Sea Currents and Archipelagic Thinking in Nayda Collazo-Llorens' Queer Abstract Experimentation *

Juan Carlos Guerrero-Hernández**

[ABSTRACT]

Nayda Collazo-Llorens is a recognized Puerto Rican artist whose works have been included in several art collections in Puerto Rico and the US. Even if already commented on, her oeuvre warrants and deserves a more in-depth study that pays attention to her conceptual operations and experimentation. Inspired by the artist's reflection on the archipelago, this article is a product of my ongoing research on her body of work. I identify and discuss two sea currents that run across, nurture, and guide the artist's queer relational abstraction between the years 2008 and 2020, and the formal, contextual, and conceptual exploration and operations with the triangle and grid as conceptual devices for queering cartography. I propose that it is an abstraction and queering that simplifies, mixes, complicates, fragments, interferes, expands, drags, invaginates, multiplies, and deploys an architectonic multi-folding, enacting an archipelagic epistemology to account for the changing territories of diasporic life and a decolonial cartography of navigation.

Keywords: Cartography; Puerto Rico; Diaspora; Relational Abstraction; Queer Abstraction.

Doi 10.11144/javeriana.mavae21-1.scqe
Fecha de recepción: 13 de julio de 2025
Fecha de aceptación: 23 de septiembre de 2025
Disponible en línea: 1 de enero de 2026

* Artículo de reflexión.

** Assistant Professor in Art History. Department of Art. University of Nevada, Reno. PhD in Art History (Stony Brook University). M.A. in Philosophy (National University of Colombia)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7064-1450
Email address: juancarlosg@unr.edu

CÓMO CITAR: Guerrero-Hernández, Juan Carlos.2026 "Sea Currents and Archipelagic Thinking in Nayda Collazo-Llorens' Queer Abstract Experimentation" *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas 21 (1)*: 186-209. https://doi 10.11144/javeriana.mavae21-1.scqe

Corrientes marítimas y pensamiento archipelágico en la experimentación abstracta y queer de Nayda Collazo-Llorens

Correntes marítimas e pensamento arquipelágico na experimentação abstrata e Queer de Nayda Collazo-Llorens

[RESUMEN]

Nayda Collazo-Llorens es una artista puertorriqueña reconocida cuyas obras se han incluido en varias colecciones artísticas tanto en Puerto Rico como en los Estados Unidos. Si bien ya se ha comentado su obra, esta merece un estudio más fondo que les preste atención a sus operaciones conceptuales y su experimentación. Inspirado por la reflexiones de la artista sobre el archipiélago, este artículo es el producto de mis investigaciones en desarrollo de su obra. Identifico y discuto dos corrientes marítimas que recorren, alimentan y guían la abstracción queer relacional de la artista entre 2008 y 2020, y la exploración y las operaciones formales, contextuales y conceptuales con el triángulo y la cuadrícula que se utilizan como dispositivos conceptuales para crear una cartografía queer. Propongo que es esta abstracción y queering que simplifica, mezcla, complejiza, fragmenta, interfiere, expande, arrastra, invagina, multiplica e implementa un desdoblamiento múltiple arquitectónico, con lo cual promulga una epistemología archipelágica para dar cuenta de los territorios cambiantes de la vida en la diáspora y de una cartografía decolonial de la navegación.

Palabras clave: cartografía, Puerto Rico, diáspora, abstracción relacional, abstracción queer.

[RESUMO]

Nayda Collazo-Llorens é uma renomada artista porto-riquense, cujas obras tem sido inclusas em várias coleções artísticas tanto no Porto Rico quanto nos Estados Unidos. Embora sua obra já foi discutida, justifica um estudo mais aprofundado que se concentre em suas operações conceituais e experimentação. Inspirado pelas reflexões da artista sobre o arquipélago, este artigo é produto de minha pesquisa em andamento sobre sua obra. Identifico e discuto duas correntes marítimas que percorrem, nutrem e guiam a abstração queer relacional da artista entre 2008 e 2020, bem como a exploração e as operações formais, contextuais e conceituais com o triângulo e a quadrícula utilizados como dispositivos conceituais para criar uma cartografia queer. Proponho que é essa abstração e queering que simplifica, mistura, complexa, fragmenta, interfere, expande, arrasta, invagina, multiplica e implementa um desdobramento múltiplo arquitetônico, promulgando assim uma epistemologia arquipelágica para dar conta dos territórios mutáveis da vida na diáspora e de uma cartografia decolonial da navegação.

Palavras-chave: cartografia, Porto Rico, diáspora, abstração relacional, abstração queer.

Sin duda, [haber nacido en Puerto Rico y formar parte de la diáspora…]

han informado e influido mi obra. Quién soy y mis experiencias de vida,

mi identidad santurcina, puertorriqueña, isleña/caribeña, queer,

el ser parte de la diáspora, el ir y venir[1].

Nayda Collazo-Llorens (quoted in Large 2022)

.

> Experience and experimentation are like sea currents: they never cease to flow, and we have no idea where they will take us. In many cases, we have only to let ourselves flow with them. In March 2022, I had the opportunity to meet Nayda Collazo-Llorens on a Zoom call. I remember looking at her on the screen, the only Latin American smiling face among the mosaic of people calling in from the north, and immediately feeling that I needed to meet her and know more about her work, which has been featured at institutions such as El Museo del Barrio in New York City, The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum in Miami, the Puerto Rico Museum of Contemporary Art in San Juan, and the Museo Universitario del Chopo in Mexico City. After this first meeting, I flew over the Caribbean Sea to Michigan as a Visiting Professor. There I met the loving artist and her equally loving partner, artist Patricia Villalobos Echeverría, at a place near Lake Michigan, which I had first heard about while listening to Glenn Miller's *I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo* (1939-1942).

Ironically, as I realized later, while listening to it again, the song emerged during a time which José L. Bolívar Fresneda has described as a critical period of "military economy" imposed by the United States on Puerto Rico (2022, 203), Collazo-Llorens' archipelagic birthplace. This military economy confirmed the United States' late nineteenth-century invasion and conquest of the Bourbon Restoration's territories in Asia and the Caribbean. It also served as a prelude to the implementation of varyingly successful late twentieth-century industrial projects in the Puerto Rican archipelago. These projects became the largest source of employment on the island, drastically affecting agriculture and the sense of food autonomy (with all the understandable restrictions an archipelago faces in these matters), as well as causing vast tracts of land to be expropriated, including the island of Vieques, as I discuss later. In this way, the New Empire's colonial frame of mind was inserted into the Puerto Rican collective imagination.

▪ CUAD. MÚSIC. ARTES VIS. ARTES ESCÉN. ▪ VOL. 21 - 1 ▪ PP. 268 ▪ ENERO - JUNIO 2026 ▪ BOGOTÁ, D.C., (COLOMBIA) ▪ ISSN 1794-6670 ▪

Such an economy established a pervasive colonial logic and worldview on a territory with deep cultural and historical ties to the vast region known as "Latin America". Even if Puerto Ricans from wealthy families, such as the writer Rosario Ferré, have been reluctant to consider the archipelago as part of a real and complex Latin America (Roca-Martínez 2023), or if Puerto Rico has traditionally disappeared from surveys of Latin American history due to the "hurricane of end-of-the-century geopolitics" (González Ormerod 2016), nonetheless, the archipelago still has strong historical and cultural links to many of the peoples in and from that vast multicultural region.

In 2013, Calle 13, the Puerto Rican music band, imagined and celebrated the region as a vast multifold of cultures on the American continent and in the Caribbean, sharing historical and contemporary (neo)colonialism, and relatively similar experiences and frustrations, with various tones and at different levels, in their struggles for decolonization and dignification. These are struggles that, in way or another, inevitably nurture the work and daily rituals of many of us, especially of those who have been forced, for one reason or another, to fly away from the places, landscapes, relatives, friends, and acquaintances of an imagined community, a process usually mediated by some sort of economic, ideological, gender, and/or social-class related hidden, symbolic, and factual exclusion and violence.

What can experience and artistic experimentation be in these diasporic conditions? How can we, as artists, writers, or workers, understand the creative need to experiment with and within the limits of creative ideas and imagined communities? In what follows, I dispense with all pretense of answering those questions fully. I merely attempt to address them by offering my initial account of my research on Collazo-Llorens' queer abstract experimentation with cartography and what I believe is her approach to problematizing the colonial configurations that are pervasive today, especially in the Puerto Rican archipelago. I do so by understanding, as I have pointed out, that experience and experimentation are like maritime currents that bring us into new directions, experiences, and languages. In fact, *heme aquí escribiendo en inglés*[2]. They can also become turbulent opportunities for change and, eventually, new beginnings in life's challenging and rich flux. I have so far identified four distinct currents in the artist's experimentation with different media. In this paper, I will only touch upon the two that, spanning twelve years (2008-2020), are more pertinent to this journal issue, regarding experimentation in Latin American artistic practices, taking into account her formal, contextual, and conceptual explorations and operations and her use of the triangle and grid as conceptual devices for queering cartography. Before addressing these currents, I briefly turn to one of the key series that helped establish part of the queer experimental spirit in her cartographic work, which serves as a significant introductory reference.

