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EDITORIAL AKAL

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The Spanish publishing house for thinking about the new left, from a consciously and historically antifascist perspective.

With more than fifty years of outstanding publishing in the fields of history, humanities, social sciences and critical thought, Akal is one of Spain's most prestigious independent publishers, with a catalogue of exceptional intellectual quality and strong international potential.

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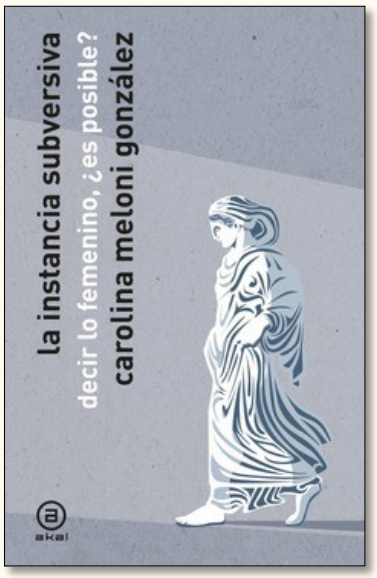
COLLECTION Agora / Theory is devoted to contemporary thought, philosophy and critical theory. The collection brings together intellectually rigorous works that engage with the major cultural, social and political debates of our time, combining theoretical ambition with a commitment to reaching readers beyond strictly academic circles.

The guiding idea behind Agora / Theory is to recover the public dimension of theory: books that do not remain confined to specialist discussions, but intervene in the wider conversations shaping our understanding of society, subjectivity and power.

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The Subversive Instance: Is It Possible to Speak the Feminine?

by Carolina Meloni



Spanish, 2026, 200 pages.

A powerful contribution to contemporary feminist philosophy, *La instancia subversiva* examines the place of the feminine within the history of Western thought.

Starting from the exclusion of women, slaves and children from the traditional philosophical canon, Carolina Meloni analyses how the feminine has been constructed as a subordinated position within systems of knowledge shaped by masculine authority.

Drawing on feminist theory, deconstruction and contemporary philosophy, the book proposes the feminine as a subversive instance capable of questioning the foundations of patriarchal thought and opening new possibilities for understanding subjectivity, language and power.

This title will be of particular interest to publishers with strong lists in feminist theory, philosophy, critical theory and contemporary thought — houses committed to intellectually ambitious works that engage with international debates and combine academic excellence with a broader cultural reach.

Carolina Meloni is a philosopher, anti-colonial feminist thinker and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Alcalá (Madrid). Her work focuses on contemporary political philosophy, feminist thought and deconstruction.

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Two Bodies of Labour: An Essay on Exploitation

by José Luis Moreno Pestaña



Spanish, 2026, 380 pages

An essential essay to break the new chains of the 21st century, which have transformed our body into a mere labor asset, trying to eliminate the power of self-definition.

In this original essay, Moreno Pestaña develops a theory of exploitation that connects historical analysis with the economic and cultural realities of the present. The book examines how the human body becomes a site of conflict, where the physical degradation associated with labour intersects with the imposition of arbitrary aesthetic norms.

Tracing the mechanisms of domination from ancient democracy and feudalism to neoliberalism, Moreno Pestaña explores how physical appearance can be transformed into a form of capital. Beyond economic exploitation, the book addresses the cultural pressures that compel individuals to manage their image in pursuit of social recognition, reproducing hierarchies that affect both physical health and moral integrity. It ultimately argues for a democratic political response capable of dismantling these symbolic demands and restoring individual autonomy over the body.

José Luis Moreno Pestaña is Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Granada. Holding doctorates in Philosophy and Sociology, his research focuses on the historical formation of philosophical norms, symbolic and workplace violence directed at the body, and the renewal of contemporary democracy through practices inspired by ancient democratic traditions. His publications include *La cara oscura del capital erótico* (Akal, 2016), *Retorno a Atenas* (2019) and *Los pocos y los mejores* (Akal, 2021). He is also the director of the Ágora / Theory collection.

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Cracks in Desire: Culture as Domination and Resistance

by Nuria Peist



Spanish, 2026, 314 pages

Nuria Peist explores the complex relationship between artistic culture, design and popular cultural expressions in contemporary society. An essay that challenges social hierarchies by uniting elitist aesthetics with the rebellion of punk and feminism.

