

15 PARTS IN 3 ACTS

The following play consists of 15 parts grouped in 3 acts. Each of these parts stems from the literal reinterpretation that 15 artists made of their own artworks and projects presented at the Concurs d'Arts Visuals Premi Miquel Casablancas 2011.

Arranging the play in three acts develops from an exercise in organization and scenic rhythm, and, in no way, pretends to be a definitive and conclusive outcome. There is, similarly, not only a clear difference between the artworks and projects presented to the award, and the texts written after them, but also between the labor of structuring the texts and their final assembled outcome, and between the final text and its onstage interpretation.

The three curators and stage directors in charge of the project want to extend their appreciation to all the artists participating in this venture, as well as, to the organization of Sant Andreu Contemporani, and to the actors, collaborators and the audience that have come to witness the staging of this operation.

Eduardo Hurtado, Rosa Lleó y Zaida Trallero
Barcelona, November 10th, 2011

ACT I

Measuring tempo “Rehearsal about fatigue”

During the whole development of the play, a digital clock will be projected intermittently on a side of the stage. It will measure, like a chronometer, the length of the play.

SCENE I

The theater is quiet. A voice offstage can be heard.

Iberia Líneas Aereas de España, S.A. is one of the world's oldest airline companies. Its traveler volume makes it the fourth ranking airline in Europe, and it is the leader in passenger transport between Europe and Latin America. Grupo Iberia flies to 108 destinations in 42 countries. With a fleet of 169 airplanes, it makes around 1000 flights a day. Medical reports establish Osamuyia Aikpitanhí's death 45 minutes after takeoff. The lawsuit filed by the victim's family states that the Spanish National Police administered him tranquilizers, and that he was handcuffed and gagged while deported using an Iberia commercial flight.

Indra is a global technological company leader in services to economic sectors ranging from transport, energy, manufacturing, public administration, health, financial systems, security and defense. Indra operates in more than 100 countries, and employs more than 30.000 professionals. This Spanish multinational corporation is commissioned by the Ministry of Interior to develop, for 1.8 million euros, the system that controls illegal immigration in southern Spain. On the 13 of March of 2010, the carbonized corpse of an illegal migrant that was traveling hidden in a container truck was found in Andalusia. On May of that same year, in Malaga, a 20-year-old migrant was run over and died after falling from the truck where he concealed his travels. Last December, again, a Cameroonian migrant, trying to cross into Spain, died after the trash container he used for hiding overturned.

Imaga adapts its entrepreneurial activity to all kinds of projects, from large public works to small construction. They were commissioned to build the CIE (Spanish acronym for Alien Detention Center) at the Zona Franca of Barcelona. On May 13th, the 22-year-old Mohamed Abagui died while in detention there.

Frontex, with its headquarters located in Warsaw, helps the Spanish Government and the European Union implement the common policies related to the governance of the European borders, and is assigned to carry operations on immigration control. The budget set aside from the mem-

ber nations of the European Union to run Frontex was believed to total approximately 6 million euros in 2005. The budget set for 2011 is now up to 88.41 million euros. The third semester of 2010 marked Frontex highest number of detentions since the start of their mission. There are no official numbers of deaths related to the migration movements that, from Africa, are headed to Spain.

SCENE 2

The curtain rises. The ACTOR gives his master class while pacing on stage.

In 1930, Fritz Todt published an article titled “Proposals and Financial Purveyance for the Employment of One Million Men”. Adolf Hitler was very impressed by the contents of the plan, and when he came to power in 1933 named Todt president of a new state company, the Reichsautobahnen, and put him in charge of building a national network of roads, thus, becoming the direct responsible of the creation of the *autobahnen*.

At that time, the main purpose of the *autobahnen* was to enable large portions of the population to drive long distances in their cars, enjoying the panoramic vistas that were doted along the way.

The beginning construction of the Reichsautobahn Berlin-Königsberg was launched at the end of 1933 as part of a plan dedicated to reduce the effects of the Great Depression by hiring the unemployed in projects of civil infrastructure. The first phase of the project, from Stettiner Dreieck to Stettin-Süd, was opened to the public the 27 of September of 1936.