1. Testing and Navigating Seawaters

The *Test* series (2003-2012) comprises a large group of paintings produced over more than a decade as part of the artist's interest in distancing herself from representational art, while recognizing that such a process required experimenting with her located, historical, and geographical imagination and being. One of those experiments consisted of an emulation of inkblot tests, calling back to such famous manifestations as the projective psychological tests that emerged in the late nineteenth century, the images that stimulated Justinus Kerner's 1857 poetry collection, *Klecksographien*, and the sets of inkblots that, at the turn of the century, nurtured Alfred Binet and Victor Henri's experiments of "involuntary imagination" or creativity and consciousness (Nicolas, Coubart, and Lubart, 2014). It would not be until 1921 when Hermann Rorschach, under the spell of Freudian psychoanalysis, employed an inkblot set to formulate a test meant to diagnose schizophrenia, a proposal that has been highly criticized and debunked. Since the 1960s, new proposals for the refashioning of inkblots have been developed for projective psychological tests. According to the more

< <

Figure 1. Nayda Collazo-LLorens, Test 7, mixed media on canvas, 62 x 54 inches, 2003

generalized and accepted current thought, projective tests allow the expression of consciously formulated and socially determined thoughts and motivations, rather than offering a manifestation or 'image' of the client's unconscious attitudes, associations, or motivations. It follows that this kind of test and images may help to express or at least experiment with thoughts originating on deeper levels than those accessed by explicit questions.

By considering connections between imagination, creativity, and consciousness, as well as subjective expression and social construction, Collazo-Llorens eventually refashioned the inkblots using diverse types of inks and other materials on large canvases. While the first pieces in this series produced pictures resembling Rorschach's symmetrical images, she later complicated the entire folding process, avoiding the 'binary' logic of the single folding that creates that symmetry. Giving priority to the process over the immediate result, and paying attention to small outcomes that appeared insignificant at first glance, she played with control and the accident to produce pictures that lack "a particular focus area" (Collazo-Llorens, quoted in: Large 2022) and look like meshes composed of stains, spots, abstract forms and regions, as well as connecting lines and shapes, which she further intervened upon, emphasized, or complicated with ink and other materials (Collazo-Llorens in interview with the author, 9 July 2025).

Significantly, Collazo-Llorens has perceived these pieces as related to, among other things, informational mediums of location, relation, and communication. At the core of her experimentation (which should be understood, from now on, as a confrontation and negotiation between artistic purposes and exploration, as well as an ever necessary acknowledgement of submission and response to the unexpected and at times indecipherable outcomes of experimentation), lies a sense of seeking and tapping into unorthodox connections between the accidental production of meshes and highly codified information. In particular, the *Test* series, as suggested by *Test 7* (2003) (Figure 1) nurtured a stream of experimentation, meditation, and production that approached the meshes as if they were unconventional, opaque, and creative topographic and geographic maps of location and dis-location, as well as roaming, attraction, and, why not, eroticism. With this type of experimentation, Collazo-Llorens realized that "Lo que me atrae de las cartografías inventadas o imaginarias y de los mapas existentes es que no nos localizan […] Parte del interés es el proceso de navegación, de perdernos, el *roaming* sin tener un punto de partida o destino final específico… sí, lo errante" (Quoted in: Large 2022).[3]

It is worth noting that roaming and exploring the countryside and lands often far afield are essential to her and Villalobos Echeverría's productions. Significantly, while I write these words, they are driving through Colorado to the Grand Canyon National Park to work as Artists in Residence. And yet, the connection between meshes, maps, roaming is also related to queerness, if one attentively 'listens' to many of Collazo-Llorens' pieces from *Test* and later series in dialogue with Eve Sedgwick's idea of queerness in terms of "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality, aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically" (1994, 8). At stake, it is worth noting, is less the idea of considering the *Test* series as a mirror reflection of the artist's unconscious or even her gender identity, and more a sense of life and a conscious experience of, and experimentation with, marginalization, movement, interconnection, liberation, queerness, and multiplication.

When I examined the *Test* series, Collazo-Llorens' queering of mesh brought to mind a marginalized example of an unorthodox appropriation of the first scientifically accurate maps in Europe. I am referring to the drawings produced by the fourteenth-century Italian priest Opicinus de Canistris (1296 - ca. 1354), who adapted, in a very original way, the so-called portolan charts intended for navigation and trade across the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Portolan chart of the Mediterranean Sea ca. 1320-1350. Ink on vellum, 43 x 59 cm. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. G5672.M4P5 13--.P6.

Figure 3. The Psalter Map, England, 13th century. British Library, Add. MS 28681, fol. 9.

These charts took advantage of the most modern and technical cartography of the time, emerging at the time Europeans began using the magnetic compass, and were characterized by their use of a mesh of wind rose lines meant to help to relate topographical features to each other and suggest scale and directions of navigation (without using the latitude and longitude references found later in the Mercator projection). That mesh, which introduced the notion of triangulation, made possible portolan charts' accurate depiction of the Mediterranean coastline and also suggests that these charts fulfilled the desire of offering a guide for all navigators who wish to travel safely, as the colophon of *Portolano per tutti I navichanti* recognized a century later (1490, c. a2).

It is worth noting that the mesh of wind rose lines, which produces regular and irregular polygons on the surface, reminds us of the triangle and of triangulation as a basic geometrical and conceptual figure, and a process of generation and expansion of the representational space. Even more, in line with Rebecca Zorach's beautiful book *Passionate Triangle* (2011), one may add that the triangle has been regarded as a central geometric and poetic reference of relationship, reproduction, and desire, especially in the late Gothic and early Italian Renaissance (with a veiled impact on modern abstraction), where it served as an abstract tool for dealing with and understanding theological, artistic, and sexual creation and perception (think of the triangle-pyramid of perspective, for instance).

And yet, Opicinus appropriated charts with wind roses to depict a Christian Europe and a Muslim Africa imagined as human figures which are visualized as part of an unorthodox threesome, in which the Mediterranean Sea is at times depicted through graphic sexual anatomy and uncanny orientation or positions; inviting us to imagine and visually navigate through homo- and hetero-social/sexual connections and visual intercourses. At the core of Opicinus' sizing of modern cartography is not schizophrenia, as has been long assumed according to an old-fashioned psychoanalytic art history (Kris 1952, 118-127), but instead a highly suggestive invitation to affirm and subvert the grammar of and the conservative take on the portolan chart expressed in the colophon mentioned above. By adopting the portolan chart, Opicinus distanced himself from the understanding of the Mediterranean Sea in the Mappa Mundi, or the world map in the Christian tradition, that Tony Campbell described as "the cosmographies of thinking landsmen" (1987, 372). Notably, the famous Psalter Map, like most of the Isidoran and Beatus maps, all of them examples of the Mappa Mundi, suggests the Mediterranean Sea as a sort of Earth's vaginal conduit to Jerusalem, which is situated, in turn, at the center of a divinely designed cosmos (Figure 3).

In Opicinus' drawings, the Mediterranean Sea undergoes a drastic transformation. It becomes less a passive, divine, and ruled receptacle — as Luce Irigaray (1985, 353-364) would describe female sexuality under Platonic shadow play and Christian rule — and more a human and central space of graphic and visual roaming (cruising, perhaps?) through which theological and poetic connections occur within the contained (by the land, north and south) but somehow unruled flux of desire and conversation between lands, beliefs, and figures (Figure 4). While the portolan chart was promoted as a tool that could secure the safety of the Venetian gentleman, who represented the contemporary merchant, Opicinus expressed instead the religious, financial, and sexual anxieties that the cartographic tool seemed to avoid or repress.

