, they saw our crying, and they decided not to get in-

volved, never, for anything. Anything... (Pochy, personal communication, December 2, 2020).

While his children remained apolitical, it was the subsequent generation, his grandson, that actively protested during the social awakening. In a mixture of pride and grief, he describes how his grandson was beaten up by the *carabineros* (Chilean police): “‘Grandpa’, he said, ‘I could never... dodge it. He would hit me downwards and upwards.’ The cop was bigger. They smashed his face” (Pochy, personal communication, December 2, 2020).

Pikoenelojo Stencil (literally translated as “Dick in the eye Stencil”) is a prolific stencil artist on the streets of Santiago since before the 2019 protests and was inspired by the artistic brigades in which Pochy painted. He explained that street graphics throughout the protests depicted the third generation’s call to action, encapsulating the sentiment “our legacy is to end your legacy.” (Pikoenelojo Stencil, personal communication, March 17, 2021). Pikoenelojo Stencil expounded:

There is still a lot of dictatorship to be resolved... we still need to remove that sorrow, that horror that the dictatorship left. I think it is necessary that we remember that. *What I do... is remember it graphically* (emphasis added) (Pikoenelojo Stencil, personal communication, March 17, 2021).

Many of these artistic depictions offered a powerful visual memory trigger of their dictatorial past to both those who lived through the dictatorship and their offspring. The same streets that had once borne the dictatorship’s military presence became the street artists’ canvas, rebuking their legacy 30 years later.

Mirona, a popular cartoonist whose work was posted on the walls surrounding *Plaza de Dignidad* and printed off and distributed at the protests by her students and Instagram followers, explained how she used this capacity in her art. She observed:

The idea that memory is constructed through the image is now more powerful. I feel... people are addicted to the image...[and] I believe that I... we [as street artists], contribute in this (Mirona, personal communication, January 5, 2021).

This visual medium allowed street artists to be effective curators of the cultural trauma still being experienced by Chile and efficaciously created the narrative of the social movement itself. The cultural significance of these graphic representations, and indeed street art in general, has grown significantly since the beginning of the *estallido social*. Mirona noted that:

Now everything is an image, and everything is entertainment. That which doesn’t entertain you, even if it is informing you,... people throw it away... It is the same thing with... the political message now (Mirona, personal communication, January 5, 2021).

This is especially true in today's society, where smartphones' cultural saturation, which includes their high-quality cameras, has encouraged the collection and sharing of visual memories through social media sites such as Instagram. The increasing visibility offered by sites such as Instagram encouraged artists to turn to urban art as a means of sharing their work with the people, especially in a culture such as Chile, where art galleries remain outside the access of the masses (Rodríguez, P, personal communication, March 18, 2021, and Mirona, personal communication, January 5, 2021).

Instagrammable heritage in protest

The symbiotic nature of a hyper-visualised society and the increasing popularity of the visual, image-rich social media site Instagram produced an Instagram sociability during the protests, which resulted in a powerful trifecta between street art, social media, and participatory heritage. The common element between each of these is how integral personal interaction was to each component of the O-18 movement. Mirona observed that unlike the written word, and this paper argues the sung word as well, both street art and social media inspire and promote interaction. She described how:

You cannot respond to the book directly; it is not like social media, where you read a message, and you can comment immediately... For me, [street art is] like a social network but real material of life (Mirona, personal communication, January 5, 2021).

Cultural trauma also interacts with heritage in much the same way. Heritage's participatory nature creates an environment wherein cultural trauma can cultivate and develop. While countless instances of instagrammable heritage have been made manifest since the beginning of the protests, this paper focuses on three points: those depictions mourning what was lost because of the dictatorship, those that blame their current woes on Pinochet's dictatorship, and those that aspire to a better country once the fetters of his dictatorship have been loosed.