During the Second World War, the middle lane of some *autobahnen* was paved to allow its use as auxiliary airports. The airplanes were hidden in the many tunnels that were built along the freeways and in the middle of the nearby woods.

There are still sections of the Reichsautobahn network in the old East German territory. Sections of the *autobahn* planned between Berlin and Königsberg were taken up to Stettin.

On February 8th 1942, in Wolfsschanze, after a bitter quarrel with Adolf Hitler about the war with the Soviet Union and the production of weapons, Fritz Todt climbed a Heinkel 111 and, on take off, the airplane exploded in the air killing all its passengers. Five hours later, Hitler transferred to Albert Speer all of Todt's responsibilities.

The German air force ordered an investigation into the accident in order to determine if it had been an accident or an act of sabotage. Hitler abruptly stopped the course of the probe.

SCENE 3

The ACTRESS enters through the middle aisle of the theater pushing a cart of drinks, and parks it at one end of the stage. She mixes herself a cocktail. This activity will be repeated several times throughout the play.

SCENE 4

Character A: the interviewer; Character B: the interviewee; Character C: the narrator.

C: We are back to another of those mornings on the weeks that the interviewer has reserved to conduct his interviews. They sat face to face. The interviewer asked the interviewee to keep quite. They were not alone. Then the interviewer asks the interviewee to answer in his own language.

Pause.

A: OK.

C: Again, there was silence at the other end. He knew immediately that he was the foreigner there.

Pause.

A: I'm waiting for you!

C: He insisted.

B: Yes!

C: Said the voice at the other end, the same mechanic mumbling, and the same desperate intonation as before.

A: Yes! Now is necessary.

B: What's necessary?

A: To talk. Right now!

B: Yes!

Pause.

Character A gets up and turns the TV on. A fragment of the movie "Asha - Bhanwara Bada Nadan Hai - Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam (1962)" appears on screen.

Character A kneels in front of a laptop giving his back to the public. Character B remains seated in the same spot. The images on the laptop are projected on screen.

C: The interviewer was the one that had to say something now, but he was not certain how, or sure what to say. Meanwhile the interviewee kept on pushing his Indian computer file to provoke him into conversation.

The lights are turned off. A Pakistani man can be heard talking in his language.

C: At the end, the expected took place. The interviewee wrote, and then read what he wrote.

Lights are turned on.

B: Time's up! They are waiting for me.

A and B stand up in anticipation of a handshake.

With a fast and happy move B rose from the chair and stood up. They both said good-bye to each other.

SCENE 5

We are in some exotic place bathed in artificial light. We are enjoying what would probably be considered the most spectacular monument in honor of a mermaid's death. It is destined to attract all those that fatally know about its existence.

A mysterious presence storms the stage. It begins to sing A Capella with a hypnotizing thin voice while gracefully twisting its body fully submerged in artificial light.

Dare yourself
Come to find me
The song's gonna carry you to me
All is awesome here
You'll be happy here

Fortune seeker
put your doubts to rest
cause I only wanna be with you
from Capri all the way right here

The moment the singer mentions the place that legend cautioned us to accept as her homeland (well known today as that touristic Italian island) everything turns really odd.

Oceans swept me
when Jason sailed them

The end for me

Charming and cute
accepted my destiny
failed my mission
my song didn't lure him

Let's dance together in the ocean's depth

Years later
another like me
Ulysses had vanquished¹

Gifts and flowers
showered her body
I was forgotten
but Naples was built in her honor.

Plunge in,
with me, right here
I'm only happy like this
an ultimate voyage
without returning...

ACT 2

SCENE I

A man dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, ready to go out, comes on stage. He has his face painted in primitive tribal designs. He stays on, his stare fixed at the audience for a few minutes, and then he goes.

SCENE 2

The ACTOR tells the story of Gaspar, a detached type, possessed, a dumb attitude in a sterile situation.

Gaspar was someone without a name, without identity. He was spending his afternoons in the supermarket, and had no concept of language.

