

»The debt is owed to us«  
Feminist Perspectives on Debt, Austerity,  
and Authoritarian Neoliberalism  
Lucí Cavallero & Verónica Gago  
(Buenos Aires)  
Lecture and discussion

Tuesday, June 27, 2023, 7:30 p.m  
diffrakt | centre for theoretical periphery  
Crellestr. 22, Berlin  
Free admission

As activists engaged in the transnational feminist strike movements and members of the Argentinian Ni Una Menos Collective, Lucí Cavallero and Verónica Gago examine the relationship between debt, labor, and social reproduction. They demonstrate how debt is intimately linked to gendered violence, patriarchal notions of the family, cuts to public services, and accumulation by dispossession. Neoliberal debt management and austerity reinforce the exploitation of unpaid care work and tie concrete desires and needs of everyday life to the abstract logic of valorization. Moreover, the »financial terror« imposed by austerity policies and investment companies amplifies violence against women and queer people in precarious conditions. The increasing indebtedness of private households binds women to violent partners or traps them in abusive living conditions, while expanding the extent of unwaged labor taken on by women, particularly in poor households. According to Cavallero and Gago we must therefore begin with the bodies most burdened by debt, if we want to understand austerity. They not only analyze why women and LGBTQ+ are those mostly affected by debt but present a feminist study of capitalist finance in which debt is analyzed as a privileged apparatus of new forms of exploitation and extraction. It is against these mechanisms of financial capitalism that feminist movements such as Ni Una Menos create anti-austerity protests that put care and commons at the center of the political discourse in coalition with struggles around housing, evictions, pensions, mortgages, racial policing, and urban gentrification. Drawing on concrete experiences and practices from Latin America and around the world, Lucí Cavallero and Verónica Gago will present their analysis of austerity and highlight ways in which debt can be resisted.

**Lucí Cavallero** is a researcher at the Universidad de Buenos Aires. Her work focuses on the link between debt, illegal capital, and different forms of violence. She is a feminist activist and member of the Ni Una Menos Collective. She co-authored the book *A Feminist Reading of Debt* with Verónica Gago (Pluto, 2020).

**Verónica Gago** teaches Political Science at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and is a Professor of Sociology at the Instituto de Altos Estudios, Universidad Nacional de San Martín.

She is the author of *Feminist International* (Verso, 2020) and *Neoliberalism from Below: Popular Pragmatics and Baroque Economies* (Duke University Press, 2017). She is a feminist activist and member of the Ni Una Menos Collective.

Hosted by Katja Diefenbach, Jule Govrin, Ruth Sonderegger, Pablo Valdivia and the research project *Natural right, valorization, and perception in colonial modernity. On the nexus of accumulation, race, and aesthetics*.

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