143.353 (los ojos no quieren estar siempre cerrados) /
143.353 (the eyes do not want to be always shut)

A work of video installation and one-channel video by Marcelo Expósito (2010)

Video installation: simultaneous loop projection: channel 1 (40 minutes) and channel 2 (25 minutes)
One-channel video: 117 minutes.

Chapter 5 of the series *Entre sueños. Ensayos sobre la nueva imaginación política / Between dreams. Essays on the new political imagination*, edited by Oriol Sánchez, sound edition by Jonathan Darch and Jordi Juncadella, produced by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid for the exhibition *Principio Potosí / The Potosí Principle*, curated by Alice Creischer, Max Jorge Hinderer and Andreas Siekmann (travelling to Berlín and La Paz).

http://www.museoreinasofia.es/exposiciones/actuales/principio-potosi.html
http://marceloexposito.net/entresuenos/

English translation: Elena Kizima.

"Where there is resistance, there it is necessary to film" (Serge Daney, with regard to Straub/Huillet)
"Others also have eyes and are astonished" (*The Antigone of Sophocles* by Bertolt Brecht)

On 8 October 2000 an unknown Emilio Silva Barrera published in *La Crónica de León*, a modest Spanish local newspaper, an article titled "My grandfather was also a missing person [*desaparecido*]". The article announced the intention of the author to open the anonymous common grave without an exact location, where his grandfather and another thirteen civilians were buried. They were murdered by Falange gunmen in October 1936, a few months before the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. This year, therefore, is the tenth anniversary of this minor event that would anticipate with time what nowadays we are living in Spain as a real psychosocial earthquake: the movement that names itself "recovery of the historical memory", whose two more obvious results are as follows. On the one hand, it gave rise to a wave of exhumations of mortal remains of people missing in the first decade of the repression period organized by the military men rebelled against the government of the Spanish Republic and, on the other, the public debate — that had never happened earlier in the history of Spain in such an intensive way, not even throughout 35 years of post-dictatorship and formal democracy that are between the death of general Franco and nowadays — on the necessity to investigate the truth about the precise mechanisms adopted by the fascist repression in Spain in 1930s and 1940s, to apply the justice versus the immensity of crimes committed — that cannot be qualified but crimes against humanity — and to offer reparation for the suffering inflicted on the victims during decades.

When a common grave is excavated, when the corpse of a disappeared person in Spain is exhumed, a powerful image materializes. The images frequently showed in TV programmes, journalistic reports either of literary or artistic style, usually put stress on the emotive shake that the meeting with a relative disappeared provokes in people. It is a way of looking for the empathy of the spectator or the reader through the sentimental identification with the families upset for sixty or seventy years over the crimes on which the last Spanish military dictatorship was based. But it is worth while observing the way how the process of graves location is commonly described and an exhumation is documented in the information channels that numerous Asociaciones para la Recuperación de la Memoria Historica [Associations for the Recovery of the Historical Memory] emerged all over the country have been provided with: on the one hand, the data are organized and expressed, in general, with obstinate enumerative exhaustiveness and the images narrate the story almost with distance and coldness; on the other hand, there exist a tendency to multiply the points of view, the number of voices that speak from the affective multiplicity but without being reduced to the mere emotional empathy. The effect of sense that this narrative mode produces consists of observing in a meticulous way a process that is needed to put together an infinity of abilities and knowledge, both specialized and informal, both written and oral (of local historians, old witnesses of the events, relatives and friends implied, forensic surgeons, lawyers, anthropologists, archaeologists, voluntary collaborators from all over the world etc.). What it is shown in this way is the complex and not simplified representation of the process that results in that one disappeared person returns, not to induce commiseration, but to implant one truth: that of his/her real existence; and to refute a supported negation: the denial that the collective Spanish memory seems to have self-imposed about the dimension reached by the crimes against humanity committed against professionals, militants, sympathizers, military men and left-wing civilians, republicans, revolutionaries, reformists or progressives in Spain during the decades of 1930 and 1940.

This is a method that affects the spectator conscience beyond any identification of humanist type: without the excuse of an emotive proximity with the victims, anyone who observes this process from a right distance facing the data and images is strongly interpellatedin such a way: what attitude to adopt and what to do today facing this revealed truth?