Gaspar could not establish a relationship between what he was seeing and who he sensed he was. That, for him, was no big deal, but it made him wonder. He worried every time he noticed that the red dots he had painted with a stone on some random products in the supermarket were, daily, sometimes hourly, even in a few minutes, gone. Who was removing them? He pondered, thinking through, I guess, some abstract vectors in his mind.

The only thing that continued being there, that abstract there that he was able to recognize, was he himself. The odd thing about that was, how-

1. The story of the mermaid's island is an episode shared by two of the greatest epic poems of Ancient Greek literature. Although set apart by three centuries, they are considered to be the same story with different degrees of added oral distortions. Even though, Ulysses' visit seems to be the most known among these two, it is thought to be borrowed from its origin in the Argonauts.

ever, that he remained nobody because he had not been given a name yet. Indeed, he never got one.

One day, a person came to him and said: You're Gaspar! From that moment on, what he recognized as his own world, that supermarket that morphed so fast, turned into a great black hole where people and typographical characters were in an eternal fight to escape. Assured now that his soup had letters, he began to repeat to himself: This is a senseless imprisonment!

This is the beginning of a tragic story, that of a legendary hero, the story that Gaspar has not been able to tell us himself. The story begins with the efforts made by this innocent saint to describe the simulacrum that bought him back to his patriarchal origins, those of the law of the father, the useless greatness of language!

We have tried everything, analytic philosophy, psychoanalysis, and even deconstruction theory. Lord, have mercy on our souls!

None of these tools have been able to bring narrative coherence to that fakeness whole. That is why Gaspar, after having labored hard, up to the point of onanism, to gain his self respect, after having, on hearing his name, taken his ego to gigantic proportions, after having tried to recognize himself in the mirror, and after having, finally, with golden scissors and glue, desperately searched for a recognizable face among that mess of letters, died of exhaustion. And with him, it died also everything that hovered 180 centimeters above the ground. **NOW FLIES ARE HIS SOLE LEGACY.**

SCENE 3

Background noise. Lots of people talk at the same time. The ACTOR looks at the audience and asks:

What do you think would happen if I was hanging from a cliff by a rope and the rope snapped?

The ACTOR picks up some objects and makes with them a little installation. Since the objects are one on top of the other in precarious equilibrium, the installation begins to fall apart. The ACTOR, meanwhile, recites the following:

A rope crosses the length of the docks. A goose covered in grease hangs at the center of the rope. One end of the rope is fixed. At the other end, a group of men pull on the rope to raise it, and let it go to bring it down. When kids grab the goose, the men pull and release the rope to make them continuously fly up into the air and fall down against the water.²

From the top of Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire, a seven-pound Double Gloucester cheese rolls down the slope followed by competitors trying to tackle it. The first person to grab the cheese wins.³

2. The Ganso de Lekeitio, festival in honor of Patron Saint Antolin.

3. The Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling and Wake

How deep is the pool?— asked Charly García from the balcony of his suite at Hotel Aconcagua to the lifeguard bellow. He was barefooted with his face covered in red and white polka dots and carrying two dolls —a CD rack made to look like the head of Siamese cat, and an inflatable Sylvester the Cat. He threaten to jump, but thought fist to try with the dolls.

Three meters deep!— answered the lifeguard nine floors bellow.

The wooden cat-rack bang the side of the pool and broke its neck. The inflatable Sylvester, however, dropped right into the center of the pool.

On returning to Buenos Aires, pressure from the press made him loose his mind, and he began throwing objects from the window of his apartment in Barrio Norte. He flew 20 meters before hitting the water. That was in a hotel in Mendoza.⁴

SCENE 4

Images of derelict buildings are projected. Meanwhile, a woman's voice tells us her story. Even the architectural shell of the movie theater, its emptied structure, the bill without text, the screen with no projections, even that exemplified nothingness, are all muted referents that will never be taken into account. These pictures hope to combine ruin and testimony. They hope to pinpoint all those spaces that have disappeared and, therefore, press upon us the stories they hold. They hope to track all those untold stories among the ruins, and among people that live outside time. They hope to force images to talk to History and produce some kind of agreement.

