

Starting sometime in the 1800s, what are called the Megaproyectos are an ever-growing group of massive infrastructural projects—typically highways, ports, and rail systems—designed to facilitate trade, economic development, and “regional integration.” By taking advantage of the streamlined permission processes and cheap labor during several authoritarian regimes, external actors have been able to benefit several Latin American governments (and themselves) in ways that would never have been possible if environmental concerns and rural communities had been taken into account. *Los caminos de la vida*, as they could be called, are not only a symbol of *progreso* but also a strengthening of South America’s connection and unity with the global north.

*“Los caminos de la vida/ no son lo que yo pensaba/ no son lo que imaginaba/ no son lo que yo creía!”*

*“(The paths of life are not how I thought, not how I imagined, not how I believed.)”*

These words are from a 90’s song originally by Los Diablitos, but I hear them for the first time in a video of Jorge Raka rolling a wheel attached to his ass up and down the wall of a Swiss-French art space. Jorge is not singing, he is yelling. The word “Progreso” is carved into the wheel and stamped repeatedly onto the wall. I don’t understand anything, which is not uncommon for me with a performance. What’s surprising is a feeling that there is something to be understood. Progreso does not seem to mean what I imagine.

Like most practices that are (linguistically) removed from Switzerland, Jorge’s work is often misunderstood as a kind of exotic activism meant to shock and educate us about the West’s effect on his particular third-world country. An exotisation Jorge plays on; almost all titles are in Spanish, but ultimately far from true. Jorge has been living in Switzerland for the past 14 years. A kind of transatlantic megaproyecto in itself, his work builds roads between Peru and Switzerland, bridging feelings of outsiderhood and geopolitics. By constantly pointing the finger at himself, he disguises the critique of northern European obsessions with security, progress, waste management, polite tolerance of others, and a resounding silent neutrality in the face of just about anything, as personal.

To criticize without complaining. Punk. Raka’s leather jacket has wheels on its shoulders instead of studs “so that the problems roll off”. The Nazi-like armband says “Insecurity.” Extremely stylish and inventive things that are art in themselves, but that are then also used in a rigorous sculptural practice. That “all comes from the action”, as Raka claims, seems to mean that he is a sort of actor in his own work. Raka the zombie, the devil, the businessman, the circus performer, the street vendor, the wrestler, and the “Indian” are necessary for something larger to emerge. An interview made in anticipation of an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist published by Macaco Press, where Jorge Raka is interviewed by himself, seems to suggest that even Jorge Raka may be one of these characters necessary for something larger to emerge.

– Charles Benjamin, 2025



Map of megaproyectos planned by the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America exclaiming “The destruction of mother nature, propaganda for the capitalist system”.



Work from the exhibition *Insecurity* at Mario Kreuzberg, Basel in 2023.



From the video *El Diablo de Sion*, 2023.



Raka shopping with his face wrapped in cellophane and fellow shopper from the video *Carlita*, 2014.



Raka wrestling a large cardboard box in *Cartón*, 2014.