1. Feliza Bursztyn's home, Bogotá
Courtesy of the Archive of Pablo Leyva. Photo: Rafael Moure

Feliza Bursztyn: “In a sexist country, pretend to be the mad one!”

Lucas Ospina

A few words

On 14 January 2019, the Colombian artist Lucas Ospina published “Feliza Bursztyn: ‘En un país de machistas, ¡hágase la loca!’” (Feliza Bursztyn: “In a sexist country, pretend to be the mad one!”),[1] a kind of literary biopic, put together from numerous articles and interviews published over the course of the artist’s life and around the time of her death in leading Colombian magazines and newspapers of the period. In his text, Ospina assembled an autobiographical narrative in the form of an interview. The fictional element in it is limited to constructing a space-time continuum in which statements made by Feliza at many different times converge, by creating a single interviewer who, in turn, is an amalgam of all the original interviewers and reporters. So, the fiction presented by Ospina does not extend to Feliza’s voice (in other words, everything Feliza says in the text she said at some point in her life) but highlights the consistency of her acerbic, outspoken sense of humour, capable of taking shortcuts that left her interviewers panting and lost, at a turn in the path. Joining all these interviews and articles together allows us to hear Feliza’s voice more clearly; we can imagine her eyes gleaming just before she leaps in a new direction, leaving so many journalists lying in her wake with their stupid, malicious questions; we can even hear her legendary peals of laughter. However, at the end of the text Ospina breaks the rules of his own game and introduces a magical, poetic and political twist of great significance, giving Feliza the opportunity to tell us something about her own exile and death, and to make her last joke, in the first person.

Sylvia Suárez

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A narrow street, a front door painted bright red, a garage. The house was a textile factory that belonged to Feliza Bursztyn's parents. The space has changed over the years but its industrial appearance – high ceilings, large windows, cement floors – still survives. In 1963, after the unexpected death of her lover, the poet Jorge Gaitán Durán,[2] and that of her father, the artist inherited a section of the factory: the garage area – a long, narrow space. The house and studio are located in the area of the mechanical workshops and her "colleagues", the neighbours who repair cars, supply her with much of her raw material. As you enter there is a kind of patio with a dusty blue sports car resting in it.

The interviewer knocked on the door and the serving woman led him to the hall, a room as unusual as the front door. It is the width of a large garage, but of considerable depth and contains, at the far end, a kitchen and three open floors connected by steep staircases without rails. The apartment is a narrow, cramped strip full of paintings and hand-made rugs; none of the furniture matches the rest; it is a delightfully well-ordered mess, the expression of people who know that a house is for living in, that it is movement; you cannot avoid the impression that Feliza Bursztyn is too busy living. Here, pliers, welding masks, motors, and mechanical waste are mixed up with artworks by her friends, literature in several languages, foreign magazines, and furniture designed by her. The interviewer is immersed in contemplation of the pictures on the walls and the weird construction which makes him think of the structure of a Mayan pyramid, when a strange being with the body of a woman and the head of a Martian appears through a door on his right. The creature, dressed in dirty, faded jeans, takes off the enormous welding goggles, a kind of diving helmet, and a white cloth to reveal a lively, smiling face. One, two, three storeys, but not conventional floors for conventional people. They are three levels that you have to reach by firemen's stairs. The interviewer, intrigued, asks her how she manages to make that climb after four Tres Esquinas rums. The sculptor explains that she has never fallen down those stairs, which look so hazardous, and offers him a glass of rum. She adds that she is not joining him because "I never start before sundown". The interviewer recalls that someone described Feliza Bursztyn's voice to him as that of a spoilt little girl capable of uttering the most high-calibre vulgarities. She wears high heels and platform soles, "whore's shoes", as she calls them.

The interviewer accepts a cup of tea and begins firing the questions, observed by two female cats, Dada and Wanda Landowska, and their four heirs. The sculptor takes out a jumbled pile of photos. Hundreds of sculptures made from scrap metal with tubes and metal sheets pass

2. Feliza Bursztyn and Alejandro Obregón Courtesy of the Archive of Pablo Leyva. Photo: unknown. News Clipping

through the interviewer's fingers, while he mentally searches for the influences and parallels. Out of the corner of his eye he sees that Feliza Bursztyn's everyday bed is an anti-bed; it has no mattress. Every night the sculptor, who has nothing in common with a fakir, goes to sleep on a board stretched out between satin sheets, with a peasant-style woollen blanket and a red satin patchwork bedspread.

"And this is my house, full of old iron, spot welders, transformers, paintings, scrap metal, cats, dogs, flowers, seeds. Of course, there's also a kitchen…", she says. The interviewer recalls a conversation he had earlier that morning with one of the regular guests: "If you'd tried her hot pepper soup, a thin broth with pepper, a dash of pepper and more pepper, her sticky rice with tomato sauce and lots of parmesan, her dry – sometimes very dry – spaghetti with garlic or her solid stewed chickpea soup, you would never have believed that for more than twenty years painters, sculptors, politicians, critics, poets, and writers sat at her table. If as well as seeing her, hearing her, going to her house, spying on her, and trying her cooking, you had been her friend; if you had drunk Tres Esquinas rum with her, or vodka, or the whisky she bought by the box, served in glasses with awkward ice cubes and stirred with her finger; if you had talked to her about Cuba, Russia, Colombia, the Kabbalah, the pros and cons of *Revista alternativa*, the mysteries of *El Tiempo*, the covers of the *New York Review of Books*, the articles in *Time*, the art criticism in the *New Yorker*".

The interview begins.

Interviewer: People call you Feliza perhaps because your surname is difficult to spell in Spanish. Where does Bursztyn come from?
Feliza Bursztyn: Two thousand Jews set off to walk to Palestine. My dad didn't go because he was a rabbi's son. My mother, the daughter of Polish timber merchants, also left for Palestine at the age of sixteen – the only woman on the boat. Dad worked in the socialist party and didn't believe in trade at all. One day the English captured a close friend of his. He took all his money out of the bank, paid it to some guards, they got the guy out and put him in a barrel, and the man arrived in Buenaventura. He wrote to dad from there, telling him about the bananas, the mangoes, and the journey, and he said to mum: "Stay here, I'm going to see what Colombia is like". I was born here.

I: What is your relationship with Jewish culture?
FB: My divorce was the first in the Jewish colony in Colombia. That's why my father wished me death, after I divorced my first husband; my family "killed" me with a Jewish ritual: they dug a grave and filled it with stones on top of each other. Later we got along well; I even inherited my grandfather's books. He was a Polish rabbi who died in the Holocaust. Paradoxically, when my eldest daughter Trié called me and told me she was marrying a goy, I replied that she couldn't have children with a goy. I behaved just like my father. Inheritance is a powerful thing…

I: What is your position on the Arab-Israeli conflict?
FB: My position on this war is difficult, because I'm left-wing, but I'm also Jewish. I'm a complete pacifist, but I think the Jews have a right to defend themselves. They were attacked and they defended themselves.

