

**A virtual pre-school with real world scenes**  
**Review of the virtual exhibition *Parvulario1* (Pre-school1)**  
**by Julia Ortiz Elías**

Un parvulario virtual con escenas del mundo real  
Reseña sobre la exposición virtual *Parvulario 1* de Julia Ortiz Elías

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The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to rethink creative practices and use available technologies to continue developing and disseminating art despite confinement. Faced with the temporary closure of art galleries and other exhibition spaces, virtual applications and galleries have emerged as an alternative to move exhibitions from the physical to the virtual plane to dilute spatial and temporal limitations. Thus, virtual art exhibitions can be visited at any time and place in the world from any digital device, which amplifies their reach and reconfigures the ways of appreciating Art in a new *sensorium* (Benjamin cited by Yúdice, 2007).

A pre-school is a space where children are educated and cared for during their early childhood. For this exhibition, the term '*parvulario*' (pre-school) has been adopted as a metaphor since this virtual space shelters and presents the girls in a small classroom. Their figures appear candid, innocent, and without malice to tell us briefly and directly their particular story. *Parvulario 1* is the first of a series of exhibitions whose protagonists are children and which the Peruvian artist Julia Ortiz Elías develops through drawing. It consists of eighteen small-format pencil portraits on cardboard, in which she records moments in the lives of girls whose childhoods were interrupted in different contexts and moments in history. They are drawings based on archival photographs in some cases. In others, they are quasi-forensic personal reconstructions elaborated by Ortiz based on historical references and trying to respect the clothing of the time. The girls portrayed are of different nationalities, including a group of Peruvian girls. Characters such as Lina Medina, Ana Frank, Sarita Colonia, Phan Thị Kim Phúc or Ruby Bridges join other anonymous girls to invite us to reflect and look back at their stories to decipher and understand the impact that the events they faced had on their lives.

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“Too soon in my life it was too late,” says Marguerite Duras in *The Lover* and this sentence moves and impresses because it contains the essence of the novel. This quote has been chosen to accompany the exhibition because it synthesizes that mixture of tenderness and pain that the viewer experiences when getting to know the personal stories of each girl portrayed. *Parvulario 1* is a journey around the world and the children’s universe that shows diverse scenes in the girls’ lives, and presents them alone and isolated within an empty context that makes it more evident that these are deprived, fragile and vulnerable girls.

From *Parvulario 1*, eighteen girls look at us with curiosity, observe us, smile at us, cry or run with fear because they were surprised by war, famine, poverty, racism, exploitation, hyper-sexualization, or the diverse uses and customs rooted in their culture. Eighteen girls born from the pencil and the hand of Julia Ortiz Elías to challenge our gaze and invite us to recognize them through a new corpus.

*Parvulario 1* is not just an exhibition of children’s portraits focusing on girls. This virtual pre-school with scenes from the real world is a call to be alert to everything that concerns our children so that they can grow up without seeing their world disrupted or their childhood interrupted. This exhibition could be appreciated from March 13th to May 4th, 2021 in the virtual gallery of Victoria: Gestión, Arte & Comunicación hosted on the digital platform Exhibbit.com. This first virtual exhibition and third solo show of the artist Julia Ortiz Elías was composed of three digital platforms: 3D virtual gallery montage, virtual tour clip hosted on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsuEAcaLyI8>) and a digital catalogue on Flipsnack ([https://www.flipsnack.com/PARVULARIO1/catalogo-parvulario1.html?fbclid=IwAR3YViwRfEAFSqtHaqKX5zIalPUCFj9pdUogDwzq5m\\_xg-BcWjGfuQiGQ0](https://www.flipsnack.com/PARVULARIO1/catalogo-parvulario1.html?fbclid=IwAR3YViwRfEAFSqtHaqKX5zIalPUCFj9pdUogDwzq5m_xg-BcWjGfuQiGQ0)). In addition, the artist conducted a guided tour via Facebook on the afternoon of Saturday, April 24th, 2021.