A somewhat similar consideration of perception, order, and unruliness, albeit in very different geographical, cultural, and political contexts, is found in two of Collazo-Llorens' later series, which I will discuss here. They intertwine her aforementioned experimentation with her experience as a diasporic queer artist, born and raised in Santurce (a historic area in San Juan, Puerto Rico), who now lives in the continental US. She, like the passengers of Luis Rafael Sánchez' 1983 performative talk *La guagua aérea*, flies between the island and the continent, thereby crossing "geographic, psychological, and imaginary" (Colla-

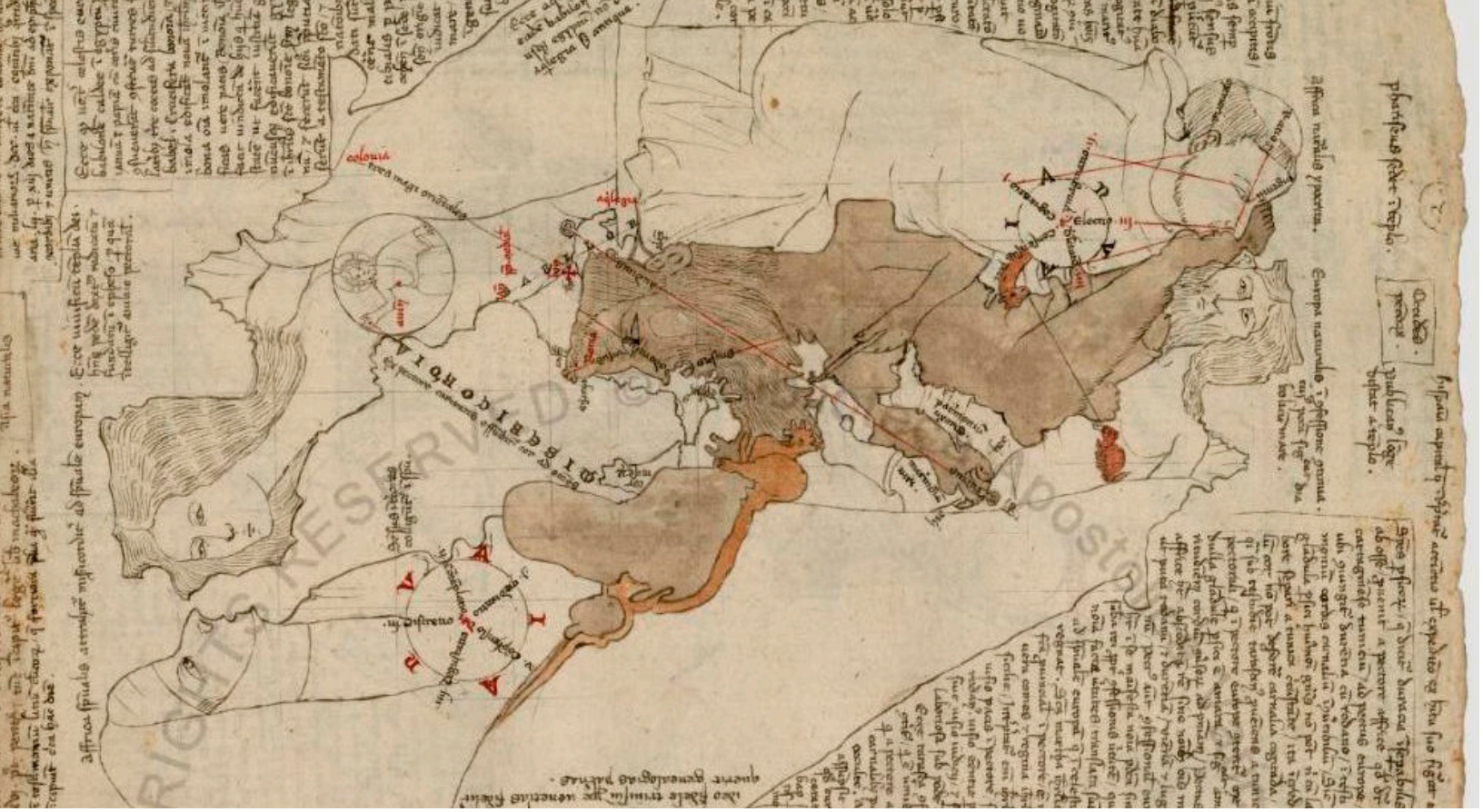

Figure 4. Opicinus de Canistris, From his Diario, 1330-1350. The image has been turned left for easier observation. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Vat. lat. 6435, 61r.

zo-Llorens 2015) territories, and redefines the "geographic terms" in which Puerto Rican identity "has been usually couched" (Duany 2000, 20); such as *puertorriqueñxs de la isla*[4] versus nuyoricans.

2. A Sea Current: The Generating Queer Triangle

One of those real and imagined territories, which several generations of Caribbean people living under the United States' colonial post-WW2 hegemony have dealt with and live in, is a zone in the southwestern Sargasso Sea bordered by oceanic currents. Unlike the Mediterranean Sea, its shape is constantly changing. Some have bounded it using Puerto Rico, Florida, and Bermuda as references within the so-called US and British "territories". Emerging in popular imagination in 1950 and gaining renewed attention in 1974 after the 1973 Oil Crisis, as well as with pseudo-scientific publications such as Richard Winer's *The Devil's Triangle* (1974) and Charles Berlitz's *The Bermuda Triangle* (1974), this zone has been famous for various stories about the mysterious disappearances of aircraft and ships that seemed to challenge the stability of modern space and technology. Countless theories have been proposed to explain the disappearance of mostly modern gasoline-based vehicles of transportation, in some cases by appealing to causes ranging from the existence of Unidentified Flying Objects that supposedly kidnapped the people and ships, to environmental factors related to the Gulf Stream's turbulence and the unpredictability of Caribbean-Atlantic weather patterns, among others.

2.1 Restructured Topography

This zone soon became a key reference in Collazo-Llorens' exploration and work. A notable example is *Restructured Topography* (2008), an installation designed for the SPACE gallery in Pittsburgh (Figure 5). Appropriating and continuing the triangle as a form that artists have long associated with sexual difference (and also evoking Cuban-born artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres' interest in the corners as both marginalized spaces and sites of marginalization and shaming) the artist transformed the very challenging corner of a triangular area in the gallery's space. The installation consisted of a mesh of interconnected lines, patterns, marks, and texts that combined personal references and reflections, as well as found text, including

Figure 5. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, Restructured Topography, 2008. Installation with vinyl tape, text on paper and acetate, pins, and map tacks. Installation view at SPACE gallery. Pittsburgh, PA. Credits to the artist.

documents issued by the U.S. government and scientific organizations, in addition to other types of scientific data, such as weather data about the so-called Bermuda Triangle. Much like in her artist' book *ESCaperucita & Little Flying Hood* (2009), Collazo-Llorens printed the texts in Spanish and English (code-switching, as is common in Puerto Rico) on a series of acetate pieces, and placed them throughout the mesh, avoiding any suggestion of a linear order, while offering a cluster of statements, *afirmaciones*, *imágenes*, and ideas of diverse nature and varying levels of (un)reliability, *invención*, *juego*, and mystery (Figure 6).

As in future installations and several of Collazo-Llorens' works, *Restructured Topography* continues the Test series' challenge to the centrality of literacy (i.e., the ability to read and write as well as competence in reading and writing a particular language, prioritizing the centrality of a particular linguistic code over another), and proposes the mesh as a sort of subversive strategy for visualcy (i.e., articulacy with visual languages). Paraphrasing W. J. T. Mitchell (2008, 11–29), I understand that the artist centers the visual as one of her exploratory vehicles for questioning, interpreting, and making sense of and linking texts and discourses, including mysterious stories. I also identify the visual as a strategy for nurturing what Howard Riley has described as the "semogenic potential" of the visual and, I might add, of the mesh in experimentation, to facilitate meanings that have not been anticipated (Riley 2021, 324).

Her decision to choose the corner of the gallery's triangular space was also informed by the possibility of an understanding of the corner as an architectural fold, and the possibility of folding the space and the mesh. One side of the corner features a large window, making the piece potentially visible from both inside and outside the gallery's space, and playing with transparency and opaqueness. For instance, the reflection on the glass interrupts, at certain times of the day, the perception of elements from outside. In addition, the large group of black lines (actually glued) on the wall and windows, inspired by aeronautical charts, is part of an oblique anamorphosis that is only identifiable from a particular vantage point within the interior of the triangular space (Collazo-Llorens in Zoom interview with the author, 9 July 2025). In a sense, this installation dialogues with the Deleuzian fold where the "inside and outside (coextensive space), illusion and reality, light and dark […] interact in complex interplays" that stress and at the same time blur distinctions (Livesey 2005, 109).

< <

Figure 6. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, [pages 6, 7, 12, and 19 from] *ESCaperucita & Little Flying Hood*, 2009. Artist book, 28 pages, four-color printing, 6 × 6 in., edition of 1,000. Courtesy of the artist.

