**The Visual and the Visceral. Bodily communities and visual communities in *El estómago de la cultura* (2012).**

*“Pictures want to be kissed. And of course*

*we want to kiss them back.*

W.J.T. Mitchell. *What do Pictures Want?*

*El estómago de la cultura* is a short documentary film directed by Martín Céspedes which depicts the slaughter process in a refrigerated warehouse “without a foreman” on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. It first appeared in the year 2012, in issue 9 of *Revista Crisis*. The documentary offers a visual reflection on the position of the livestock industry in Argentina in the face of finance capital’s imposition of genetically-modified agriculture. It also serves to show and encourage debate around the functioning of an establishment managed by its own workers .[[1]](#endnote-1) *El estómago de la cultura* presents a constellation of ideas, centred on relationships between animal bodies, human bodies and machines, inviting us, among other things, to analyse representations of bodies as articulated through the mechanisms of capital. It invites us to assess the nature of the work force and the transformation of the body into merchandise (the conversion of the cow into meat for consumption and the conversion of the man into a worker). At the same time, the animal body at the heart of the visual narrative continually attempts to define, compare and contrast and challenges our own subjectivity–making the documentary a very rewarding work to analyse from the perspective of animality studies (Donoso and González 711).

 Nevertheless, in the following pages, I would like to trace two lines of thought and outline two different approaches to interpreting this documentary. The first approach is related to the generation of images which appeal directly to the viewer’s sensibility (understood as a living creature’s ability to feel), that is, images which affect the body of the person viewing them. The second approach aims to highlight the presentation of collective images, of collectives, or images of groups of people, of livestock, of lifeless organs or bodies in the documentary. In this article, I will propose a reading which will provide us with a present-day way of thinking about the communities which arose after 2001 and their “exposure”.[[2]](#endnote-2) Didi-Huberman has argued that reflecting on exposure presupposes an evaluation of the ways in which communities make themselves visible (expose themselves) and, simultaneously, endanger themselves (expose themselves to), when they reveal themselves as exposed to their own disappearance (102). In *El estómago de la cultura,* this exposure is represented by the generation of an elemental sense of community with the viewer, through an appeal to the “stomach” of the person observing and through an insistence on the presentation of a community viewed from the perspective of a common existence and the establishment of a place of common utterance.

 The documentary opens with the famous quotation from Esteban Echeverría’s *El matadero* [1840]: “The scene which the slaughterhouse presents should be seen, not written about.” This extract, which summarizes the complex relationships between *eikon* and *logos* in Echeverría’s text, has become, in *El* *estómago de la cultura,* the phrase which legitimizes a visual regime located beyond written language, a regime which is capable of articulating a visual reality which cannot be put into words. Adhering to this principle, *El estómago de la cultura* documents the process of livestock slaughter in five stages: 1) the cows’ entry into the establishment through narrow, penned-in, metal walkways and the preparatory showers they are given to clean and relax their bodies –using a combination of hot and cold water, 2) the moment at which the cow is struck on the head by a drill emerging from a Jarvis pneumatic stunner (captive bolt pistol), which stuns the animals before they are killed; 3) the hoisting and disembowelling of the animal, the cows are hung by their legs while still alive to facilitate the bleeding and disembowelling itself; 4) the butchery or the process of dismembering the animal body and separating out the skin, flesh, intestines and bones; and, finally, 5) the final preparation of parts of the body for later consumption in the form of typical Argentine cuts of meat. The documentary has a brief coda, less than a minute long, showing the clean-up process and the warehouse waste being discarded: two workers are pulling at the legs of a foetus stuck in the drainage system, an act which is highly visually reminiscent of the scene of a birth. The foetus falls onto a pile of other half-formed foetuses, a pile of viscous material, a few intestines, and embryos. The eleven-minute documentary closes with this scene: a pile of formless bodies, a pan shot with the still camera, without any close-ups.

