

Seed 2. Pluriversing the Screens

by Valentina Medina and Jonathan Hurtado

Editor: Alessandro Y. Longo



Estación Terrena (ET)¹ is a space for arts, research, and creation located in the iconic commercial district of electronic components in Bogotá. ET seeks to stimulate the development and layout of local networks for lateral and interplanetary interconnectivity of alternative forms of knowledge and contemporary technologies. As a place for dialogue and collaboration, it offers a space for artists, self-taught researchers, and academics to reflect on artifacts and landscapes of technological diversity

Estación Terrena is situated in in La Carrera Novena, a neighborhood in Bogota known to be a commercial district for electronic components and ET itself shares its space with a repair shop for electronic devices. ET practice echoes its surroundings and it's inspired by a combination of cacharreo, an improvisational, hands-on Latin-American ethos towards technical problems, with the concept of media archeology. The latter is articulated by Jussi Parikka as follows:

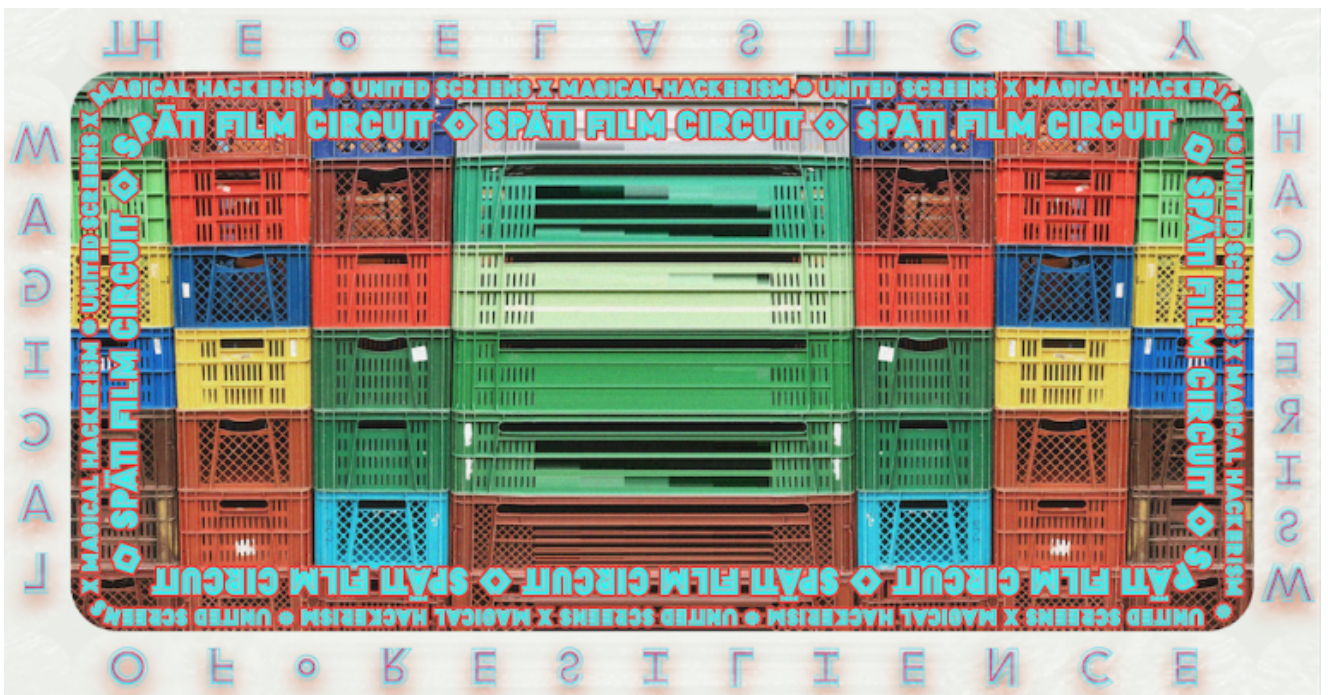
"[...] A way to research new media cultures through insights from past new media, often focusing on the quirky, non-obvious apparatuses, practices, and inventions [...] offering re-orientation in research inquiries when digging into the background

¹ Estación Terrena. "About." Accessed April 9, 2024. <https://www.estacionterrena.art/en/about/>.

