

F. Could you describe the development processes used in your performances, such as Mas Distinguidas. When do you decide that "It's presentable" or "It might be finished" or "It's finished"?

Because of the fragmentation of «Mas distinguidas » , each small part or piece has a very, very different process is used. Sometimes I am looking for something very specific, how to use the body in «Manual de uso» for example. I had already been working with all kinds of operating manuals, from a camera or a lemon-squeezer, and making collages of the instructions, but I was not sure how it would work for the body. For a long time I've been creating instructions for the body to dance, to eat... Finally I used the instructions for the body to die, to become extinct. extinguished it. I liked it better that way. The piece with the chicken is very different. I was showing a work in progress to some friends and I had the chicken I intended for some other ideas. When I got to the point where I had to explain what I was going to do next, I said "Here I don't know what to do", and I threw the chicken as I do in the piece. The piece was done. In «Nº 26» I wanted to draw the music on my body. I love this pasodoble by Carles Santos, and absolutely wanted to use it. Finding the pencils was very difficult. «Misunderstanding» was the same. I wanted to do a choreography just marking the steps, as classical dancers do. Two bodies appear, the first is the body marking and moving spontaneously, and the second is the body dancing in the imagination. In both cases the process, once the idea was clear, was to try and fix it. I realised later that these two bodies are in almost all of the pieces. In «Manual de uso» it is very clear, in «Narcisa» also. This piece was one vision, one second. Afterwards, I worked on how to present it, but the idea was a quick thing. «Numeranda» took me some more time, which was mainly recording the music at home with some friends. One friend with the washing machine, microwave and phone, the other with the hoover, the alarm, the metronome, the dryer, and the third with the coffee machine and - I don't remember now. I wanted to do the live sound. It didn't work at all, so I recorded the machines one by one and went out to a friend's studio.

F. What is the importance of spontaneity in your work?

I have looked in the Spanish dictionary and espontaneo means: 1-on its own impulse, 2-unpremeditated human action, 3- the person who jumps in a corrida. I like the third definition. I believe the espontáneo, the person who jumps in the bull fight has been thinking about doing this for years. He could have been planning every single movement, but the reality will surely surprise him. The bull, 'la plaza', the people, that's why theoretically I love corridas. It is the best performance plan ever and the most spontaneous one at the same time. Spontaneity is inside any live performance at some level. It depends on how much you appreciate the present, how much you can work with the present. In my work, almost everything is thought out, measured and decided in advance, but sometimes I react to something that is happening around me. Once I am in front of you, I am presenting my thoughts, my ideas, my way of seeing things. I am not representing because there is nothing to represent. What you see is what there is and what there is what I have thought out. I like to think in the frame of time passing ... quick, slow. It is very important for me to understand and to use this idea during the work process. There is a gap in between spontaneity and eternity, I always try to work in

this gap. I can feel this time passing better than I can explain it. I like this feeling of interior silence. One thing appears quickly, the other takes a lot of time.

F. When you perform (and you say what you perform is pretty much fixed) some sort of personal relationship with the audience must take place. What is the importance of the experiences you have during the performance? Do you think you are sometimes watching more than audience is watching you (you as a personality) - or, to be metaphorical, does your performance have eyes?

I can see the audience very well. Their reactions and eyes. In all my pieces I see the audience. In «Mas distinguidas» it is like I am talking to them. Like a typical «conversation» ... it's more difficult at the beginning as we don't know each other, and it's very easy at the end. I have the feeling that we end up being friends, laughing together, thinking together, being together. When we are happy, of course! Sometimes they don't like me or they don't like me then I just keep going. Most of the times it's - you meet someone who is telling you something, you need time to discover if you like it, whether you feel you are comfortable, etc, and if you like each other then things go quickly, nicely and softly. Metaphorically, my performances have eyes, yes. I cannot imagine doing anything without eye contact. It doesn't make sense for me. For twelve, thirteen years I have been working with the eyes. I don't think I have ever made a piece without eye contact. In my last series of distinguished pieces, «Still distinguished», the situation was very different because the audience are with me in the same space, so our eyes are in constant contact, but I could say that in this piece we talk with our bodies movements - fast, slow, with our reactions, etc. Here the relationship is one on one. I see individuals, not an audience. In «Still distinguished» we are whispering with our bodies more than talking with our eyes. It is something for each person individually, more interior, more personal.

F. You are selling "distinguished pieces" to distinguished proprietors. How do you see that idea of somebody's ownership on your own pieces performed alive?

The distinguished proprietors are the proprietors of a distinguished piece. They are not the owners because the concept of ownership doesn't exist in the distinguished project. They know where their piece is taking place or being presented because I inform them, and if they want to see their piece they always have a place at the venue. There is a real moment when a distinguished piece is being produced, presented, when it's alive or whatever. Instead of having the detritus or the documents of something that happened, I value «the ephemeral» moment I sell it as a work of art. I have defined what a distinguished piece is and this is what a distinguished proprietor gets.

F. Some of the owners of your pieces are renowned artists like Jerome Bel, Franko B.,etc.Also a group of artists is usually being presented in similar contexts as yourself: Gilles Jobin, Xavier Le Roy, Thomas Lehmann and you. What do you have in common with these artists?

We are the same generation. We more or less know each others work and in some cases we like each other very much, in others we don't like each other at all. I have invited some of them to participate in «Desviaciones», a two week program in Madrid, that I curated with Blanca Calvo and Jose A. Sánchez from 1997 to 2001.