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Each of the sections into which the documentary divides the slaughter process is separated by five black screens which seem to suspend the visual narrative, each bearing a phrase related to one of the various subjects associated with the slaughterhouse in Río de la Plata culture. From Echeverría, via Alfredo Zitarrosa, through to Spinoza, the brief texts which scan the narrative suggest connections with death, life, the animal, the human. The first black screen is entitled *Cero Stress* and places the documentary in the context of the narrative present: “In a country with more soy plantations than cows, the beef industry has been suffering a sustained decrease for many years. 120 slaughterhouses closed between 2009 and 2011 and 12,000 workers lost their jobs. The slaughter (*faena*) went from 16 million cows to 11 million. Argentineans went from eating 71 kilos [157 pounds] of beef per year to chewing barely 54 [119 pounds]”. The second black screen, *Anestesia Local*, is a version of Alfredo Zitarrosa’s 1972 song *Guitarra negra*: “Temblando, cae sobre sus costillas, pesada como un mundo con estrépito, de bruces sobre el cemento, en plena estupidez sentimental, como un escarabajo que no piensa, mientras medita lentamente por qué duele tanto”. The third black screen, *La estocada*, contains a quotation by Vasco Huidobro, president of the Federation of Self-Managed Cooperatives of the Meat Industry and Related Branches (*Federación de Cooperativas Autogestionadas de la Carne y Afines*), Fecacya for short: “Acá nadie dice *vamos a producir carne* acá se dice *vamos a matar*. El compañero entra en un mundo de violencia que puede descargar con el animal, pero que sobre todo termina desgastando al obrero”. The fourth black screen says *El fordismo se hace carne*: “Every medium-size plant —-this big machinery without machines, this precise human chain—- processes 120 animals every 60 minutes and prepares 2 million kilos [4,409,245 pounds] of meat for consumption every month”. And the final black screen, *Razón Bovina*, is a free translation of the appendix to proposition 37 of book 4 of Spinoza’s *Ethics*: “Every law against the slaughtering of animals is founded rather on vain superstition and childish pity than on sound reason. For everyone's right is defined by his virtue, or power, men have far greater rights over beasts than beasts have over men”.[[3]](#endnote-5) But these phrases offer an incomplete narration and description of the crudeness of the film’s visual dimension; nor are they able to impose any kind of order over the documentary’s images, since they are not designed to explain or elucidate what the viewer is watching, or is about to watch. The written language, in white letters on a black background, seems to constitute an attempt to fix a meaning or frame an action, but it remains sterile, without even the power to interrupt the story which has been imposed upon us, like a visual steamroller, a language which is almost completely shut down by Echeverría’s initial phrase. *El estómago de la cultura* contains no dialogues, no interviews, no intelligible voices: there are only murmurs and the noise of machines which, despite being out of synch with the machines shown in the documentary, nevertheless serve to anchor the images of the slaughterhouse.

***Bodies***

 The images of the slaughter of cows within the space of the slaughterhouse with which *El estómago de la cultura* presents us, suggest an escape from the tongue as the mediator between the body and reality, and directly target the reality of the body of the person watching them.[[4]](#endnote-6) The stomach, from the documentary’s title onwards, makes its presence felt, *from* the body and *in* the body, as the recipient of the images. Because the stomach is a centre capable of processing said images, capable of transforming them into material to be consumed or discarded. The logic of the guts (the guts which exist within the body and which, for brief intervals, take on this role) is constantly called into action in *El estómago de la cultura.* And the reference to the guts as an organic centre has a double meaning. First of all, the images on display inside the slaughterhouse record processes of the destruction, processes of the transformation of animals into products for consumption, like a parody of an organ which works with a variety of materials. That organ is a nucleus which intervenes in and records the process of deformity and deformation, the transformation from formlessness to form, the production of harnessable power and the power of waste material. Secondly, the images refer directly to the guts by appealing to the person looking at them. For that reason, during the first year in which the documentary appeared, the virtual edition of *Revista Crisis* warned viewers that: “Persons of a sensitive disposition may find the graphic nature of the images in this documentary disturbing”.[[5]](#endnote-7) This warning acts as a response to Echeverría’s phrase in that they both describe the “graphic and explicit” nature of the images in relation to “sensitivity.” And, actually, the images we can see *are* graphic and explicit, just as every image is, as John Ellis argues: “there is no way that any [visual] representation can insure itself against such labeling [the graphic or the explicit]” (25). Seeing is an unavoidably physical action through which the images disturb or affect the viewer’s sensibilities. *El estómago de la cultura* reminds us that seeing takes place in the body, that seeing mobilizes the body and affects it in as much as it is a sensorial/sensual experience: this is the second meaning of the trope of the stomach which the film evokes.Disgust, sorrow, anguish, cruelty, revulsion and emotional distress are all permitted, since seeing cannot be reduced to the act of looking and, as Linda Williams demonstrates in the classic work *Hard Core,* images always affect our sensibility, always “move us” (289).[[6]](#endnote-8)