The image of the skeleton of a Spanish dissapeared person murdered as a result of fascist violence that is exhumed of a grave NN in any place of the peninsular territory perfectly resumes the apocryphal tension between Messianism and politics that chapter VI of Walter Benjamin´s Theses “On the Concept of History” contains. Even being known, it is worth while dwelling upon it for a moment:

> To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize “how it really was.” It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger. For historical materialism it is a question of holding fast to a picture of the past, just as if it had unexpectedly thrust itself, in a moment of danger, on the historical subject. The danger threatens the stock of tradition as much as its recipients. For both it is one and the same: handing itself over as the tool of the ruling classes. In every epoch, the attempt must be made to deliver tradition anew from the conformism which is on the point of overwhelming it. For the Messiah arrives not merely as the Redeemer; he also arrives as the vanquisher of the Anti-Christ. The only writer of history with the gift of setting alight the sparks of hope in the past, is the one who is convinced of this: that not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

The Benjamin´s Thesis elaborates this unstable chain of equivalence: the memory is revolutionary as it rescues a fragment of the past that is in danger; this rescue, when happens, is transformed into an image that flashes suddenly like a spark of hope: a Messianic flash that redeems the present and simultaneously defeats the historical class enemy. And this defeat begins to be inflicted, to finish the story, just when one manages to pull what is to be remembered off the hands of the dominant class since it is menaced to disappear. The relation between past and present

stops, therefore, being lineal, contrary to what the most vulgar historicism would like. Otherwise, the past determines the present so much as the latter has the power to extract of the past redeeming images or memories, whose evocation cherishes the revolutionary power, exercising this way a retrospective rescue that neither repeats nor imitates but actualizes the past in the present. In the interview included in our video Emilio Silva affirms the following: between the living and the dead exhumed, who in the past were made to disappear, a dialogue is produced. A skeleton reveals to the living some truth by means of an embodied language: a cranium splintered by a shot at a short distance, a wedding ring, a private keepsake or an evidence for the history pressed in a handle. Nevertheless, this language also includes a paradox: its own epiphanic dimension. Not always is it easy to perceive exactly what the dead express, or all what they could end up telling us. A memory that flashes in the moment of a danger works upon the conscience in the same way as it does the vision of a child whose head comes out for the first time at the moment of his/her birth or the contemplation of the corpse of a missing person that is brought unexpectedly to light: no matter how much it may be rationally known beforehand that they are crouched down there, hidden; no matter how much their arrival may be expected or have been announced or even looked for, just at the moment of their appearance a shock is inevitably produced: it is an epiphanic moment. This refulgent image speaks and at the same time it is ineffable: it produces an effect that seems to be on this side of the verb, in a stage different from that of the word. It seems even to be beyond politics, leaving it in suspense for a moment but without denying it: on the contrary, this shock is rather a hinge that articulates the relation between a previous political process, which causes it, and a later one, which this shock helps to break out in a determinant way.

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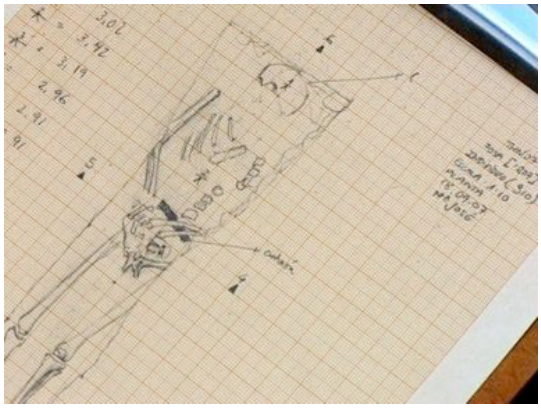
143.353 (the eyes do not want to be always shut) is a project initially thought as a contribution to the exhibition *The Potosí Principle* opened in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in May 2010. The central topics of the above-mentioned exhibition (for example, the archetypical continuity of the process of primitive accumulation of capital between the different moments of the possible beginning of the modernity, and the inseparable interlacing of modernization and colonialism: that is, the exploitation and the genocide as basis of capitalist modernity) are supported by the following *modus operandi*: many artists and activists from different parts of the world were asked to realize projects that would answer a series of works — basically paintings — originated from several moments of the Spanish baroque or the Latin-American colonial baroque. In particular, our project simoultaneously starts from the painting of the Seville-based Lucas Valdés *Santiago batallando con los moros (Santiago battling with the Moors)* (1690) and the painting of an anonymous author, dated back to the middle of the 18th century, which represents the Spanish King Felipe V under the characteristics of Santiago Matamoros. The first image is from the permanent collection of the Museo de Bellas Artes of Córdoba (Spain), while the second one belongs to the Museo Nacional de Arte of La Paz (Bolivia). The location of the images on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean makes possible to state the following question: How do certain specific articulations between power and visual representations circulate, updating in the (historical) time and in the (geopolitical) space?; and to consider this interrogation at the moment when the bicentenary of the independence of most of the current States-nations of Latin America is celebrated.