Photography is by my side when I release the shooter. The photographic act comes before the shot. It justifies being always on the watch. To watch is an activity that levels everything that appears in our visual field. It means to take account of things from a higher place, to scrutinize, to carefully examine. I remember that, when I first encountered the word, I noticed that I always look at things through cracks, from above, not from a privileged above, but from an above of widened horizons where our vision opens up and the lens diaphragm opens to let more light in. Our gaze and the image we build from gazing always go together with words, precursors of concepts. Watching, touring, walking around the city I was born in, has meant also, for a long time, the acknowledgment of the buildings that doted, in my youth, my way to the movie theater.

Ciudad Bolívar is a city without movie theaters, a City Without Movies. Cities are considered urban space, and, in the case of Ciudad Bolívar, about one million people live in that space. That fact seems enough to

4. Charly García, Argentinian rock star. He jumped to a pool from the ninth floor of his hotel suite.
<http://edant.clarin.com/diario/2000/03/04/e-06601d.htm>

make Ciudad Bolívar a city. “Without” is a preposition that signals some kind of absence. It negates the word that follows it. Movies are the artworks produced by the cinematographic industry. Movie theaters are the places where movies are projected and seen. Movies are also known as moving pictures, a succession of stills that give the impression of movement. “City Without Movies” becomes, then, a geographical representation of a community that is barred from projections, from movie projections, content projections, imaginary projections, and all those social constructs that are built around movies. “City Without Movies” began by an inquisitive exploration of some abandoned buildings, by watching the death of a signifier (movies), and the death of an activity (to watch movies in a public space).

What is the message sent by abandoned movie theaters when a city turns off the light of their movie projectors?

SCENE 5

A man appears with a stool, sets it in the middle of the stage, and sits on it. He takes a pack of cigarettes from the inside pocket of his jacket, lights a cigarette, and places the pack back in his jacket.

The concept for the work “Pyrenees”, divided in two parts, started with the idea of smuggling and contraband. My interest on crossings of the Pyrenees goes a long way back, and is based on two reasons. On one hand, they interest me for the stories that the two preceding generations experienced during the postwar and dictatorship period. Those stories and anecdotes of shady and misleading deals impressed me. Even the story of my father who, during the 23F coup d'état, grab his old military boots feeling he would soon have to make a escape to France through the mountains, also greatly affected me. On the other hand, however, the Pyrenees have always been, for my generation, a way to escape, a different type of escape though, not political, of course. The moment we got our driver's license, we always headed to the mountains.

The idea of smuggling tobacco came to mind in relation to an initial project that dealt with failure, and that I later expanded to stories of crossing the border to go see porn movies. I focused my project on contraband tobacco although the stories of going to see porn in France fascinated me too. The ticket to the movie theater was also a small token. In both instances, I liked the contrast between the size of the tokens gotten and the elaborate symbolic and narrative process involved in getting them.

I smuggled a carton of Gauloises across the border. At the festival Observatori, the second time I showed the work, two packs were stolen from the carton. I believe, because of the nature of the project, that the anecdote gave the work an interesting twist. The original intent of the work was aimed at exploring the moving of goods across the border, the illegal importation (anachronic) of a legal drug. The stolen packs continue, somehow, the illegal movement that was set at the very start of the project. Obviously, they took the packs to smoke them.

I tried to get some compensation for the stolen items from the company that insured the show. They were willing to pay compensation for the two packs, and not the entire work. Can the packs be substituted, or not? Is the symbolic value of the work measurable, or not? This is the core of the disagreement. A lawyer for the association of visual artists of Valencia told me to ask also for compensation from organizers of the festival. They, obviously, refused. At the end, the lawyer counsel me not press any charges since I was going to probably lose the case. He was fascinated by the facts, and thought it was material for an interesting case study.

ACT 3

SCENE I

The ACTOR projects a slide before beginning to tell the story.

ACTOR: I had in my notebook several newspaper clips with articles talking about the future plans for the Oteiza-Basterretxea building in Irún. From reading them, one could figure out the push and shove the municipality was having around the project, placing the project on a tight rope, threatening any hope of stability, and instigating its final fall.

