

Alma Soto Zárraga\*

# THE INFLUENCE OF '68 ON POLITICAL CARTOONISTS<sup>1</sup>

**F**ifty years after the massacre, no one has been arrested or sentenced for the bloody Tlatelolco events. Despite the attempts to silence further inquiry about this atrocious, authoritarian act, a wounded society made sure that the slogan “October 2 Will Never Be Forgotten!” would be written in the pages of history forever. The country’s cartoonists joined in the work of keeping that memory alive without faltering and not knowing that they would transform entire generations of citizens.

Gustavo Díaz Ordaz could not tolerate jokes about his image in the press of the time. His evil temper became harsher and harsher, and then 1968 came around. In the year in which it was impossible to differ, the cartoonists differed big time.

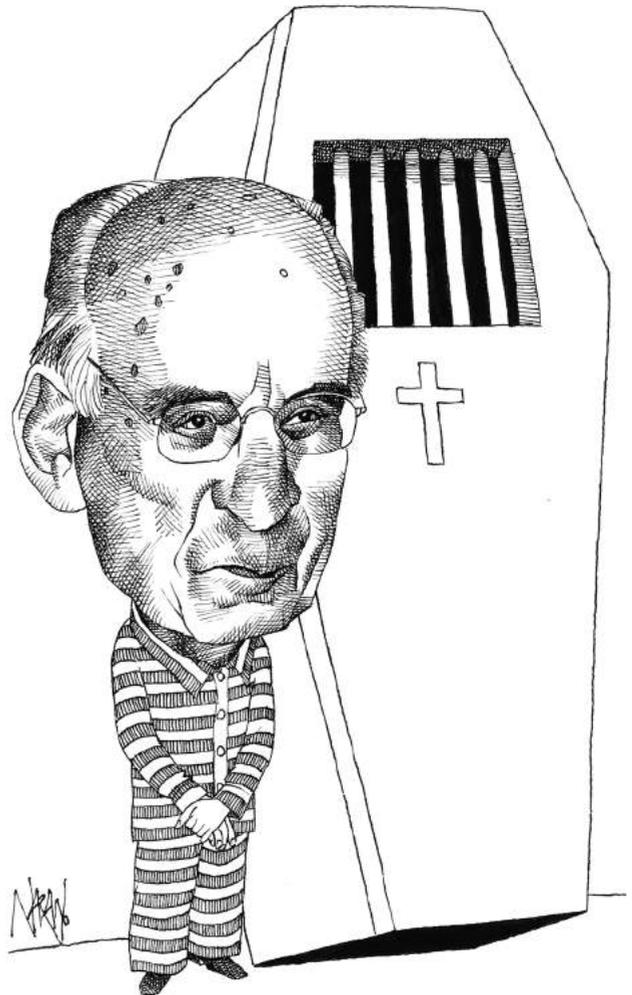
## **The Artifices of Social Literacy: Before, During, and After 1968**

After the 1968 student movement broke out and was repressed, Mexican political caricature, which was already in transformation, took on new energy among cartoonists who exercised their craft critically, bravely, and with humor. They did not know that their work would serve to teach the citizenry political literacy, to change forms of behavior, and begin a democratizing movement

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Unless otherwise indicated, all caricatures are by Naranjo, with the permission of Tlatelolco University Cultural Center.



October 2, *El Universal*, October 2, 2003, 34.6 x 22.3 cm (ink on paper).



Gustavo Díaz Ordaz could not tolerate jokes about his image in the press of the time. His evil temper became harsher and harsher, and then 1968 came around.

one who saw the comics as an instrument for political persuasion.

His characters were exaggerated stereotypes like Calzonzin (“emperor” in the Purépecha language); Doña Eme; the strongman Don Perpetuo del Rosal; or Venancio, the corner store owner; then there was San Garabato (Saint Squiggle), his comic strip’s mythical town. All this portrayed and criticized what readers had never seen before. In 1957, Rius began to publish in the daily newspaper *Ovaciones*, thanks to a recommendation from his colleague Abel Quezada, of whom we will speak later. In 1963, he came up against presidential candidate Díaz Ordaz in the magazine *Política*. Then, in 1965, he published his celebrated *Los Supermachos* and in 1968, *Los Agachados* (The Bowed Ones).