*reasons why... media apparatus or use habit is able to be born and be picked up and sustain itself in a cultural context"*²

In this spirit, in 2021 ET intersected the research of UNITED SCREENS on the topics of solidarity and cybernetics, linking the situated technological knowledge fostered in Estación Terrena with the cinema distribution technologies discussed in United Screens.

Späti Circuit



The first result of this pollination was the Späti Film Circuit, organized within the frame of Magical Hackerism³, an exhibition curated by ET co-founder Juan Pablo García Sossa (JPGS) at SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin.

For Senegalese filmmaker Sembène Ousman cinema was “the evening school of the people” – l’ecole du soir⁴. Moving images as a means of moving thinking for him was the most important means of changing reality. During the same time, the Tropicalia movement in Brazil in the late 1960s, with some of the most notorious filmmakers and

² Parikka, Jussi. *What is Media Archaeology?* John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2012.

³ Savvy Contemporary. "Magical Hackerism." Accessed April 9, 2024. <https://savvy-contemporary.com/en/projects/2022/magical-hackerism/>

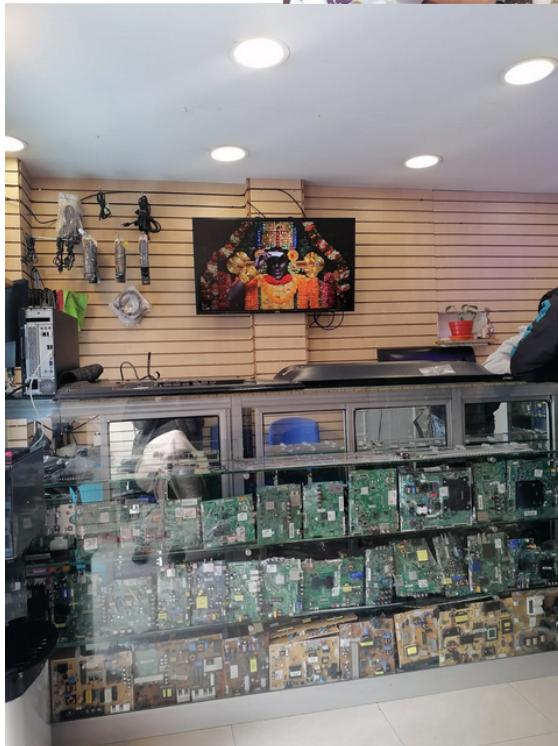
⁴ Nzabatsinda, Anthère. "Roman et cinéma chez Ousmane Sembène: la langue des formes." In *Nouvelles écritures francophones: Vers un nouveau baroque?*, edited by Jean Cléo Godin, 194-201. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2001. Accessed April 9, 2024. <http://books.openedition.org/pum/9601>

musicians of the time, nurtured the idea of “cannibalizing” foreign culture, so as not to reject it completely, but eat it up, appropriate and remix it with local culture⁵. Taking films and imaginaries into the quotidian, video clubs, street vendors and popular spaces was a means of sharing anti-imperialist thinking, storytelling, and collectivity. With big cinema screens largely inaccessible and crammed with Hollywood Blockbusters, the hacking of the traditional cinema circuit through creative networks of dissemination has proven utterly resilient, creating new film ecosystems (and numerous parallel-“woods”, like Nollywood in Nigeria) that rendered a pluriverse of stories and narratives to a multitude of different screens.

The Späti Circuit intends to decentralize the circulation and exhibition of film and video art as a means of popular culture. Spätis, a colloquial German expression for kiosks open until late into the night (spät = late) are neighborhood spaces characterized by a coming together of different social fabrics and creating a sense of community through shared concerns, common languages, and familiarity. An evening school for all walks of life and Kiez⁶ encounters.

⁵ Dunn, Christopher. *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8078-4976-6

⁶ Kiez is a German word for a city neighbourhood, a relatively small community within a larger town. It is used mostly in Berlin and northern Germany.



