

THE 3 DUETS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

For “3Duets”, my last project, “still and forever” under construction, I wrote:

“Manipulate me,
Move me,
Carry me,
Play me...
Make me meaningful and meaningless...
Both now just happening
Deal with my weight and my surrender
Transform me
Affect me
Justify my need of moving with your strength and commitment
Then I will give you the whole responsibility of my presence
I will not move, not triggering you, not seducing you...
I have just decided I will trust you
I will not fight now
Needing you...
I will enjoy losing the control this time
Minimizing my reactions
Redefining roles
No victim no master
Surviving to number 3”

In this piece 3 dancers moved my body (which was trying to be totally motionless) one by one, repeating 3 times the duet format. The dancers, in charged to move me, seems to be the total responsible of each piece (movement, meaning and time wise), they were articulating my body, choosing my motion, my positions, my grade of exposure, and playing with the different ways how a body (my body) could be read. They (through their strength, curiosity and imagination) justified my need of movement and brought me to places I was never before.

THE BEGINING

I wonder how “a” context can condition a work.
When is something too personal, too private, and too real?
How fears can change a piece?

1.

The first title of this piece was “Surviving to number 3”.

This piece started as a personal exercise, almost as a private sacrifice or demonstration. It was for my body.

What happen when I loose the power?
Am I able to surrender?
How much pain can I take?
Can I discover some alternatives to activity?
Can I redefine roles?

I am indestructible, brave, I can deal with pain, I can survive to meaning, and I can redefine myself after an eventual semi death.

It was about me and about my body.

As a preparation in this process I gave to each of them the same questions and instructions, they all shared the same “script” and the themes I wanted to deal with. After this first step I offered them my body and I totally surrender to their interpretations and “manipulations”.

First questions that I gave to them

How would you make me visible?

Different ways to touch my body

How would you undress me?

A poem for my funeral

5 ways of manipulate me (me being in different degrees of activity or passivity)

When do you use to be active or passive?

Create images of tenderness, sex, violence, torture, and love...

A letter that would hurt me

5 different situations of intimacy that can happen between 2 bodies.

Simple set up for rehearsals...and some notes

3 DUOS that follows the same instructions.

3 different INDIVIDUOS (exploring subjectivity and identity. How bodies are read by shape, gender, nationalities, and energies...)

and 3 different THEMES:

Manipulation

I was looking for a physicality that happened to my body but that I did not have to choose or anticipate, physicality as a consequence rather than as a predefined form or group of shapes. The “manipulation physicality” explored issues of availability. It negotiated with my limitations and my abilities.

I discovered that the physicality in my works is always as a consequence of an encounter between, at least, 2 bodies, it is appearing in the touch.

Intimacy

We were looking for bodies without hierarchies, bodies as “affectable” matter.

I ask them to touch my body without thinking I was a woman, neither Aitana. As if they could forget what to be a body could mean and what issues to touch could arouse.

I asked them to invest on me without being involved.

I asked them: How can you include me in you, how can we minimize the distance between our bodies, minimizing also our prejudgments and ideas of what and how the bodies are and can react and behave.

I invited them to make a tour through my body and to become expert of my anatomy.

We explored different degrees of exposure and sharing.

FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS

BE AN EXPERT OF MY BODY

MASTER MY PHYSICALITY

EXPLORE ME

UPDATE YOUR CURIOSITY TOWARDS MY BODY AND TOWARDS YOUR TOUCHING (as if you could forget it after it has happened, always enjoying the advantage of the “beginnings the pleasure of the moment when a discover happen, erasing memory, updating curiosity...)

Violence

Extending the limits of the body
How to canalize violence?
Violence without target, without reasons...
Why do we fight?
What is to win?
"All form of violence is questions of identity"
"By showing it you transcend the event"

2.

I was not indestructible. At the end, there were some limits.
During the general rehearsal, after the 2 first months working in the project, my rib got damaged (due a little and stupid accident) and we had to cancel the performances and stop working for some time.