The book examines how cultural hierarchies have historically been constructed, separating legitimate art from everyday objects and mass media, and considers the mechanisms through which certain forms of cultural production acquire prestige and recognition.

Drawing on the concept of *artification*, Peist analyses how ordinary activities and objects can be elevated to the status of high culture according to criteria such as originality, singularity and avant-garde innovation. At the same time, she explores the transformative potential of social design and cinema as tools for cultural change and democratisation, challenging traditional forms of elitism. The book argues that a productive encounter between artistic and popular culture requires the dismantling of the structures of subordination that have historically kept them apart.

Nuria Peist is a lecturer in the Department of Art History at the University of Barcelona. Her teaching and research focus on the theory and sociology of art and culture, particularly the processes through which modern artists achieve recognition and the relationship between artistic and popular culture. Her publications include *El éxito en el arte moderno. Trayectorias artísticas y procesos de reconocimiento* (2012) and *Artistas y reconocimiento. Un enfoque sociológico* (co-edited with Vicenç Furió, 2022). Since 2023, she has been a member and transfer coordinator of the Extraordinary Chair in the Social Philosophy of Bodily Discrimination.

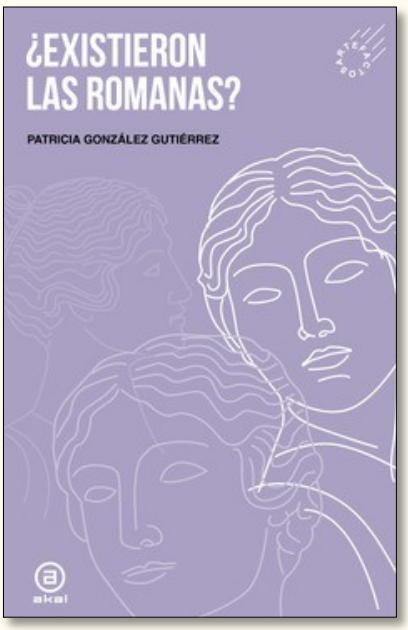
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COLLECTION Artefactos (Artefacts) has consolidated its position in the contemporary non-fiction market through a fresh, deconstructing approach. The collection dismantles deeply rooted historical clichés by applying a critical, gender-sensitive perspective tailored to a broad audience. Sharing a catalogue in Artefactos means featuring alongside key essayists in the renewal of public historiography and rigorous cultural dissemination. The project enhances academic research by translating it into direct questions that challenge current collective memory.

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Did Roman Women Exist?

by Patricia González



Spanish, 2025, 256 pages

The work analyses the historiographical and ideological mechanisms that rendered women invisible in Ancient Rome.

It examines everything from onomastic assignment to the construction of moral myths, dismantling the traditional androcentric vision. A work that transforms classical history into an accessible essay on cultural historiography, aligned with the rise of non-action feminist essays.

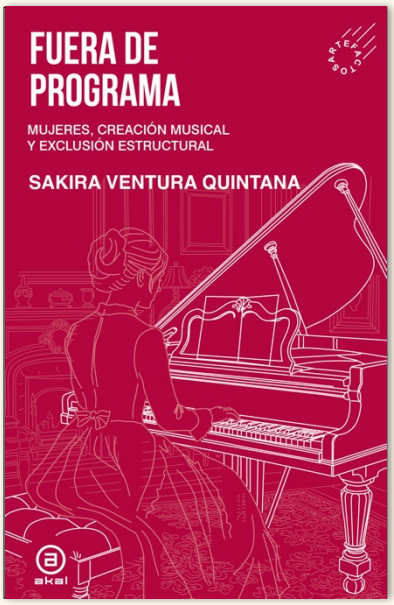
This title will be of particular interest to publishers focused on cultural essay, popular history, and broad-spectrum cultural studies.

Patricia González Gutiérrez, PhD in Ancient History and researcher specializing in gender historiography. Her outreach work features regularly in media and academic networks.

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Off-Program

by Sakira Ventura



Spanish, 2026, 224 pages

A critical journey through the history of Western music recovering the memory of female creators silenced by the official canon.