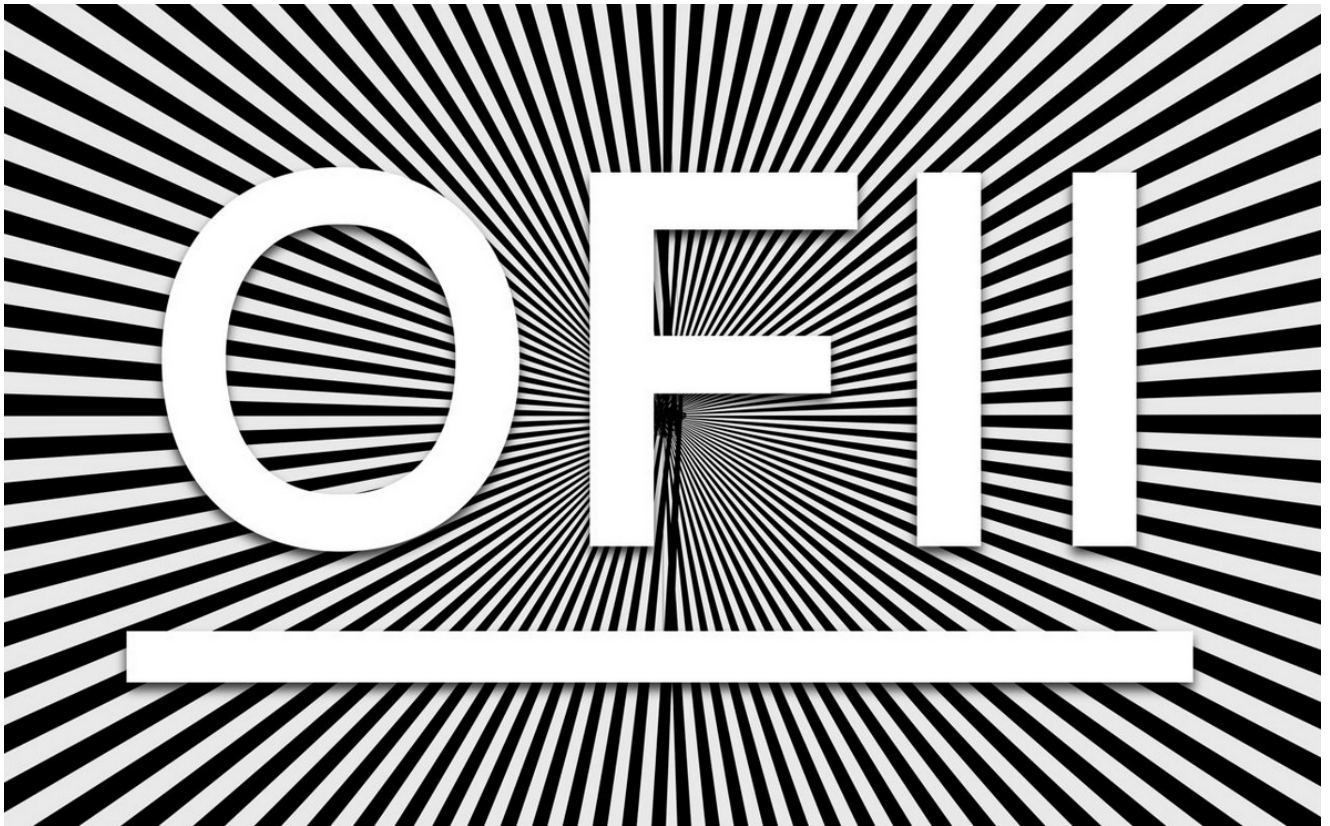
The hacking of Spätis paired with the intervention in Estacion Terrena and all over the neighborhood of La Carrera Novena. In Bogota, storefront Smart TVs in repair shops were the locations in which a selection of 7 films and videos was showcased. The films - short films, from documentaries, hyperreality, essays to animations - examined various forms of technologies from a Tropikós perspective (both as region and as mindset), to diversify and redistribute the networks of technologies and cultural imaginaries towards pluriversal understandings of the planet. They aim to complexify modern binary divisions and systems of classification and disrupt the vertical sight in our relationship to natural, artificial, and hybrid environments. More generally, this tropical turn, a term that we borrow from the presentation of "Futura Tropica" by JPGS, hints at ways in which the Tropical region's cultural specificities influence the adoption and adaptation of technology, fostering other ways of

creation. "Workarounds that understand the inputs and forces of our digital environments and are elastic enough to turn them around and develop symbiotic relationships with them..."⁷

Diversifying individual understandings of film and new media instruments, and ultimately, articulating an extended and plural comprehension of the technical elements in contemporary cinema distribution is a research attitude and objective that stems from these experiments in 2021 and continues through our design and research for the Possible Cinema Protocol.