I: So they're in the right in this war?
FB: No war is right. Israel can repel attacks, but not occupy territory that doesn't belong to it. The root of the problem is that Israel – like all small countries – is a "piece" on the international chessboard at which the great powers play. Israel has no interest in making war.

I: Did you study art?
FB: I finished secondary education at a convent school in Teusaquillo and felt attracted by art. I was eighteen and I went to New York to study at the Art Students League. Then I went to Paris where I stayed for five years and studied with Ossip Zadkine[3] at the Grande Chaumière. It was the period of Brancusi, Giacometti, and a little later Tinguely and César.

I: How many times have you been married?
FB: Five. Some by a civil wedding and some with a blessing.

I: Why have you married so many times: is it love, habit, or addiction?
FB: After the third time I think it's an addiction.

I: Any children?
FB: Three daughters from one of my marriages.

I: And are you married now?
FB: Very much so.

I: What about your daughters?
FB: They stayed with their father; they went to Texas.

I: What was your life like in Paris?
FB: You know, if I'm a sculptor, it's thanks to Jorge. You never do things for someone, they just happen. My marriage was going badly, I was fed up and I wanted to separate. One day I met Jorge at the Excelsior, a café that was a tunnel where 200 people crowded in on top of each other. He invited me to lunch, I accepted, and hey presto! A week later we were already living together! He could do eighteen things at once. He had an extraordinary capacity for work. That was a great help to me, for making sculptures, which is real donkey work.

Over in Paris, in 1960, I began welding. I studied classical sculpture. In clay. From clay you move on to plaster, make moulds, and so on. Zadkine did classical sculpture and that was what I studied. I made bronzes. These little men you see there are in bronze. They're what's left of that period. Late homages to the master. I came back from Paris to Colombia, and as there is not and never has been a foundry in Colombia, I had to go back and tell Zadkine: "In the country where I live there are no foundries". He told me: "Then change country".

I: And what was he like?
FB: Lovely, a lovely old man, seventy-odd, but completely crazy, raving mad. He gave a sculpture course at the Grande Chaumière for people who had finished fine arts. People who went there to "find a path", as he called it. There were about fifteen of us, from various countries. French, Japanese. I had already studied painting in New York. And he found it hilarious, because as I couldn't speak any French, he could talk to me in English, and he thought that was the greatest way to practice. He became

very fond of me. It was lovely. He spent the whole time saying: "Why is it that they don't get women pregnant anymore?". He was very distressed about it. He said that in his day they were always pregnant.

I: How long did you study with him?
FB: Four years. A whole lifetime. He had a wonderful studio. He would offer us a drink. It was my initiation. We used to arrive at school at seven in the morning, in the winter: imagine the cold. The old man gave us a glass this big full of brandy to warm us up and we set to work. At that time, he used to come once a week with a stick and knock over everything we'd done, saying: "*merde, merde, merde!*". And finally he said: "Why don't you go back and practise?", and the following week he came back and knocked everything over again.

I: Zadkine was important, wasn't he?
FB: Yes, those convoluted forms. In that period all the sculptors were Russian, all émigrés. Great people, very civilized. When I went back four or five years later, I heard gossip about the old man; he was about seventy by then. He left his wife and went off with a twenty-year-old model, and he got her pregnant! He managed it. Imagine his poor wife: she was going crazy.

I: And who else was around?
FB: Giacometti, no less. He went to the same café every day, at the same time, to get drunk. Did you realize that all Giacometti's sculptures are of the same face? It's his wife's face. He was obsessed with her. He had a wonderful studio; you went in and there was a layer of dust this thick over everything. And he asked people not only to please not touch the dust but not even to blow, because if they ever blew, everything would be messed up.

I: How long were you in Paris?
FB: Jorge and I were in Paris for four years. He was writing, I was studying. He even wrote on the paper napkins in cafés. It was the period of the essay on Sade, the poems of *Si mañana despierto* [If I Wake Tomorrow], his diary. He also ran the magazine [*Mito*] from there, and wrote letters to Hernando Valencia,[4] scolding him because he had got drunk and hadn't done what he was supposed to.

I: Did Jorge and the other Latin Americans lead a bohemian life?
FB: Yes, like students, very irresponsible. As soon as the cheque arrived from Colombia they spent it all, in the best restaurants, and the next day they didn't even have the money to buy bread for breakfast. Jorge,

as always, talked to everyone. He was very friendly with Octavio Paz and Juan Liscaro; they spent all their time talking about Latin America. Typical rich kids' bohemia. He read a lot, chatted, and screwed.

I: Meanwhile, what about you?
FB: I was with Zadkine, working in clay and plaster. Then I went to see César, the one with the crushed cars, the one with the scrap metal. A metal worker that size! Half as big as Hernando Valencia, and that's saying a lot. Napoleon must have been like that. He had a gigantic workshop. And he taught me to weld. Like a good Frenchman he was an out-and-out male chauvinist. Almost like the Mexicans. Pure macho. And when I learned to weld, I came back to Colombia to make those things, the first of them, which were round houses, with screws. I did my first show in 1960, at Casimiro Eiger's[5] gallery. Like everyone else, I started at Casimiro's place.

I: What did he think of your sculptures?
FB: I imagine he must have found them terrifying. And that was very nice because Casimiro was the guide, the modern man par excellence, and he was really a completely classical gentleman.

I: How did it go?
FB: Very well. Marta Traba launched a passionate defence of my ironwork, and it all turned out very well. Neither Luis Eduardo Nieto Calderón nor Germán Arciniegas, nor their attendants at the court of good taste, asked for the exhibition to be closed. And all Jorge's friends were there: Mother (Alejandro Obregón), Hernando, Gabo.[6]

I: What were they like back then?
FB: Gabo was a journalist on *El Espectador*. Very, very thin, dark, and extremely nervous. With a tiny moustache. He smoked like a chimney. Incredibly nervous. When he sent *No One Writes to the Colonel* from Paris via Germán Vargas, Jorge went crazy: he devoted a whole issue to it.

I: And what was Jorge (Gaitán Durán) like?
FB: First of all, he was a Santanderean to his fingertips. And one of the shyest people in the history of this country. That was Jorge. Morbidly shy, which made him terribly aggressive. He was the rich kid living among a load of people who were really fucked: Hernando Valencia, Pedro Gómez Valderrama, Gabo, Alejandro Obregón.[7] They were all poor back then, except Jorge. At that time, not even Alejandro was selling a lot of pictures. It was a bohemia of beer and brandy. We held parties in Jorge's apartment with Santanderean tamales, and Jorge bought boxes of wine.