Since his youth, Helioflores had published in the *Diario de Xalapa* (Jalapa Daily) and had dropped out of architecture school to do caricature full time. In 1964, he was publishing his cartoons in the newspaper *Novedades* (News) and was about to leave to study drawing on a scholarship at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Rius knew him from the cartoons he had sent when applying for a job at the magazine *Siempre!* (Always) and decided to contact him to invite him to contribute to the cartoon supplement of the magazine *Sucesos* (Events), *El Mitote Ilustrado* (The Illustrated Kerfuffle) that Rius was editing. That was how Helio began to send his cartoons from New York, thus beginning an epistolary relationship that would become friendship and give rise to joint publications like *La Garrapata*, *el azote de los bueyes* (The Tick, the Oxen’s Scourge) after his return to Mexico.

Rogelio Naranjo, a member of the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) was an illustrator for union newspapers and the Mexican Workers’ Party (PMT) and a collaborator of the “*El Gallo Ilustrado*” (The Illustrated Rooster) section

in the country. However, years before, that neo-revolutionary nature of the cartoonist’s trade had already been gestating.

A little before 1968, a group of young caricaturists—they could be called the Mid-Century Generation or the Generation of the Break—began publishing in independent media. But they also broke into the traditional media, breaking with the official vision, making an effort to be up to the challenge of the circumstances and infusing their sketches with the scathing criticism that that historic moment required. They drank from the fountain of Rius (Eduardo del Río [1934-2017]), whose cartoons, graphic jokes, and comic strips began appearing in 1954 in the humor magazine *Jajá* (Ha Ha); from then on, he stood out for his need to break with the official world, adulation, and ceremony. For writer Carlos Monsiváis, Rius was the only

of the *El Día* (The Day) daily. In 1968, he contacted the Strike Committee leaders and became part of the movement, creating placards, banners, sketches, and engravings. Though he was anonymous in a crowd, Naranjo, as he is known, was proud to see his sketches on posters, leaflets, and stickers at demonstrations and student marches down Reforma Boulevard, since that was a way of circumventing censorship and reaching a wider audience. When events began in '68, he went to the university to look for a leader to tell him he was at the movement's disposal. He met with a mid-level leader, Romeo González, a student leader at the School of Political Sciences, who said he couldn't pay him. Naranjo responded that he wasn't there for money and said, "I'm an inciter of consciences; I like to be in these kinds of things and I'll do it for free!"

While the student movement proclaimed that it would "win the streets," the cartoonists were winning quarter

**Abel Quezada was one of the first who ventured an anti-solemnity position in the press. He systematically and humorously exposed the figures of post-revolutionary presidentialism.**

pages away from the censors in the big newspapers. The editorial norm of the time was being a-critical or even reverent in the face of power. The task of the cartoonists was to use humor to beat censorship. Abel Quezada was one of the first who ventured an anti-solemnity position in the press. He systematically and humorously exposed the figures of post-revolutionary presidentialism using characters like "The Hooded One," "Don Money-Spender,"

"Matías the Charro" (Union Bureaucrat)," "The One-Dimensional Peasant," "The Charitable Lady of Las Lomas," "The Preventive Police," etc.

For Rius, Quezada's triumph was due to his "mocking, disrespectful humor," but he also published several cartoons about the student conflict before the attack in Tlatelolco. For example, his work "Words at Rest," published in the newspaper *Excelsior* on September 14, 1968, is about the March of Silence in response to the Díaz Ordaz administration's hollow rhetoric after days of uninterrupted repression. In the cartoon, two white doves (the symbol of the Olympics and peace), look at each other and say, "Silence is louder." Meanwhile, most newspapers barely reported the march and gave no precise figures about the number of demonstrators.<sup>2</sup> The cartoon seems subtle, but nothing made those in power more uncomfortable than a dissident in the press. The censorship of photographs —only one photographic report about the march was published in all the print media— was made up for as the political scenario was recreated in an eighth of a page.