The author examines the social and institutional structures that relegated their production to oblivion. Connects rigorous musicology with heritage recovery, backed by the previous international impact of her cartographic map.

For independent cultural essay publishers, history of the arts imprints, and narrative non-fiction catalogues.

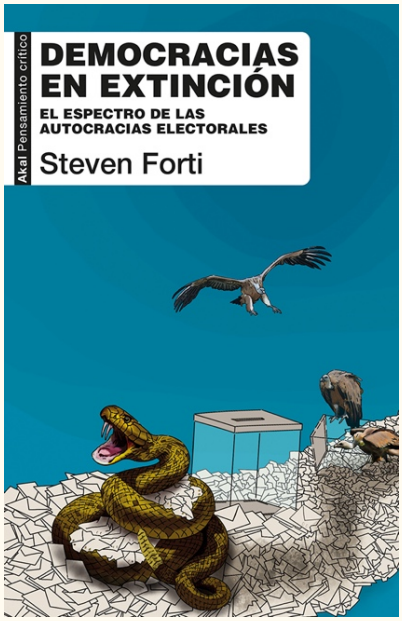
Sakira Ventura is a musicologist, teacher, and creator of the global interactive map "Female Creators in Music History". Her musical research work has been featured in international media such as The Guardian and the BBC. https://svmusicology.com/

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COLLECTION Pensamiento crítico (Critical Thought) brings together essays addressing the key issues shaping our present: democracy, political power, capitalism, feminism, ecological crisis, culture and ideology. Combining intellectual rigour with a commitment to public debate, the collection reaches beyond academic circles to engage a wider readership. Its catalogue features established international thinkers and new voices, offering critical perspectives that challenge dominant narratives, examine structures of power and shed new light on today's political and cultural transformations.

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Democracies in decline.
The spectre of electoral autocracies



by Steven Forti (Spanish, 2025, 344 pages)

An analysis of the erosion of democracy perpetrated by the far right.

It's not time for digressions or complacency, but rather to confront the most pressing danger of our time. It is now beyond doubt that the far right is on the rise across the globe and, if we do nothing to prevent it, we may be the generation that loses the rights we have fought to secure. Our democracies are in danger of extinction, and their predators enjoy greater support, have a better image and are growing stronger by the day. In many parts of the world they have already come to power and, when they govern, nothing is as it was: they are crippling democracy from within until it is transformed into an autocracy, with little scope to reverse the situation.

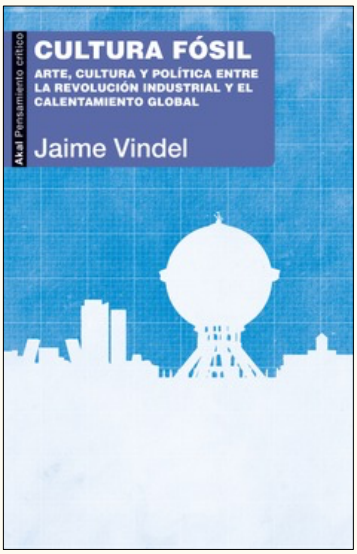
Forti analyses – taking into account the historical evolution of the phenomenon – the latest political developments and movements – both national and international – of the far right, to show how they are dismantling the rule of law and the welfare state. In doing so, he denounces the threat that looms over us and warns us that it is in our hands to halt the spectre of autocracy before it destroys our democracies. The present hangs in the balance and the future remains to be written.

Steven Forti is a lecturer in Contemporary History at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He specialises in the history of fascism, nationalism and the far right. He is a member of the Centre for the Study of Dictatorships and Democracies (CEDID) and sits on the editorial board of the journals *Ayer. Revista de Historia Contemporánea, Política & Prosa* and *CTXT*. He is currently also the local coordinator for the European research project 'Analysis of and Response to Extremist Narratives' (ARENAS) and is the author of several books.

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Fossil Culture. Art, culture and politics between the Industrial Revolution and global warming

by Jaime Vindel (Spanish, 2023, 496 pages)



A book that sets out to explore the blind spots of our historical unconscious, with the aim of helping us to imagine and bring to life a post-fossil fuel culture.