3. Collage by Federico Hecht
Courtesy of the Archive of Pablo Leyva. Photo: unknown. News Clipping

FELIZA EN CHATARRA.—Su amigo, el fotógrafo Federico Hecth, hizo esta foto-montaje de la escultora Feliza Bursztyn, autora del "Monumento a López", en una de sus obras.

It was an amazing luxury, as if they were boxes of champagne; people fainted. Also, everything was still more provincial. A totally small-town atmosphere. Everyone knew who was going around with who. Gossip, gossip. Just imagine: I came to think Jorge was a communist.

I: Why?
FB: Well, because everyone who was a rebel was called a communist. To be honest, I always thought Jorge was reactionary, but he wasn't considered to be. That phobia he had about the Church, priests, sexual repression; people thought all that stuff was horrible, and that's why they called him a communist, for opposing the priests. For the denunciations published in *Mito*.

I: And you lived with Jorge up to his death?
FB: No, I went to Israel to do an exhibition and Jorge wrote to me to tell me my father had died. While I came back, he went to Paris, and while he was returning from there for us to meet, he was killed. On his death the group broke up. He was the point of connection.

I: What about you?
FB: I carried on with my iron pieces, but as they were completely flat up till then, I began to make them fatter. In Colombia there was no possibility of casting or anything. I didn't want to be a lady of culture or follow the advice grandmothers in the capital gave well-to-do girls: "just play dumb" and marry well. They thought I was crazy, but I took advantage of the whole 'madness' thing, and played it up, so that I could really do what I wanted. Because I do believe that we're living in a male chauvinist world. And to be a sculptor and not be a man is very difficult. I resorted to this trick so that people would take me seriously, because they thought, "maybe that crazy woman does interesting things". And I think it worked. I wanted to work in scrap metal, but I was so poor, so poor, that I didn't even have enough money to buy scrap metal. One day I found a room full of Nescafé tins at Rogelio Salmona's[8] house. I used them to do my first show, *Las Chatarras* [Junk Sculptures], at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Marta Traba's[9] museum.

I: Some have said that you use welding very badly in your works. What do you think about that?
FB: Maybe; actually, I'm sure, and I promise you that the day I master this job of welding I'll use screws.

I: On one occasion they said that your junk sculptures fell apart so easily that they seemed to be made with nail varnish…
FB: How strange; I wasn't painting my nails at that time.

I: Did you make a break with Colombian sculpture by looking for forms in scrap metal, as Alejandro Obregón also did with painting?
FB: I think I did make a contribution and that young people are looking towards scrap metal, in a country where we don't use wood, or bronze, or stone.

I: Do you think maestro Obregón is in decline?
FB: I don't believe any such thing… in any case, his alleged decline would be glory for others.

I: What's your opinion of the painter Botero?
FB: Botero[10] is like García Márquez; they became so important, so very, very important, that they had to leave the country, perhaps to become less important.

I: When you speak like that, are you driven by passion, by conviction?
FB: The most important thing of all is passion, passion while knowing what you're talking about. The problem of criticism is never a problem of justice, it's a problem of taste. An art critic can't be dispassionate. Passion is based on knowledge.

I: But if we consider that these critics are leaving records for the future…
FB: Records for the future are left by works of art, not by critics. A critic serves to show people certain paths that are his own, not necessarily the truth, because nobody owns the truth. And what is good today may be terrible five years from now.

I: What do you think of art critics in our country?
FB: Well, there are all sorts, from very mediocre to very bad, all with an erudition worthy of Bristol's *Almanac*.

I: How have critics treated you?
FB: They've said all sorts of things, from the best to the worst. For example, a critic who visited me in my workshop published this: "Eccentric so-called sculptress prepares serious assault on established art. A woman with outlandish clothes and manners is planning an inconceivable outrage against the art of Phidias, Michelangelo, and Arenas Betancourt. Luckily, there is still time to thwart the dark conspiracy. The Society for Improvements and Embellishment, the Board of Censors and all institutions and individuals who still love the fatherland must take the matter into their own hands before it is too late…".

I: Do you think religion is necessary for an artist?
FB: The most important thing is to believe in yourself. I don't believe in God, I believe in people. For Jews God has not arrived yet. Jehovah has not arrived. We're still waiting.

I: And what do you think about changing things through religion?
FB: I don't think that's the way. Changes must be political, not religious. We can't go back to the Middle Ages. All change has to be political.

I: How would you classify yourself within current art?
FB: I think my work currently belongs to what we might call "Motorized Romanticism".

I: What are you working on at the moment?
FB: On trying to answer you.

I: Some people think your work is an irreverent hoax. Others consider it serious and very well researched. What does Feliza Bursztyn herself think about her work?
FB: I've been working at this for many years. I'm not the kind of person to waste so much time on leg-pulling. It would be incredibly unprofessional. Besides, I have great respect for the public. I think a work is really important to the extent that people get something from it. The work ceases to exist if there is no one to receive it.

I: And how do you earn your living?
FB: By welding beds and other things.

I: And do you think you're going to sell these works?
FB: No, of course not, nobody would be that crazy: you'd have to be mad to buy them. You can't make a living from sculpture, but I live on sculpture. And I don't live so badly. But this type of sculpture is what I have fun doing, it's what I like. It doesn't matter that I'm never going to be an Onassis.

I: Has art made you money?
FB: I get by, which is already more than enough. I live a very contented life. I have what I need, nothing superfluous. And that's to live at ease with myself and other people. I'm happy.

I: Isn't sculpture useless? Isn't it just a pointless adornment bought by those who can afford it, merchandise available to those who have the money to spend on a decorative object?

FB: I've constructed works in scrap metal where the cost was reduced precisely because they were in that material. I've made sculptures for public squares and parks and schools. In some places, I've worked on a wall: in other words, made a mural with the scrap metal "left over" from the construction itself. Turning it into an aesthetic space, which serves to rest the eye or please the senses. I think that doing sculpture like this has profound social propensities. Not as a mere decorative object. I can tell you that there's a neighbourhood of very poor people in Colombia who asked me to make them a sculpture for their school. I asked them to give me objects. You can imagine what they gave me. Goodness knows: thousands of objects, tins, tubes, saucepans, old iron, masses of things, and with those objects we made the mural. They helped me; that's why I'm using the plural. In their school is our mural made from objects of no apparent value.

I: How would you define your job?
FB: I'm a labourer and a welder.

I: Did the Economic Emergency affect you?
FB: Not at all! I've always lived in a state of emergency.

I: Do you believe in so-called moments of inspiration for an artist?
FB: No, I don't! I think that as soon as you start working on something, there's a total integration of the artist and their work.