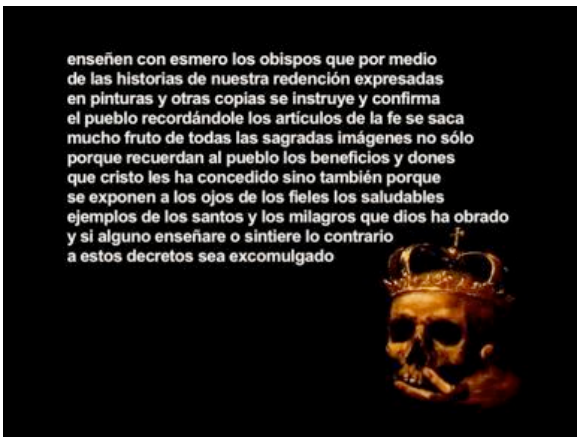
To interpret both paintings this project has made use of the principal tools utilized by the Spanish movement of Recovery of the Historical Memory in order to implement its peculiar "model Antigone". This model consists of multiplying the disobedience to both not written laws (the silence on how we should take charge of the magnitude of the genocide executed at the beginning of the Franco regime) and others really written (for example, this disobedience demands explicitly or tacitly that there should be revoked the way in which the Law of Amnesty dictated in 1977, only two years after the death of the dictator, has been imposed *de facto* as a "full stop law" [*ley de punto*

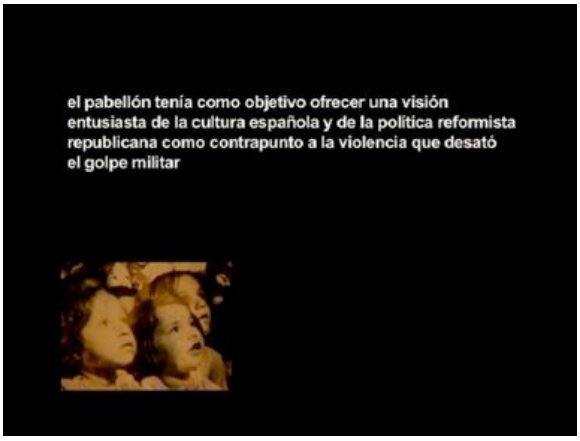
final] or all kinds of individual responsibility in the political crimes committed by the repressive machine during the first years of the military dictatorship and its prolegomena during the Civil War), a disobedience that is effected by means of tools that are not others than the *excavation* and the *exhumation*. What would it mean, therefore, in this sense, *to excavate* in an image? What kind of truth does appear or return when an evidence, a fragment, a meaning previously buried, silenced or disappeared is exhumed of it? That is why we have decided to turn our point of view immediately to the original place of the myth of Santiago, the myth that has been for centuries the engine of a certain idea of the Hispanic world: this place is the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, erected on the enclave where hypothetically the apostle — the right-hand man of Jesus Christ, to whom the popular belief attributed even to be a brother of the very same God's son — was buried with the head cut and placed under one of his arms as a result of his Martyrdom in Palestine, after having invested long trips and years of dedication to the Christianization of the Iberian Peninsula. We have travelled to Compostela together with other several thousands of pilgrims from all over the world who are doing it during the current Year of Saint James [*Año Xacoveo*]. Having arrived at this fundamental enclave, our project initiates a long, sinuous and irregular transit to make us cross the historical construction of the myth of Santiago who helped literally to defeat the Moslems during the "Reconquista" of the Peninsula on the part of the Christendom. As original references we have taken the first known graphic image of Santiago Matamoros, as well as its sculptural representation installed exactly in the baroque altar of the Cathedral. It is where a vertical axis between the supposed remains of the apostle preserved in the underground crypt — below — and the God's eye in which the arches of the principal vault come together—above— is structured. We have tried to understand this way what the formal and symbolic archetype is (the vertical structure sky - earth from which the Soldier of Christ descends upon a white horse to help to annihilate the unbelievers and enemies of the Christendom; Santiago carrying a flag and a sword with which he beats cruelly, at a great height, from up to down, while he rides, who are seen wound by the mount, laid on the ground) that historically did of Santiago a "genocidal model" on having transformed into the *Mataindios [Killer of the Indians]* of the colonized America.

