

#RestauradorasConGlitter

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Mexico City

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FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONS,
ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY:

Considering the numerous defamatory articles put forward in recent days by various media organizations regarding the spray paintings made on the Column of Independence (also known as “*El Angel de la Independencia*”) during the feminist march of August 16th, a group of women specialized in the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage have come together to form an independent collective named *Restauradoras con Glitter* (Restorers with Glitter) in order to state our professional opinion in reference to the implications and consequences of these actions.

UNESCO defines cultural heritage as “a product and a process that bestows societies with a wealth of resources inherited from the past, created in the present and that are transmitted to future generations”. This is to say that cultural heritage is made up of tangible and intangible resources that have been inherited to us in order to be experienced, used, reflected upon, enjoyed, reproduced, conserved and preserved. Hence, we understand heritage to be an adaptable medium in which ideas, inquiries and consensus are materialized. Due to its dynamic nature, it triggers social and cultural processes around it that in turn generate identity and purpose. Our practice is rooted in making it possible for cultural heritage to participate in these social mechanisms that are ever changing as society itself.

As a result of the above and given our expertise, we would like to state that:



1. Although we do not promote in any way the painting of historical monuments, we understand the social and transgressive importance that these inscriptions have as part of the processes that occur around monuments in specific contexts. The recent demonstrations are a desperate cry against the systemic and normalized violence perpetrated against women in our society, which has not been dealt with in an efficient or resolute manner in order to guarantee our security. The general media coverage has preferred to emphasize the visual effects of the spray paintings rather than focus on what is truly important: the hundreds of rapes and feminicides that should never have happened and that are alarmingly on the rise daily. The paintings on the monument are a mere symptom of the exorbitant violence in which we live and as such should be discussed by the media in order to promote mindfulness of the underlying problem. We sustain that the permanence of the paintings needs to be a tangible reminder of the reprehensible situation of violence in our country and that therefore, none should be removed until this crisis is addressed and a solution to the problem of gender based violence in our country is given.

2. We consider that due to their wide-ranging social, historic and symbolic relevance, the paintings should be meticulously documented by professionals in order to emphasize and maintain the collective memory of this event and its causes; as well as raising awareness in order to propose and manage solutions of the underlying problem. If the paintings were removed without a systematic registration that could give way to a reflection on the subject; the voices of women demanding our integrity to be guaranteed and that justice be given to the victims of violence would once again be silenced. For these reasons we request that this collective can perform this documentation, as we have experts specifically trained to carry out such a task.



3. We invite civil society and our colleagues dedicated to the care of heritage to join the cause for the eradication of gender-based violence. Together we can build a dialogue that will accompany the actions of the Government to end the impunity enjoyed by our assailants, increase security and modify and implement legislation with the protection of women in mind. Similarly, this joint effort can result in the proposal and management of projects whose objectives would include the recognition and sustainment of civil and social values.
4. This collective considers that no conservation specialist should lend themselves to any intervention that would lead to the removal of the paintings. That is, until the Federal Government takes the necessary actions to guarantee the safety of women in Mexican territory and until there is a noticeable society-wide reduction in all expressions of gender-based violence as well as its equitable sanction when necessary.
5. We request to all accountable government authorities, once the fundamental issues have been tackled, that the intervention of the monument be carried out in an interdisciplinary manner and by subject-matter experts. The time estimate for the project must consider producing a proposal with the adequate evaluation criteria and means. The proposal in turn will emanate from an integral diagnosis where the original materials will be studied, and the different coloring substances employed will be identified.

*Cultural heritage can be restored; but the raped, sexually abused and tortured women will never be the same again; grieving loved ones will continue to wait for the missing, and the murdered will never return home.
Lost lives cannot be restored, the social fabric can.*



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This independent collective is conformed by professionals from different academic specialties associated with cultural heritage: conservation-restoration, history, art history, archaeology, architecture, amongst others. We are all women who have witnessed and/or have been victims of the horrors entailed by being a woman in this country. We are constantly supporting the feminist cause in the battle for our human rights and for a dignified life in sisterhood with all abused women.

YOURS SINCERELY
RESTAURADORAS CON GLITTER

C.C. Alejandra Frausto Guerrero, Secretaria de Cultura

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