< <

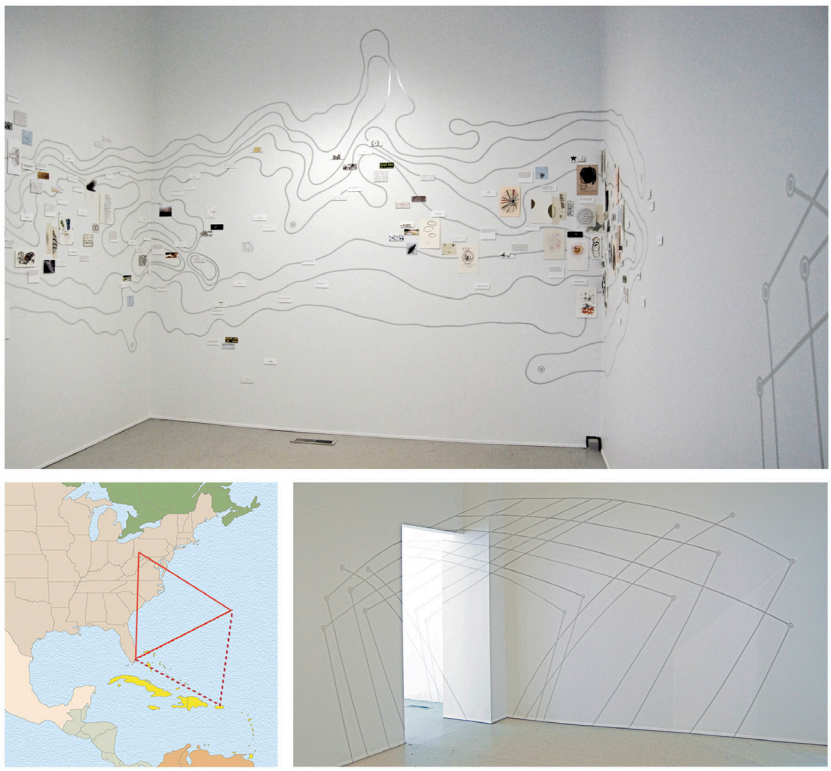

Figure 7. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, Unfolding the Triangle, 2009. Wall installation with reflective tape and mixed media on paper. Installation view at the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA. Courtesy of the artist.

2.2. Unfolding the Triangles

Collazo-Llorens has further developed the questioning of her relationship with Puerto Rico and mysterious, queer triangles. She has also complicated the experimentations and folding in *Test* and *Restructured Topography* through three interrelated installations, which share the title *Unfolding the Triangle* and were produced in three different cities where she lived between 2009 and 2012. The first version took place at the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh and capitalized on the fact that the so-called Bermuda Triangle has proven to be very plastic: in some cases, the zone traditionally associated with the Southwest Sargasso Sea, bordered by oceanic currents, has been restricted to cover a smaller area, including only Bermuda and Florida. In others, as a 1976 WGBH documentary reported, it has even been extended to Ireland's coast. In either case, one cannot ignore the significant plasticity of imagination surrounding the desire for control and definition, as well as the experience of unexplainable phenomena, and the reconfiguration of the world in response to economic and political anxieties. Notably, around 1976, in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, a time during which the UK faced financial crisis and the possibility of a Eurocentric future, the British public sphere was permeated with anxiety and saw the appearance of discussions regarding the need to recover Anglo-American relations, which could grant some degree of autonomy from Europe (Marsh 2020).

For this Pittsburgh iteration, the artist recognized the possibility of unfolding the triangle (which is to say, folding it outwards) by mirroring it, suggesting a virtual image that could have Pittsburgh on the map as one of the angles (Figure 7). This (un)folding meant, as it were, a restructuring of *Restructured Topography* and a transformation of the piece into an installation that involved another oblique anamorphosis through which the visitors had to pass to enter the space (Figure 8).The installation also included grey lines, taken from bathymetry (or marine topography) maps of the Caribbean zone, which grouped different elements pasted on the walls, while also inviting people to roam in the space: walking and perceiving, looking, walking back, returning to abstract drawings, photos, and "fragments of phrases from the many different stories" (Collazo-Llorens 2023), as well as made up, edited documents, and scientific data collected during the latter half of the twentieth-century about the Bermuda Triangle. Collazo-Llorens invited visitors to inhabit the "Triangle," as she has also done, as both a real and imagined space, and even as a "state of mind", perhaps best described as a mixture of discovery, desire, doubt, and, why not, fascinated apprehension.

The second version, produced in New York at 80WSE Galleries. included abstract audio-visual elements, further complicating the possibilities of spatial, conceptual, perceptual, erotic, and affective interpretation and connections with the so-called Bermuda Triangle, as well as an idea of Puerto Rico as "geographic, imaginary and psychological territor[ies]" that are neither fixed nor utterly ethereal (Collazo-Llorens 2015). It recalls the passage that Sánchez humorously recounted his imagined interaction with a woman sitting next to him on board in *La guagua aérea*:

—*De dónde es usted?* Unos ojos rientes y una fuga de bonitos sonrojos le administran el rostro cuando me contesta—*De Puerto Rico*. Lo que me obliga a decirle, razonablemente espiritista—*Eso lo ve hasta un ciego*. Como me insatisface la malicia inocente que le abunda el mirar, mirar de tal pureza que le hace cosquillas a mis ojos, añado, copiándole el patrón interrogador—*Pero, ¿de qué pueblo de Puerto Rico*? Con una naturalidad que asusta, equivalente la sonrisa a la más triunfal de las marchas, la vecina de asiento me contesta—*De Nueva York* (1994, 21).

In a sense, one could also propose that the triangular character of said Triangle may well reside not in the exact shape and location of its angles, but in its erotic, plastic and generative folding power: any line may be expanded into a plane, every plane into a three-di-

Figure 8. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, Unfolding the Triangle (NYC), 2011. Wall installation with videos, reflective tape, and mixed media on paper. Installation view at 80WSE Galleries, New York, NY. Courtesy of the artist.

mensional volume, and so forth, allowing pairing, mirroring, juxtaposition, coupling, and apposing, in multiple dimensions. Hence, in addition to the already suggested possibilities, the triangle announced what Carole Boyce Davies names, under the label of "Caribbean Spaces", as "plural island geographies" in South, Central, and North America, and "social and cultural places (spaces) that extend the understanding of the Caribbean beyond [the idea of a] 'small space' [and] fragmented identifications" (2013, 1), and in particular extend a Puerto Rican-ness increasingly detached from the notion of physical and symbolic borders and stable geographies (Duany 2017, 26).

The third version, a more intricate and clearer example of the aforementioned folding experiments and possibilities, took place at Western Michigan University's Richmond Center for Visual Arts in Kalamazoo (Figure 9). While doing research for this new version, the artist discovered books like Jay Gourley's famous *The Great Lakes Triangle* (1977), which recounts stories about the mysterious disappearances of ships and planes in Lake Michigan. By further (un)folding the previous (un)folding and attesting to the possibility — already suggested in the *Test* series — of understanding and deploying maps as folded surfaces that can create and recreate in its visitors intricate topographic and spatial effects and affects, *Unfolding the Triangle* achieved greater complexity.

The artist connected San Juan and Kalamazoo, where she and Villalobos Echeverría reside, envisioning an installation that leveraged the architectonic possibilities of her mapping as a connection and conflation of facts, documents, times, images, and places. Following this direction, the installation featured found objects, including a rock in the shape of a pyramid, metal scraps, glass, and metal spheres, as well as a bent fork, whose size contrasts with the scale of the exhibition space. The new (un)folding also included, as in an invagination (i.e., the process through which a surface folds in on itself to create a cavity), "a space within a space": a roofed dark room with two entries. Placed in the center of the installation, the room was surrounded and wrapped by the drawings, documents, and objects of the installation space. This interior room featured a slow-paced four-channel video "reminiscent of underwater sounds and visuals". Here, the artist abstracted images and sounds similar to those included in her exploratory piece *Amphibian Mode* (2009), a video produced as second part of the book *ESCaperucita & Little Flying Hood* (2009) for the 10th Havana Biennial,