After that event we retook the project 6 months later and started to work again.
We were afraid.
I could not surrender as much as before and I started to questions some of the main point of the work.

We changed the terminology. In the beginning there were 3 parts or themes: manipulation, intimacy and violence, then we started to call them instead: manipulation, intimacy and "fast part".

I had to clarify some things:

No victim

I was not a victim, I was not death, I was not passive or absent, I was not an empty and insensitive piece of flesh.
I did choose to be manipulated and have to recover the sense of "taking choices", whatever this could be within the set up I had proposed.

Theater

I did not like pain and I did not want to risk my body again.
This piece was not about my body experience and me. I did not want to go so far in my real reality. I did want to use theatre yet to explore the edges of what that meant. But I did not want to hurt myself again.

Trust and surrender

The piece was not about a body that likes to suffer, or about a death body.
It was about a body that wanted to explore its availability, a body that decided to surrender and to trust.
This piece was about a body that wanted to signify and also to erase and loose all its meanings, a strong but accessible body, a body sensual but also vulnerable. A body that wanted to be touched and that wanted to touch.

3.

This project had a third stage.
We were invited to perform the piece again in "Something Raw festival, at Frascati theater.
There were some things that changed in our approach to the piece.

Violence.

It is true, the fast or violence part of the piece was one of the most affective and effective one.
This moment always woke up the audience and brought them back to us.

After "the accident", during the first period of the process, I was thinking a lot what I should do with this part. One of my biggest fears was to kill myself during the piece.
I remember the performances in June in Melkweg, 4 days in a raw.

I never have experienced to go to perform not knowing what was going to happen. I never have experience to go to perform totally afraid of dying or of being really hurt. I even remember myself asking to "whoever": please, I hope nothing is going to happen, I hope nothing is going to happen".

Joao was sure he would break my neck at certain point and he was terrify every time that his part was about to start.

We were fucking afraid. There was a real risk but the fear gave heaviness to the piece that was at the end unaffordable.

In the last face of the process, this last January, I took a choice. I would minimize this part. We already had changed the name to feel comfortable but it seemed to not be enough for us to deal again with it.

I also thought: this piece is not about virtuosity, not about "Effects". And this part seems to be this: effective, surprising, and difficult to see. I remember mister Simon Dove, in one rehearsal saying to me: "it was nearly too much, I just did not know how to take it, I could not look at it". How much aggression Aitana's body was able to deal with, how fast she could react to avoid being hurt?

The beautiful suffering, the aesthetics of the other people pain. I started to think that we, as spectators like to see aggression, we are used to see it everywhere, in our case, probably never in reality, but always behind a frame of a TV or news. "Exoticing" the pain of the others. We can look at it because it is far, it seems not real. I started to question if I wanted or not to give more of it, aggression in a performance. Did I want to feed the "wanting to see violence" tendency?

I decided we will minimize aggression but we will keep on working on it.

Finally I found some strategies that worked.

I pretended (in front of them) that I was not afraid anymore about it and told them that I trust them totally. It gave them some relief.

I told them that I would not be passive. That we would share the responsibility of this event. This piece was a duet, where we both would be solving things together, listening to each other.

I asked them to "mark" (to not do fully) the fast part, even in the performance and to keep on "feed backing" with me, I would communicate with them all the time.

It worked. I am no sure anymore if we minimize really this part and we did not do it with aggression but we found a technique that make us feel more comfortable and safe while doing it. It seems super aggressive but it was not as much as it looked. There was a real action in our bodies but we had a sort of control.

Boredom.

When, before, the involvement of everybody was total, during this last period "boredom" started to appear. During some weeks I had to face the problem of some of them not being interested anymore towards my body and my physicality.

How could I seduce them again? How to bring them back to this exploration? How to always update? It is my function as a maker creating always surprises and novelties?

The piece would never work without their curiosity and desire. It was everything about curiosity and research. I needed them with me fully involved. But it seemed we had exhausted the reasons of our desires to be there.

I started to think funny things. Would it be different if I would be able to pay them more? How much am I able to ask form my performers if I cannot offer a decent salary? Is my responsibility to stimulate my performers always? Bringing new exercise, new color, new food?