The building, known as La Picota, was the post-exile home of the artists in their return to Euskadi, their original homeland. It is a construction in line with a GATEPAC style designed by the architect Luis Vallet in collaboration with the two Basque artists. The place was a center for spreading fundamental diversity and exchange in the development of Basque culture at the end of the 50's. Today, it is no more than an architectural corpse.

I began my preliminary work by studying and documenting, collecting books, write-ups and images, and all those bibliographic sources that could shed light on the artists, the architect, the architecture, the culture and folklore of the times... material like "Animal fronterizo" by Guillermo Zuaznabar, the only detailed publication on that subject, and one that lends its title to The Border Dessert.

For the fieldwork that completes the second part of the research process, I went to Avenida Iparralde where stand the remains of the building. I began an extensive photographic session, not with artistic intent, but as documentation —did not care about framing, light, or exposure, registering, like in forensics, the whole perimeter of the building using analog media, only slides, capturing camera travellings, wide angles, and details.

Back to my studio, with all photographic material already at my disposal, I selected the images that ended in the exhibition carrousel, and that I juxtaposed with blown up photocopies of the building as it was between 1957-58 to show the state of decay it has been left in.

The ACTOR projects now a second image.

SCENE 2

A voice offstage reads what takes place on stage while character A and L enact the details of the story.

A and L enter a coffeehouse together. Ten minutes later, leave it together. Truth is that they do not really come together. They do it in a literal sense. They cross the threshold of the door at the same time, but they do not really know each other.

The next day, this synchronized set of events takes place again, and again, and again for some days.

After a few weeks, A notices that L arrives and leaves a little later. A measures the difference, and confirms a small but progressive delay. He measures with the same intent he enters and exits the coffeehouse at a scrupulous times, with the same obsessive fascination with which he sizes the duration of everything. After having noticed, for some months now, L's reciprocal perfect timings, A concludes that L shares his scrupulous fascination, but their clocks are somehow desynchronized. The more weeks pass, the less time they spend together in the coffeehouse. A has no emotional attachment to L. He is not sadden by the prospect of seeing less of L next day, but he is hooked to predict the time of L's next departure, and waiting a day to confirm results. This routine has become more and more part of his everyday.

A concludes, not until they meet again in the threshold of the door, this time in opposite directions, that 230 years will pass before he meets again with L. He wants to tell him, but he does not have the guts. He is certain of that final figure, but it does not matter to him because what used to intrigue him, now, hurts him.

SCENE 3

The ACTOR comes on stage carrying a wheelbarrow full of dirt. He starts spreading dirt around with a rack while he tells his story. When he ends his narration, he cleans up and leaves the stage.

When you are at a job like this one, with lots of hours doing nothing, you have two ways to kill time.

If you choose to do something unrelated to the job, you can busy yourself watching the people that come to see the works of art and appear in the security screens that record the street entrance.

If you choose to do something related to the job, you can look at the artwork.

If you decide to examine the artwork, you might be enthralled looking at wet dirt and water puddles, or you can read the wall legend. If you are enthralled looking at wet dirt and water puddles you really have a problem.

If you decide to read the wall legend, you will notice that the artwork is explained in relationship to its physical properties. It is measured by vol-

ume, surface, height, and weight. Its volume, surface, height, and weight are all measured in the two different systems, metric and imperial.

If you check the numbers, it is not clear why the amounts do not coincide. You can check again and again all the calculations you have made, hoping to find mistakes. You can choose to write a letter to the DIA Art Foundation to make them aware of the mistakes. If you choose to fix the amounts, you have two options.

If you choose the elaborate way, you can make one version of the artwork that coincides with the metric measurements, and another that does with the imperial. In any case, you will need an additional apartment to put all that dirt.

If you choose the easy way out, you can try to modify the original artwork so as to get some figures to match up. In this case, you have two options. You can add or subtract dirt.

If you decide to add dirt, you must be sure that the apartment structure will hold the added weight.