From the journey of the cows’ living bodies to their deaths, *El estómago de la cultura* portrays the slaughterhouse as a stomach and the stomach as an obscene space. The term *ob-scene* needs to be understood literally here, as that which remains or should remain *off stage* (the *ob*-*scene* as the off-stage), in other words, that which should not be exposed to view (Mey 7).[[7]](#endnote-9) As Kerstin Mey has pointed out, the traditional documentary genre as such, because of the “realist” mode surrounding its image and because of the kind of prestige it enjoys, by comparison with other cinematographic registers, is valued precisely because it displays the obscene as a form of indictment, that is, because it takes us to the place where *you can see that which should not be seen*, and places the *off-scene* *on-scene* (105-106). *El estómago de la cultura* continually points to this inversion, and not simply because it takes us inside the slaughterhouse and confronts the viewer with a process rather than a product. At the same time, the obscene is distilled onto the screen in the form of two different kinds of procedures applied to the animal bodies: from the inside out and from the outside in. First, procedures which are directed from the inside to the outside of the bodies cause certain scenes to unfold: movements of blood gushing out of the necks of the suspended cows and internal organs tumbling out of the cows when they are split down the middle. Secondly, the procedures which are directed from the outside to the inside are represented by penetrations: the *death blow*, the *disembowelling,* the *flaying*, the *evisceration* with large knives, and the *splitting*, when the cow is split down the middle using electric saws.

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 In her essay *Lo obsceno,* Corinne Maier notes our fascination with a certain type of imagery in relation to the representation of the real.[[8]](#endnote-10) Following in the footsteps of Freud, Lacan, Bataille, Barthes, Delueze and Derrida, among others, Maier argues that the obscene functions as an intermediary (a protection and a prohibition) between desire and the pleasure which could in principle be obtained from it. It is the proximity of these images to “the real” in Lacanian terms –our body is part of the real and plays a part in the real -, and that, the contact with “the real”, is what renders them intolerable and obscene. (PAG?). Different versions of this argument have been deployed by scholars of visual culture to describe these kinds of images and their relationship with the body of the spectator. For example, in addition to the work of Linda Williams, several other pioneering works immediately come to mind. Vivian Sobchack’s work discusses *carnal thoughts* (2004), Jonathan Crary describes the *carnal density of spectatorship* (1992), and Steven Shaviro refers to the *cinematic body* (1993). For all these authors, the common denominator here is the works’ ability to affect those who watch them and the capacity of the observer’s body to generate meaning in the process of watching (Sobchack 56-57). This production of meaning through the act of watching which occurs within the body opens up new possibilities of rethinking representation and developing a visual model which includes the body, in the face of a hegemonic visuality which attempts to erase it at all costs, privileging “the disembodied, centered gaze at an absent object over the embodied, decentered sensations of present observers” (Williams, *Corporalized Observers* 15).

For Sobchack, although the observer’s body is also presented as an intruder, jeopardizing the discursive consistency of cinematographic reality, representations which appeal directly to the body or obsessively signal its presence are needed in order to produce a new configuration of seeing capable of demarcating and generating a political practice (a politics of seeing and of showing) when they mobilize the individual directly. In “The Intolerable Image”, Jacques Rancière is more skeptical about these kinds of images, since, in order to “mobilize” (to move and to mobilize) the viewers, it is necessary, according to him, to use *those same images* to create a visual reality which can be opposed: “Such is the dialectic in the political montage of images. One of them must play the role of the reality that denounces the other’s mirage. But by the same token, it denounces the mirage as the reality of our existence in which the image is included” (85). For Rancière, political mobilization and mobilization *within* politics is not the result of an appeal to the body in itself, but arises from the deployment of a new way of organizing perception and sense, a *consensus*, and, consequently, a new sense of reality, a *common sense* (102). Mobilization doesn’t arise in response to the indictment of a hidden reality, or of a simulacrum, or the mobilization of the body. Instead, it is a response to the construction of “different realities, different common sense – that is to say, different spatiotemporal systems, different communities of words and things, forms and meanings” (102). In the same vein, in his *Pueblos expuestos, pueblos figurantes*, Georges Didi-Huberman highlights what he calls “el reparto de los cuerpos” in the appearance of different peoples as a new configuration of that which can be seen, a “common setting” which also includes the observer in a form of “joint seeing” (106). This is the approach adopted by *El estómago de la cultura*: the portrayal of communities of men, of animals, the exposure of “common ways” of existing which, on the one hand, reinforce the sense of communion (common union) and, on the other hand, simultaneously indicate the precarious nature of its existence and survival.