A concept almost universally expressed by each of the participants on their works' significance was the integral nature of both the street walls and Instagram in facilitating exchanges between their art and protestors. This occurred by three principal means. Perhaps the most self-evident manner is the increased visibility and interconnection that the street walls themselves offered the artist as a means of display. The protests were concentrated in and around *Plaza de Dignidad*, a meeting point both literally and metaphorically between the rich and poor of Santiago, providing a potent location for the exhibition of their art. The artistic exchanges between the street artists and other artists on Santiago's walls, such as those in front of the GAM (Centre Gabriela Mistral), proved an influential second avenue of exchange. Here, the artists would use the GAM's walls to paint, stencil, paste, or graffiti. Others would then come with their own

art to add or change the original work, each iteration proving significant and instagrammable. The last element influencing the artists' significance was performed in the virtual space of social media through the interplay between their art and the public on such sites as Instagram. Fab Ciraolo, a well-renowned artist who was convinced to take his art to the street by the street artist Cai-zozzama, reinforced this when he explained:

Letting go of the work afterwards... is like a second stage of my play... because following it forever and pretending that everyone understands that I am saying such a thing is meaningless. I like it when many things are understood, when everyone makes their own reading of the work and can draw different conclusions, different stories (Fab Ciraolo, personal communication, December 19, 2020).

Paloma Rodríguez, another distinguished artist in her own right before the protests began, explained how, when she took her art to the streets, these interactions with the protestors created a new influential ingredient to her art:

And then, when you start hearing the responses that people have, those interpretations. Sometimes they are totally more gratifying or better ones than I had originally given them. So that is why I have decided to stay in that line and continue with urban art (Rodríguez, P, personal communication, March 18, 2021).

Image 2. Instaram feed by ☆ P A L O M A ☆, 2020, used with her permission.



The above Instagram feed is an example of how street artists interacted throughout the protests. Here is a recreation of one of Rodríguez's more famous paste ups advocating for a new constitution. It features Hedy Lamarr, a brilliant scientist taken advantage of for her beauty by the film industry, wearing a Chilean star alongside an "enhanced" version of the Chilean crest. The Instagram post also depicts another street artist's work in this recreation, who added to her paste-up, with Paloma bringing attention to how the other artists' work interacted with her own on her Instagram feed.

Interactions like these demonstrate how Instagram has become a powerful participatory heritage website (van der Hoeven, 2020) and a rich source of future digital heritage research. Nevertheless, whether these interactions occurred through Instagram or manipulations of their art on the street walls themselves, their influence on the participatory heritage practised by those involved in the protests was marked. As these artists interacted with their dictatorial past on the public streets, it was, in essence, a form of performative heritage, resulting in a circular reinforcement between their art, social media, and the participatory heritage of the masses.

The participatory heritage that manifested itself through the street art during the *manifestaciones* was also a striking representation of Chilean heritage activism. While none of the still-active street artists interviewed shared that they had experienced any direct violence from the *junta* during the dictatorship years, all exhibited elements of intergenerational cultural trauma throughout their interviews and shared an instinct to represent virtually this cultural trauma in their own way. Despite the countless unique characteristics found on the walls of the protests, the art interacting with their dictatorial past can generally be broken down into three distinct groups: those that mourn their traumatic past and what was lost because of the *junta*'s tyranny, those that blame the current political and economic woes on Pinochet's leadership, and those that depict their hope for an enlightened future once the remaining shackles of Pinochet's legacy are removed. Many of these images were then viralised through sites such as Instagram, producing continuously more points of interaction with exponentially more people, pushing the arts' bounds of influence and affect. While the overall significance of viralisation in the participatory nature of heritage has yet to be sufficiently studied and is unfortunately not within the bounds of this research, many of those interviewed expressed a desire to reach a larger audience. This desire for increased interaction universally led them to both the streets and Instagram, despite many scorning the social media in general. For example, Pikoenelojo Stencil described how:

I have a... kind of natural dislike for social media. And although I consider it as an important element for the diffusion of what one does, it makes me feel that social media is also used for a lot of nonsense... it is full of chauvinism, of ego, of so many things, yet I keep [my work] there (Pikoenelojo Stencil, personal communication, March 17, 2021).

