**Transcription from Observational Walk notes**

Route in Santo Domingo: CU Pass and Tetl to the popular community centre and back.

Duration: 42 minutes

Date and time: November 2, 2022 - Day of the Dead from 11:37 a.m. to 12:19 p.m.

Additional notes (in addition to field notes): Third walk, not many people in the neighbourhood. popular community centre closed because of the festivities of the Day of the Dead

Observer: A

I arrive at Santo Domingo at 11:37 am. Today is the Day of the Dead, an important cultural and religious celebration in the country. That's why it's also a day when many people don't go to work, and schools are off. There are far fewer people in the metro and on the streets than there normally are, like Tetl . There are stalls and people in the street, but fewer. I walk through Tetl and turn around in Teocalli. There are people working in the street. Street vendors and mechanics. But many businesses are closed. Seeing people working in the streets makes me think of the street as an extension of the house. As a connection between the public and the private.

It strikes me again that in this neighbourhood it is very evident that the houses have different shapes, sizes, and proportions. They are very close together in this neighbourhood. Several families live inside the lots. History is still very much alive in this neighbourhood, in the walls and in the houses. On the corner of Teocalli and Atl there are people who are also building, so I see piles of earth and materials on the street. Among these materials are volcanic rocks. In Santo Domingo the volcanic rock is intertwined with the concrete.

I turn in Atl and walk down this street. As there are fewer people passing by, I notice more of the presence of dogs, which are always present among the people. I also notice more the smell of dog poop, which is constant, although people usually clean their pavements with water. In Atl I see a person coming out of their house who meets someone passing by on the street, and the passer-by invites them to go and do some activity. The person who came out refuses and gives his reasons, which seem to be excuses for the passer-by, who gets desperate, berates and insults him.

I see that the grocery shops are open, even if many other businesses are closed today. In this street there is a mural about the struggle against electricity payments, and in defence of the nationalisation of the electricity industry. There are several murals in the neighbourhood that have a political and activist character, so I wonder if they belong to neighbours who are sympathetic to the activism of one group or another. This can be important to identify themselves and to mark the spaces in the neighbourhood that are important to them. Also, many walls have murals that show support for the current president, so something similar may be at work.

In Atl there is a primary school, which I walk to. On one of the corners of this school I remember that there was a water tap, with a tap that opened onto the street. It was a public tap in the street, which people used to fill their buckets when the water ran out in their houses. Now the tap is no longer there, but has been moved a few metres. What now occupies the site is the construction of a well. Today there are people working on the well. This well is being talked about a lot by the Water Defence Committee, because this group was campaigning for it to be built. There is a machine digging, and approximately 5 workers today. The construction work on the well is noisy, especially because of the digging, and has involved a partial closure of the streets that converge at this corner. I see that they are installing what looks like drainage or pipes. A well has replaced the tap, although the tap has been moved a few metres.

At Fuerza Street I turn around and continue walking down the street. Here I notice that there are many houses with surveillance cameras in front of them. That scares me, because it makes me think that there might be crime in these streets, or that there were thieves who broke into some of these houses.

Today I tried to take some pictures of the neighbourhood, as there are less people walking around, and I can be more discreet. I don't want my presence to be too noticeable as if I were a strange observer, a tourist, or a policeman or a photojournalist.

The pavements in front of houses also change, just as the facades and shapes of homes change. They change like the houses, and it feels as if they are a combination of various things on the street. On the corner of Fuerza and Llave streets is a mural of the Assembly that opposed the construction of a building at 215 Aztecas that ended up damaging a spring. I know about this mural from presentations and photographs, but I had not seen it in person. I pass in front of the mural and take a picture of it. Some people notice that I am taking a picture and turn to look at what I am taking a picture of.

In the next street I turn left and walk. I pass a community theatre. I wonder what kind of plays are performed in this space. I hear a rooster crowing, and I also notice the presence of more dogs in the street.

I continue along this street and arrive at a popular community centre that also functions as a cultural and workshop space. It was founded in the early days of the neighbourhood by a well-known activist who has also written about Santo Domingo. It seems that the building is now closed. In front of the building there are several houses with murals. One of the murals is of a tortilla shop, which catches my attention. It has a phrase written by this activist and author. I take a photograph of this mural. In the popular community centre I see governmental community centre type propaganda. I didn't know that this space was now also related to the activities of the city government. That surprises me. This building, the popular community centre, looks very big, very decorated, and beautiful. On one side of the building there is a "café de barrio", a community café, and apparently also a community kitchen. There are advertisements for many kinds of workshops in this space. I know that this building and its founder are important people in the history of the neighbourhood.

I look inside and hear someone talking to me. It's a woman sitting in front of the neighbourhood café, which is also closed today. She asks me if I was looking for something in the building, and I tell her that I was just looking and reading the advertisements. She tells me that it's closed today because it's a holiday, but that they're open any other day and I can go and ask. She tells me that there will be a Day of the Dead activity in the evening. I ask her the time, and thank her for the information. This exchange made me feel nervous, as I felt watched and seen. I wanted to take a photo in the community centre, but I don't do it anymore. I feel very conscious that I am not unnoticed in this place.

I go back the same way, and take pictures of more murals, but more discreetly. On the same street as the mural there is an altar dedicated to Santa Muerte. It looks very ornate and they seem to have a lot of flowers in front of it. That scares me a bit too, as her devotees have a reputation for committing crimes, although I am not convinced of this and it has a lot of stigma attached to it.

On the way back I see a woman in Teocalli who is hosing down her pavement. It may be to clean it of dirt and dust. I also see a boy using drugs. In the streets of the neighbourhood some people meet, others get high, others agree to do things later, others sell things, others organise themselves. At 12:19 I'm back on the CU pass.

Checking the news I found out that the popular community centre is under renovation, and that this was done with the support of the city government. I found a video with the head of government making the announcement in January of this year that this place would now have a government workshop centre, and that Santo Domingo would be helped not only with the renovation and support for the community centre, but also with the issue of water.