I: Can one speak of a sculptural movement in the Colombian school in the arts?
FB: No. In Colombia there's no tradition, there's no school… And it's a big advantage, believe me. There are few people making sculpture, but the phenomenon exists all over Latin America. Poverty. It's much easier to sit down and do little drawings on a napkin than to get a shed and welding equipment. That's a lot of work. Besides, all the people working in sculpture in Colombia are very similar. Let me tell you, when I was a teacher at Tadeo Lozano University – funny, isn't it? – I wanted to bring a Polish sculptor to teach the students how to work stone, which is the one thing we have plenty of in Colombia, and they wouldn't let me. And also, you have to question the teaching curricula, which rarely change because teachers occupy their posts for ever and go from young to senile practically without realizing. When I thought I'd finished my studies I found that the famous classic steps I'd learned in the academy had no justification. That business of making the figure first in clay, then in plaster, and finally casting it in bronze, in other words doing the same thing once, twice, three times, or four times, made no sense, especially since there were a series of things to be done.

4. Feliza Bursztyn working on Rita de Agudelo's sculpture
Courtesy of the Archive of Pablo Leyva. Photo: Pablo Leyva

I: But how can sculpture be taught?
FB: It can't. If anything, you can make suggestions on the material. All you can do is teach a few techniques. And let people get used to seeing sculptures around the place. Of course, they rush past and hardly notice them. Sculpture is strange, very strange; you never know what's going to happen with it, but it's such fun.
I: But influences do exist in the new generation of artists?
FB: I don't think they exist. And I would dare to go further: I don't think plagiarism really exists. I prefer to think of the millions of similar works as the result of chance.

I: Have you had any special satisfaction in your career?
FB: I consider that all satisfactions in life are small. Life is too important a thing to take it seriously. I make art with a laugh, which is quite serious, by the way.

I: Hence your *Las histéricas* (The Hysterical Ones) series, the beds.
FB: Yes.

I: When did that series begin?
FB: In 1968. They were in stainless steel, with a little motor. Then I set them to music, later I covered them with cloths, and finally I took them to bed.

I: Were you confronted with a lot of curious comments?
FB: Yes, from curious to very morbid.

I: They say you're an extremely liberated woman…
FB: How nice!

I: What is a liberated woman?
FB: Let me tell you: either we're born liberated or we never liberate ourselves.

I: Do you love someone?
FB: The mother.

I: Electra?
FB: Always.

I: Are you one of those feminists who complain and carry placards, down with men, etc.?

FB: No. I love men! I think they're a wonderful invention, which needs to be looked after [*laughs interminably*]; the problem, as I see it, is social, cultural, and political. Not sexual.

I: Would you go back in time?
FB: I like how things are today, but I have no regrets about yesterday…
I: Do you not like saying how old you are?
FB: That's got nothing to do with it; the facts are what counts.

I: How do you manage to keep so thin?
FB: I'm paid to.

I: Would you have plastic surgery?
FB: No, I like the marks of the passing years.

I: How many cavities?
FB: All the holes in the world.

I: Holes?
FB: Facts.

I: Big?
FB: Not very big.

I: Who do you get on better with, women or men?
FB: Men.

I: Did you enjoy the Witchcraft Congress you recently attended?
FB: It was great fun. It's the best symbol of the country. I think this and the National Planning Department[11] represent us better than a picture by Alejandro Obregón. I showed a sculpture there called *El bebé de Rosemary* (Rosemary's Baby) in the Visual Arts Room. A black cradle, with black drapes, on a white platform. The girls who cleaned the room were terrified and commented while looking at it: that must be something like death.

I: What is your highest aspiration as an artist?
FB: To make art.

I: And as a woman?
FB: To do everything artistically.

I: Do you feel different from other women?

FB: No, not at all.

I: Do you write?
FB: No, but I would love to have done so.

I: After the *Las camas* (The Beds) series, what came next?
FB: The Ballet, mechanical forms with music.

I: With humour as well?
FB: Of course; I'd die without it.

I: Do you give your sculptures names?
FB: Sometimes. This one [*pointing to a work*] is called *Pantófulo No. 4*.

I: Why? Were there previous Pantófulos?
FB: No, it's just that it's number four.

I: Why did you call your prizewinning sculpture in the Intercol competition *Reblakadaka*, the name of one of the pioneers of aviation in India?
FB: Because it had form, like air…

I: Did you name the work after it was finished?
FB: Yes.

I: What is Colombia to you?
FB: The *patria boba*.[12] In a country like Colombia, so poor in human and intellectual values, Marta's departure was a catastrophe. There is not and in the history of Colombian culture there never has been an intellectual who has done as much for art as Marta Traba. I am amazed that this event did not give rise to a more formal protest from Colombian intellectuals, but of course the thing is that talking about freedom and being free are two different things. Don't go telling someone they're not free; they'll be furious and want to kill you to prove that they are.

I: So why do you live here?
FB: Because of its people, the most beautiful and delightful in the world.

I: Was your monument to former President Alfonso López Pumarejo[13] inspired by some physical or political feature of the ex-president?
FB: No. It's a strictly visual artistic conception. I wanted something sober and very dignified. I completely left the character aside to search for forms, I used tubes of all dimensions and sizes so that the materials would

disappear and only the form would remain. I think Dr López is worthy of that tribute. I was asked for a monument in his memory, not a statue of López in an outdoor suit and a starched shirt, which I would not have done, because it would be disrespectful to him as a politician, as well as the fact that I consider him one of our most important men. Of course, it takes very little to be important in Colombia. Besides, statues are made so that pigeons can relieve themselves on them. I don't believe in monuments…

I: And why tubes, precisely?
FB: Because tubing is a very noble and very simple material.

I: Did you ever meet Dr López?
FB: No. I didn't even know his son Alfonsito, also former president; I have no political affinity with him.

I: Do you think yours is the best homage that could have been paid to President López?
FB: No. Why should I? I don't think my work is the best. But it was approved by people who know about art, such as Marta Traba, Fernando Martínez,[14] and Rogelio Salmona. In Havana they built a really beautiful monument with the remains of a boat that the anti-Castro people blew up in the port, some time ago. It is a tribute to the victims of that criminal attack. In Jerusalem they also built a very beautiful monument to the heroes of the 1948 war, out of tank gun barrels.

I: So what do you think the criticisms of your monument were due to?
FB: To the fact that we're an underdeveloped country. Besides, I don't want to defend my works. They defend themselves on their own.

I: To what do you attribute your attraction to sculpture?
FB: They are aberrations with which you make things.

I: So you consider sculpture an aberration?
FB: Naturally.

I: And what about your liking for scrap metal? Do you find beauty in those twisted Nescafé tins?
FB: Of course I do.

I: But the way you work is more concerned with the physical than the spatial, isn't it?
FB: What I love is the physical side: welding. Spending hours welding.