Despite the disparaging attitude many artists had towards social media, Instagram has proven itself intrinsic to the influence of the movement's street art and to their role as movement intellectuals explicitly. In fact, almost all of the street artists interviewed requested to be referenced throughout this research by their social media names.

As previously discussed, one principal manner in which the *artistas callejersxs* of the social outburst visualised their traumatic heritage is through the artistic mourning of what was lost because of the military coup. Using

Víctor Jara as an artistic synecdoche, Pikoenelojo Stencil vividly reproduced a series of one of his most potent stencils of Victor Jara during these protests, with Jara extending his bloody hands and quoting one of his celebrated song lyrics, *levantate y mirate las manos* (rise up and show me your hands), representing Jara's torturous hand damage before his ultimate death (Pikoenelojo Stencil, 2020b). Pikoenelojo Stencil's work joins countless other graphic images of Jara and his lyrics on the streets of Santiago's historic district since O-18 began. During the protests, one of the most quoted lyrics was from Jara's song "The right to live in peace" in both the sung and written word. It was posted on the walls and bus stops throughout the historic district. The visuality of Jara and his lyrics as street art empowered the emotion of listening to Jara's revolutionary music, and the loss and pain of his murder, to break through into their consciousness in a flash of recognition. These images not only represent a noteworthy interaction with the traumatic violence which occurred during the military coup, but also a sense of mourning for what was lost.

A common theme of loss due to the military coup was shared by all artists, from the deprivation of freedom and forfeiture of Chilean culture to the loss of familial relationships. This sense of loss was expressed universally, despite many of the artists' families being Pinochet supporters and benefiting from the regime. Mirona even specifically mentioned how she felt the dictatorship robbed her of learning and listening to Víctor Jara's music (Mirona, personal communication, January 5, 2021). This sense of loss could be why many artists felt an onus to bring their depictions to the walls of Santiago. For example, Fab Ciralo, who pasted an emblematic version of Jara in a "The Clash" t-shirt, described how his project of bringing past Chilean icons such as Víctor Jara to the present was his "struggle", as he was carrying "emotional burdens" (Fab Ciralo, personal communication, December 19, 2020).

Perhaps one of the most self-evident means in which the urban artists of Santiago engaged with their dictatorial past throughout the Chilean Spring was through the overt representation of the dictator himself, Pinochet. The artistic rendering of any Chilean president was not a comfortable process for some, a fact expressly pronounced by several in the interviews. Mirona describes how "many people feel like me in the sense that they are afraid to... criticise... the president, so openly, and then one wonders why?". She feels that "maybe it has something to do with the dictatorship, maybe it has something to do with the fact that I have it in some parts of my body" (Mirona, personal communication, January 5, 2021). This inveterate fear is a clear example of the emotional energy required for a cultural trauma narrative (Eyerman, 2020, p. 681). Fab Ciralo expressed difficulty in even working on his Allende project because he "was not used to touching certain topics here" and does not feel like he could even complete a Pinochet project "because... touching that image of him is complicated" (Fab Ciralo, personal communication, December 19, 2020). For him, working during the protests was not just difficult for himself but also arduous for his whole family. He expressed the paralysing fear that his murals would

create for his parents, describing that “with all the murals we did, they suffered. My mother thought they were going to kill me... they did not want to know anything. They just wanted to be safe” (Fab Ciralo, personal communication, December 19, 2020).

Other artists, such as Pikoenelojo Stencil, wanted to push the envelope and confront Pinochet’s legacy directly. He explained that:

Those kinds of ties to the past, I believe, must be eradicated... unfortunately, Pinochet is still in the collective consciousness of so many people and in the thoughts of many others. What provokes me the most, what is most complex in my head, is the fact that his legacy seems not to be over yet. And that is precisely what we have to eradicate (Pikoenelojo Stencil, personal communication, March 17, 2021).

