**Reflecting on Sebastián Calfuqueo Aliste’s Public Performance at The Ohio State University**

Chilean performance artist Sebastián Calfuqueo Aliste explores the intersection between queerness and Mapuche identity in his work. For his public performance at OSU on November 21, 2019, he appeared nude in front of spectators while wearing red lipstick and a wig of long straight hair, a purposeful feminization of his male-reading body. He proceeded to tie a rope across his torso while the following words could be heard through the sound system:

*hacer un nudo en mi cuerpo*

to make a knot in my body

*el nudo es el peso social*  
the knot is the social weight

The imagery he presented recalled ideas of bondage and submission, tropes that allude both to the colonization of indigenous bodies and to taboo sexual practices. Echoing his handling of the rope, Calfuqueo Aliste then proceeded to wrap the wig’s hair around his mouth resembling a bandana or a gag. This performative action also presented a dual meaning, as it stood for the silencing of indigenous voices and for the acts of resistance by demonstrators during the 2019-2020 social uprising in Chile.

The artist soon relinquished control of the rope thus allowing a participant to further constrain his body. Jem Panganiban, graduate student in the Department of Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies, began walking around him as she wrapped his body with more rope. The words “*anúdame*, knot me” were now playing on the speakers. This action lasted nearly 10 minutes making the audience slightly unsettled by the repetitive sound and movement. This repetition played an important role in the performance though because it reminded the attendees of the continued and persistent abuse and marginalization of native peoples in the Americas.

The performance concluded when Panganiban inserted arrows in between the ropes that bound the artist’s body, a nod to the martyr Saint Sebastian. This was a symbolic wounding which addressed the tensions between pain and pleasure, embodiment and transcendence. In reaction to these piercing arrows, Calfuqueo Aliste fell to his knees and lowered his head. This final gesture could be read as a ritual death and willful demise.

Calfuqueo Aliste, as K’acha Willaykuna’s first visiting artist, posed many provocative questions with his public performance at OSU. Do Mapuche bodies become queer through their colonized status? Is there a possibility of resistance within the experiences of bondage and pain? Does performance art provide unique opportunities to address the complexities and contradictions of indigenous people’s lives?