felipe V el animoso rey entre 1700 y 1746
primer monarca borbón en españa aquí lo vemos
caracterizado como santiago en un cuadro anónimo
de mediados del siglo XVIII conservado en el
museo nacional de arte de la paz bolivia



We have observed the meticulous work of cleaning of *Santiago battling with the Moors* by Lucas Valdés on the part of the restoration team of the Museo Reina Sofía so that the picture could be exhibited in *The Potosí Principle*. And, across the familiar affiliation between Lucas Valdés and his father Valdés Leal, we have dwelled upon the moment when the Spanish painting constitutes historically the epitome of the guidelines expressed by the Council of Trent to set up a use of artistic images that should contribute to the restoration of the catholic hegemony in Europe emerged in the conflict opened by the Protestant Reform. Iconographic apotheosis baroque of the Antireform versus Protestant Iconoclasm: the ideological struggle in the bosom of the visual representation. Of two classic pieces of baroque painting of Valdés Leal installed in the Church of the Hospital of Charity of Seville in 1672, the first one — *In ictu oculi* — quotes in its title a passage of the First Epistle of San Pablo to the Corinthians: "In a moment, in a wink, the dead shall be resuscitated incorrupt, and we shall be transformed", while the second painting, *Finis gloriae mundi* (*The end of the earthly glories)* represents a scenery of corpses and skeletons accumulated both in individual and common graves; the scenery that is appeared again in *La procesión de la muerte (The procession of death)* by José Gutierrez Solana painted in 1930. The fact that this painting was included in the Pavilion of modern orientation constructed to represent the Spanish Republic in the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* in Paris in 1937 could be easily explained because certain aesthetic eclecticism seems to meet adequately the aim that this pavilion had: to make possible that a great number of forces in the cultural field should come together to produce this way a propaganda artefact that would help to praise the public opinion and the help of the western governments in favour of the Spanish Republic which was fiercely attacked by the fascist military upraising from one year earlier.





Nevertheless, a more detailed observation of the artistic-political thinking of the driving force of the Pavilion, the young communist Josep Renau, appointed as General Director of Fine Arts of the Government of the Spanish Republic when he was only 29, allows us to extract some more complex conclusions on the following dilemma: the reason of the formal eclecticism — photomontages engraved in craft and folk art, abstraction along with realism, syncretism of modern and baroque styles — of a Pavilion that was inspired clearly in an avant-garde propaganda as radical as it was the semiotic architecture of the Pavilion of the Soviet Union for the Press International Exhibition (*Pressa*) in Cologne in 1928, a collective work designed and constructed under the guidance of El Lissitzky. A booklet — *La función social del cartel [The social function of poster]* — published in 1937 provides us with the key. Renau categorically participates in the debates supported by the progressive area of culture to find out the best way of contributing, through the cultural tools, to the support of the republican legality in the prolegomena of the Civil War. Renau strongly attacks to the heart of the common sense historically installed upon the relations between art, politics and social activism, according to which the progressive politization of