One of his pieces of art that speaks to this confrontation with Pinochet is his stencil showing Pinochet sitting on a chair in the role of a ventriloquist, with Piñera (the then-current right-leaning president) being his puppet, linking the problems of this presidency with those of the dictatorship (Pikoenelojo Stencil, 2020a, 2020b). While Pikoenelojo Stencil’s art is undoubtedly poignant, perhaps the most common theme surrounding Pinochet was an amalgamation of both Pinochet’s and Piñera’s face or body in varying forms.

Image 3. Left and Centre: Pikoenelojo Stencil’s Instagram feeds. Right: Caiozamma’s Instagram feed. Used with their permission.

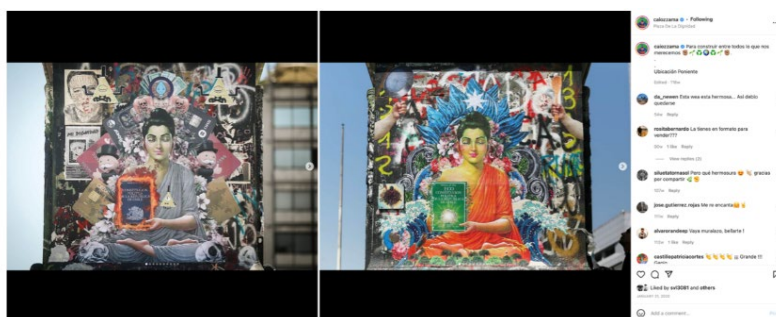


Although Pinochet’s face was branded throughout many artistic renderings, especially during the first days of the protests, another more lasting link to his regime was about to begin – and one that would change the narrative of the movement itself. While a call for a reduction in metro fare, publicisation of water rights, pension and education reform, and the elimination of road tolls were only a few of the demands that were part of the beginning narrative, soon, a more unifying demand came forward. Caiozama, a prolific artist of the *estallido social* and a world-renowned Chilean street artist even before the protests began, describes how the demand to abandon the Chilean Constitution written under the dictatorship in favour of a new constitution came to encompass his artwork and what it meant to him:

On October 23, that is, five days after it all began, I made one of an angel that says “New Constitution”. At that time, there was still not much talk about the Constitution.... and I think that was the most powerful one I ever made. Because, of course, it basically showed what we did have to change the root problem, which is the Constitution. Because here, without changing the Constitution, we’ll never get out of the hole (Caiozzama, personal communication, November 23, 2020).

The Constitution of Chile has been a contentious issue since its inception during the dictatorial regime. While technically ratified by the populace, the plebiscite accepting the Constitution during the height of Pinochet’s rule is widely regarded as a democratic sham (Collier & Sater, 2004, p. 364). In addition, the Constitution itself has been described by others as having been created to enshrine and constrain Chile to Pinochet’s extreme neoliberal economic reforms long past his demise (Alemparte, 2022). Each artist spoke passionately about the need for a new Chilean Constitution and how Pinochet’s Constitution was so deleterious to Chile as a whole. Paloma Rodriguez, an artist almost exclusively known for her women’s rights expressions, described why she embraced the demand for a new constitution in her artwork since being “tied to a Constitution that was created in dictatorship... limits everyone’s personal freedoms” (Rodriguez, P, personal communication, March 18, 2021). One of Caiozzama’s more famous works during the protests and popular on Instagram was a diptych of two Chilean Constitutions (Caiozzama, 2020a, 2020b). The first centres on the current Constitution written under Pinochet surrounded by fire and items commonly associated with suppression under its extreme neoliberal policies: consumer debt, lack of public water rights, etc. – while the second describes a new idealistic EcoConstitution surrounded by fresh flowing water and light, with a renewed Chile and symbols of their protest surrounding it.

Image 4. Diptych posted on Caiozzama’s Instagram account, used with permission.