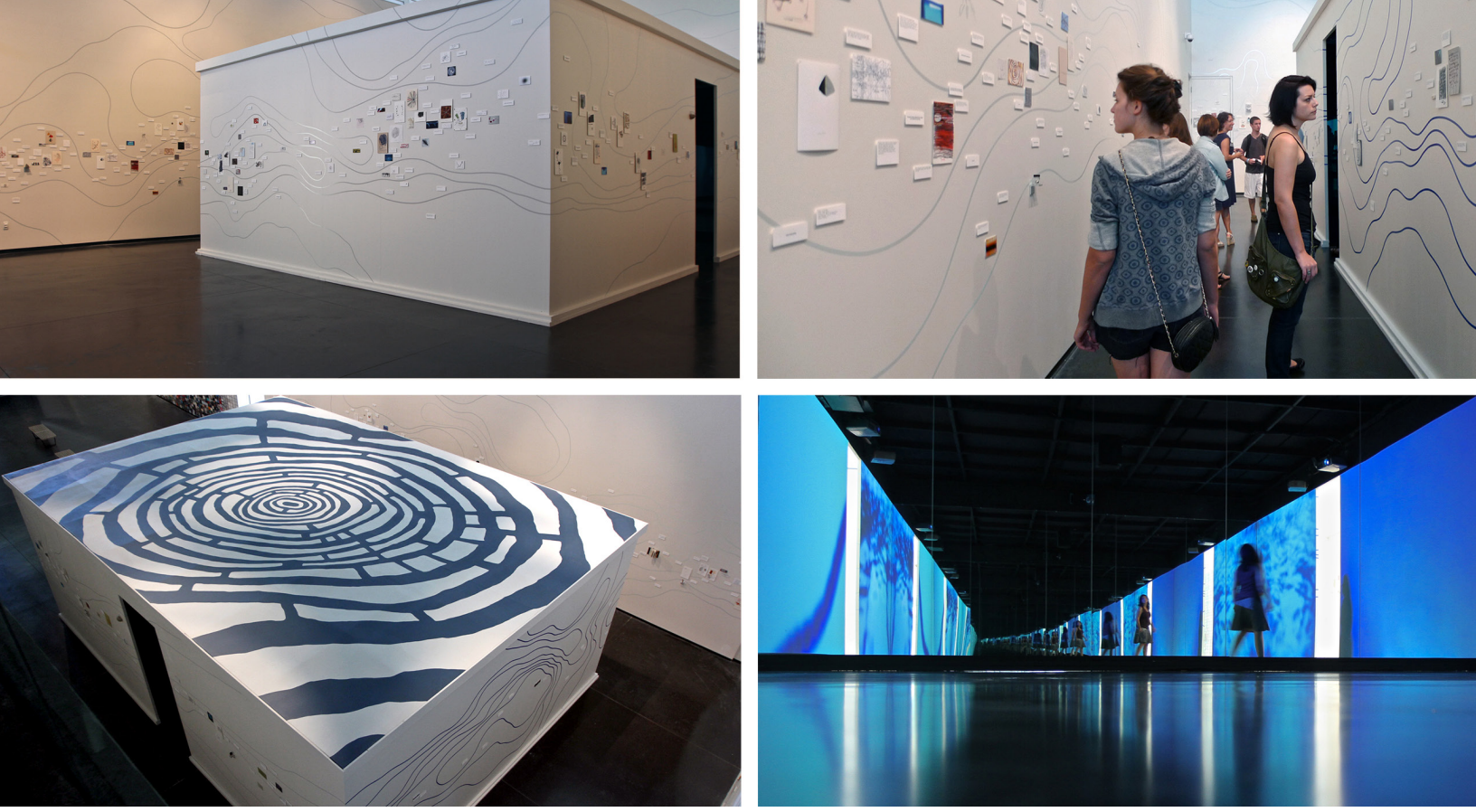

Figure 9. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, *Unfolding the Triangle* (Lake Michigan), 2012. Wall installation with tape, mixed media on paper, and objects. Dark room with a four-channel video and mirrors. Installation view at Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Kalamazoo, MI. Courtesy of the artist.

where the abstracted images of meshes and flesh still allow one to sense a body resting on another. By projecting the videos on two opposite walls in the room, and installing a set of mirrors on the other walls, Collazo-Llorens created, in the new version of *Unfolding the Triangle*, a highly sensorial and illusionary space of an infinite underwater tunnel that virtually connected "the bottom of Lake Michigan with an underwater cave somewhere in the Caribbean" as "the mapping around the room transitioned slowly from Michigan [close to an entry] to the Caribbean" (Collazo-Llorens 2015) in the opposite entry.

The third version not only confirms the idea of the queering of maps that I previously pointed out with Opicinus' drawings of the Mediterranean Sea as the center of both representation and navigation. In addition to the conceptualization and experience of water as fluid, erotic, and 'queer' element of life, the new version plays with a folding that, like in a sort of reticular dynamic, decenters, expands, and invaginates: the new unfolded and northern triangle lays on/alongside the first triangle on the map, as lovers do. And the videos projected on the interior room, virtually connecting Michigan and the Caribbean, seem to suggest a similar togetherness that, nonetheless, many visitors may not initially identify as queer.

Once again, it is pertinent to place Sedgwick's understanding of queerness in dialogue with Collazo-Llorens' experimentation to recognize the "beside" as a queer prepositional and experimental methodology that invokes non-hierarchical relations of being, perception, and navigation. Such an experimental methodology may be a way of responding to structures of modern colonial domination by referring to "a wide range of [horizontal relations of] desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivaling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping" (Sedgwick 2003, 8) between South and North, land, air, and water, island and continent, between San Juan (Puerto Rico), Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Kalamazoo (Michigan), and New York City (New York), etcetera.

It is not a mere coincidence that the room's roof, as seen from outside, reveals the anamorphic motif of a tunnel, which the artist had used in another piece. This decision is highly significant since anamorphosis can be understood as a liminal and returning glance, as well as an image of recognition. When recounting his experience of the oblique anamorphosis

in Holbein the Younger's *The Ambassadors* (1533), Jacques Lacan stated that the skull "emerges when, having passed in front of [the painting], you leave the room by a door located so that you see it in its sinister truth, at the very moment when you turn around to look at it for the last time" (2008, 169). In a relatively similar fashion, the anamorphic image in Collazo-Llorens' work has served as a code of entrance as well as a strategy for inviting the viewer to return, see it again, and 'get' it, a 'getting it' that is not limited to a niche (i.e., the queer community) nor entails cracking a code. It instead involves calling attention to what visitors (most of whom are arguably Michiganders) have probably missed at first sight and can nonetheless comprehend as an unexpected but appealing outcome if they are willing to look back attentively and learn, so to speak, a new code or switch the gender code. It may also apply, at another level, to the artist herself as a queer and diasporic Puerto Rican artist, since the anamorphic motif of tunnel can also be regarded a motif of 'queer looking back' and inward, that is, a person's understanding of and intimate meditation on her artistic experimentation, sexuality, gender, and/or cultural identities as they have evolved over and through time and space.

3. Another Sea Current: The Noisy Queer Grid

In 2014, Collazo-Llorens exhibited what I describe as a second current of her queer experimentation with abstraction and her questioning of her relationship with Puerto Rico. This current includes a series of pieces called *Geo Dis/connect* initially inspired by the *Test* series' pieces that emphasize the mesh as a grid and invite to explore "the structure of the grid as something that can visually generate connections as well as isolate areas" (Collazo-Llorens 2023). Each piece from the new series consists of a grid of 360 framed clippings of maps and cartographic depictions that the artist has collected over several years from around the globe. It is worth noting that the use of 360 clippings ambiguously refers to the panorama, the panopticon, the globe, and the turn, and each clipping includes shapes of solid color pasted on top (Figure 10).

3.1. Archipelagic Grids

Her use of the grid recalls modern maps and cartographic systems of representation as well as the "modernist ambition within the visual arts" that Rosalind Krauss diagnosed (1979, 50), coincidentally at the same time as when the Bermuda Triangle was gaining renewed attention. Krauss stressed that such an ambition announced "modern art's will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse". She also argued that "the grid is the means of crowding out the dimensions of the real and replacing them with the lateral spread of a single surface". Echoing Krauss, one may say that *Geo Dis/connect* conveys the "crowding out" of the dimensions of the real world by crowding clippings in a cluster of fragments that convey and further enhance the planar and dehierarchizing relations Collazo-Llorens recognized in *Test*.

The *Geo Dis/connect* series recalls centrifugal and centripetal forces that Krauss identified in the experimentation with and conceptualization of the grid. Even if the reputed art historian focused, as usual, on modernist fine art, one may appropriate and extend her consideration forward and backward in time to maps and other pictures, that are a part of the popular visual culture. In the case of the centrifugal force, the grid, Krauss proposed, seems to offer various possibilities of continuity between the image and the world and of ordering aspects of a "reality" that is "conceived more or less abstractly" (1979, 63). One case of this tendency is Agnes Martin's formally abstract exploration of the perceptual field. A second and very different case is the accurate geographical maps that sci-fi and pseudo-scientific publications about the so-called Bermuda Triangle used and recontextualized to affirm the continuity between the imagined myth and the world. A third case is Collazo-Llorens' use of 360 clippings from maps and as part of her exploration of the perceptual field alongside

▪ CUAD. MÚSIC. ARTES VIS. ARTES ESCÉN. ▪ VOL. 21 - 1 ▪ PP. 268 ▪ ENERO - JUNIO 2026 ▪ BOGOTÁ, D.C., (COLOMBIA) ▪ ISSN 1794-6670 ▪

Figure 10. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, Geo Dis/connect #1, 2014. Wall installation with found maps, 360 framed images, 4 × 6 in. each. Overall dimensions approx. 5 × 16 ft. Installation view at LMAK Projects, New York, NY. Courtesy of the artist.

an understanding of abstraction as a way of opening and conceptually entering into an uncertain territory.