art should always bear the impoverishment of its aesthetic excellence. Excessive artistic practice within the political contest, overdetermined in 1937 by the pro-coup aggression to the Republic and the growth of the European fascism, according to Renau, supposed an opportunity, not for a simplification, but for a major complexity of the avant-garde language. Major sophistication that, in case of the Spanish propaganda art during the Civil War, should be achieved by means of the articulation of three elements or the conjugation of three different "raw materials": the experimental achievements of the avant-garde in its previous autonomous phase, the efficiency in mass-media communication attained by the capitalist commercial publicity, and the peculiar local imagery of every particular nation, that Renau, in case of Spain, discovered in the baroque visual representation, finding, therefore, in the Baroque an effective historical precedent of art and propaganda articulation without prejudice. In our project, a visual common place of the struggle against the European fascisms, the *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso, stops being the essentialized icon of the aesthetic idealism to be returned to its context (it was one of the major works produced specifically for the Republican Pavilion in 1937) and to its condition of a propaganda artefact that, like Renau wished, syncretizes the structure of the baroque representation, the anti-naturalistic realism of the avant-garde language and the privileged dimension of the cinema as a way of mass communication.

This project, definitely, considers in an anti-idealistic way the historical polemic about the relations between images and politics. It proposes to explore genuinely the following: How do artistic representations constitute and how could they help in searching to constitute moments and specific material articulations of social, political and economic conflicts? It operates through semantic displacements between concepts and images: between the anonymity of the graves NN, where a great number of the victims of the pro-Franco genocide still can be found, and the pomposity that indicates the remains of the Patron of Spain; between the restoration to update the pictorial images by museum professionals and the political or cultural restorations (we propose to excavate in the image of the King Juan Carlos I — designated by Francisco Franco in the 60s as his successor to the State Headquarters — proving the comeback to the Spain of 80s — as a symbol of the democratic transition — of the *Guernica*, the picture that was originally thought to represent the massive murder of civil population on the part of the European fascist international, who intervened in Spain in support of the responsible for genocide general Franco); between the two components of the big double denial engraved in the Spanish socio-historical conscience: the classic colonial genocide and the modern fascist genocide.

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On 22 September 2008 the Plataforma de Víctimas de Desapariciones Forzadas por el Franquismo (Committee of Victims of Forced Disappearences during the Franco's regime) delivered to Baltazar Garzón, the Judge of the Audiencia Nacional (one of the Spanish High Courts), several lists containing the total of 143.353 names of people whose disappearance during the Civil War and the first years of the military dictatorship was possible to prove. A systematization of these lists as well as the application of standard criteria in the definition of the word "victim" and a strict temporal restriction, resulted in rounding this number up to 113.000. At the time when this project is being realized the Associations for the Recovery of the Historical Memory have located and excavated throughout the last ten years in the whole territory of Spain approximately 150 graves with the remains of roughly 1.500 persons. The excavation appeared in this project was filmed in 2007. It lasted two years over an area of 3.000 square meters of which 309 corpses were exhumed. This area is located next to the Monastery of Uclés, the historical headquarters of the Orden de los Caballeros de Santiago (Order of the Knights of Saint James), visited by the Reyes Católicos (Catholic Monarchs) in order to request help of Santiago Matamoros at the time of besieging Granada, last Moslem enclave in the Peninsula: from 1493 — the year after the capture of Granada, the expulsion of the Jews of the peninsular territory and the arrival to America of the marine expedition commanded by Christopher Columbus — Isabel and Fernando themselves managed this Order of Knighthood. In 1936, after the beginning of the Civil War, the Monastery was assaulted by the supporters of the Republic and turned into hospital of the 8th Medical Body of the Popular Army until the end of the war. It was in this epoch when the area of the bakery at the feet of the Monastery was turned into unexpected cemetery. When the forces participants in the coup took the area, the Monastery was converted in prison where political prisioners were interned: from 1940 till 1943 the death of 316 persons between the ages of 3 and 72 has been documented, of which 160 were executed by firing squad and 156 died as a result of the famine, ill-treatment, tortures and illness without having any medical assistance. The Association for the Recovery of the Historical Memory of Cuenca patiently exhumed them all, as the one who pulls, one by one, the arms of those who were thrown to the feet of the horses.