But I can't do it anymore because my lungs have rotted. They were completely rotted by the welding, and I get tired and out of breath. I can't do it anymore.
This process of modelling scrap metal is the least delicate imaginable, twisting and crushing tins, iron, screws…
But that, in itself, is art: converting one thing into another. Like Michelangelo, when he turned a block of stone into a statue, the total transformation of matter is essentially that. Art has managed to open thousands of paths. Sculpture used to be understood as the representation of characters, and sculptors devoted themselves solely to portraits. Now, by contrast, a new boundless frontier has opened up before us, holding thousands and thousands of surprises in store. It can't be denied that we are living in a much more exciting period, as far as art is concerned, than any previous time.

I: And what's the deal with welding?
FB: Ahh, this business of casting metals is a real delight. With heat you can do whatever you want. Melt them like plasticine. Welding is really nice, with subtleties and textures. Very, very nice.

I: Do you give your sculptures a particular subject?
FB: No. I don't want to convey messages, either social or aesthetic. I sculpt because I like doing it.

I: Is there some reason why you chose scrap metal to work with?
FB: Of course: it's an aesthetic way of expressing yourself. Giving an aesthetic value to something that didn't have it before. Giving nobility to any material, not necessarily marble. The fabulous thing is that you're a worker at a factory where not just lorries are made, but delicate objects. I initially chose scrap metal because I felt it was important as a material, but then I got a bit bored with using it; also, I think art is an investigation and involves changing material, form, movement. I can tell you that the attraction of scrap metal for me is that it's a material that's already been used. It's already had its time of existence and then become refuse. Perhaps it's closing the great circle: making the object, using it and throwing it away. I close the circle by giving use again to something that was apparently dead. The world of forms is openly a kind of self-service restaurant where those who want something help themselves to what suits them, and what depends on each artist is the intelligent and sensitive use they make of that basic repertoire they've acquired.

I: In the text he wrote about you for the Museo de Arte Moderno,[15] Hernando Valencia spoke of how you left things lying around, in the

workshop, at random, scattered, and then they began to talk to each other and paired up: this tube with that screw, this shapeless lump with that typewriter. Pieces of scrap, junk, which joined together, composing something else, without you playing much of a part…
FB: Hernando's so nice, isn't he? I didn't really understand what he was saying, but it's the opposite of what everyone does, making drawings and sketches and getting things out of them. I work the other way around: I look for the material first, then, if I like the material, I make something with it, and normally, at first, you can't really tell what it's going to be. What I do depends on the material. It's the material that tells me what has to be done. Where to start.

I: And how do you look for it?
FB: Others go out whoring, I go out visiting workshops. Besides, people give me a lot of material for free.

I: Do you have a supplier?
FB: Exactly: like those drug dealers on motorbikes who come to your house bringing you big bundles of marijuana wrapped in the *El Tiempo*[16] literary supplement, there are dealers who come and bring me scrap metal that they've kept because they thought it was wonderful. Sometimes they're right. And other times I'm the one that goes out looking. Gigantic scrap workshops, over there in the south.

I: And what do they say?
FB: About the crazy woman?

I: Do any of them happen to have seen what the crazy woman does with their old iron?
FB: No. That would be terrible! I try to make sure they don't find out much, because the price depends on it. The only price those cases have is what they see in your face. I try to say that it's to fix something at home, a hole, a wall that's collapsed, things like that. Otherwise they start charging like crazy.

I: But didn't one of them recognize the *Homenaje a Ghandi* (Homage to Ghandi), that four-ton mass on the corner of Calle 100 and Carrera 7a?
FB: Yes, sure: they were going to steal it.

I: What? Themselves?
FB: Well yes, I think they were going to do it themselves, to resell it.

I: When was this?
FB: One night, very late, Pablo[17] and I were coming from a party and we saw some guys with a crane, pulling the statue and trying to knock it over. They were pulling and pulling. I was terrified. Pablo got out of the car, ready to hit them, but fortunately they realized we'd stopped and left. Thank God it was securely in place. Pardo [check name] set it up. Otherwise they'd have taken it. Can you imagine? That's why we gave it that monumental plinth which is now all covered with graffiti, and as soon as they introduce that red bus[18] along Carrera 7a at the junction with Calle 100, no one knows where my sculpture will end up.

I: But the big pieces must surely have been more thoroughly prepared – the SENA mural, for example.
FB: Yes, of course, that was with a design and durable materials. With 15 or 20 tons you can't take much of a risk. You have to consider that it might fall on us and kill everyone. It's terrifying.

I: Tell us about your beds…
FB: Very nice, but better in bed. [check translation]

I: What's your favourite song?
FB: *La cama de piedra* [The Stone Bed].[19]

I: Your favourite book?
FB: *Los caballeros de la cama Redonda* [The Knights of the Round Bed].[20]

I: Your solution for the country's problems?
FB: More beds. Remember: beds are good, if you can't sleep, rest! [check translation]

I: And where are the beds now?
FB: In Mexico, in the Museum of Mexico City, in pieces. They finished them off. There was nothing left.

I: How many were there?
FB: There were thirteen.

I: Why thirteen?
FB: I don't know. That's as far as I got. There was no room for more in the museum gallery. I would like to have added more, but there was no room. So they stayed like that: thirteen.

I: First there were the *Chatarras* (Junk Sculptures), then *Las histéricas*, which you endowed with movement, straight after that came the *Pequeñas maquinita*s (Little Machines), made from old typewriters and transformed by hand, without motors. Then your great environment, *Las camas*, which had music, as well as movement. And now there's the *La baila mecánica* (The Mechanical Ballet). What's the idea behind this piece?
FB: I can't even remember. I work on three or four things at the same time, as a relaxation technique, and also to be able to see, because if you get deeper and deeper into just one thing, you can't see anything anymore. On the other hand, if you do something else, you stop and look. Then you can see. In this way I made the beds, minisculptures, and typewriters at the same time. I worked on the *Baila* for about four years. I made all the mechanisms something like eighteen times. I completely invented everything. Nothing worked; the cables blew. Dreadful things happened. It was like reinventing the wheel. Like the bumper cars in the Ciudad de Hierro funfair in the National Park. That came after the beds. From the theory of things moving. But they also move in themselves. I wanted to try it out, to see whether they themselves could move on their own. And it turned out to be great fun… the things they said. For example, Alejandro Obregón went crazy: he was convinced they were all women.

I: Everyone judges according to their position, don't they?
FB: Here, as in those stupid reports, we should add: "much laughter". And, of course, other people saw monsters, things like that. People see very strange things. It was nice, and sort of very theatrical.