***Communities***

In their feature-length documentary *La hora de los hornos* (1968), Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino explore the image of the slaughterhouse as a recurrent and insistent theme in Argentine culture. In their film, celebrated images of slaughterhouses for cattle and sheep are juxtaposed with commercial advertisements for Shell, Volkswagen and Chevrolet, all tied together by an extract of Bach’s concerto no. 5 in F minor, interpreted by the voices of the Swingle Singers. *La hora de los hornos* employs its montage of images to indict, on the one hand, the primitive brutality of sovereign power and, on the other, the mechanized brutality of neoliberal capital, themes which, for Gabriel Giorgi, have shaped our ways of thinking about the slaughterhouse as an image from South Cone culture, capable of problematizing the relationship between animality and politics (137). In *Formas comunes, animalidad, cultura y biopolítica*, Georgi points out that, if you want to understand the relationship between the slaughterhouse and the culture, there is one crucial rule to consider:

Como instrucción social, el matadero busca poner a distancia lo animal de lo humano y la vida de la muerte: busca, en otras palabras aislar la vida eliminable, consumible, de la vida protegida, reforzar su distinción evitando que la muerte animal se mezcle, contagie, irrumpa en la vida de la comunidad. La función social del matadero es aislar la muerte de la vida y lo animal de lo humano. (130-131)

What Giorgi calls “cultural slaughterhouses” –which begin with Esteban Echeverría’s *oeuvre* and continue in the works of Osvaldo Lamborghini, Rodolfo Walsh, David Viñas, Carlos Alonso, Fernando Solanas, Martín Kohan and Carlos Busqued, among others- narrate, by contrast, a stubborn failure of the task of separation, demonstrating that death is not confined to the slaughterhouse or to the animal. The central task which the cultural slaughterhouses have taken on is that of showing the “contagion” and the “overflowing” of death which breach the boundaries of the territory of the slaughterhouse itself (130).

 In this sense, when the animal body is exposed to view in *El estómago de la cultura*, whether in order to show the cows’ journey together with the journey of the workers at their different work stations, or to merge the sounds of humans and animals to the point of indistinguishability, the slaughterhouse blurs the difference between alive and dead, between animal and human. For example, before showing the instant of the “death blow”, a quotation from Vasco Huidobro makes the parallel between animal death and human death explicit: “Acá nadie dice vamos a producir carne, acá se dice *vamos a matar*. El compañero entra en un mundo de violencia que puede descargar con el animal, pero sobre todo termina desgastando al obrero”. Killing what is “alive”, whether human or animal, is the trademark of this slaughterhouse. With a thrust of his knife, the slaughterer ends the cow’s life while, at the same time, the mass, mechanized deaths of the cows “wear out”, erode and corrode the worker’s life. Animals and men live and die subject to a law which is ultimately incapable of telling them apart. In this respect, Giorgi’s text is revealing. Giorgi intervenes in the field of animal studies in a Latin American context by approaching the slaughterhouse as a trope freed from aesthetic considerations in order to shed light on a relationship which “reorders the visible and the sensory around a ‘living being’ which does not overlap with the human” (162).[[9]](#endnote-11) We could argue that Céspedes’ slaughterhouse also reorders the visible and the sensory. His documentary work records the form of the “common” and its insistence on survival amidst the threat of collapse in the meat market. The crisis of 2001, global capital’s imposition of genetically-modified agriculture, the suspension of beef imports to China, “mad cow disease” (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and the 2009 drought combined to bring down a industry which had been one of the central defining features of Argentine identity since the XIXth century: the meat industry. Between 2009 and 2011, the soy industry finally superseded the meat industry nationally.[[10]](#endnote-12) According to Rodolfo González Arzac, hopes of an industry revival were hampered by a “bloodthirsty and inequitable” marketplace, a market with few and deficient state regulations, slaughterers who knew how to navigate the market, huge Brazilian investments, and “millionaires” who decided to abandon cows in favour of soy plantations (54). Therefore, *El estómago de la cultura* documents the conception, formation and appearance of a community of self-regulating workers who discovered a common form of existence which has survived since the year 2001, by contrast with other communitarian projects which, in the Argentina of 2012, when the documentary was first released, had disappeared or lost momentum. As Maristella Svampa has pointed out, by around 2003, desires for solidarity and equality had been overruled by “demands for normality and security” while the role of those sectors excluded from the system was being questioned and stigmatized (202). This led to the disbanding of many groups and collectives which had been incorporated before the collapse and the Argentine crisis.