For its part, with the centripetal force, Krauss argued, the grid becomes an exploratory or meditative consideration of the picture itself "as something complete and internally organized" and as "the object of vision." A similar phenomenon occurs in Piet Mondrian's *Composition IA* (1930), Joaquín Torres–García *Estructura en blanco y negro* (1938), Lygia Clark's *Composição* (1953), and Frank Stella's *Bermuda Petrel* (1979), which features an abstract rendition, in vivid colors, of the second rarest seabird in the world and the national bird of Bermuda, overlaid on dull, matte graph paper. This centripetal tendency also occurs in *Geo Dis/connect*, where the shapes of solid color and matte paper, pasted on top of a clipping mostly taken from glossy-paper publications (Collazo-Llorens, in interview with the author, 9 July 2025), make each "cell" an object for visual perception.

And yet, nurtured by her Caribbean roots and childhood, Collazo-Llorens subtly distances herself from the unifying or 'continental' — as Édouard Glissant would say — tendency that characterizes Krauss' and many others' understanding of the grid. Unifying and continental since it assumes the image in terms of the whole (the world and the image as a whole or continent) and the part (the image and the "unit" as parts or contained). For her part, in *Geo Dis/connect*, Collazo-Llorens invites us to consider an archipelagic approach that, in dialogue with Glissant's ideas about multiplicity and relation, I describe as interested in the possibility of simultaneously connecting and disconnecting at different levels and of understanding the poetic possibilities that open a multiplicity of horizontal and rhizomatic relationships between pictures and elements. In fact, regarding the *Geo Dis/connect* series, and continuing with the *beside* as a queer prepositional and experimental methodology, I want to point out that each cell or island is placed alongside others, and at times seems to visually connect with and continue in the next, regardless of their being clippings taken from maps representing very distant regions and taken from very different sources. In this sense, each clipping speaks to the other rather than to the real territory they have indexed or represented. In other cases, the black grid separates, divides, and even fragments the whole, isolating it without detaching it into an isolated island. The inclusion of strips of solid color triggers the simultaneous dynamics of connection (as well as with other clippings that are not necessarily close) and disconnection at several levels, including the archipelagic island, which is never completely isolated, nor completely absorbed by a containing totality. In this regard, I also believe that Collazo-Llorens' experimentation in *Geo Dis/connect* series and what she wanted the viewer standing in front them to experience resonate with Glissant's statement in which he described the archipelago as vantage point and archipelagic image: "[if] we look to the horizon, we see [..] the entire Caribbean, which changes our [continental] gaze and teaches it not to underestimate anything in this world, not even the smallest pieces of land" (Quoted in: Wiedorn 2017, 8).

Glissant's archipelagic thinking indeed invites us not to underestimate even the smallest island. This commitment, we may say, is present in the series, as the artist had the island of Vieques in mind while producing *Geo Dis/connect #1* (2014) (Collazo-Llorens 2023). Part of Puerto Rico, Vieques is commonly known in Puerto Rico as Isla Nena (or Little Girl Island), perhaps suggesting that it is Puerto Rico's little sister. And this name is ironically suggestive because, for a long time, Puerto Ricans have had access to just a small percentage of the land. Most of Isla Nena, on both its west and east sides, has been used as a bombing range, testing ground, and military base under the control of the United States Navy and Marines. Even if the Army and Navy have initially departed from the island, a large percentage of Puerto Rico's little sister is still inaccessible on maps and in situ, because, in addition to being heavily polluted due to biological or chemical contamination with substances used in the wars and invasions, for example, the Vietnam war, it is now being used to control the Caribbean, as well as threaten Venezuela and Colombia.

In the *Geo Dis/connect* series Collazo-Llorens points to the fact that, besides helping to visualize and study the unexpected and mysterious, as it happens in the cartographic illustrations of the so-called Bermuda Triangle, the grids and maps have also served as and continue to be proxies of continental thought, tools of surveillance and concealment, instruments of political and hegemonic control, as well as mechanisms of epistemological colonialism and the coloniality of power. We may remember here that, in a sense, the invention of the continent known as America "was a cartographic process that relied on and silenced-erased Indigenous bodies, relationships with, and spatial knowledge of the land to chart its routes and resources and thus, invented the Americas as a space where 'people without history'" were located (Özyeşilpınar 2024, 118-119). Those maps were used to teach and instruct the locals for centuries. In a similar vein, the official maps of Isla Nena render visually inaccessible the lands under the Marines' control as well as those heavily contaminated. They also name these lands by transparently using the name of the colonial force and by resorting to an encrypted and opaque jargon (Figure 11). These maps also serve as mirrors of Puerto Rico and blatant confirmations of the opaque transparency of colonial rule over the Puerto Rican sub-archipelago, which is significantly described, in official — and continental — terms as merely a "US territory" (neither a state nor an independent country), that is, a land and a people "*sin voz ni voto*[5]" (Cerro 2024).

Nonetheless, the grid and maps may also serve as tools for experimenting with and visualizing structures of power, including colonial power, and are resources for queer and decolonial experimentation, appropriations, and reformulations of territory and imagination. This is already suggested by the artist's decision to install *Geo Dis/connect #1* (2014) and *Geo Dis/connect #*5 (2020) in corners, again referring to what I have pointed out regarding the corner as a marginal space and architectural folding in *Restructured Topography*, in addition to the attention the artist pays to the visitors' reactions, including their dance of coming close to read and enjoy the details, and then stepping back to observe and enjoy the complete piece.

Relatedly, in the *Geo Dis*/connect series, the artist's use of abstraction is crucial: From each clipping extracted from geopolitical maps (mostly from Puerto Rico and the Caribbean), she dragged (*trahere*) a color away (*ab[s]*) as a solid and opaque band, strip, or shape that blocked the glossy and supposed transparency and neutrality of both the grid and the map or chart. With the 360 clippings and, in particular, the bands and strips that the artist visually dragged and reinserted in *Geo Dis/connect #1*, she introduced an interfering grid within the grid, exploring the grid as an abstract device for a queer seeing and as a vector of queer and poetic relationality that features abstraction as a political strategy. It is, indeed, a queer grid and relationality that, in particular, seems to seek to subvert Puerto Rico's colonized relation with Isla Nena by placing the lands of the small island beside and along the lands of Puerto Rico and other places and islands in the world.

▪ CUAD. MÚSIC. ARTES VIS. ARTES ESCÉN. ▪ VOL. 21 - 1 ▪ PP. 268 ▪ ENERO - JUNIO 2026 ▪ BOGOTÁ, D.C., (COLOMBIA) ▪ ISSN 1794-6670 ▪

