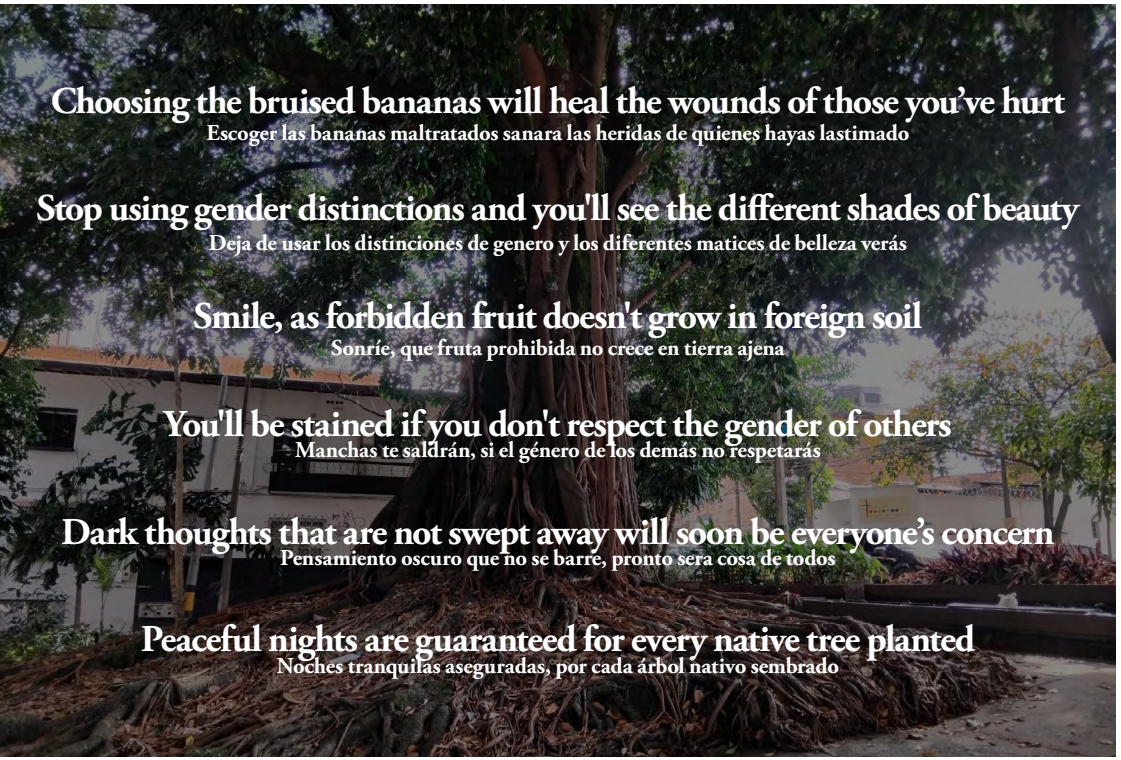
What if to choreograph the actions that can lead to solving social problems? What if these antidotal actions were dispersed in the form of superstition, tapping into people's minds? How would these controls coming from 'inside' serve and take effect in comparison to the external controls of power?

Noting the locals' spirituality and piousness and the omnipresence of police and guards in public spaces, I made workshops with locals to identify social issues and imagine new superstitions that lead to solutions.



Nuevas Supersticiones (English: New Superstitions)
2026 - ongoing
project / collaborative workshop series (dialogue and creative writing) / texts
number of superstitions: 6 (as of March 2026)
as a part of project *Magical Practices & New Superstitions*, in collaboration with Centro Colombo Americano, Medellin, Colombia

Aftertaste of Mexican Magic

In Mexico, which I visited before my stay in Colombia, I encountered white witches. As I walked through the city, listening to their stories where the boundaries between the world of mystery, fantasy, and fiction seemed to dissolve, I pondered how white witches and *curanderos*, or shamans/healers, play a role in 'curing' everyday issues such as health, love, and neighbour relationships. While killing time in a bookstore before my flight to Colombia, I came across a book that collected superstitions. This gave me the idea - what if superstitions could serve to solve social problems, and why not attempt to formulate new superstitions that can solve local social problems?

Place of Syncretism and Innovation

As a result of Spanish colonisation and the forced enslavement of Africans, Colombia became a place of syncretism, where indigenous, European, and African beliefs and cultures merged. Christianity permeated the local devout population, and when priests preached that 'planting a coffee tree will absolve you of your sins,' locals repeatedly performed acts of atonement, making Antioquia, with Medellín as its capital, one of the world's leading coffee-producing regions. Once considered the world's most dangerous city for the drug business and its related violence, it has now undergone a miraculous transformation and is considered one of the world's most innovative cities.

Local Problems Seen Through Local Eyes

What are the deep-rooted, unsurfaced social problems that the people who live and work in that place are concerned about, complain about, and worry about? Instead of viewing society through the eyes of a stranger and discovering its social problems, I conducted a series of collaborative workshops with local young artists in Medellín, attempting to collectively imagine new superstitions to solve the social problems they identified.

Methodology of Formulating Superstitions

Participants list common superstitions in Colombia, as well as their own personal or family/neighbour rituals, and share them with everyone. The psychological and physical structure of superstitions is examined, including the leaps and illogicalities between 'causing actions' and 'resulting events' and the power of words in the phonetics and phrasing of these superstitions.

Through group discussion, each participant lists the social issues they are concerned with. They then imagine situations and phenomena that could lead to the resolution of these social issues, and consider what actions can be incorporated into daily life that lead to these situations and phenomena.

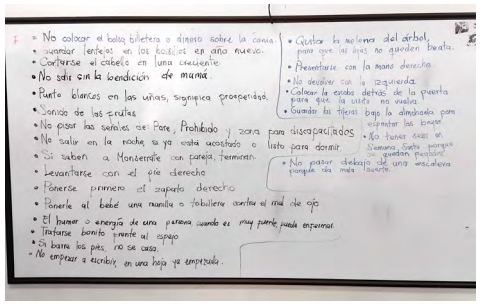
Each participant writes down the 'causing actions' and 'resulting events' of a new superstition on paper. These are collected and shuffled, and each participant draws an action and an event blindly. The resulting 'new superstitions' that enjoy leaps and illogicalities in their cause-and-effect relationships, are expressed and edited, with attention to phonetics and phrasing.

New Superstitions

Six superstitions were imagined and edited through a series of workshops with the artists at La Naviera in Medellín. On the left page, you find the English translations of the new superstitions, accompanied by their Spanish originals*.

* The originals can be more poetic and made to be remembered/pronounced





(above) Artists at the La Naviera Residence; local superstitions and personal rituals listed by the artists.

(below) New superstitions were randomly constructed by shuffling combinations of 'causing actions' and 'resulting events' related to the social issues, written on paper strips by each participant. The local social issues the locals listed were most prominently concerned with lookism, gender discrimination, (de-)colonisation, and individualism.

(left page) 6 new superstitions imagined with La Naviera artists