On October 2, 1968, a few hours before the massacre, "La cultura en México" (Culture in Mexico), a supplement of the weekly *Siempre!* (Always), published "Seis puntos de vista sobre



el delito de la disolución social” (Six Points of View about the Crime of “Social Dissolution”). The article mentions a Quezada cartoon that suggests the resignation of university President Javier Barros Sierra (1966-1970).

After the massacre, confusion reigned in the print media, and expressions like “bloody encounter” or “fierce fighting” were the euphemisms to avoid saying “gunned down by the army” or asking the government for an explanation. But, *Excélsior* published one of the most memorable challenges to censorship and “official versions” of the era: a Quezada cartoon on October 3, 1968 that consisted of a black rectangle titled “Why?” For writer Carlos Monsiváis, that “had the force of a deluge of manifestos.”

### **A Manifesto against Repression: *La Garrapata* (The Tick)**

In his book *Los moneros de México* (Mexico’s Cartoonists), Rius says that, “a little pissed off” about what had just happened on October 2, he and other colleagues began publishing the bi-weekly magazine *La Garrapata* (The Tick). Naranjo said it was a response to the massacre to denounce everything Díaz Ordaz was doing. This “bi-weekly of humor and bad habits” was co-edited by AB, Helioflores, Naranjo, and Rius, who called themselves the Politbureau or the Central Committee.

The first official issue was published November 8, 1968 sporting a cover by Rius. The headline was a question: “Do we have a legal or a right-wing regime?”<sup>3</sup> The editorial states, “Today, a solemn, tranquil, black, sinister day, you receive the first issue of *La Garrapata*.” It cost four pesos, a rather high price for a publication at the time, but that guaranteed that it had no “official line” handed down to it because it contained no advertising and had no other income or subsidies of any kind.

Almost all the pages in the issues 1 to 13 made some mention of or vindicated the student movement. They referred to the witch-hunt against intellectuals and journalists, to the preponderant role of the army, to authoritarianism, or to the harassment of educational institutions like the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) or the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN).

This publication made it impossible for the memory of the movement to be erased, and later made it possible for broad sectors of the population to become politicized

through political humor. It also turned laughter into a very popular political act, an exercise of dissidence to defeat the hitherto untouchable figures of presidentialism.

We should remember that at that time, the Ministry of the Interior controlled all publications. Yet another office distributed all the newsprint, so it was almost impossible to get out from under its control, since the authorities threatened the media with cutting off their supply of paper.

The magazine disturbed the regime so much that, in early 1969, an attempt was made to kidnap Rius; this was denounced in issue four of *La Garrapata*. On January 29, 1969, he was actually kidnapped and taken to the Toluca Snowy Mountain, where he was subjected to a simulated firing squad; it is public knowledge that he escaped from that alive because former President Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, a distant relative, intervened.



*Never to Be Forgotten*, *El Universal*, February 13, 2002, 35.1 x 22.1 cm (ink on paper).

Naranjo used to say that Rius remained frightened for a very long time. They had told him to do something else for a living and that if he did not, they would not only kill him but his entire family, of whom they had photos and information about the places they frequented. Despite everything, they decided to continue since, in their opinion, the only thing that could provide them with certain security was that the people threatening them were more frightened than the magazine's publishers. So, they decided to continue publishing and making denunciations even more vigorously.

Using the slogan "Neither blackmail nor threats will make us improve the quality of this magazine," they dropped the price to three pesos and then to 2.60 pesos, and made it a weekly that came out on Wednesdays! They fought to keep it on newspaper stands as they commented and condemned the wars in the world—with Vietnam as the center focus—and U.S. intervention in national politics, as well as the constant Mexican government repression against its own populace.

The jokes continued to center on the students who had become political prisoners or the torture they suffered under interrogation in the basements of the Attorney General's Office secret service. Mentions of disappeared detainees and political prisoners were a constant, as these practices were common during and after the movement.