I: What is *La baila mecánica*?
FB: In *Las histéricas* the sculptures were in stainless steel with motors and sound, and with their tick-tick-tick-tick-tick they drove you mad. Then *Las camas* had movement but no sound of its own. Jacqueline Nova had composed some music specially for them. Later we thought of doing the ballet. Jacqueline was going to write the music again. When she fell ill, she assured me that she had it all ready. Jacqueline died, the music didn't appear and then I put my mind to doing something totally different from what she would have done. I didn't think I should set my ballet to modern music. That's why I went for the twelfth century. I find mechanics fascinating. You'd be surprised how much I know on the subject. Of course I don't know as much as I'd like, but I do know enough to work in this type of sculpture. I see a piece of waste material and I die of happiness. Then I saw those little motors, I bought them and they worked brilliantly for me. *Las histéricas* had already had motors, but they were from record players and were very expensive for me. Starting from those motors I began to make

my sculptures, with technical advice from Ramón Rodríguez to make the dolls dance and move as I wanted. People ask me why I didn't call the work *Baile mecánico*, in the masculine, as in normal Spanish, instead of *Baila mecánica* in the feminine. I put it in the feminine because it sounded horrible to me in the masculine. The day the parts of *La baila* arrived at the gallery it looked more like a battlefield than an art exhibition, but it soon started to take shape until it became that combination of scaffolding, ghostly music, and contortions that is the *mechanical ballet*.

I: How do you approach "dressing" your ballet?
FB: I always thought of those sculptures as people, perhaps sexless characters that move, dance, and sing.

I: Why did you give names to the seven characters who make up the group?
FB: I'm convinced that each sculpture has its own character, its personality, a different way of moving, a distinct tone, a world of its own. Exactly like people. So it seemed natural that they should have names: Fragata, Piolin, Pipa, Gordillo, La Fragata, Chiquito, and Bailón, hooded blind characters who dance singly or two or three at once, spasmodic and trembling, around an orange dwarf who never rests.

I: Why did you choose music by a composer from eight centuries ago for such a modern work?
FB: I looked for a composer who didn't remind me of what Jacqueline Nova would have done. "El Chuli" Fernando Martínez gave me the solution when he found me the music of Perotinus Iklagnus, from the twelfth century. He's a very interesting composer and was a revolutionary in his period, one of the most outstanding men of his time. It's sacred music with male-voice choirs. I know Jacqueline would never have done it like that.

I: How much did *La Baila* cost you?
FB: I don't know. A lot! Four years' work.

I: Where does the commercial sense of your work lie?
FB: Nowhere. Or perhaps in the lithographs I'm going to sell to those who come and see the performance of *La baila*.

I: If it's taken you eight days to set up the work and it had to be transported here by lorry, tell me, how are you going to manage when it has to travel?
FB: I don't even want to think about it. I refuse to touch that subject

yet… And the most serious problem is that it's going to travel as far as Poland and Havana, and of course all over Colombia.

I: And where is *La baila* now?
FB: Here, in pieces. But the thing is that there were three *bailas*. They're out there, around the world, moving.

I: But between *La baila mecánica* and *Las camas*, which moved, were there other things, apart from the small sculptures?
FB: Yes, large sculptures, in metal, such as that of *Andromeda*, which is at the SENA in Chapinero.[21] And the mural of the forks, which is at the SENA in the centre… such fun.

I: And what other large sculptures of yours are there?
FB: There's a big one at the Banco del Comercio, on 13 and 8a, on the fifth floor, which is like a patio but is the management gallery. A thing this big. Gigantic. With hoops, like *Andromeda*. One day it fell over and it looked great. I thought what had happened was wonderful, but the people at the bank didn't.

I: And what about these radical changes in your work?
FB: It's precisely a matter of changes; art is experimentation and all the changes have been very important to me; they connect with each other until it comes down to this. Every time you start something new you think it's your salvation, and sometimes it turns out to be just stupid. But at that moment you're convinced it's where the party is.

I: Have you ever done any other kind of sculpture, more traditional, let's say, or painting, or drawing?
FB: My first exhibition was a series of watercolours. But I only became interested in colour at the end; at first, I looked for form and always through scrap metal or stainless steel, and then, when I encountered car panels and car doors and started playing with that stuff, colour arrived.

I: Colour? Why colour?
FB: Because I had never used colour. Sometimes it's the colour of the car, other times I paint them. Look at that panel: that red is painted. It's fun, isn't it? Not just the form but also the colour is very important. Don't you think?

I: Have you ever been afraid of electricity?
FB: Never. Otherwise I'd be an utter masochist.

I: Do you believe in political art?
FB: Some political art. I think it's very difficult. It's the same in film. There have been one, two, or three who have managed to do it. [Sergei] Eisenstein in film. García Márquez in literature. A Spanish artist, Canogar, in the visual arts. It's very difficult to do political art without it degenerating into poster art, and that's fatal.

I: Is art critical?
FB: Inevitably. It's always been like that. If you talk about someone or something, you're giving an opinion, which is critical. It's the same with artists; capturing something you see involves giving it a critical interpretation. It doesn't matter whether the objective is political, social, or whatever.

I: Which is yours?
FB: Social and political.

I: Do you think artists should be left free to be able to produce?
FB: No. All the great masters in the history of art always worked on commission, not freely. Goya with his great portraits, Velázquez… they were all commissioned, but not directed.

I: And how do you see the situation in Colombia? Do you think the way out can be found through politicians?
FB: I think it's very difficult. Because there are no possibilities, there's no opening, you can't see a way forward. How can they give work to thousands and millions of unemployed people? How can they stop inflation? How can they provide food for everyone, education for everyone, medicine for everyone, a place to live for everyone? How?

I: Would you give up your house in Bogotá and your whole way of life and be reduced to one room if things changed?
FB: The problem is not habitable spaces. The problem is poverty. I would be much less worried living in a city like Bogotá if there were no poverty. If you knew that you can go out in the street and you're not going to get mugged, if you knew that everyone has something to eat. And if you didn't go around the corner and see three young lads dying of hunger. I think I would have much more peace of mind than I have now. It's not a question of the space you inhabit, it's a question of the environment you inhabit. I mean, in the Cuba I knew, artists had their house, their workshop, their work, their children's education was taken care of, medicine, everything was seen to, and also their work was bought and they were given a monthly wage. That's what they need to live. If you had enough to eat and a place

to live you wouldn't have to charge such exorbitant prices to be able to eat all year. Then there wouldn't be that pressure that has made artworks completely inaccessible to the economic middle class. Artists raise their prices because the art market has made this economy like that.

I: What's your favourite pastime?
FB: Sex! Ah, I've got another: cooking. I think all those who work in art are good cooks. There's something, a little bit of magic, in cooking too. What you produce, the flavours, mixing. It's a creative thing.