If you decide to removed dirt from the original artwork, although it seems, at first, the simplest task, you end up having to go back to the complex choice since measurements can only be made using one of the two systems. You will have to make a version of the original in order to remove the right amount.

Once you reach this point, you have again two choices.

You can modify the wall legend in order to avoid any misunderstanding, or you can dismiss the wall legend and go back to watch the people that come to see the original artwork.

SCENE 4

The actress interprets the gray text in an improvised manner, and the black text strictly as it is.

My last show is over. I am considering working on new project. Oh, God, this sounds like an Albert Pla's concert! Note to the next written assignment: you got to order your mental diarrhea before you begin writing.

After acknowledging the little "a", as Lacan would say, everything that escapes, everything I failed to capture in my last exhibition, I intent to resolve my new project just by following instructions. I intent to free myself from ART, the signifier, the one that weights on me, weights on us with analytical paralysis. We must do ART. Shit, with this heading is impossible to overcome apprehension!

In order to remove myself from all that, I sabotage again, the same antics that I have always followed. Once again, therefore, I am going to sabotage myself. What better way do I have to achieve that than to force myself to do oil painting? Therefore, I enroll myself into an oil painting class at the local cultural center.

The class is lots of fun. It is full of women trying to fill their spare hours, and, why not, fill the empty white walls of their homes. Art here is played out of tune. The important thing here is to know how to copy well. Hid-

ing the fact that I am an artist makes me feel great and protected. I take full advantage of the situation to closely watch everything. We talk about art and share our opinions about contemporary art. I almost learned more here than from the classes I took in college!

The art instructor suggests to me to begin painting flowers. If I could, I would kill O'Keefe! Yeah, kill O'Keefe! Kill her for having created that crappy feminine imaginary world full of symbolism! I zip up, however, and begin painting flowers, helioconias, tropical flowers, fresh and voluptuous. Here you go O'Keefe, fuck you! I am going to imitate you so badly, you will like me dead too! We're now even! Not one, two, or three paintings, I did ten of them, ten of those "F4" horrendous flowers. I have already spent two months here. This is worst that psychotherapy. What should I do now with these freaky and pretentious objects that are not art, nor craft, nor anything? OK, as Maria, a 55-year-old lady that attended the class, once told me, "they are cute, you can hang them above your bed." Sure, just what I expected! This is the end of my personal sabotage. I am still thinking what to do with the paintings. In order to confront the problem and free myself from all stereotypes concerning Basque artists, I should kill the father of Basque formalism and, by the way, the mother of conceptual art too. They are the ones that forbid me to accept that I am capable of painting flowers worst than the ones painted by O'Keefe. So, let's kill'em! I feel a page has been turned in my mental notebook.

To continue playing with my feminist side, I asked 10 women artists to choose a painting and hang it on the wall of my studio. I only instruct them to do that, and I withdraw to document and enjoy their decisions. I feel that they, their moves, their striving bodies, choosing, making decisions, as all artists do, are so beautiful that I decide to end my project here. I ask them to smile and I take a picture of them. Thank you! You have given me the opportunity to escape from myself. You are the ones that have completely planned and structured the work at the formal and conceptual level. Thank you! How come after all that turning around, I end up taking a picture of 10 women artists. Awesome!!! That's how I am. This is another personal sabotage that, as a result, has produced a new artwork. Until the next time!

SCENE 5

Mr. END walks on stage to stop the chronometer.

Mr. END: Dear all, thank you for coming. I'm here to put an end to the play. I'm the last face you'll see on stage. I'm here to be sure you exit and leave this theater empty.

My job is to make sure that you understand that his play has definitely ended because, in numerous other occasions, people had remained in their seats refusing to accept the fall of the curtains.

To you, to all the ones that don't quite trust us, I want to let you know you're absolutely right. There are lots of people that abandon their seats before the end, missing all the goodies that come later.

So you can take me as a guarantee, a certainty that nothing more is going to take place on this stage. In all other circumstance, if I don't appear, be sure to remain seated.

Lights are turned off. Curtains fall.

THE END