The magazine continued to exercise furious criticism until issue 32, when, after stating in the editorial that threats and political or official pressure had had no impact, the editors announced the end of the magazine's first era. By that time, *La Garrapata* had become the breeding ground for young, talented political cartoonists like Vadillo, Checo Valdés, Efrén, Feggo, Sergio Arau, El Fisgón, Alán, Rocha, and Jis.

The magazines *Política* and *¿Por qué?* (Why), also critical media, closed due to government pressure through the paper monopoly Productora e Importadora de Papel (PIPSA), and also because they were raided and their collaborators persecuted by the police. On April 20, 1970, *La*



*Garrapata* came out again, with an editorial denouncing this same official pressure mechanism.

By 1971, after the June 10 massacre, Helioflores stated in an interview that when the shock troops known as the Falcons went out to kill students, the city's mayor said, "The Falcons don't exist." So, he did a cartoon in which a drunkard is holding on to a lamppost, saying, "Alcohol doesn't exist."<sup>4</sup> He took it to the newspaper *Novedades*: they liked it, but it was never published. Censorship was very harsh at the time, and particularly in that newspaper.

Implacable against Díaz Ordaz, Naranjo parodied the logo of Johnnie Walker whiskey using the president's face, emulating a dandy walking seriously and very elegantly over coffins, to remember the 1968 attack. This image was reproduced in the poster for the film *1968* in August 1973.

## The Solidarity Movement After the 1985 Earthquake

The committed work of these and other cartoonists in different media (magazines like *Proceso*; newspapers like *La Jornada* and *Unomásuno*) also reflected the exceptional public solidarity in the face of the Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) administration's incapacity after the September 19, 1985 earthquake. One of the results of that movement was the September 19 Union of Neighbors and Earthquake Victims, whose Cultural Commission carried out several artistic activities as a form of resistance. One was the publication of Rafael "El Fisgón" Barajas's first book, *Sobras escogidas* (Selected Leftovers), a large collection of cartoons about the earthquake.

In his cartoon "Discovery," Naranjo denounced the clandestine jails and special dungeons discovered both in the



"No... how could I forget?" *In Perpetuity*, *El Universal*, June 13, 2004, 34.2 x 22.4 cm (ink on paper).

offices of the Attorney General and those of the Mexico City judicial police when one of their buildings collapsed in the earthquake. This exposed the methods being used to obtain "witness testimony" to implicate innocent people.

## The Didactic Comic Strip and The Spawns of Neoliberalism

Naranjo was a founding political cartoonist at the magazine *Proceso*; as such, he had a full page to himself. His criticism disturbed President Carlos Salinas (1988-1994) so much that he wanted him fired; so his work ended up being put on the last page, where it became an emblem of the publication until his death.

Helguera and El Fisgón published *El sexenio me da risa* (The Administration Makes Me Laugh), a kind of didactic comic book that emulated Rius's work. The book began a series of comic books that included *El sexenio ya no me da risa* (The Administration No Longer Makes Me Laugh); *El sexenio me da pena* (The Administration Embarrasses Me); and *El sexenio se me hace chiquito* (The Administration Seems Short to Me).<sup>5</sup> Among other topics, they all criticized those in power and dealt with the problems facing the educational institutions and student movements of the following eras.

In February 1994, Helguera, El Fisgón, and Rius, together with the Posada publishing house, created the political humor magazine *El Chahuistle, la enfermedad de los nopales* (Blight, the Disease of Nopales), which ran to 41 issues. After adding Patricio and then José Hernández, they abandoned the project in 1995 because publisher Fernando Mendizábal R. defrauded them and kept the rights to the magazine's name. As cartoonist Hernández said, he continued publishing it as an "apocryphal *Chahuistle*" with other sketch artists and content.

The bi-weekly *El Chahuistle* gave its readership another renewed tool for politicization. It became very popular

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among university students and staff at the time of the January 1994 Zapatista uprising, a very common topic in the magazine's pages. The project was very similar to that of *La Garrapata*: confronting authoritarianism, censorship, the army's violation of individual rights, the crisis of credibility in the institutions, and the frank decline in the presidential image due to the cases of corruption and impunity associated with it.