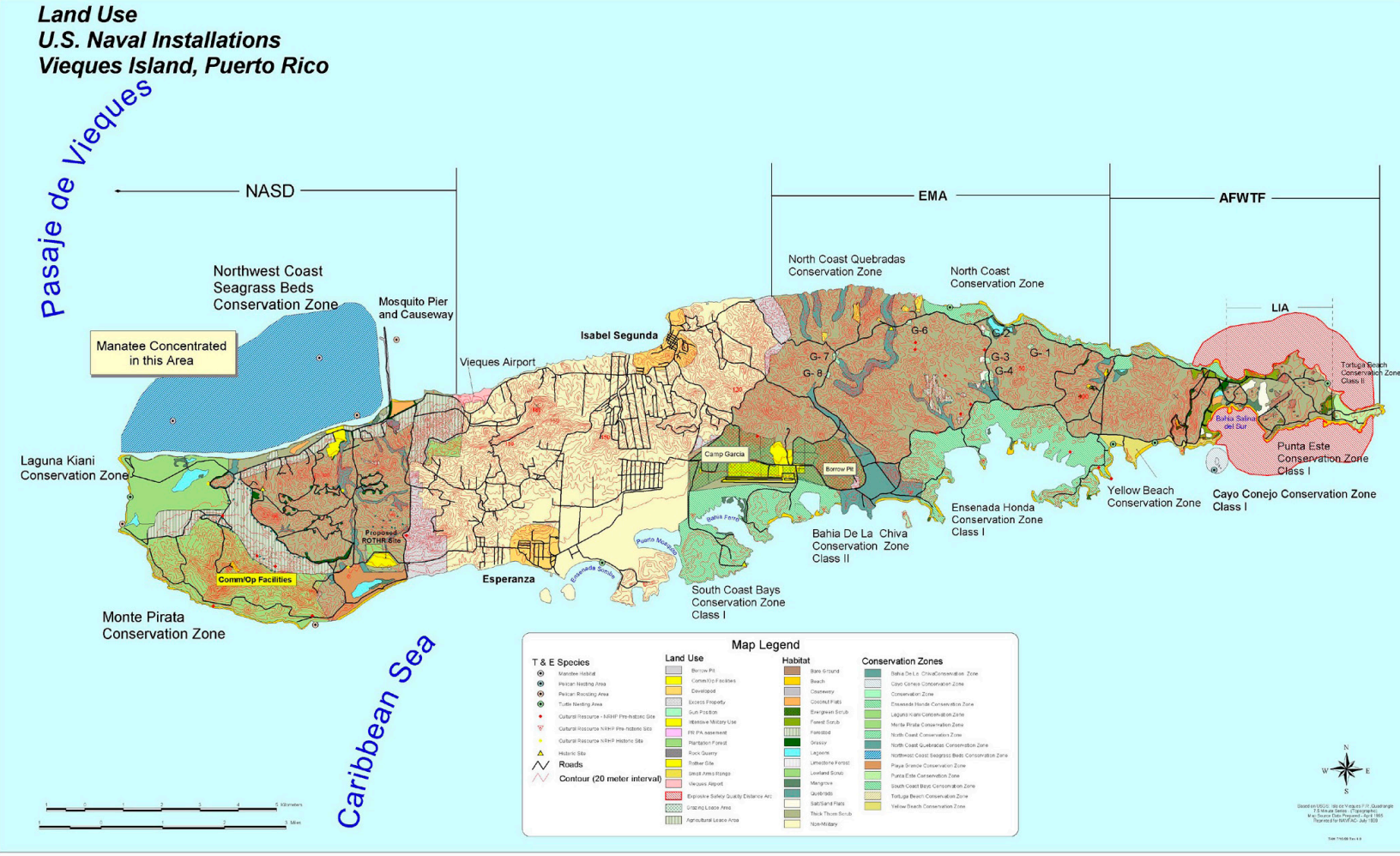

Figure 11. Land Use, U.S. Naval Installations Map, Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. U.S. Navy Office of Information Press Release, October 18, 1999. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas Library.

3.2. Borincan Grids

The aforementioned interruption and subversive possibilities were further explored in *Geo Dis/connect #4* (2018) and *Geo Dis/connect #5* (2020) (Figure 12), produced after the 2017 Hurricane María disaster, wherein the artist significantly used clippings from nautical and aeronautical charts and bathymetry maps, most of which were from the Caribbean. This time, she also included clippings from lunar charts and used solid circular shapes instead of strips. The shapes echoed the forms of the moon craters as well as circular marks she found in the navigational maps. Interestingly, in these two pieces, Collazo-Llorens proposed a new level of connection and disconnection, this time relating the Earth and the Moon, and celestial bodies well beyond both. Was she subtly envisioning the satellite (coincidentally included in earthly exploratory and colonial plans in the last decade) as the Earth's little sister? It is even more difficult to neglect that question when these two pieces seem to inevitably echo Juan Antonio Corretjer's poem *Boricua en la Luna* (1987), the beautiful anthem of Puerto Rican-ness that ends declaring "yo sería borincano aunque naciera en la luna"[6]. An anthem that inspired Adal Maldonado's *Coconauts* (2006). Altering shots from the 1969 NASA moon landing, Maldonado produced the story of Puerto Rican astronauts, including himself, who traveled through the spatial sea and arrived on the Earth's satellite, perhaps another "Isla Nena", three years before the US claimed to have done so. Whatever the case, the solid and circular shapes *Geo Dis/connect #1* and *Geo Dis/connect #5* act as both spots and masks, suggesting that we are looking through a microscope or a telescope or other modern scientific instrument, or traveling thanks to a spotlight, which is a modern performance of *dar a luz*, or *darse a luz*[7] from the darkness of the stage and disconnection, as Corretjer suggests. Extending and unfolding her strategy of queering maps and queer relational abstraction once more, Collazo-Llorens introduced a new level of connection and disconnection, generating shifts and changes in scale, space, time, and relation.

I find *Geo Dis/connect #5* particularly appealing. The artist focused on areas related to water (a metaphor of desire, birth, fluidity, female, queerness…) using clippings of maps depicting oceans, lakes, or rivers, as well as charts of other planets featuring "topographic areas named after seas or oceans," such as the Northern Sea on Mars or the Sea of Tranquility on the moon (Collazo-Llorens 2023). While in *Geo Dis/connect #1* and *Geo Dis/connect #4* the solid strips and shapes offer visual rhythms that move back and forth between multiple visual songs and a visual symphony, or, to put it metaphorically, between a group of sounding islands and a symphonic continent, in *Geo Dis/connect #5* there is also and mostly a sense of abstract(ed) noise. By noise, it is worth noting, I do not just mean evident interruption to the access of meaning, as it happens, for instance, when uncanny sounds and interference make listening difficult or impossible in airplane radio transmissions (which some stories about the Triangle attest), or when solid strips visually block cartographic information. Nor do I solely mean an uncertainty of meaning and signification that renders the structure of signification unstable — for instance when turbulences (luckily not only of the atmospheric variety) make flights unstable, worrisome, lovable, or exciting queer adventures, as it happens in *ESCaperucita & Little Flying Hood*. Or when feedback in analog video breaks down the indexical function of the image, while making the image's hidden structure visible instead. Or when the artist inserted the grid into another grid, overlapping and highlighting it, as well as problematizing the original grid as a stabilizing structure in the *Geo Dis/connect* series. Noise is not always a conspicuous destabilizing phenomenon. It can also be subtle currents of matter, energy, and information whose function is, nonetheless, reorganizing a system, as I discuss in my forthcoming book *Subvertir el Orden: Mujeres artistas, video y ensamblajes en los años ochenta* (2026)[8], when analyzing Colombian-US artist Karen Lamassonne's *Ruido* (1984). It is a reorganization that, it must be stressed, in *Geo Dis/connect #5* — as it also happens in meditation — is not necessarily one of conquering or subduing a colonial system, but rather a decolonial effort to make it livable and, hopefully, a place of dignity even within the current colonial conditions.

The decision to visually and conceptually focus on water and shades of blue, as seen in clippings and solid circles, offers a fluidly organic and material take on the archipelago. With *Geo Dis/connect #5*, the series suggests that the archipelago is neither a landmass surrounded by defined currents of water, nor merely a group of islands surrounded by a

Figure 12. Nayda Collazo-Llorens, Geo Dis/connect #5, 2020. Wall installation with collected and printed maps and color paper, 360 framed images, 4 × 6 in. each. Overall dimensions approx. 5 × 15 ft. Installation at Cartographies of Displacement exhibition, Art Miami, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Abdiel Segarra.

sea. It is rather a noisy, queer grid. As Glissant's quote and *Geo Dis/connect #5* suggest, a crucial characteristic challenge of archipelagoes for those physically and, I might add, visually, culturally, linguistically, sexually, and affectively willing to navigate them, is being able to look for and outward with the tides, the variable weather, and most important, the changing, turbulent, and contradictory flux of water and currents that, even if not aways utterly visible, remain essential. With a queer look forward and outward, I do not mean calculation and prediction of the tides, atmospheric conditions, etc., but seeing and listening, waiting and willing. I mean an archipelagic plasticity to change and adapt to the changing currents of time, place, scale, desire, politics, and affection as a way of liberating oneself from the pervading continental structures, colonial epistemological orders and powers, homogenizing dynamics, and the logics of standardization of sexual, affective, transformational, and cultural life and experience.

4. Instead of conclusions, a whirlpool

Distancing himself from the idea of origin as a primeval source, Walter Benjamin resorted, time and again, to one of the simplest but most crucial of his dialectic images: the whirlpool. Echoing Heraclitus' influential dictum that no human being ever steps in the same river twice, Benjamin proposed that the origin is "a whirlpool in the river of becoming," and a vortex that "swallows up the genetic material in its rhythm" (2009, 45). As such, the origin would be neither conceived as the starting point of something, the beginning of a process and life, nor related to the original fruit and seed that performed a conclusion and end. It would rather be a phenomenon of the encounter of currents that, in meeting, create a revolution that transforms inherited structures: revolution as origin.

Benjamin later returned to this idea and proposed that the Angel of History, the messenger of history's revolution, "sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet," as the angel moves into the future (1969, 257). As Glissant would say, Benjamin's understanding of history betrays the fact that the German thinker was still a continental person: the continent as Western-Northern history's *terra firma* and imperial cultural *continens* (i.e., holding together, continuous). Were Benjamin a Caribbean thinker, his conceptualization and abstraction of the catastrophe of history would be different.

The Martinican and archipelagic philosopher proposed instead that "the Sea is history," a different history, one that, like the Caribbean whirlpool, offers a *digenèse* in which even the slave boat is a womb (Glissant 1997).