### **About the artist**

Julia Ortiz Elías (Lima, 1975) has a bachelor’s degree in Painting from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and a degree in Education from the Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola. She is currently studying for a master’s degree in Digital Graphic design at the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja. She has participated in the group exhibitions *El arte de hacer patria (The art of being patriotic)*, *Cuerpo e identidad (Body and Identity) (2018)*, *Cómplices (Accomplices) (2019 and 2018)*, *Cien por la Sarita (One hundred for the Sarita) (2014)*, *Mujeres de la floresta (Women of the Glade) (2013)*, *La mirada inclusiva (The Inclusive Look)*, and *Portrait, gender and citizenship (Retrato, género y ciudadanía) (2011)*. Her solo exhibitions are *Parvulario 1 (Pre-school 1) (2021)*, *Estereoscopías, la mirada doble (Stereoscopies, the double gaze) (ICPNA Gallery in Lima, 2017)*, and *El problema del otro (Other’s problem) (Library of San Marcos’s Cultural Center, 2011)*.

She is part of the artistic collective *Trenzando Fuerzas* (Braiding Forces), and is a full time teacher in the design careers of the Instituto Superior Tecnológico Cibertec, since 2010.

### Note

The figures for violence against women in Latin America and Peru remain high and have even increased during the pandemic. In the case of child abuse, a similar situation occurs. In *Infographics: Let's be free, let's be free without violence. Cifras de la violencia hacia los niños, niñas y adolescentes en el Perú* (Figures on violence against children and adolescents in Peru), published by UNICEF, MINEDU (Ministry of Education), MIMP (The Ministry for Women's Affairs and Vulnerable Populations), and the Government of Canada in 2019, points out that violence in Peru is "daily and normalized, being considered a valid practice to correct, control or show power over children and adolescents". In addition, 48 percent of children justify violence, while 40 percent of adolescents justify it. It is also important to mention that fourteen out of every one hundred cases of violence reported against children or adolescents correspond to sexual violence.

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### Author

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She holds a master's degree in Communications and a bachelor's degree in art with a major in graphic design from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) and has completed a doctorate in Education (UNFV) and a doctorate in Humanities with a major in Culture (UDEP). She works as a consultant in design and visual communication at national and international levels. She teaches design, Art, and communications in Peruvian universities at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Currently, she directs Victoria: Arte & Comunicación, a digital platform for dissemination and cultural management.



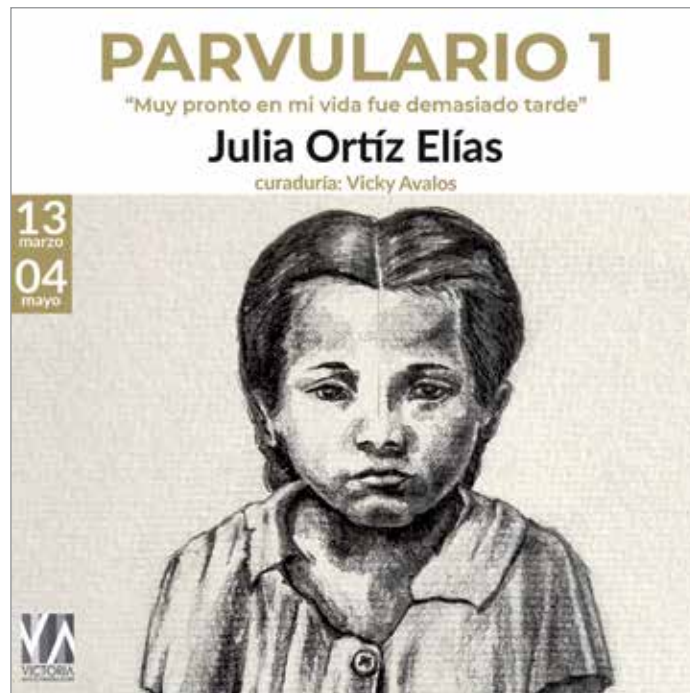


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Figure 1. Informative flyer for dissemination in social networks. Image: detail of the artwork "Iquitos, ca. 1982" by Julia Ortiz Elías

Figure 2. General view of the 3D virtual gallery. Screenshot from Exhibit.com platform.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Figure 3. Detail view of the artwork in the 3D virtual gallery. Screenshot of the artwork "New Orlean-USA, 1960" on the Exhibitbit.com platform.

Figure 4. "Cusco, 1926", one of the artworks in the exhibition. Piece by Julia Ortiz Elías in technical pencils on Canson cardboard. Canson cardboard. 42 x 29,7cm . Source: Marriage for convenience, Martín Chambi.