TRUTH
JUSTICE
REPARATION

143.353 (los ojos no quieren estar siempre cerrados), instalación en la exposición *Principio Potosí. ¿Còmo podemos cantar el canto del Señor en tierra ajena?*, en el Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2010.

Dos canales de vídeo (canal 1: 40 minutos, canal 2: 25 minutos), en una doble proyección paralela y asincrónica; dos bancos de asiento alargados, seis auriculares (tres por banco, frente a cada una de las proyecciones). La instalación se muestra muda en el ambiente; se puede escuchar alternativamente el audio del canal izquierdo o el audio del canal derecho a través de cada uno de los tres auriculares distribuidos por canal de proyección.

143.353 (los ojos no quieren estar siempre cerrados)

filmado en

catedral de santiago de compostela
museo nacional centro de arte reina sofía madrid
museo de bellas artes de sevilla
iglesia del hospital de la caridad de sevilla
exteriores en madrid y uclés

con

equipo de restauración del museo reina sofía
paloma calopa / ana iruretagoyena / francesca secchi / josé francisco lorén

asociación para la recuperación de la memoria histórica – cuenca

grupo arqueox y colaboradores: isaac muñoz / manuel garcía / daniel izquierdo /
rafa giraldo / mar dorero / maría josé luceño

emilio silva

músicas citadas

hanns eisler + bertolt brecht / spruch 1939
dietrich fischer-dieskau bariton
aribert reimann klavier

richard wagner / das rheingold (1869)
pierre boulez + orchester der bayreuther festpiele

mauricio kagel / sankt-bach-passion (1985)
süddeuscher rundfunk stuttgart

asmus tietchens / formen letzter hausmusik (1984)
united dairies records

la bien pagá / ramón perelló + juan mostazo
interpretada por miguel de molina (década de 1930)

la otra cara de un jardín (francisco felipe) /
búsqueda del consuelo en los amaneceres fríos (1982)

luciano berio / ritorno degli snovidenia (1976)
ensemble intercontemporain pierre boulez conductor

escritos citados

bertolt brecht / antigonemodell / antígona de sófocles (1948)
traducción de herbert wolfgang jung

brechts antigone des sophokles / herausgegebe von werner hecht (1988)

américo castro / la realidad histórica de españa (1954)

nicolás cabrillana ciézar / santiago matamoros historia e imagen (1999)

xosé m. sánchez sánchez / santiago el hijo del trueno (2009)

santiago sebastián / contrarreforma y barroco (1989)

jordana mendelson / el pabellón español parís 1937 (2009)

josep renau / la función social del cartel (1937)

emilio silva / mi abuelo también fue un desaparecido (2000)

manuel espina / la historia y la memoria
(de lo individual a lo colectivo y viceversa) (2004)
en aa.vv. la memoria de los olvidados.
un debate sobre el silencio de la represión franquista

films adicionales citados

dr. macityre's x-ray film (1896)

lumiére / le squelette joyeux (1898)

living theatre / signals through the flames (1983)

javier setó / el valle de las espadas (1963)

josé val del omar / fuego en castilla (1958-1960)

sergei eisenstein + grigory alexandrov / filmaciones en méxico (1931)

fotografías adicionales citadas

dora maar / documentación fotográfica del proceso de realización
del "guernica" cuadro de pablo picasso (1937)

143.353 (los ojos no quieren estar siempre cerrados)
es un trabajo de marcelo expósito

editado por oriol sánchez / edición de sonido por sonometraje.com
(jonathan darch y jordi juncadella)

producido con la ayuda del museo nacional centro de arte reina sofía (madrid)
para la exposición "principio potosí" (2010) comisariada por alice creischer /
max jorge hinderer / andreas siekmann

filmación en uclés producida con la ayuda del centre de cultura contemporània
de barcelona (cccb) para la exposición "en transició" (2007)

agradecimientos

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gracias a las instituciones respectivas por los preceptivos permisos de filmación

143.353 (los ojos no quieren estar siempre cerrados) es el quinto trabajo
de la serie entre sueños. ensayos sobre la nueva imaginación política

dedicado a pere portabella /
y a juan goytisolo por reivindicacion del conde don julián

para mi hijo manuel y su madre verónica iglesia

(c) marcelo expósito 2010

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