 Clearly, the images generated by the slaughterhouse in *El estómago de la cultura* reproduce a reigning logic which regulates the lives and deaths of bodies as part of an economy of use, consumption and disposal, thus demonstrating a close relationship between life and capital. However, this same slaughterhouse displays a community of workers who have dismantled all traces of sovereign power: they were able to make private property change hands, they were able to take over the means of production from the cattle-owning middle-classes. In itself, the presence of a collective of workers and animals (through their mere coexistence in the slaughterhouse) hampers a clear focus and individualization *on* and *between* animal and human bodies. Céspedes’ documentary continually reminds us that there, within the slaughterhouse, everyone (human, animal, alive, dead) is part of a single whole, an indisputable premise in the more critical branches of the present-day field of *animal studies,* focused on interpreting the relationships between animals and political life:

Muchos de los materiales trabajan sobre la *distancia y la disimetría entre el cuerpo y la forma individual o individuada*: los cuerpos que estos materiales conjugan no son cuerpos individuales, cuerpos que puedan definirse en torno a un individuo como forma […] No hay, pues, cuerpo *en sí mismo*, hay cuerpos en relación, en exposición; hay topografías y escenarios cuya lógica pasa por el espacio entre cuerpos que diseñan. (Giorgi 296)

The representation of bodies “in relation to each other” and “exposed to view” is the basis upon which community is constructed in *El estómago de la cultura.* The community in this documentary is, above all, exposed: *exposed as in on display* and *exposed to*. In *Pueblos Expuestos, pueblos figurantes,* Didi-Huberman points out that peoples are *exposed* in that they are more visible to each other today than ever before, since “they are the objects of all the documentaries, tourist activities, all the commercial markets” and, at the same time, they are still *exposed to* by virtue of the fact that “their representation –both political and aesthetic- is under threat and so, all too often, is their very existence (11). In the documentary, the slaughterhouse community appears in one common manifestation, with no possibility of individualization, as anonymous as the refrigerated warehouse itself –there are no dates, no place names, no workers’ names.[[11]](#endnote-13) This “common framing” exposes the community, with its life force, powerfully inscribed in the history of the country, its resistance to political and social crisis. But the “common framing” also implies *exposing* the community, revealing its fragility, showing that it is *exposed to* its own disappearance in the face of the law of capital, in the face of neoliberal plundering and in the face of the failure of the state to offer protection, since the state’s jurisdiction, as Palomino emphasizes, is “limited to containing the forces of solidarity liberated by the new social economy” (128).

*The exposure of a community* capable of living or dying is the crucial factor which unites all the images in *El estómago de la cultura*. But in what ways is the community *exposed* in the documentary? Its “common framing” takes place *thanks to and by means of* the creation of a shared space. This shared space is not simply defined by the topographical coordinates of the slaughterhouse as a place of work or as the only place presented in the documentary. The shared space is united and delineated by sonic relationships between machines, cows and workers. One of the most striking aspects of the depiction of the community in *El estómago de la cultura* is the absence of clear voices giving orders in the place (ordering) and the absence of identifiable words, together with the absence of a voiceover, or a narrator, or interviewees, techniques typically employed by mainstream documentaries. In this documentary, a continual and monotonous fusion of the noises of chains, saws, the machines’ conveyor belts, and the guttural cries of workers and of cows, hampers the formation of discourse, giving place to glossolalic voices, incomprehensible, cancelling each other out, continually avoiding the appearance and formation of a single, articulate, individualized voice, thus articulating a noise, a sound at the limits of linguistic possibility, a public sound, “the sound which traverses and demarcates the collective: the speech, halfway between the audible and the inaudible, of a group, a multitude, a network, oscillating between pure noise and possible meaning” (Giorgi 148).

