

Review for Professor Anita Giraldo Works in the Work  
“Finding the Sky: A Multimedia Installation”  
Communication Design Department

Review by Sarah F. Price, Ph.D.

Professor Anita Giraldo from the Communication Design department presented her on-going work titled “Finding the Sky: A Multimedia Installation” for Works in the Works on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026. She began her presentation by explaining that this is a project that is still underway and has undergone a number of challenges resulting in shifts and modifications to her approach of the subject matter. “Finding the Sky” is a public video and audio installation project that tells the early story of an individual who has reached the centurion mark and must confront his relationship with technology through memories of his life. Set in outlying areas of Northern Columbia, “Finding the Sky” was originally designed as videos narrated by a local voice-over artist that recount the evolving life of “a city on the precipice of modernity”. Professor Giraldo tells her audience the story of a woman who bought a house with the idea of levelling it and rebuilding but has been informed by local government that she must restore the house if she is to do anything with it. As a result, the woman has decided to let the house continue to fall into disrepair. As Professor Giraldo narrates this example of the tension between preservation and modernization, she explains that the goal of the project is to bring viewers into a time and place that exists within the memory of the aforementioned centenarian, exploring his early life in rural northern Columbia. Audiences entering her multimedia installation will use smartphones and tablets to interact with existing pictures and backgrounds by using a designated app. The app will show them an evolving version of reality based on what was and what is now. Professor Giraldo is currently working to develop the app and build out the collected voice overs and iterations of the space. In this experiences, a narrator’s voice will tell the story through short text segments written based on interviews of the subject’s family and friends, with details added from regional scholars, architects, historians, and linguists.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing current political strife on the north coast of Columbia, Professor Giraldo’s work has had to adapt and redirect, and is currently exploring different avenues of AI for voice over work. To demonstrate what she is trying to accomplish throughout the project, she showed the audience a video of a beautiful countryside and water imagery with a voice over in Spanish explaining the history of the area of French colonization and subsequent construction of the local towns and cities. As the narrator goes on to explain Christopher Columbus’s introduction of the first cow to the region, pictures and videos of the Warsaw Cattle are shown on the screen. This narration and imagery delve into the evolution of livestock as the primary industry in the region and the power of the Pacifico horse that came with the conquistadors. The narrator explains how as technology as developed, the bulls and cattle are now identified with chips that can be scanned to identify the owner. This progress is supported by the regional cowboys who work for conservation and environmentalism to protect this historical way of life while incorporating the necessary modern technologies that continue to make it possible. As the narrator explained (translated to English by Professor Giraldo), “This world is disappearing as quickly as can be imagined.”

As a result of the global pandemic and political strife, the Professor Giraldo has been unable to return and have the same local narrator continue as voice over. Therefore, Professor Giraldo has begun to explore alternative options from using her voice to record the narration then put the

recording through an AI filter to deliver a man's voice with a northern Colombian accent, however it is missing the strong drawl of the area. She explained that she may end up doing the entire rest of the installation this way as a result of political strife or she may attempt to get samples from local voice artists. However, this secondary route poses an ethical question about AI use: is it fair to use somebody else's voice to filter into AI to create all of the voice overs? In the meantime, she is studying the linguistic colloquialisms and incorporating them into her voice-overs that then get carried over modified by AI to male voice in order to make the AI generated voice overs more accurate and authentic to the region. This whole process of AI generated voice overs and the analysis of the regional modernization of the project explores the impact technology has on how people assigned value and identify what is "worthwhile". Professor Giraldo provided the regional example of how huge beautiful historic houses have been abandoned in favor of smaller apartments that can be airconditioned.

At this point in the presentation, we moved into a Q and A discussion exploring questions of the technology development and ethical AI usage, community response to her work, and the impact of political forces on her project. In the Q and A's, Professor Giraldo explained the system of branding of the livestock animals with chips well before this system was introduced in the US. The incorporation of the microchips made the branding of the livestock more streamlined and easier, therefore aiding and modernizing this industry in the region. As demand for exporting their livestock continued to grow, a university was needed in the region. A wide variety of different countries were importing this type of livestock, therefore, there was a need for technological development to keep up with demand, which in turn led to other traditions being left behind.

In relation to her project, the development of AI has actually made managing political strife and uncertainty in the region easier as she is not currently able to return to the area to collect more voice recordings. She describes how there exist number of intrusive forces in that area, as well as migrants coming through the Panama Canal, that prey upon these desperate groups of people, creating dangerous dynamics. As a result, Professor Giraldo found that AI could process voice samples and eventually video samples and edit them quickly, and generally a pretty good job, so there a couple of different avenues to continue the project. At the moment, Professor Giraldo and her team is continuing to weigh the ethical considerations of using AI generated narration based on where the voice comes from: her voice AI generated, voices from open sources, or other samples of regional dialect. As she explains, taking the original narrator's voice resampling it into her project would not be a morally good decision. But listening to what he does and then translating it and incorporating it into her voice then modifying her voice through AI feels like an ethical approach to representing the dialect of the region.