



EMBAJADA

Tropiwhat

No olvides lavarte el cerebro

Opening June 26, 2021



Emabajada is pleased to present the first individual exhibition by visual artist and graphic historian Fernando Norat (*alias* Tropiwhat), titled '*No Olvides Lavarte el Cerebro*' ('*Don't Forget to Wash Your Brain*'). In this exhibition, Norat presents the series that best reflects his interdisciplinary practice, one that draws us into his historiographic work through his curious and colorful visual representations. In his series titled '*Libros que no existen*' ('*Books That Do Not Exist*'), Norat invites us to explore a selection of 15 of his 78 book covers (one for each municipality), with the purpose of pushing us to reflect about the role of present-day people in the (re)formation of the past and the construction of the future.

In his own words, Norat not only invites us to explore each one of his representations, but also dares us to dive into the process of illustrating Puerto Rican realities openly, without holding back, in a way that promotes dialogue and critique and fosters the formation of bonds that unite us with the historical experience of our Caribbean region. Applying a folk-inspired approach in his elaboration of the methodology of microhistory (the systematic study of a limited time and space, which has the effect of eroding macrostructural understandings), his main goal is the rescue of collective memory and social narratives of scant circulation in the hegemonic spaces of our everyday experience. Each of the book covers has visual characteristics that are related to its placement (red for valleys, green for mountains, blue for coastlines, and grey for cities), alluding to the physical differences that affect the everyday subjectivity of individuals in the Caribbean.

Burrowing the aesthetic elements of 1950's posters created by DIVEDCO (an entity whose goal was the production of a collective memory tied to a linear conception of progress and to the promises of the nascent Commonwealth status), the book covers represent an attempt to undermine this didactic strategy. By decentralizing historical narrative(s) and (re)localizing the covers in each municipality, this series represents a form of memory that is alive and active. In other words, Norat tries to not only put alternative histories on display, but also to present them as dialectical counterpoints in opposition to the myths of origin or charter narratives that still serve to rationalize the structures that support the status quo.

In addition to the series of book covers, many of Norat's illustrations will also be included and made available in the exhibition. These pieces are created in a variety of formats, including magnets, postcards, posters, and t-shirts.

Text by Eduardo J. Rivera Pichardo (b. 1992, Bayamón, P.R.)
(PhD candidate in social and political psychology at NYU)

Fernando Norat (b. 1995, Aibonito, Puerto Rico) currently lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island, where he is a PhD candidate in Caribbean History at Brown University. He was named Artist of 2020 by Puerto Rican newspaper Claridad, and he has worked as an illustrator for WNYC Studios, the Smithsonian, and Rimas Entertainment, among others. He has also participated as an illustrator in community projects.



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Embajada se complace en presentar la primera exhibición individual de trabajos del artista visual e historiador gráfico Fernando Norat (*alias* Tropiwhat) titulada 'No Olvides Lavarte el Cerebro'. En ella Norat nos presenta su serie más afín con su práctica interdisciplinaria, la cual nos invita a sumirnos en su gesta historiográfica a través de sus pioneras y curiosas representaciones visuales. En su serie 'Libros que no existen', Norat nos invita a explorar una selección de 15 de sus 78 portadas (una por cada municipio), con la mira de estimular a la reflexión del rol del sujeto presente en la (re)formación del pasado y el porvenir del futuro.

En sus propias palabras, Norat no solo nos invita a explorar cada una de sus representaciones, sino también a atrevernos a

'tirarnos de pecho a ilustrar realidades puertorriqueñas sin tapujos', que sigan forjando a la crítica, diálogos, y lazos entre nosotros y la experiencia histórica de nuestra región caribeña. Arraigado a una elaboración cotidiana y popular de la metodología de la microhistoria (el estudio sistemático de un tiempo y espacio limitado, el cual sedimenta lo entendido a nivel macro-estructural), su objetivo principal es el rescate de la memoria colectiva y de las narrativas sociales pocamente circuladas en los espacios hegemónicos de nuestra cotidianidad. Cada una de las portadas está visualmente situada (rojo para valles, verde para montañas, azul para costa, y gris para ciudad) un poco denotando las diferencias físicas que afectan la subjetividad cotidiana del individuo sujeto al Caribe.

Apropiándose de la estética de los carteles de la DIVEDCO de la época de los 50's (la cual tenía como objetivo la producción de una memoria colectiva atada a una concepción lineal del progreso y a las promesas del Estado Libre Asociado), las portadas representan un intento de subvertir dicha estrategia didáctica. Al descentralizar la(s) historia, y al (re)localizar las portadas en cada uno de los municipios, esta serie representa un vivo activo de la memoria. Es decir, Norat busca no solo representar historias alternas, sino dialécticamente contrarrestar estas con los mitos de orígenes o '*charter narratives*' que aún sirven una función racionalizadora a los andamiajes del estatus quo.

Además de la serie de las portadas, también se presentará y harán disponibles durante la exhibición gran parte de sus ilustraciones en diferentes formatos incluyendo magnetos, postales, carteles y camisetas.

Texto por Eduardo J. Rivera Pichardo (n. 1992, Bayamón, P.R.)
(candidato doctoral de psicología social y política en NYU)

Fernando Norat (n. 1995, Aibonito, Puerto Rico) vive y trabaja actualmente en Providence, Rhode Island donde actualmente es candidato doctoral de Historia del Caribe en la Universidad de Brown. Fue nombrado el artista del 2020 por el Periódico Claridad, y ha ilustrado para WNYC Studios, el Smithsonian, Rimas Entertainment entre otros, además de producir ilustraciones para proyectos comunitarios.