I know I am a demander maker, I use to ask too much and normally I also use to give a lot back, rehearsals are nice, funny, and intense...and I always have took super care of the people hat worked with me.

In this process my position was a bit strange. I developed a funny sort of esquizofrenya. Trying to convince both their bodies and mine. Trying to understand their needs but also mine.

I could not think just on them because my body was also super involved.

For example, we needed different warming up, so, sometimes I would go to the gym while they would be doing things on the studio.

While we were more and more following each other needs (to be good and ready for our roles) we were also building a bigger distance between us.

I was too concentrated in “building muscles” and survival strategies and they were becoming almost soldiers or machines (able to carry, maneuver and master “a body”), it was as if their responsibility was only towards the action. For a while we needed to invest in our individualities and this was problematic. It was paradoxical again, I could not be with them if I was not ready and strong by myself but being with myself make me distant and make me feel super alone as a performer and as a maker.

Another problem, I directed them through my kinesthesia and through my intuition, I developed a philosophy of the physicality and the event we wanted to create through my own experience of it. These, after a while, exclude them also.

Only last January (after almost 6 months working together and 2 performance situation) I started to realize: “fuck, this piece is about them, they are also visible, it is not about my body, they are actually the main characters of this event, I am just the constant, their limitation...”

For the first time (it is horrible, I know) I started to look up them.

I always took care of them and value them in the rehearsals but never gave attention to their individualities inside of the piece.

I asked them to take responsibility; I allowed them to take choices. We agreed, “that” was a duet, we were both challenging to each other, and we needed to communicate.

There is a huge paradox here. Who was responsible? Who was being used? Who was following instructions or being manipulated?

And even in the physicality, I asked them so much not getting involved personally, not seeing my body as Aitana’s body that, at the end, we were all almost OBJECTIFIED.

This is one of the bigger problems of my last works. My tendency to objectify the materials I propose. Looking for a body without hierarchies I use to find a body that escape feelings. I will talk later about it.

RESEARCHES

1. PHISICALITY

Availability

Limits

External forces that molded my body.

Physicality that only works in the “becoming”.

Physicality as a negotiation.

Physicality as a consequence.

For me this piece was an intense research about physicality. We spent around 4 months just training the physicality and conditioning our bodies to achieve the kind of concentration and physical logic and investment I was looking for.

Maybe it seems quiet obvious and easy but it took us several weeks to understand the mechanisms of my body and the negotiation of our responsibilities.

In the rehearsal floor we always had expressions as:

Available, accessible, surrender, body without hierarchies, updating curiosity, include me, articulate me, place me in a big or in a small box, be my floor, erase memory, invest in risks and treasures, building trust, convincing my body, collecting me, spreading me, penetrating my holes, dragging me, playing me, exposing me...

We talked about the anatomy of our meeting and of our contact, we agreed that we never should commit with any of the images we were delivering. We only had to commit with physicality. Insisting. But I was not looking for neutrality. We discovered a funny and paradoxical intensity and intimacy.

It was a really demanding process, one of the most intense ones. We had to cross several borders. We had to insist everyday in a physicality that never worked in the same way. If we were tired, sad, aggressive, with menstruation or external worries, hungry, angry, horny, bored, if I was wearing red or too tight clothes or a too stretched bra....

It was ephemeral. The physicality always tended to disappear, it was difficult to catch, control and define. We experienced moments of ecstasy and total communication and other moment of blocks and frustrations that seemed impossible to be solved.

Sometimes it seems as if we were totally connected and others as if they did not have hands and sensitivity. I was light and able to fly some days and others I was heavy and unmovable.

2. IMAGES

Beauty and visual contamination.
Prejudgments and stereotypes.

I said " we are creating the physicality and "they", the audience, have to read it and interpret it".

I was looking for a body that could be in a constant transformation. We had to commit with the physicality, and acknowledge the images we were passing through but never commenting them or committing with them. Passing through them and in constant transformation. No commitment, as in meditation, allowing things to not get established, allow them to disappear and to transform.