From the invention of the steam engine at the dawn of the nineteenth century to the global warming that now looms over us and shapes our lives, Vindel analyses—from a new critical paradigm—the relationship between the energy transformations driven by the Industrial Revolution, hegemonic social imaginaries and the acceleration of the eco-social crisis.

This essay sets out to weave together a political ecology of the history of art, visual culture and the cultural imaginaries of the Anthropocene, going beyond their explicitly environmentalist expressions. The narrative addresses the presence of fossil fuel sources in the forms and institutions of art and culture, and describes how these have become an underlying current that shapes the socio-political processes of the last two centuries.

Contents

Introduction. Fossil culture
I. From flow to stock: hydraulic utopia and the fossil industry
II. The dialectics of the picturesque
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IV. Artistic avant-gardes and industrial modernity
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VI. The Illusions of the Neo-Technical Era
VII. The Sandstorm: From Frontier Colonialism to the New Deal
VIII. Interlude. Sandstorms in Art History: On Aby Warburg's Encounter with the Pueblo Indians
IX. Fossil culture: the industrial (and infrastructural) evolution of art and culture
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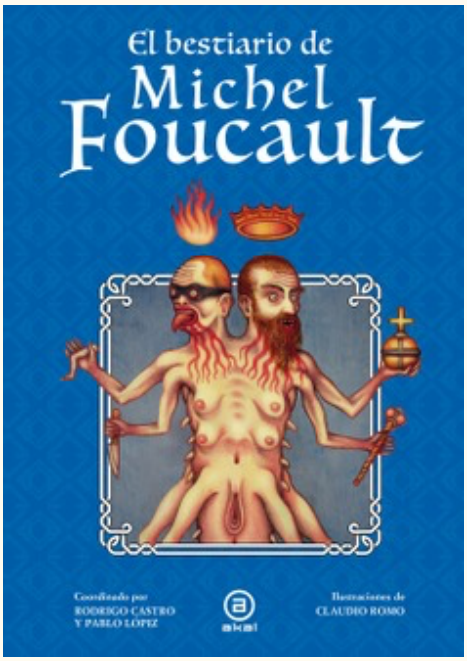
Jaime Vindel holds a European PhD in Art History and a Master's degree in Philosophy and Social Sciences, and is a researcher on the Ramón y Cajal Fellowship Programme at the Institute of History of the CSIC. He was coordinator of the 'Cultural Ecologies' section of the Independent Studies Programme at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA, 2017–2018/2019–2020) and is the author of books such as *Estética fósil. Imaginarios de la energía y crisis ecosocial* (2020).

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COLLECTION La palabra ilustrada (Illustrated Words) brings together books that explore the power of language through the interplay of text and image. Combining intellectual curiosity with visual creativity, the collection offers an accessible and engaging approach to literature, thought and culture, opening up new ways of understanding complex ideas and discovering the world. Through the dialogue between words and illustrations, its titles invite readers of different ages and backgrounds to explore knowledge, stimulate their imagination and experience reading as both an intellectual and an aesthetic adventure.

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Michel Foucault's Bestiary



by Rodrigo Castro & Pablo Lópiz (editors)
Claudio Romo (illustrator)

Illustrated essay (Spanish, 328 pages full colour)

A dark, baroque bestiary of the excluded, from academic seminar to wider cultural debate.

Rather than reducing Michel Foucault's thought to abstract theory, this richly illustrated volume explores his ideas through more than thirty figures of deviance and exclusion — the delinquent, the hysteric, the witch and the outcast — who expose the shifting boundaries of modern normality.

Michel Foucault's Bestiary is an essential "encyclopedia of ignominy" that shifts the philosophical spotlight away from canonical thinkers and towards the marginalized figures who populate Foucault's historical analyses. Coordinated by leading Foucault scholars Rodrigo Castro Orellana and Pablo López Cantó, the volume brings together prominent contemporary intellectuals to explore more than thirty figures who reveal the workings of social power.

Far from offering a conventional commentary, the book creates a powerful dialogue between text and image. Claudio Romo's striking, grotesque and intricately detailed illustrations expose the mechanisms of institutional power and give visceral form to the experience of exclusion. The book does more than explain Foucault's ideas: it uses his outcasts and condemned figures to examine how modern systems continue to produce deviance, subjugation and resistance. It invites readers to question their own assumptions and challenges them to reconsider how modern institutions shape our desires, fears and identities.