It published comics whose characters portrayed the police practice of torture and their cynicism and impunity: "Las aventuras del Sargento Mike Goodness y el Cabo Chocorrol" (The Adventures of Sergeant Mike Goodness and Corporal Chocolate-Cake-Roll), by Fisgón, and the ups and downs of recurring characters in his books like *La Beba Toloache* (Love Potion Babe) or *El Charro Machorro* (The Macho Cowboy) and *El Deputado Sí* (Congressman Yes), all neoliberal prototypes. *La cocina de Don Chepino* (Don Chepino's Kitchen) and *Don Quijotillo Quitamanchas and Ancho Panza* (Little Don Quixote Stain Remover and Wide Belly),<sup>6</sup> by Patricio, also reflected the political class's lack of character and the poverty and ingeniousness of the lowest rungs of society.

On February 25, 1996, the first founders and collaborators of *El Chahuistle* published the first issue of *El Chamuco y los hijos del Averno* (Old Nick and the Sons of Hell). In its first era, they edited it collectively and continued to publish the most savage cartoons possible at the time. They insisted on creating these humorous political satire magazines for different reasons, such as feeding the resistance to the neoliberal offensive (aggressive budget cuts for university education, the imposition of tuition fees, and union busting, among many other measures taken to dismantle the welfare state).

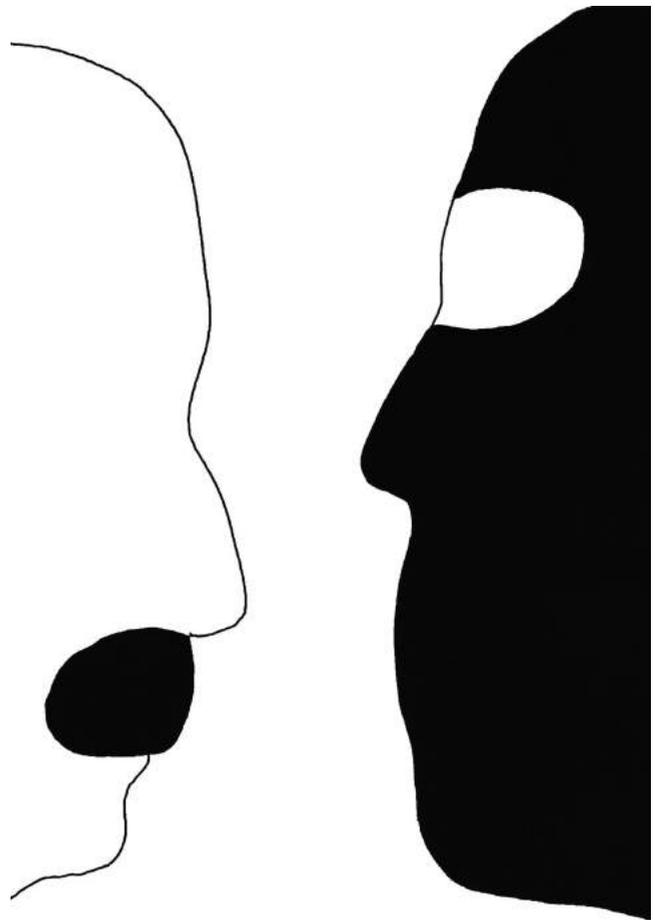
Also in 1996, Helguera and Hernández went to work at the weekly magazine *Proceso* to illustrate its last page, which the great Fontanarrosa had made iconic with his *Boogie, el Aceitoso* (Greasy Boogie), a tradition begun by Naranjo. The pair founded the section "Mono sapiens" (Monkey/Cartoonist Sapiens). *Los hijos del Averno* continued to publish daily cartoons in the national press, but it was in *El Chamuco* where they would put out their most daring work.