I wanted to allow the bodies on stage to be read and interpreted but I also wanted to question the value of this first interpretations. What is this duet about? It is about aggression? Tenderness, sexuality? Who is in charged? Who is suffering? What this means? Why? I was interested in giving the responsibility to the audience as total and final readers of the material we were offering. Our offer was our involvement towards the physicality, we should make this physicality works but we should not be interested in the narrative or in the meanings of the event we were creating.

3. ROLES

Who has the control? What is to be active or passive? What is to be abused?

One of the main researches, for me, in this process and in this piece was about "ROLES". I was interested in the edge of roles and how they are constantly changing and shifting. I don't believe in binary systems, I don't like this need of defining postures so strictly. Good and bad, beautiful and ugly, passive and active, hetero and homo, majority and minority, top or bottom, feminine and masculine...

I wanted to show a sort of paradox. I asked them to follow my instruction while I was motionless, I tried to remain available and to delegate the power of my actions but still give instructions through the whole piece. I seem to be used but it is never clear what they want from me. They, at the end of "their own duet", finish totally exhausted and destroyed while I go fresher and prepare myself for the next one.

Even inside of the physicality the roles seemed to be clear, a body passive and a body active. But it was far from reality, the physicality only happened out of a constant negotiation between my movers and my body. I was super active mentally and physically, solving, proposing and discussing what was possible, where the limits were.

4. NO REAL NO FAKE

Reality on theater or “theatricalizing” reality?

5. ON SURRENDERING

“3Duets” seems to be the last and more consequent step in my new research. A research where “surrender” and “how to achieve different ways to be affected” are the main parts. Surrender but not capitulation, surrender without being occupied, without winner or losers, without victims or masters, surrender as an agreement, as a way to release my power and to empower my vulnerability. Surrender as a “relation of forces”, surrender to train the flexibility of my statements, updating myself, being available and able to be redefined and replaced. Surrendering to “forces that model flesh or shake it” in Deleuze words.

In a review made out of the Deleuze piece “Francis Bacon: The logic of Sensation” Andrew Feldmar wrote: “surrender means total experience: no defense, no critique, fully allowing oneself to be taken for a ride. Surrender and catch a sort of epistemology. Having giving myself over to a work of art letting it have its way with me, I come back to myself. Am I richer; Am I poorer, is it as if nothing really happened at all? The catch is the gift, the transformation the altered state of consciousness I returned with from my surrender to the piece”.

Maria Ines Garcia Canal, nevertheless, in her essay about Foucault work “La resistencia y el arte de existir” wrote “The subject is born resisting and is, in this capacity to react, where he is constituted. He defends himself, reacting in a thousand of ways, against the forces that goes towards him. The resistance is the capacity of the subjects to react. (...) The resistance is the main technique to produce subjectivity”.

I disagree.

Could also surrender be a strategy to build subjectivity as well as a critical action and reaction that also would question our patterns and ways to establish meanings? Achieving an alternative way to extend individuality through affection? “Questioning what (or whom) holds the body property and interrogating what (or whom) sustain a movement’s purpose

DISCOVERS

I want to be physical

I want to move

I want to be on stage

We achieved a full Investment and an interesting trust.

We had a strange shared and undefined “wanting” that keep us charged and committed. I am still not sure of the real reason of that.

I discover a funny and paradoxical intensity.

I realized that the body could never be meaningless.

I love processes, I love people, and I love to work with other bodies around.

THE BODY ALWAYS HAS MEANINGS, TOUCHING IS ALWAYS OVERLOADED

This is the main paradox of my work. I am interested in body and its anatomy. I shake for De-contextualization and alternatives to stereotypes. I would like to free the ways in which bodies are perceived and read, to offer other ways to look up actions and physicality. But I always work with intensity and intimacy, with fluids and sharing processes, with sensuality.

But I negate emotions on stage or I escape of the consequences. I show mechanisms and run away of conclusions.