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From elite seminar to wider cultural appeal

The project began as an ambitious two-year seminar supported by the Institut Français de Madrid under the direction of Martin Chenot. Over twenty-four months, a dedicated group of researchers explored some of the most complex figures on the margins of society in Foucault's work. The resulting book, however, goes beyond the boundaries of traditional academic publishing. It challenges leading scholars to move beyond specialist jargon and bring philosophical ideas to a broader audience. The aim is to show that engaging with Foucault does not require an extensive academic background.

This strong academic foundation was further enriched by the contributions of prominent intellectuals with a public profile. The result combines rigorous historical and philosophical research with contemporary cultural criticism. Already attracting attention in Spain and Latin America, the project transforms the material developed through academic seminars into an engaging, richly illustrated book that speaks to both specialist readers and a wider audience.

About the editors & artist

Rodrigo Castro Orellana and Pablo Lópiz Cantó (Editors): Leading scholars in contemporary Foucault studies. Rodrigo Castro is a Professor and Vice-Chair of Philosophy at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, founder and Executive Director of the Red Iberoamericana Foucault, and an editor of the international journal Foucault Studies. Pablo Lópiz is a Professor of Philosophy at the Universidad de Zaragoza. He holds a PhD focused on Foucault's "anomalous trajectory" and is the author of Michel Foucault: pensar es resistir (2010).

Claudio Romo (Illustrator): An internationally acclaimed Chilean graphic artist and professor. Known for his intricate, baroque and surrealist visual storytelling, Romo translates complex psychological and political ideas into striking images that give the book a distinctive visual identity.

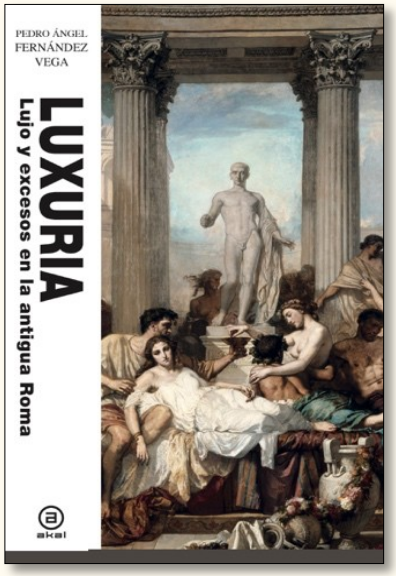
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COLLECTION Anverso, a non-fiction series that brings together ambitious works of narrative nonfiction combining intellectual rigor with broad appeal. That collection includes major international historians and essayists such as **Jacques Le Goff** (*The Birth of Purgatory*), **Geoffrey Parker** (*A History of War*), **Natalie Zemon Davis** (*The Return of Martin Guerre*) and **Paul Veyne** (*The Roman Empire*). These titles represent the spirit of the series: **authoritative works that open new perspectives on history, culture and society while remaining accessible to a broad readership.**

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Luxuria. Luxury and Excess in Ancient Rome

by Pedro Ángel Fernández Vega



Spanish, 2026, 336 pages

A rigorous and fascinating historical anatomy of how the relentless pursuit of luxury and pleasure eroded the moral and political foundations of Ancient Rome.

Through an in-depth analysis of domestic space, lavish gastronomy, and eroticism, renowned historian Pedro Ángel Fernández Vega traces the metamorphosis of an austere society that succumbed to refinement imported from the East. From the Numidian marble columns of the Domus Aurea to the extravagant banquets of Vitellius or Elagabalus, the book meticulously documents how luxuria ceased to be a mere private excess and transformed into an instrument for ostentatious displays of power. Drawing on the satires of Juvenal and Martial alongside first-rate archaeological evidence, the author reconstructs the intimate lives of a Roman elite willing to embrace carpe diem before the collapse of their republican institutions.

Pedro Ángel Fernández Vega holds a PhD in Ancient History, is a professor at UNED, and former director of the Museum of Prehistory and Archaeology of Cantabria; he is the author of reference works such as *CORRVPTA ROMA* and *Bacanales*.