



Season's Uruguay

Democracy and Women Playwrighting

1985-2016

Translations by Florencia Caballero and Florencia Salvetto

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Edited by Sofía Etcheverry

Introduction

by Sofia Etcheverry

In 2015 Uruguay celebrated 30 years of democracy. The 1973 coup dissolved the Parliament Houses, introducing a civic-military dictatorship which lasted 12 years. As many artists had to flee for exile, the theatre, as an expression of society, came as a space of resistance for the ones remaining in the country.

As from 1985 there was a period of transition into democracy, during which institutions that had been put down come to reinstall people and rights. The same happened to theatre: independent companies reunited with the refugees that came back from their exile and a new generation of artists arose, with hope and dreams of nurturing life in democracy, as well as rebuilding the country gathering the broken pieces.

However during the 90s neoliberal agendas in government started to privatize public companies and take a series of measures which made the democratic process less inclusive. As the new millennium kicked in, the 2001 banking crisis in Buenos Aires, Argentina, hit our economy and a new wave of exile, this time economic, leaves the country. The destinations chosen were mainly Spain and the United States. Since then, Uruguayan colonies can be found all over the world. Our country knows well about of coming and going, since our population consists mostly of European immigrants.

In the past decade we have had left-wing parties in government for the first time in history. This resulted in social and cultural policies never seen before in our country. The art started to have legal and normative visibility, unknown to us before. New funding, scholarships, and public and private subventions for scenic arts in their different disciplines; a National Institute for the Scenic Arts was created, the INAE, and our theatre is again in the festivals circuit around the world.

This is a good moment to acknowledge those achievements and go even deeper, a moment to look inside and recognize ourselves as a community of creators. While working on this publication I realized I personally knew almost every woman featured in this book, yet we rarely get the chance to share instances of discussion and exchange of visions. Many of the female playwrights included here are also actors, others are not. Some of them lived their teenage years and early adulthood in dictatorship times; the younger ones were born in democracy but know that for the last 20 years every 20th of May a silent demonstration is held for truth and justice regarding the dictatorship's disappeared detainees. The women that lived those times have a parricide speech against the precedent generation; they took non-conventional spaces, because they felt it was necessary to break the idea of theatre. The younger ones were born with many more possibilities and do not have the urge to break ties, they have a dialogue with the past and an urge to make amends.

The female playwrights invited in this publication reflect on their work and their ability to speak from our context and to the world. At the same time, each one of them selected a play (from which a fragment was chosen) that showed their respective gender views as well as their take on recent history.

I am grateful with the ICWP and especially to Margaret McSeveney for the invitation to elaborate this piece. I hope that this Season Uruguay part of our playwright reality gets pictured. A reality with wounds to heal and a theatre with the ability to make amends with the next generations.

Montevideo, March 2017

Sofia Etcheverry is an actor, teacher, scenic creator and researcher. She holds a MA in Theory and History of Theatre from FHUCE UDELAR. To see more: www.sofetcheverry.blogspot.com

She holds a degree in Acting from EMAD and one in Communication from UdelaR. At the moment she is doing her MA in Theatre History and Theory. As an actor she has worked in different projects.

Analia Torres (Montevideo, 1983)

In 2007 she co- founded the company Efimero Teatral where she has worked as director and playwright. She has written several plays, such as *Parada Olivera*, *Shejitá*, *El arte de ilusionar* and *Mancuso (Olivera's Stop, Shejitá, The art of illusion, Mancuso)*, being awarded in several numerous occasions, such as the First Prize and a Mention from COFONTE-AGADU's contest of unedited plays, Madrid Frinje 15 Festival in a contest for stage readings and Iberescena for the co-production of one of her plays.



At present she works as a Drama Teacher in both public and private institutions and as a communicator in different projects.