I used to achieve intense physicality but I always try to clean out its emotionality. "I provoke erections but never allow the "coming" to happen", "I am a fake seducer"...

But I am emotional and intense...easily affected by beauty and feelings...

Am I escaping? Which is my comment? Which is my responsibility as a maker?

PHENOMENOLOGY AND "BECOMING" RATHER THAT FORM AND FIXATION

I don't use to choreograph but I use to condition bodies. The physicality I used to be interested are always under construction. I use to show them in their face of "being happening" and "becoming". And, I don't know, maybe I have heard too often the name of "Deleuze" during my years of school but I use to be seduced by the research of the physicality rather than in how it is perceive or should be presented. I use to be fascinated by a physicality, which is not fixed.

Sometime ago I wrote:

"I am more interested in what is the act of becoming than in what is established, in the negotiation of the "happening" rather than in the fragility of the statement of "being". I do not use to choreograph my physicality. I use to condition the bodies to produce physicality. It is not created and setted but it is constantly appearing. The physicality I am exploring it is shapeless but it still have it own identity. It does not end in form but get defined and concrete by dealing with the actions, conditions, instructions and obstructions that create it. A narrative without beginning and end. It is a gesture"

It is true or maybe I am unable to set material?

Is this my problem or it is just a characteristic of the physicality I used to be interested in?

ALTERNATIVES TO COMPOSITION

As always in my pieces, compositional choices were taken at the last stage of the process. As always in my processes I spent a lot of time "convincing" my performers, and in the exploration face of the project and almost forgot about how to compose the piece.

If I think about it I felt attractive to play with composition but if I see what my work have been till now it seems my interests are in a different face of creation.

Of course I want to improve. I would love to accumulate tools and knowledge that will make my artistic life more complex a better but, I wonder, maybe I should explore an alternative to composition instead of feeling frustrated by my non-ability to reflect my own work.

Maybe, at the end, there is something "un-catchable" and "unfixable" in the bodies I am looking for, maybe I am fascinated by the unfinished, maybe is part of my nature to start thousand of beginnings and never being able to conclude them.

Maybe...

REALITY IN THEATER OR THEATRICALIZING REALITY?

I also wrote sometime ago:

“How to find a way and a moment to question the line between what means to perform, what means representation, which kind of illusions do we need to accept to read information, which are the ethics and aesthetics in performative event?”

I would like to stage the authentic, accepting the becoming, making visible what is censured in the codified and systematize reality, where the boundaries between the different disciplines are almost not perceived and the line between what is real and what is behind a safe performativity is never clear and always uncomfortable ambiguous”

I have realized I use theatre as a place where to expose my researches, but I don't understand yet its characteristic, rules and possibilities.

I did break two times in the last year two different bones of my body in two different performances.

I think I am doing something wrong.

AM I AWARE OF MY CHOICES AS A MAKER? IS IT ABOUT COMUNICATION?

My English is not good but if I had written this paper in Spanish probably you, the readers, would have understand even less.

If I choose to share this with you I should be concern in the agreement of communication we have done. The language we share, the theme we are going to talk about.

If I want to communicate I should be aware and use the channels and bridges that connect us.

Should it be the same procedure in the making process of a piece?

I discovered some time ago I was not interested in masturbation. Well, actually I think it is fantastic but not on stage or, well, not always. Again, I have realized it is not about me but it should be about something else, on stage.

But, how much should I compromise my obsessions and my intuition to listen and follows the communication channels? I do believe in an audience that can be active and responsible of their own reception process.

Do I want to take responsibility of my audience? Caring or manipulating how they will perceive my work on stage?

Do I want to use references and known representation codes and systems?

Do I think a work could be interesting also in its “no definition”, in it proposal to be just a sort of shared “phenomenology”?

Agamben definition of gesture:

"...Gesture is that dimension of language that is not exhausted in any communication of meaning and that in this way marks the point at which language appears in its more capacity to communicate. (...) Without identity, defined by nothing other than its existence in language as irreducible, absolute, POTENTIALITY"...

Am I asking for Audience responsibility or not assuming my own responsibility fully?