Many more creators contributed to *El Chamuco*, also keeping alive the memory of the '68 events in cartoons by Ahumada, Luis Fernando, Noé, Jans, Rapé, Jis and Trino,

Vico, Cintia Bolio, among others. An editorial dedicated to October 2 read,

Some brainy theoreticians say that '68 was a milestone in the modern history of Mexico, but the truth is that it was a beat-the-shit-outta-you-stone.<sup>7</sup> However, we would have to admit that after the student movement of Mexico and the world, everything changed. Before, the status quo was unmovable: it was impossible to question the president; the United States was a huge power; and nobody could talk about sex. Now, however, nobody questions the sexual potency of the president of the United States.

The last line alludes to the sex scandal involving Bill Clinton, who was on the cover of that commemorative issue, published October 4, 1998.



HELIOFLORÉS

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El Chamuco filled its pages with events like the 1999 UNAM strike to change tuition regulations, or Andrés Manuel López Obrador, then mayor of Mexico City, being stripped of immunity and having his political rights taken away in 2004 to prevent him from running for president.

In November 2000, before businessman/rancher Vicente Fox took office as president (2000-2006), the first era of *El Chamuco* came to an end. Its issue 116 began the second era on February 14, 2007.

### Other Fruits of '68

By presidential decree, on November 27, 2001, the Special Prosecutor's Office for Social and Political Movements of the Past was founded. Its only achievement after four years of work was that on June 30, 2006, Luis Echeverría Álvarez, Díaz Ordaz's minister of the interior and president at the time of the “Falcon Attack,” was placed under house arrest on charges of genocide, homicide, and the forced disappearance of university activist Héctor Jaramillo. That was the first and only time that the Mexican justice system has ordered the arrest of a former president for these reasons.

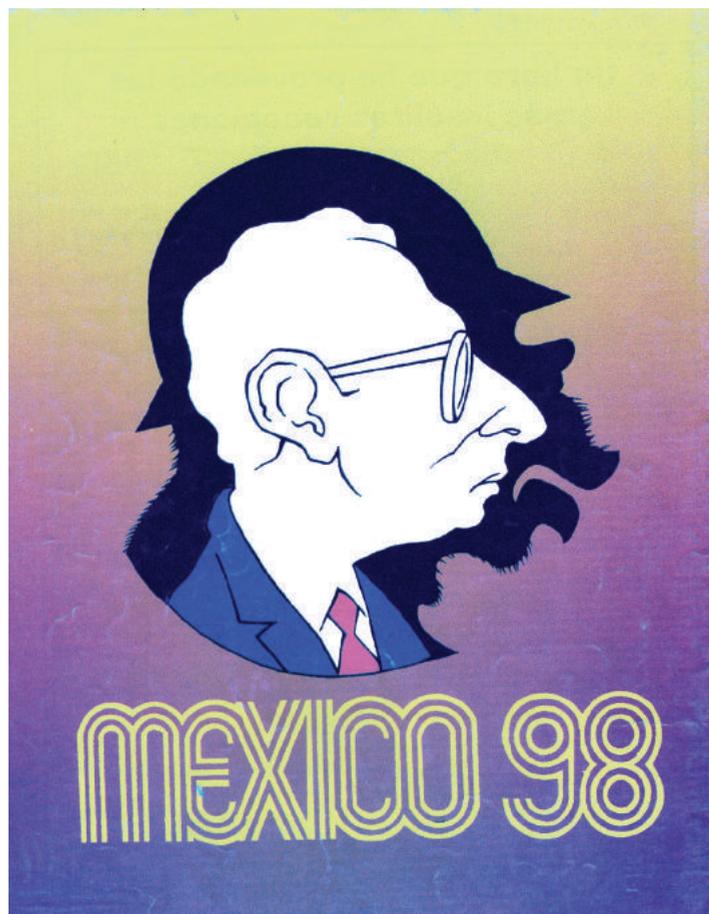
Helguera and El Fisgón say that the first weeks of the Felipe Calderón administration (2006-2012) showed what was considered its media policy: journalists Ricardo Rocha, José Gutiérrez Vivó and Carmen Aristegui, whose popular program was cancelled, all came under pressure. For its part, *El Chamuco* continued publishing uninterruptedly despite serious administrative problems. For this reason, the cartoonists decided to stay away from all kinds of businessmen and to manage the company themselves. Despite these economic adversities, the magazine's small team of collaborators and founders continued sketching without pay, or charging only symbolic amounts, donating their work to the cause.