The call for a new constitution was almost unanimously represented by all the interviewed artists and became the rallying call for many on the streets and on social media. Their actions represented a move past simple cultural commentary. As Eyerman and Jamison explained, movement intellectuals “can be un-

derstood as those individuals who through their activities articulate the knowledge interests and cognitive identity of social movements.” (Eyerman & Jamison, 1995, p. 450). As the street artists called for, and even demanded, a new Constitution on the walls of Santiago, their actions demonstrated an evident consciousness of the movement’s interests. In a movement where leadership was noticeably absent, their art took centre stage on social media. Moreover, the artists were present within each stage of the movement and, in effect, became the O-18’s mouthpiece (Eyerman & Jamison, 1995, p. 451). The calls for change by the artists and protesters were soon heard by the Chilean government, and Chile held a plebiscite in October 2020. Almost exactly a year after the protests began, the Chilean people took to the voting booths to determine whether they wanted a new constitution. While still a contentious issue for many Chileans, the plebiscite passed, leading to the election of a Constitutional Assembly in mid-2021, in one of Chileans’ final efforts to rid themselves of the remnants of their heritage of dictatorship.

Conclusion

Social movements, especially in Chile, have often occurred at times when societies are confronted with painful remembrances of their history (Mason, 2017; Wilde, 1999). Even seemingly non-attributable events can trigger a societal rise-up in remembrance. The rise in metro fare in 2019 had the ability to bring generations of Chileans to the streets and confront their painful past. The performativity of heritage, as demonstrated through protest, has proven to be a vital placemark in healing Chile’s difficult past. The memory of their military dictatorship being utilised for social transformation is a powerful example of the newly theorised heritage activism. Chilean heritage activism, as the intangible heritage of protest turned tangible through urban art, is a striking example of precisely this.

Intergenerational trauma due to the atrocities of Pinochet’s dictatorship has been abundantly evident throughout the Chilean protests beginning in October 2019. Evident not only in those families that personally suffered violence and brutality during the authoritarian regime, their suffering was also embodied throughout much of Chilean culture. Even those whose families personally benefited from the *junta* recounted how they are personally impacted by a cultural trauma with which they continually live. Feelings of fear, blame, political repressiveness, and loss of culture are only a few examples of common elements artfully depicted on Santiago’s streets, with the violence of yesteryear provoking an even more powerful narrative for the current violence on the streets.

These dissenters’ cultural trauma was beautifully and ingeniously carried forward by Santiago’s *artistas callejeros*. Graphic representations of their dictatorship manifested themselves throughout the more recent dissent and can be broken down into three distinct categories. In the first of these, palpable grief

over what Chile had lost due to Pinochet's authoritarian rule was exhibited through representations of those martyred. Their faces, names, and words were displayed in remembrance and memorialised by numerous street artists. Second, and perhaps the most prominent display of the dictatorship, was through the unique characterisation of the dictator himself. Often in conjunction with the then-current right-leaning president Piñera, these amalgamated images provided powerful icons to the streets, homogenising the current social and political issues with those of the past. The last variety of heritage activism observed during the O-18 movement, and perhaps the most influential to the future of Chile, was the references to the dictatorship's Constitution. Early in the protests, street artists generated a commentary depicting the role Pinochet's Constitution bore on the current society and their aspirations for a new one, written by the people. This continual "blame game" thrust the accountability of their current woes back on the dictatorship, keeping it a constant part of their collective consciousness. Each of these variations of heritage activism points to how a country contends with their painful past throughout societal clashes.

The narratives the street artists expressed on the *estallido social* secured their role as movement intellectuals of the Chilean Spring. This curation was born from the cultural task that historic street artists of Chile executed in both propagandising a Marxist revolution under Allende and commemorating the disappeared during the *junta*, lending credence to their collective voice. In addition, this blended with the heightened capacity of influence that Instagram offers in today's hyper-visualised world. These cultural forces provided a powerful voice to these intellectuals throughout the protests, both in the material spaces of the protests and the virtual walls of citizen's social media accounts. Their creativity provided an instagrammable point of contact for Chilean dissenters to interact with their heritage of dictatorship while demonstrating in their *estallido social*.

* * *

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Notes

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Appendix

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