Links to plays by Analia Torres and her company Efimero Teatral: www.efimeroteatral.com
<https://www.facebook.com/efimero.teatral>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/GrupoEfimeroTeatral>

The experience of writing by Analia Torres

To be a woman.
Nina, Marlene, Wendy or Lola whatever they'd like to call me.
I can come up with names for myself.
Or I can forget who I am.
I can finish the bottle.
I can give you the complete package. (Puedo hacerte el service completo)
I can invest in my future.
I can be alone.
With myself.
I can as well hold a gun.
And decide.
To look at your eyes.
And decide.
I am able not to have the need.
Or maybe yes. It is the same.
If someone thinks.
I am not worth it.
It is the same. Because here I am.
Because I am a person.
Before everything.
Because I give birth.
Or not.
Because I write.
I exist.
Because I am.

Writing is an aesthetic activity, is image, ideology, music, body and volume. But above all things writing is taking risks and having the courage to show others who you are and what you have inside. To write is to strip off fashion and idiotic conventions that lead us toward shortcuts and try to establish who you are or who you could be. They point at things for you to see and tell you that if you don't you won't exist.

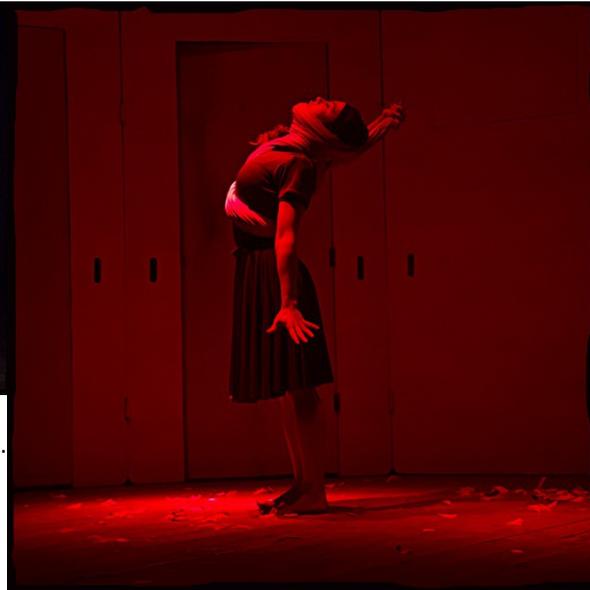
When I sat down to write this article under the motto "30 years of democracy" I did not know how to start or how I should structure it. Therefore I left it to the most healthy and organic instrument I have: intuition. Or in other words, an associative instinct. When I came back to words like "*International Centre for Women Playwrights*", "*equality*", "*gender*" I connected them to my first play *Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop)*. Your first text is like your first love, unique, visceral, filled with self-references. The play is about a woman living in extreme conditions of vulnerability and violence, a character on the edge. She defends her devastated world and we judge her on aesthetics and morality as we judge every action. Judgement is implied in the act of looking but her gaze also judges us, she mirrors us. In the light of that text I started this article. In the light of everything I see of myself in those words.

What you bring with you

I think that what we read as children remains, keeps echoing and you find yourself many years later writing in a way which you don't know where it came from. Writing when it is authentic is organic, organic to the the writer. The most powerful material is the one that comes from inside. When I started *Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop)* I didn't have any techniques or style, it's not that I have lots of it now but I can see I am not in the same place. I believe at that moment I felt lighter without any rules, good or bad ones, I just had the need. I am grateful to that state of lacking, to that absence of paraphernalia.



The art of illusion. Directed and written by A. Torres.
Photo by Martín Pérez



Since my teenage years I enjoyed cheap police procedural novels, bestsellers and thrillers, I would also read poetry, cheap one and good one if I could find it. I recognize it was a strange combination. I didn't have much interest in the classics, the big names. Now as an adult I see prejudices prevent you from reading certain literature because they are considered vain or superficial. The thing is I started to write plays many after that, and one of my plays turned out to win a contest. During the ceremony one of the jurors told me "*Your text has something of a police drama but doesn't lack poetry...*" I'd never thought of writing a police

drama and it wasn't until that point that I realized everything I'd read as a young girl (and kept reading those days) that strange combination had burst inadvertently, powerfully willing to live in my writing. This is who I am, I can't deny it. I won't deny what I have inside and my writing has a lot to do with it.