Oficina de Interferencias

⁷ Garcia Sossa, Pablo Juan, <https://futura-tropica.network/>



Besides being an entertainment engine, Smart TVs are media tools used for marketing reasons by many businesses. Menus, mainstream GIFS, and pedagogical and institutional messages are part of communication strategies that utilize this medium as an alternative to distributing information among the audience. They become a sort of platform virtually created for propaganda and mass consumerism market strategies. Nevertheless, the context in which Smart TV screens are set winkers an invitation to new film-showcasing experiences.

Departing from this digital shift in marketing strategies, and expanding the initial findings of the Späti Circuit, Oficina de Interferencias (OFII) was born as a temporary agency for video art display services elaborated betinstación Terrena and Tercer Cine in December 2022. OFII developed a technological tactic to challenge conventional screening formats and comprehension of moving image distribution in local, novel, and unconventional film networks.

Bogotá-based artists and media practitioners, gathered in "Centro Comercial del Futuro" (Shopping mall of the future) to imagine possible distribution systems in the electronic market street through organized discussions and ideation sessions. As a result of the experiments conducted in Carrera Novena, a fictional agency was created: Oficina de Interferencias. This agency worked on developing film and moving image distribution experiments in Carrera Novena, alongside an exhibition of Smart TVs involving young artists.

Mainly interested in expanded notions of cinema distribution and the flexibility that artistic approaches lead to in Humanities research, OFII created a new discursive space among local film and audiovisual practitioners. Utilizing digital technology history elements as a main guiding topic the final output of the project gave space to:

- + “Conectar y Liberar” (To connect and to liberate): a short fiction novel on the origin of cinema distribution in Colombia by Jonathan Hurtado;
- + “Antenas Vivas” (Living Antennas): a database prototype to link poetic references between the television transmission system and the communication system of the Andean Cloud Forest developed by Valentina Cerquera;
- + A Bogotá edition of the “El Camino de las Estrellas” (The Path of the Stars), ongoing research in cultural archeology and performance arts by Laura Wiesner and Alexandra Gighas;
- + “OFII CALL CENTER” by Felipe Quintero, who scouted new Smart TV locations for film and video art purposes; + A fictional literary map of Carrera Novena by Laura Arias that mixed situated media history elements with fictional facts from “Conectar y Liberar”;
- + Plus, the USB-based distribution program for Smart TVs showcased works by 13 artists.

This array of exercises offers us a good example of how new distribution systems can serve as fertile soil for organizational and artistic experiments. Expanding the premises of the Späti Circuit, OFII structured a local attempt at an alternative circulation ecology, situated in the locality of Bogota but anchored to the global situation of digital media. Within Meshdia, we are designing the Possible Cinema Protocol to weave together local experiments like this into a trans-local network, through the mediation of a techno-social system.

Intermission: The power of moving images in insurgent Colombia

In Colombia, 2020 was not only the year of the COVID-19 pandemic but also of a highly-discussed attempt at tax reform. Additionally, widespread social discontent led to a social outbreak of discontent that persisted for about 2 years, notwithstanding harsh repression from the State.

Amidst this upheaval, numerous cultural demonstrations played a pivotal role in activism, agitation, and denunciation. Undoubtedly, the projection and distribution of moving images stood out as one of the most visible forms of collective expression.

Not only could these images be shared on social platforms like Instagram, but they also served as a means to rally the population and directly address the social issues of the country.

One of the most important groups that used these tools was the group called “The new terrace band”, located in Medellín. They made projections of still and moving images on large facades of buildings. Thanks to this, necessary complaints against the hegemonic media were made visible, not only through social networks but above all in the streets and homes of Colombians.