We have very different aims, tastes, ideas and ways of approaching our work, but there are things that one could see almost all of us share: like focusing on the body, the artist's body, or naked bodies; working on presentation instead of representation; the use of silence, the bare scenes, bare situations, the use of stillness or kind of stillness, of simplicity, daily situations, daily objects, daily texts, of fragmented structures, systems or games, rules, etc. Sooner or later, you find all or some of this in our works. In my case, because of the reality of the dance in my country, Spain, at the beginning of 90, I went for rapidity, lightness, independence, and the use of solo performer/dancer as well as interdisciplinarity and contamination. It was a way to survive but also a way to escape. Sooner or later I see some of these things in a lot of artists of my generation. Sarah Lucas or Forced Entertainment, Claudia Triozzi, Marco Berretini, Olga Mesa, Nao Bustamante, or Rineke Dijkstra, Richard Billingham and Mónica Valenciano, Yann Marussich, Richard Maxwell, Rodrigo García, Meg Stuart, Oskar Gomez Mata, and many others. We are after freedom and complicity with other disciplines and also a kind of co-operation between us. A lot of these artists are curating programmes, groups, events, improvisations, exhibitions, or have done so in the past. Anyway, it is more varied if we are not always in the same context. We are not a group. Only if this context is very, very large, we can we find the individuality inside this group.

F. As you say, more and more artists are curating, programming, or organizing meetings. Is it a kind of confrontation with the market? What is your relation to the performing arts market?

I always believed artists have curated and organised things for themselves in order to meet other artists, to talk to other artists. That's what we like. To talk and be with the people who like art, or who work in the arts, with artists, or for artists.

F. In the performance "el gran game" there were some rules, but the structure was random. That kind of performance asks from the audience to trust that you are really following the "rules" of chance. I liked that piece very much, but all the time I had a feeling that there is still a kind of structure which reminds me of narrative structure because of it's authority (this time there is no author of structure, but there is the authority of chance). What was the difference for you as performers and choreographers? What did chance give you, and what difference could it give (or gave) to the audience?

El gran game has been one of the most interesting processes and pieces of work I ever did, but not the easiest. It is true that that kind of performance asked a lot of the audience and a lot from the dancers. Some of the dancers were not mature enough to deal with this possibility, with this game. The authority of chance was in a way dictatorial and I suffered a lot because of it. My point of view had more to do with chance, rather than just following the rules. That was my exact proposal to the dancers. It didn't really happen. I was even happy when sometimes I saw the dancers cheating! That was in a way closer to my idea ... even if it was not at all ... even if it sounds silly ... We struggled in the first level. I also struggled on the outside. I just performed the 'exceptions', the two moments to break the chance, with music, colours and clear funny rules. So, I was not very helpful and it was too late to consider myself inside for the rest of the game!

F. In that piece you used a very defined sign language, but also some abstract material. There are differences in reference and technique, but somehow it builds up the surface of (non)communication. How much does the expressiveness of those languages matter to you? What is their expressive force? What precedes those materials? Are they explicit?

“Here we are trying to imagine a political speech which looks like a gazelle”. This was a text that our sign language teacher translated. From the sign language, I asked the dancers to translate it into a dance using only legs, since it was a dance already. Afterwards, I added the high heels for everyone. We called it Legs - gazelles. Then I asked them to translate the visual result of the ‘legs’ translation using their hands. Then I asked them to whistle and jump constantly. That was another material called hands- gazelles. With Arms -gazelles they repeated the same process. They were doing that version as a political speech, standing on a chair. We also had an action. That was the one that I performed with the extras - dressing and undressing, folding and unfolding trousers and jumpers. This action was called Action Extra. They translated it with the hands and fingers and performed it very close to the audience, sitting down on a chair, as a private conversation. We called it Closer. For me and for everyone, this part of the work was the most amazing, the first months. Much more than the game! We were constructing a specific ‘body’ language, with real meaning, and with the energy and will to communicate with the audience. But little by little we were discovering that it was a mission impossible. For it was the high point of the work, maybe the most poetic. It was a moment of reality, very strong when we discovered the silence of our efforts and how we understood each other - the four of us, just between ourselves.

F. What is the focus of your research right now?

Colours, a lot of people, markets, food, trumpets, flowers, fishes, He,he,he,hehehehe I have finished some things I’ve been doing over the past ten or twelve years. I want to move on. I still don’t know how, but I will find it, new things, new way, new approaches. The year 2003 will be a mix of retrospective and renovation. After 10 years of doing distinguished pieces using my body, I am preparing what I call detached body, which means I am working now with different media, such as video, performance, books, another body and film, to be able to move on, ‘out of my body’.

I am preparing Panoramix, a performance based on the 34 distinguished pieces that I have created in the past ten years, and the striptease Socorro! Gloria! from 1991, which was the seed of these pieces. I will present Panoramix at Tate Modern next March as part of the programme Live Culture. The English dancer Anna Williams will take the second series ‘Mas distinguidas’ and will perform it from 2003 onwards. I am also doing my second video installation Take off. I will present a series of video installations entitled Striptease at the South London Gallery at the time as of the Tate performances of Panoramix. I am preparing an “object” book related to these works and also a film on Panoramix. After that I will stop for 3 months to be ready to start a piece with a lot of people for a theatre. By the way the title could be Mission Impossible o Espontáneos.