In 2011, Naranjo gave the UNAM his life's work and made an enormous donation to its collection of political

caricature: 10 600 drawings, including political cartoons, posters, erotic drawings, and comic strips, to be collected, conserved, and disseminated. El Fisgón said that Naranjo was the first to systematically touch on the president in his cartoons, the one who persistently and consistently attacked the office; and none of them, including Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, Luis Echeverría, José López Portillo, Miguel de la Madrid, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Ernesto Zedillo, Vicente Fox, Felipe Calderón, and Enrique Peña Nieto, escaped his pen.

To a great extent, this artist ensured that the '68 insurgency was reflected daily against the murkiness of officialdom.

To return to President Peña Nieto when he was still a candidate, in 2012, he had his first big encounter with the real electorate at the Ibero-American University. He stated that the use of force in Atenco had been necessary, and for that reason, the students pursued him on the campus, questioning him about that repression.<sup>8</sup> That was when the YoSoy132 (IAm132) student movement was born,





Magazine cover showing a play on words: in Spanish the word "vota" (vote), as in "Vote for the PRI," sounds exactly the same as "bota" (throw [the new PRI] out).

which was widely covered in the social media and sought to stop the mainstream media war that was trying to discredit the students who had questioned Peña. Despite all efforts, a new electoral fraud put Enrique Peña Nieto in the Los Pinos official residence, returning the PRI to office.

Repression stained the inauguration itself, since on December 1 of that year hundreds of young people were corralled in streets, arrested without reason, and jailed without proof. The onslaught was compared to what happened in '68 when similarly, fear and disorganization reigned, but it also gave rise to new forms of resistance: lawyers defended the detainees in solidarity; marches were organized; lightning rallies were held; and different actions were convened on social media, showing that society was no longer the same as in 1968. Censorship was no longer possible and the criminal abuse of authority and force were clearly revealed.

On September 26, 2014, a group of students from the Ayotzinapa normal school mobilized to procure buses to transport them to Mexico City. They intended to partici-

Political caricature has prepared the ground for freedom of expression thanks to the founders of *La Garrapata*, but also to their disciples and heirs, who forged creative resistance.

pate in the march to commemorate October 2, 1968. They did not know that they would become the center of a similar tragedy. After a confrontation with the police about the take-over of the buses, shots rang out, there were arrests and dead, and the number became clear: 43 students had disappeared. Immediately after they were attacked, rumors became rampant. The caricaturists took on board the demand for their return alive, publishing cartoons about the event and reminding the public that in 1968 the university students and ordinary people had been at the mercy of the army.

The '68 graphics are so deeply rooted that the cover of the July 4, 2016 issue of *El Chamuco* was a Hernández cartoon pointing out the Peña Nieto administration repression against the teachers and civilians of Nochixtlán, Oaxaca, who were demonstrating against the educational reform.

Comic strip artist Augusto Mora's work stands out; in his didactic, documented way of narrating the student movements, he has created two graphic novels, indispensable for the new generations to be able to understand the transcendence of the cultural, political, and social heroism of 1968. The first novel, *En busca de una voz* (In Search of a Voice), won the comic division Prize for Short Story, Short Film Subject, and Comic at the second Memorial for '68 hosted by the UNAM Tlatelolco University Cultural Center in 2015.

In 2016, Mora published *Grito de victoria* (Victory Cry), a graphic novel dealing with the recent history of social movements in Mexico. It reconstructs two events separated by 40 years: the 1971 Falcon Attack and #1DMX, the march against Enrique Peña Nieto's inauguration.

After Naranjo's death in 2016, Rius stated, "We had to put ourselves on the line so that those who came after could enjoy a little more freedom of the press. They called Rogelio, Helioflores, and me the Three Musketeers. . . . We

put an end to the myth of the figure of the president and Our Lady of Guadalupe. The only thing left is the Army.”