In the slaughterhouse, it doesn’t make sense to talk about the cry of an animal, or of a human voice, or of a mechanical sound, since the sonic fusion is so perfect that it is impossible to isolate each of those layers. This fusion is reinforced by the lack of synchronization between the visual and the sonic: you rarely see and hear the workers shouting or whistling at the same time; most of the time, the sounds and images simply coexist (at some points, it resembles a silent movie, an effect which is amplified by the appearance of the signs in white letters against black).

Hence, *El estómago de la cultura* takes responsibility for producing a place of collective utterance which leaves us scarcely able to understand *a single word*. One single word is spoken at the very moment of maximum communion: as a worker embraces a side of beef. First he kisses it and then he rests his head against it in a moment of genuinely human contact. Then the worker stammers: “beautiful”.

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But, in order to hear this, you have to approach the screen or place your ear close to the speakers or even read the worker’s lips. In order to understand the word, the viewer has to literally approach this moment of maximum communion which is taking place in the documentary. And then there is a double communion, with, on the one hand, the contiguity of death and life and animal and human and, on the other, there is the communion with the viewer which requires proximity, requires him to mobilize his body, affecting it in order to render an account of a word which, once heard, no longer seems important. Hence we discover the number and the form in which the community is counted. Contiguity and non-contiguity of the different, of the radically different in this case, since it is a union between human/animal, alive/dead, consumer/product. *El estómago de la cultura* employs these visual and sonic strategies to develop a new way of imagining communities and cooperatives in documentaries filmed after the crisis of 2001.[[12]](#endnote-14)

 By deploying this communal audio-visual arrangement, Céspedes’ documentary refuses to reproduce the kind of discourse which indicts the present, a discourse associated with the documentary and collectivist traditions of Argentine cinema which have been able to dominate the visual landscape since 2001 (Andermann 95).[[13]](#endnote-15) Although it preserves and readopts many of the practices employed by that genre and many of the aesthetic guidelines of cultural collectives –*Revista Crisis* itself began as a collective project in 2010, the Editorial Crisis Collective (Colectivo Editorial Crisis)-, *El estómago de la cultura* does not offer us the image of a reality which should be indicted. That is, there is no image to counter the slaughter of the cows which could show the other side of the coin, or present an inescapable truth about life and death which the slaughterhouses are concealing and whose revelation would be capable of producing a “consciousness” about humanity and animality –as we see in *La hora de los hornos*. Nor does the documentary deploy its images to stimulate the debate about animal rights, or attempt to convert the viewers to vegetarianism or veganism. The documentary’s importance lies in its ability to expose a community in its common place, and yet go beyond the “commonplace”, that is, beyond an insistence on the idea and concept of community as a ready-made solution (Didi-Huberman 99). The documentary, by contrast, undertakes the task of presenting a community which appeals to the spectator’s body: there can be no doubt that the impact, the force these images transmit on the screen produces a sensory/sensual experience in our bodies, creating a consciousness, a recognition of the body in the act of seeing, in order to go on to construct a relationship between the content of the documentary and the circumstances in which it was produced. *El estómago de la cultura* evaluates the communities which occupied and, following a communitarian ethos, took over various means of production after the 2001 crisis in Argentina (it exposes them) and, at the same time, it signals the soy industry’s increasingly dominant role in the country (it shows that they are *exposed to* their own disappearance). It deploys a new language, a new configuration of the sensory by developing a physiology of the guts, and of the stomach as a nucleus and an organ, as live tissue which ruminates on –processes, stores and regurgitates- a culture.