I: As someone who has so much respect for the public and cannot conceive artistic creation without them, how do you receive their reactions?
FB: Something wonderful occurred with the exhibition of the beds. I showed them first in Medellín and got a pair of teenage brothers to listen and note down everyone's comments. You can't imagine the things they wrote! It turned out to be an extraordinary book in which they tell us how some people shouted in front of the moving beds, some nuns cried, another person had the most unlikely opinions. It was wonderful. That's why I insist that a work is important to the extent that it arouses reactions in people. The important thing for me is what the work leaves in people who see it; the experience each person has, what they feel and think and the associations they make; what it means for everyone who looks at it; what is left behind in visitors. All this is what I really believe is important. The public decides everything; if they see it and are impressed, it's a process.

I: As happened with *Las camas*, a lot of people try to lift up the sculptures' clothing. Why do you think this happens?
FB: Because they can't really understand how they're moving. And also out of morbid curiosity and because the moving sculptures give them a feeling of hysteria. That's why I stuck the skirts on these seven sculptures. And we put a rope around the platform for protection.

I: A women's page question: for a person who moves in the world of aesthetics, how do you react to seeing yourself published – as happened recently – on the list of the ugliest women in Colombia?
FB: It was an incredible surprise. But I already have a protest document with a thousand signatures certifying that I am NOT the ugliest woman in the country.

I: What's your bedtime ghost?
FB: I have time anxiety. That's why playing seems like wasting time to me. There's so much to see, so much to read!

I: Is it true, as Gabriel García Márquez says, that you died of sadness in Paris?
FB: That's Gabo telling stories. I was sad, yes. Imagine: I'd had to leave Colombia, I'd spent 166 days away from my house and workshop, where some soldiers in plain clothes arrived at four o'clock in the morning, with machine guns under their ruanas, and dismantled even the bed, perhaps looking for my lost fucks. After the kind formalities, performed with an air of routine rather than diligence, they took away some photos I had brought back from Cuba when I was there for an exhibition and a unusable old pistol a friend had given me as a present when I lived alone. The soldiers arrested me and took me to the Brigade of Military Institutes, in "the Usaquén stables", for an interrogation. There I was sat blindfolded for eleven hours, with no food. They stuck an adhesive strip on my chest with the prisoner number: 5. That patch, with that number, is still stuck on the kitchen wall of my house in Bogotá. Before blindfolding me, the gentlemen offered me excuses for having to do so. I never found out what I was accused of and among the string of questions they asked me, one, perhaps the most intimidating, was whether I wasn't afraid of being raped. I told them that every married woman is used to being raped every night. Then they released me, but a few days later I received a summons to appear before a military judge, and we found out that on the day of the arrest the Ministry of Defence of the Turbay[22] government itself had told Hernando Santos, editor of the newspaper *El Tiempo*, that there was a serious accusation hanging over me that he wouldn't reveal. It was also said that I was a liaison between the Cuban government and the M-19 guerrilla group. I preferred to go into exile at the Mexican Embassy and then in that country I was received by Mercedes and Gabo who had to listen to the story like a broken record. I couldn't go to the United States, where my mother and my three daughters were, because they refused me a visa. Later on, we went with Pablo to Paris, where some friends got me a grant and a social security card to have my lungs treated. We went there with Mother (Alejandro Obregón), we made non-holy pilgrimages around outlying dance halls, I made Gabo his lentil soups to take away his fear of flying, and he looked after my guava plants, with carefully measured dry martinis and recent copies of *The New Yorker*. And of course in the last ten days, when Pablo arrived, I told him again and again after reading the news: "My love, the world has just come to an end!". There were just a few days left until they gave me a workshop I had rented, where I could begin again to do what I had learned here with the masters of my youth. That night we met some friends for dinner, but my heart let me down and I had a cardiac arrest. But I'm not dead. As Nene Cepeda says in his story: Dying is a drag. The interviewer went out into the garden, and before leaving, he saw something placed under the iconic

5. News clipping [newspaper, date…?]
Courtesy of the Archive of Pablo Leyva. Photo: unknown. News Clipping

DIARIO DEL CARIBE — Barranquilla — MIERCOLES, 23 de Abril de 1969.

Felisa Bursztyn Triunfa con sus "Histéricas"

"De la palanca a la máquina, o la Vida Privada de Felisa Bursztyn" fue el título de la conferencia con que el director de teatro Santiago García inauguró la exposición de 7 esculturas 'histéricas' con sonido y movimiento, de esta artista colombiana cuya obra se presenta en la Galería del Banco de la República, bajo patrocinio del Centro Artístico. Centenares de personas se congregaron en el recinto para admirar la discutida obra de Felisa Bursztyn, a quien vemos en la foto junto a una de sus obras. La película 'Hoy Felisa', del director barranquillero Luis Ernesto Arocha, fue presentada como parte del programa, arrancando aplausos del público. (Foto de Acuña).

images of the leaders Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro; it was a sign from the former factory of Feliza Bursztyn's father: "This company prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages, the carrying of knives and the use of coarse language very common in the guild of artisans on its premises. The Management".

[A collage of interviews welded with pieces from texts and interviews with Feliza Bursztyn: "Entrevista telegramática con Felisa [*sic*] Bursztyn", unsigned, *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), 28 May 1972; Enrique Carrizosa, "Qué hubo… qué más", *Micro-Entrevistas*, undated; Maritza Uribe de Urdinola, "En un país de machistas, ¡hágase la loca!", *El Tiempo: Revista Carrusel* (Bogotá), 30 November 1979: 15; Beatriz Zuluaga, "Felisa

Bursztyn: La mujer de las camas", *Revista Mujer* (Bogotá), October 1975: 68–72; Lader Giraldo, "Mis Chatarras se Defienden Solas, dice Feliza", *El Espectador – Diario de la Mañana* (Bogotá), 25 July 1967; Enrique Santos Calderón, "Feliza Bursztyn y el Arte en Latas de Nescafé [La escultura de chatarra]", *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), 21 September 1964; Maritza Uribe de Urdinola, "Feliza 'baila' en Cali", *El País* (Cali), Sunday supplement, 18 November 1979: 6–7; Jorge Gaitán Durán, "La densa nube del ser", *El Espectador* (Bogotá), 12 October 1958; Walter Engel, "Poesía de la Chatarra: La Exposición de Feliza Burztyn", *El Espectador: Magazine Dominical* (Bogotá), 4 October 1964: 10-F; Gina McDaniel Tarver, "The Art of Feliza Bursztyn: Confronting Cultural Hegemony", *Artelogie*, no. 5, 2013, http://journals.openedition.org/artelogie/5561; Héctor Muñoz, "El monumento a López es un horror", *El Espectador* (Bogotá), 16 June 1967; Marta Traba, *Los que son* (Bogotá: unpublished, 1963); Alvaro Medina, "¿Feliza Krugman o Irene Bursztyn?", *La Vanguardia Liberal: Vanguardia Dominical* (Bucaramanga), 2 June 1974: 4–5; Marta Traba, "Burztyn [*sic*] por encima de toda sospecha", typed manuscript, https://icaa.mfah.org [1974]; Miguel González, "Análisis de la obra de Feliza Burstyn [*sic*]", *El País* (Cali), 25 September 1974; Gloria Valencia Diago, "Académicos vs. Artistas: el monumento a Bolivar", *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), 7 August 1980: 1-B; Camilo Leyva Espinel, "Un montón de chatarra", master's thesis in history and theory of modern and contemporary art, University of the Andes of Bogota, 2008, 11; Manuela Ochoa Ronderos, "Los escenarios inhabitados", 2013, https://premionalcritica.uniandes.edu.co/?texto=los-escenarios-inhabilitados; Nicolás Suescún *et al.*, "Un Brindis de Adiós a FELIZA", *Cromos* (Bogotá), 19 January 1982; Nicolás Suescún, "Las camas de Feliza en el Museo de Arte Moderno el 26", *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), 24 March 1974; Juan Gustavo Cobo Borda, "Entrevista trunca con Feliza Bursztyn", *Cromos* (Bogotá), 8 March 1983]

