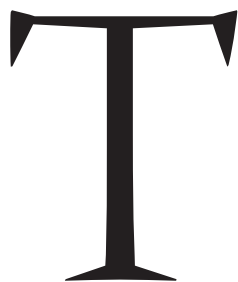


STITCHED BY FIRE: THE THREAD OF SPARKS OF SANTIAGO ESCOBAR-JARAMILLO'S "COLOMBIA, TIERRA DE LUZ"¹

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"[...] if we are to solve that political problem in practice,
follow the path of aesthetics, since it is through Beauty
that we arrive at Freedom."

Friedrich Schiller,
On the Aesthetic Education of Man, Second Letter.



HERE MIGHT NOT BE BETTER place to start this chronicle on the meanderings of an artist across the whole Colombian territory than by focusing on the walls—on one wall, to be more specific—of one of the most central streets in Bogotá. Across from the Tequendama Hotel, on the back wall of an abandoned church, reads, almost faded, hidden underneath all the other graffiti, "Indignarse no es suficiente" ("To get outraged is not enough").

I ignore how long such graffiti has been there, but that is hardly the point; urban platitudes—graffiti, bumper stickers, t-shirt wordings—exist in a perpetual belatedness which makes them live enveloped in an always precise timeless state, addressing us incessantly from a temporal nowhere. Nonetheless, the statement stuck out, amidst the rainy days of Bogotá, not so much for its distant echoes of the social unrest across southern Europe these days, but for signaling a change of moods in what can be considered the "post-conflict" Colombia of today.

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¹ For the most up to date information and the latest developments on the project "Colombia, Tierra de Luz", visit Escobar-Jaramillo's blog: <http://colombiatieradeluz.org/>.

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Wall across from Hotel Tequendama, Bogotá, 2012.



Photo: José Falconi.

In fact, if there has been a tectonic shift in the last years in this country it has been the pervasive sensation that the conflict is, somehow, coming to an end. From government commissions to public demonstrations, they all share a glaringly explicit use of the past tense when it comes to talk about the internal conflict. Therefore, what seems to be the lingering question, though still half-mumbled, half-formulated, in the minds of most Colombians might be: What's next?

What can possibly come after outrage for a country ravaged by decades of structural violence that almost feels inherent, intrinsic to itself? How to move beyond outrage? Or, to put it more explicitly: are all sectors of the country really outraged enough to move beyond outrage? Do we really believe that Colombian society, as a whole, is ready to move beyond outrage if some sectors are still reluctant to even feel outraged?

Though no expert in these matters nor prophet of any kind, judging by what happened in similar processes across the region—after all, despite the incredible differences between the Guatemalan, Argentinean, Chilean, Peruvian dirty-war cases and their aftermath, do show a pattern among them—what seems to follow the tenuous peace is the even more tenuous and more confusing period of national reconciliation. In fact, what might be next for