Another of these meetings took place on May 14, 2021, where 30 audiovisual and graphic groups came together to create the Audiovisual Coordinator of Young Artists (CAJA). In front of the façade of the emblematic National University of Colombia, a projection was held, mixing diverse audiovisual works about the social dilemmas in Colombia that led to the social outbreak, as well as a transmedia graphic projection. Also, the two projections took place at the same time, showcasing the greater level of coordination of these groups. About 300 people enjoyed the meeting and exchanged their stickers, pirated films, graphics, and more.



Activist screening by the MASA Activism Collective

The graphic projection at the event was managed by the MASA Activism Collective. They were responsible for editing, projecting, and intervening with the movement, creating an atmosphere of both denunciation and solidarity among the attendees. This collective has played a crucial role in various contexts of denunciation and dissemination. By projecting images with strong political, social, environmental, and economic messages in public spaces, they have established a distinct political stance in audiovisual creation and influenced political demonstration processes. These projections are ongoing in major Colombian cities, particularly in Bogotá, reaching a wide audience.

The Third Cinema group (involved in the OFII) has generated samples of moving images with a political tone of rebuke. The “Cinescrupulos” exhibition was held on February 5, 2022, in an anarchist bookstore in Bogotá, Colombia. There viewers could chat with the directors of audiovisual works that combine experimentation with audiovisual language to denounce or present the multiple forms of development of social problems that young people face. This group has dedicated itself to the dissemination of different Colombian audiovisual works and to studying these alternative distribution processes and their history.



Activist screening by the MASA Activism Collective

To conclude, it is clear that political demonstrations have been key to the distribution of the moving image in Colombia. The relationship between technology and distribution is closely related. As can be seen, street projection or projection in alternative spaces is a constant exercise, spaces and technologies have been mixed in spaces other than movie theaters or Streaming services. This is important because it not only aims to reach other eyes but also expands the possibilities of technological uses for audiovisual purposes. The relationship translates into a reflection on how technologies (such as projectors, televisions, 360 spheres, etc.) and the artistic technologies of the moving image are used, in this case, to communicate a political message. Furthermore, the reflection of technologies becomes more complex when presented in unconventional environments such as streets or emblematic places for the State/Nation of Colombia. This is important because it breaks into everyday life, hacks daily routines, and generates reflections on the uses of images and the messages they convey.

Set 02

Finally, the most recent intervention in this series is Set 02, a commissioned work I organized in collaboration with Aditya Fachrizal Hafiz Aka Goodit in November 2023. Hafiz, a participant in the UNITED SCREENS' gathering Think Well 4, contributed with his characteristic DIY digital curatorial approach. He elaborated a dynamic visual playlist with pop music videos, TV commercials, and movie snippets to be distributed in the alternative Bogota circuit established in previous events, through USB sticks and Smart TVs. This action added another dimension to the poetic system of circulating film and media objects: the collage-like blending of moving images, archetypes, and global styles within local media objects like TV screens.

One aspect of Set 02 is of particular interest for the future design of Meshdia. During the event, a discussion emerged, raising inquiries around the legal dimension of image copyright when redistributing these hybrid audiovisual products due to the commercial nature of the material used by Hafiz. The close link between licensing and circulation is an important knot to detangle in imagining alternative distribution circuits and our protocol will pay great attention to it. Moreover, questions were raised regarding the intercultural dynamics at play during an exchange between digital collages with global visual references and hyper-local spaces like the TV repair shops.

These three projects - Spati Circuit, Oficina de Interferencias, and Set 02 - emerged within the United Screens Network as practical exercises activated by Estación Terrena. They represent a process-oriented approach where concepts related to the development of protocols and technologies are fleshed out through discussions and active experiments. Whether exploring a pluriversal view of technology, or the interplay of global images with local film history, these initiatives lead to tangible strategies that blend digital interaction and multicultural expression within a Latin American context. Through a grassroots hacking gesture involving offline digital

media, the local community is invited to share their devices, contributing to both artistic and communal endeavors.

References

- [1] Estación Terrena. "About." Accessed April 9, 2024. <https://www.estacionterrena.art/en/about/>.
- [2] Parikka, Jussi. *What is Media Archaeology?* John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2012.
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- [6] Kiez is a German word for a city neighbourhood, a relatively small community within a larger town. It is used mostly in Berlin and northern Germany.
- [7] Garcia Sossa, Pablo Juan, <https://futura-tropica.network/>