[1] Lucas Ospina, "Feliza Bursztyn: 'En un país de machistas, ¡hágase la loca!'", *070* (Bogotá), 14 January 2019, https://cerosetenta.uniandes.edu.co/feliza-bursztyn-en-un-pais-de-machistas-hagase-la-loca/

[2] Jorge Gaitán Durán (Pamplona, 1924 – Pointe-à-Pitre, 1962) was a Colombian poet and critic, founder of the magazine *Mito* and a member of the Cuadernícolas.

[3] Ossip Zadkine (Vitebsk, 1890 – Paris, 1967) was a Russian artist, mainly known as a sculptor, although he also worked as a painter. [please check place + date of birth, it seems uncertain]

[4] Hernando Valencia Goelkel (Bucaramanga, 1928 – Bogotá, 2004) was a Colombian critic and essayist. He was the co-founder of *Mito* together with Jorge Gaitán Durán and a member of the Editorial Board of the Cultural Bulletin of Banco de la República.

[5] Casimiro Eiger (Warsaw, 1909 – Bogota, 1987) was a Polish gallery owner, historian, and art and film critic.

[6] "Gabo" is an affectionate nickname used to refer to Gabriel García Márquez.

[7] Alejandro Obregón (Barcelona, 1920 – Cartagena, 1992) was a Colombian-Spanish painter and a mythical figure who helped build the art scene in twentieth-century Colombia.

[8] Rogelio Salmona (Paris, 1927 – Bogotá, 2007) was a prominent Colombian-French architect who was characterized by a wide and varied work with an extensive use of brick, concrete, and water as a connecting element, through canals, water mirrors, pools, and ponds.

[9] Marta Traba (Buenos Aires, 1930 – Mejorada del Campo, 1983) was an Argentine-Colombian art critic and writer, known for her important contributions to the study of Latin American art, her combative character, and her wide influence on the perception of art in the local Colombian environment.

[10] Fernando Botero Angulo (Medellín, 1932) is a Colombian painter, sculptor, and draughtsman who has lived in Pietrasanta, Paris, Munich, and New York. His work was vital until the mid-1970s, after which he inevitably chose to copy himself.

[11] Established in 1958, the Departamento Nacional de Planeación (National Planning Department) is an administrative unit responsible for leading, coordinating, and articulating planning for the sustainable and inclusive development of Colombia.

[12]Literally "Foolish Fatherland", historical term for the initial period of Colombian independence from 1810 to 1816.

[13] Alfonso López Pumarejo (Honda, 1886 – London, 1959) was a Colombian businessman, politician, thinker, and diplomat. He was President of Colombia for two terms, first between 1934 and 1938, and then between 1942 and 1945, the year he resigned. In his first term he became known for his progressive measures, including a constitutional reform in 1936 which gave private property a social function, and in general for his government known as Revolución en Marcha (Marching Revolution).

[14] Fernando Martínez Sanabria (Madrid, 1925 – Bogotá, 1991), known as El Mono or El Chuli, was a Spanish architect considered the pioneer of organic architecture in Colombia. He arrived in Colombia in 1938 because of the Spanish Civil War and taught as a professor at the National University of Colombia. Sanabria was one of the main actors in the bohemian nights of the capital's countercultural Creole elite.

[15] The Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (MAMBO) was founded in 1953 by Marta Traba and refounded by herself in 1957 [what do you mean "refounded"? Did it undergo restructuring/renovation…?]. It played a vital role in the programming and articulation of the local scene until the early 1980s, and then became just like any other institution with great ups and downs.

[16] *El Tiempo* is a Colombian newspaper founded on 30 January 1911 and since then has been characterized by its support of government policy with the occasional critical exercise in divergent research, often unnoticed by its own directors. Since 2012, it has been the privileged communication organ of its current owner, Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, Colombia's main banker and one of the contractors most benefited by the Colombian State.

[17] Pablo Leyva (place + date of birth?) is a chemical engineer graduated from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá. He holds a PhD in Economic and Social Development from the Institute for Economic and Social Development Studies (IEDES) of the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. He was Director General of Colombia's Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM), as well as Vice Rector of Resources and Dean of the faculties of Engineering and Sciences of the National University of Colombia. He was a professor at the Universidad de los Andes and associate professor at the Instituto de Ciencias Naturales of the National University of Colombia. He was Feliza's last companion in life and, together with Camilo Leyva, took care of the good destiny of artist's work.

[18] "Little red bus" is a diminutive for TransMilenio, the rapid transit system widely extended throughout Bogotá which has privileged the bus over the construction of an integrated subway network capable of improving mobility in one of the world's worst-rated cities in terms of public transportation.

[19] "The bed must be made of stone / The headboard must be made of stone / The woman who loves me / Must love me for real." The lyrics are by Mexican singer and songwriter Cuco Sánchez (Altamira, 1921 – Mexico City, 2000).

[20] FOOTNOTE?

[21] The Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) (National Training Service) is a Colombian public institution founded in 1957 that offers education and training services.

[22] Julio César Turbay Ayala (Bogotá, 1916–1905) was a Colombian politician and diplomat of Lebanese descent. A member of the Liberal Party, he was President of Colombia from 1978 to 1982 and became known for his misgovernment, which earned him public ridicule. He made history for the implementation of an infamous Security Statute that imposed a policy of harassment, repression, censorship, torture, and disappearances by the most fascist military wing in collusion with the political and business elite. The current President of Colombia, Iván Duque, has shown himself to be a fervent admirer of Turbay and has updated that mandate of the most inept, incompetent, cynical, and least qualified (Kakistocracy).