Peña Nieto (2012-2018) did not change military strategy. The result was hundreds of reports of human rights violations, multiple murders of journalists, and unexplained massacres like Ayotzinapa, Tlatlaya, Tanhuato, and many others that go unreported.

After Rius’s death on August 8, 2017, all over the country countless events were held honoring his humorous, didactic work, and his book *Los presidentes me dan Peña* (I Feel Sorry for Presidents) was published posthumously.<sup>9</sup>

On December 15, 2017, the Senate approved the Internal Security Act clearly intending to legalize the presence of the army in the streets, given the immanent presidential elections, to guarantee control, surveillance, and military police participation in the life of the citizenry.

Comic strip artist and illustrator Luis Fernando Enríquez published *La pirámide cuarteada: Evocaciones de 1968* (The Cracked Pyramid: Evocations of 1968) in October 2018. This autobiographical novel targets a young readership and deals with how “an ordinary young man” reaches new awareness when he sees the country through this movement.

Rius used to say that you couldn’t change the country at the point of a cartoon, but that there was no reason not to try. Political caricature has prepared the ground for freedom of expression thanks to the founders of *La Garpata*, but also to their disciples and heirs who forged creative resistance, journalism that goes hand in hand with activism, and have fostered the training of political cadre and broader civic participation.

The sketch artists of today may not be hitting the brick wall of censorship, but they do have to deal with the insolence and cynicism of Mexican politicians who, despite being caricatured, do not change their discourse and do launch veiled threats when they see themselves portrayed in a cartoon.

However, society has been changed by seeing its politicians ridiculed and deformed through the eyes of these cartoonists. Political party members have changed due to mobilization and social protest, the forging of communities, and social media activism.

Despite a vigorous offensive by the right wing, the current decade has seen civil society and transformative movements like the Zapatistas and feminists put on the agenda perspectives and reflections about the national moral, political, and economic crisis. Hopefully, carica-



“I really don’t remember anything.” *Amnesia*, *El Universal*, October 2, 2012, 30.4 x 22.9 cm (ink on paper).

ture will remain at the side of all of this in order to sketch out a better road ahead. **MM**

## Notes

**1** A Spanish-language version of this interview was published in the book *Memoria en pie. 1968-2018. 50 años de resistencia artística, crítica, independiente y popular* (Mexico City: Tintable/Secretaría de Cultura, 2018).

**2** Official sources said there were 180 000 participants; unofficial and journalistic sources cited 300 000 to half a million.

**3** In the original Spanish, “¿Tenemos un régimen de derecha o de derecho?” is a play on words because “de derecha” means right-wing and “de derecho” means “legal.” [Translator’s Note.]

**4** Another play on words, since in Spanish, the word for “falcons” is “halcones” (with a silent “h”) and the word for “alcohol” is “alcoholes.” [Translator’s Note.]

**5** Yet another play on words: in the original, “se me hace chiquito” also refers to the sphincter tightening in fear. A loose translation would be, “The administration makes me shit myself.” [Translator’s Note.]

**6** Ancho Panza (Wide Belly) is a take-off on the name of Don Quixote’s companion, Sancho Panza. [Translator’s Note.]

**7** In Spanish, “milestone” is “parteaguas”, and the authors use the invented word “partemadres” in the original, alluding to the phrase in Mexican Spanish, “partirte la madre,” meaning approximately “beat the shit out of you.” [Translator’s Note.]

**8** In 2006, when Peña Nieto was governor of the State of Mexico, he sent police into the town of Atenco, State of Mexico, to put an end to demonstrations involving activists and the students supporting them around a local issue. The brutal beatings administered by the police were filmed live, as were the arrests of dozens of people, some of whom remained in prison for years afterward. [Editor’s Note.]

**9** Another play on words: the word for “feeling sorry [for someone]” is “pena,” and here, Rius deliberately uses the outgoing president’s last name, “Peña,” instead. [Translator’s Note.]