The experiences

If we talk about "context" I'd rather think about a friendlier, warmer word. I prefer "experience", not as a pathway but in the accumulative sense. Experience as the things lived with their characteristics of those events that forged your inner world. The events in your life, moments that you chose to live or moments that chose you are clearly determined by the context. However, the word "experience" is a personal translation of the concept of context. It is what the event leaves you, in your body, in your imagery. There are also collective experiences, yet the individual experience is always there and it is in the link between them where the point of view is built. My point of view, unique and not replicable is also the origin of my writing.

Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop) and *Shejitá*, my second play, were born from that experience, not from technique. They are two intertwined stories in a common universe. It is difficult for me to think about techniques while I write. Undoubtedly, because I don't have much, in fact I've never studied playwriting. I learned the way I could, where I could, from those I found on the way. Also, I think technique should be learned and forgotten, you can't do anything with technique alone, at least anything that is moving at all. Technique can be shared with others but it doesn't assure you anything valuable, at a personal level. Yet I do believe in experience, even in the experience of small things. I couldn't have been able to write those texts if it wasn't for the images I have of my grandmother in the countryside, of animals and of course if it wasn't for my imagination. I haven't yet written documentary theatre because I made all the images I took from my memory play with my imagination to create fiction. I think imagination and the ability to put different materials in the game as well as unprejudiced associations enable a very enriching creative process. The one that works the best and lets you create in a state of freedom.



Olivera's Stop. Actor: A. Torres. Written by: A. Torres. Directed by: Yamandú Fumero.

Since I started to write I feel like a spider in her web. While in the bus, touring the streets, I think about trivial things but at the same time I am unconsciously sensitive, perceptive, catching material, images, sounds, characters. One time in one of those buses, line 329, during a long ride to Colón High School a shoeshine sat next to me. I looked at him and thought "What a character!" And that is what happened. He became Luisito, one of the characters in *Shejitá*. The shoeshine, a poor guy, filled with dignity, made me remember the tango *Yira Yira*: "...*Cuando rajés los tamangos buscando ese mango que te haga morfar...*" (The spanish version is written in slang: *When you've worn your shoes off, in search for that penny that will make you eat...*) From then on Luisito was born, fleeing the deserted Uruguayan country life. A character filled with innocence, sweetness, loving an illusion.

LUISITO- You had white hands, like birds between the notes, willing to escape. Your dress would shape your hips. I watched you play from the last bench in church, spying you. All the furniture and men would watch you. Accomplices, wanting to steal your thoughts. Wanting to get inside you to steal your present. I kept on watching you as if time was in your hands, in your tight high-heels. As if you could stop it. I looked at you as if I'd never looked at you before. Those clean, honest, selfless hands. Those dead hands, Clara.

As I mentioned before, *Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop)* and *Shejitá*, were born from a common universe, my grandmother's farm in Soriano. I first wrote *Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop)*, the story of a prostitute born there. It was a very powerful world to me, the landscape that, some time later, I further developed for *Shejitá*, as the story of Clara before becoming the prostitute in *Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop)*

I also ask myself, as Clara does: why do I do it? This thing of spending hours isolated, fighting images, and myself. This thing that is creation, writing. I think I do it because it is who I am.

*"The same day you told me you loved me. You asked me: why do you do it?
You didn't have time for me to tell you the story.
Now you know. I don't have anything else to give you.
My legs no longer have a price.
Nor my hands.
Nor my eyes.
To live life as it is.
To be here.
To breathe.
To wait to be distorte.
To wait for the night to fall on us.
To be finished,
at last to be finished.
To have to say goodbye
to my own body.
To have to be handled
Without a name
or a story
to make the bed
and start over."*

Final fragment from *Parada Olivera (Olivera's Stop)*. Winter of 2013

Sandra Massera (Montevideo, 1956)



She got her acting degree from EMAD and is also a History Teacher from IPA specialized in Arts History and Visual Perception. She is an ECU co-founder and Theatre Action and Visual Perception Teacher in Casa de la Cultura de Montevideo as well as a History and Arts Perception Professor at EMAD.

She directs and writes theatre since the 90s and has specialized in non-conventional spaces. She was awarded the Florencio for the best play by a national author in 2007 and 2009, COFONTE's First Prize in Playwriting in 2006 and 2011, the Juan Carlos Onetti First Prize in playwriting in 2013 and MEC's First Prize in Literature, Playwriting –Drama category in 2014.