1. The documentary was first screened on the *Revista Crisis* website, in conjunction with the release of issue no. 9 of the journal which included a reference to it. *El estómago de la cultura* is available on the publication’s website: <http://www.revistacrisis.com.ar/videos/el-estomago-de-la-cultura> and on YouTube, [httFps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljrIGsuS1Vs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljrIGsuS1Vs) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. For more on Argentine experiments with self-management, see Hector Palomino. “Las experiencias actuales de autogestión en Argentina. Entre la informalidad y la economía social”. For Palamino, reclaiming a company “supone la transición hacia un nuevo régimen jurídico en el que los trabajadores toman a su cargo la producción, estableciendo acuerdos con proveedores y/o clientes, lo que les asegura un cierto capital de trabajo, y fijan una retribución mínima para su trabajo consistente en retiros periódicos equivalentes a un sueldo mínimo, a veces combinados con pagos en especies o mercaderías” (Palomino 121). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. The full quotation reads as follows: “It is plain that the law against the slaughtering of animals is founded rather on vain superstition and womanish pity than on sound reason. *The rational quest of what is useful to us further teaches us the necessity of associating ourselves with our fellow men, but not with beasts, or things, whose nature is different from our own; we have the same rights in respect to them as they have in respect to us.* Nay, as everyone's right is defined by his virtue, or power, men have far greater rights over beasts than beasts have over men.” (PAGE?) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
4. This is an important strategy in Martín Céspedes’ audiovisual work. In *La guerra por el metro cuadrado* (2015), he also appeals to the viewer by showing images of the slaughter of a goat and a small pig and the birth of a little white doe goat. These images interrupt the narrative of the purchase of lands and the displacement of peoples in Santiago del Estero. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
5. One year later, the webpage ceased to display this “viewer warning”. Nevertheless, the documentary which is available on YouTube is “flagged” as only suitable for those over 13 years of age: “Content Warning. This video may be inappropriate for some users. Sign in to confirm your age”. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
6. In her reading of Vivian Sobchack’s work, Williams argues that the cinematic experience causes our senses to construct a sense which cannot be simply reduced to sight: “Sobchack’s phenomenological approach to cinema asks us to consider ways in which the literal and figurative senses make sense together. We do not literally taste the food in *Tampopo*, or touch the flesh in *The Piano*, but we have a generalized sensual experience that cannot be reduced to sight” (*Hardcore* 290). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
7. Here, I’m using the historic definition of the obscene which Kerstin Mey describes in her work *Art & Obscenity*. I agree that “Obscenity does not reside in the content-form dialectics of the cultural production per se … but in the discursive context, that is in the way it is discussed publicly, in relation to its production, circulation, and reception. No object or event is obscene in itself. Obscenity is an argument about the qualities, public exposure and traffic of an object or event”(2). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
8. For an exploration of the representation of the real in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian cinema, see. *La escena y la pantalla. Cine contemporáneo y el retorno de lo real.* Andermann, Jens and Álvaro Fernández Bravo Ed. Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
9. Breve nota y biografía sobre animal studies citar la revista de DePaul. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
10. For an evaluation of the role of soy exports in relation to the construction of a popular discourse and the growth of the post-2001 governments, see Miguel Rivera-Quiñones. “Macroeconomic Governance in Post-Neoliberal Argentina and the Relentless Power of TNCs: The Case of the Soy Complex”. *Argentina since the 2001 Crisis. Recovering the Past, Reclaming the Future.* Levey, Cara, Daniel Ozarow, and Christopher Wylde Eds. New York, NY: Plagrave Macmillan, 2014: 67-86. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
11. González Arzac’s article in *Revista Crisis* suggests that it must be one of the 14 Fecacya cooperatives, presided over by Huidobro; probably Frigocarne, in Máximo Paz, Cañuelas, Buenos Aires Province. This information is irrelevant to the documentary. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
12. This is a fundamental part of what, according to Rancière, could be regarded as a kind of “political deployment”, the capacity to “sketch new configurations of what can be seen, what can be said and what can be thought and, consequently, a new landscape of the possible” (103). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
13. For an evaluation of the documentary tradition which began in 2001 in Argentina, see Jens Andermann’s excellent work *New Argentine Cinema,* especially Chapter 4: “Perforated Presence. The Documentary Between the Self and the Scene”.  [↑](#endnote-ref-15)