While Glissant's approach is deeply indebted to his reflection of the Middle Passage and the impossibility of an abyssal memory, one may nonetheless find an echo of his words in recent Puerto Rican experience after Hurricane María: an island of (and in) ruins (Robles and Patel 2018). This has been a significant way of experiencing and describing the experience over the last twenty years, when Puerto Rico fell into a tremendous economic crisis that still haunts it to this day. And yet, no matter if you flew away or back (perhaps as in *ESCaperucita*), you are a *boricua*. The Caribbean and *boricua* messengers of history, be they philosophers or artists, would see multiple encounters of opposing, crossing, and coinciding currents to navigate and surmount anyway; something one may identify in *Geo Dis/connect #5*'s subtle blue noise, that may initially 'bypass the radar' even if it is still an organic set of currents of matter and information which bring dignity and calm in the middle of *la locura*[9]. Chaos, as a force of opacity, still holds the possibility to transform life through a dignifying *Revolú**tion, which is, significantly, the name of one of the artist's public art pieces from 2012 (which points to another current in her work). And yes, *revolú**tion may be a noisy *revolú*, that is, *bochinche*[10], mess, and quarrel, especially from the *gringo*'s viewpoint que *quiere matarnos la nota*[11] as one of Sánchez's characters says about the plane pilot (1994, 16). And nonetheless, *revolú**tion may also be a noise that can be developed and switched (*) into a transformational and "unforeseeable whirl[pool]" (Glissant 2010, 62).

Glissant's archipelagic perspective helps us consider the whirlpool attested to by Collazo-Llorens' explorations, which I have attempted to draft in terms of just two currents among many others of her queer relational abstraction, an abstraction that, for instance, seeks to simplify, mix, and complicate; to fragment, interfere, connect, and expand; to set, drag, invaginate and multiply. It is an abstraction that also (un)folds queer ways of seeing back, inward, forward and outward, that, among others, may be part of an architectonic multi-folding or, better, an abstract whirlpool in Collazo-Llorens' fluid experimentation and explorations; a queer looking that in turn (un)folds forms, images, spaces, places, structures, mediums, times, bodies of water, and scales; indeed, a queer looking that enacts an archipelagic epistemology to account for the changing territories of a diasporic life and a decolonial cartography of navigation in and with the inhabiting exploration through the unexpected and mysterious, the surveilled, invisible, and opaque, the political, personal, subjective, and affective, the continental, islandic, and archipelagic, and the earthly, the airy, and, indeed, the watery.

▪ CUAD. MÚSIC. ARTES VIS. ARTES ESCÉN. ▪ VOL. 21 - 1 ▪ PP. 268 ▪ ENERO - JUNIO 2026 ▪ BOGOTÁ, D.C., (COLOMBIA) ▪ ISSN 1794-6670 ▪

[NOTAS]

1. Eng. Without a doubt [to have been born in Puerto Rico and to form part of the diaspora] have informed and influenced my work — who I am and my life experiences, my identity as a santurcina, a Puerto Rican, a Caribbean islander, a queer person, a part of the diaspora, a coming and a going.
2. Eng. Here I am, writing in English.
3. "What attracts me to invented or imaginary cartographies and existing maps is that they don't locate us […]. Part of the interest lies in the process of navigation, of getting lost, of roaming without a specific starting point or final destination... yes, the wandering." Translation my own.
4. Eng. Island Puerto Ricans.
5. Eng. lit. Without voice nor vote.
6. Eng. "I would be Borincan even if I had been born on the moon."
7. Eng. Giving birth (dar a luz); giving birth to yourself (darse a luz).
8. Subverting Order: Women Artists, Video and Assemblages in the 80s
9. Eng. Madness.
10. Eng. Ruckus, kerfuffle, fuss.
11. Eng. Wants to kill our buzz.

[REFERENCES]

Benjamin, Walter. 2009. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, translated by John Osborne. London: Verso.

Benjamin, Walter. 1969. "Theses on the Philosophy of History". In *Illuminations and Reflections*, translation by H. Zohn, 253-264. New York: Schocken Books.

Bolívar Fresneda, José L. 2022. "La economía de Puerto Rico durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial: ¿capitalismo estatal o economía militar?". *Revista del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas* 18: 197-248. https://revistas.upr.edu/index.php/opcit/article/view/938.

Campbell, Tony. 1987. "Portolan Charts from the Late Thirteenth Century to 1500". *In The History of Cartography, volume one (Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean),* edited by J.B. Harley and David Woodward, 371-463. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cerro, Raúl. "Puerto Rico: sin voz ni voto". *En Disputa,* 23 September 2024. Accessed 10 July 2025. https://endisputa.com/p/puerto-rico-sin-voz-ni-voto

Collazo-Llorens, Nayda. 2015. "Markmaking: Shift + Strategies. Artist Talk at Grand Valley State University". n.d. Accessed June 22 2024. https://vimeo.com/134047901

Collazo-Llorens, Nayda. 2023. "Artist talk at Kalamazoo Institute of Art". n.d. Accessed June 22 2024. https://www.youtube.com/live/fcExddP2qnk

Davies, Carole Boyce. 2013. *Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zone*. Illinois. University of Illinois Press.

Duany, Jorge. 2000. "Nation on the Move: The Construction of Cultural Identities in Puerto Rico and the Diaspora". *American Ethnologist* 27, no. 1: 5-30.

Duany, Jorge. "El éxodo boricua contemporáneo". In *Ida y vuelta: experiencias de la migración en el arte puertorriqueño contemporáneo*, 19-27. San Juan: Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

Glissant, Édouard. 1997. *Traité du tout-monde*. Paris: Gallimard.

Glissant, Édouard. 2010. *Poetics of Relation*, translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

González Ormerod, Alejandro. 2016. "Puerto Rico, tan cerca de Latinoamérica y tan lejos de Estados Unidos". *Letras Libres*, 18 October. Accessed 12 June 2025. https://letraslibres.com/historia/puerto-rico-tan-cerca-de-latinoamerica-y-tan-lejos-de-estados-unidos/

Irigaray, Luce. 1985. *Speculum of the Other Woman*, translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Krauss, Rosalind. 1979. "Grids". *October* 9: 50-64.

Kris, Ernst. 1952. *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*. New York: International University Press.

Lacan, Jacques. 2008. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book VII*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Dennis Porter. London: Routledge.

Large, Sophie. 2022. "La abstracción puede ser sumamente política: entrevista a Nayda Collazo-Llorens". *Hispanismes* [En ligne] 20. doi: 10.4000/hispanismes.17630.

Livesey, Graham. 2005. "Fold + Architecture". In *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Revised Edition, edited by Adrian Parr, 109-110. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Marsh, Steve. 2020. "Wilson, Callaghan and the Management of Anglo-American Relations, 1974-1976". *Contemporary British History* 35, no. 1): 26–51. doi:10.1080/13619462.2020.1785292.

Mitchell, W. J. T. 2008. "Visual Literacy or Literary Visualcy?". In *Visual Literacy*, edited by J. Elkins, 11–29. New York: Routledge.

Nicolas, Serge, Aurélie Coubart, and Todd Lubart. 2014. "The program of individual psychology (1895-1896) by Alfred Binet and Victor Henri". *L'Année psychologique* 114, no. 1: 5-60. doi: 10.3917/anpsy.141.0005.

Portolano per tutti i naviganti. Venice: Bernardinus Rizus, Novariensis, 1492.

Özyeşilpınar, Eda. 2024. "Maps as Rhetorical Tools of Colonial Power and Alternative Cartographies: The Americas' Cartographic Invention". *Rhetoric Review* 43, no. 2: 116–31. doi:10.1080/07350198.2024.2318063.

▪ CUAD. MÚSIC. ARTES VIS. ARTES ESCÉN. ▪ VOL. 21 - 1 ▪ PP. 268 ▪ ENERO - JUNIO 2026 ▪ BOGOTÁ, D.C., (COLOMBIA) ▪ ISSN 1794–6670 ▪

Riley, Howard. 2021. "A Contemporary Pedagogy of Drawing". *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 20, no. 4: 323–49. doi :10.1080/14702029.2021.1980278.

Robles, Frances and Jugal K. Patel. 2018. "Puerto Rico sigue en ruinas a un año del huracán María". *The New York Times, 24 September 2018*. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/24/us/puerto-rico-huracan-maria-vivienda.html

Roca-Martínez, Silvia M. 2023. "Cuando Latinoamérica llegó a Puerto Rico: La comunidad imaginada puertorriqueña en Memoria de Rosario Ferré". *Romance Notes* 63, no. 1: 183-193. doi:10.1353/rmc.2023.a904325.

Sánchez, Luis Rafael. 1994. "La guagua aérea". En *La guagua aérea*, 11-22. San. Juan: Editorial Cultural.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1994. *Tendencies*. New York: Routledge.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 2003. *Touching Feeling Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wiedorn, Michael. 2017. *Think Like an Archipelago: Paradox in the Work of Edouard Glissant*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Zorach, Rebecca. 2011. *The Passionate Triangle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.