Plays: *La mujer copiada*, 2006 (The copied woman); *No digas nada, nena*, 2008 (Don't say anything, girl), showcased in Uruguay, Argentina and Spain; *Locas*, 2009 (Crazy women) premiered in Madrid in 2013 under the name *Camille*, among others.

1975: Presentation

by Sandra Massera

1975 is a play written as a (one man-woman show) monologue by the Uruguayan playwright Sandra Massera.¹

It came out from the writing of the monologue *A doll without a face* presented for the call *10 years of Theatre for Identity* organized by Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This monologue was selected to participate in the show *Identical*, with Mauricio Kartún as its playwright and the direction of Daniel Veronese.

After the premiere of *A doll without a face* in 2012 in Buenos Aires and its success, the author decided to go further in its writing and transform it into an independent piece.

Plot summary and general idea

The topic addressed in *1975* revolves around anonymous corpses found on the Uruguayan coasts. This issue was already tackled in a scene of a previous work of the author *Don't say anything, girl*, based on true facts of the recent past. In *1975* the narrative takes the point of view of a woman who has lost her brother. A fictional story about an anonymous character, consisting of pieces of memories and real events, lived by the author in those years, intertwined with imagined ones.

¹ Cast and Crew: María Laura Almirón, actress; Sandra Massera, director; Álvaro Domínguez, lighting; Carlos Rehmann, graphic design and sound digital edition; María Inés Corbelle, make up and Natalia Méndez, production.

1975 refers to the defenceless and terrifying essence that an inanimate being can inspire in us, in this case a corpse on the seashore. The absence of news from the main character's brother is linked in her mind with the heartrending doubt about the identity of the dead man seen by her on the beach a few days after her brother's escape to Buenos Aires due to his political implications as a student activist.

The situation is seen through the experiences of a young woman. The first date that must be mentioned on each show is the date of the show itself, and from there the story is told backwards, starting in her adulthood, reaching her seventeen. The woman writes letters to her disappeared brother, no to be sent anywhere but to ease her pain and despair. The absence is the theme of the play, the absence of the lost brother as well as the absence of a brother that never got to be born.

The plot can be found in a letter dated precisely in 1975 written by the character to her lost brother. The story develops in an atmosphere at the same time frugal and poetic that allows us to go in depth in intimate aspects of feelings and sensations of a character that has lost a family member. Four decades later these events keep echoing through us. The intention is to carry on talking about this so it is never forgotten. To keep talking about it through the support and beauty art can achieve.



1975] [abril, 2015
(C) foto alejandro persichetti

1975. Actress: María Laura Almirón

Characters and writing

1975 is a monologue with three main characters, although two of them never appear on stage, they belong to the innermost essence of the play and are the trigger of the story. The writing in this play flows through the words spoken by the actress and the space's material presence. In a mirror game between characters three texts can be found: the one said, the one that can be seen and a third one protected by the woman. The text said is the one heard by the audience composed by the playwriting and the work of the actress. The one seen is in the letters on stage, a parallel play can be found in them, an account of moments in the life of the character that are not said straight away. The third text is the one protected, a notebook, and the only object on stage, containing notes of the characters and their fate.

Production

1975 was produced and staged by *Teatro del Umbral de Montevideo* (1998-2015). This independent company has been working for seventeen years staging sixteen plays and numerous performances, representing Uruguay both in national and international events. They are recognized by the audience and critics for representing plays of strong human interest such as human rights and State terrorism. Among this works are:

Don't say anything, girl (*No digas nada, nena*, Sandra Massera. 2008) Florencio Prize as best play by a national author, 2009, *The test* (*El examen*, Carlos Rehermann. 2010) –National Prize of Playwriting 2008 and First place in Cofonte's Prize 2008, *Crazy Women* (*Locas*, Sandra Massera. 2009-FIDAE 2010), *A perfect future* (*Futuro perfecto*, Sandra Massera, 2012) –First place in Cofonte's Prize 2011.

The members of the company have been sharing both investigation and production work for many years. The conformation of a stable team has allowed the company to go in depth into a methodology of work that seeks to incorporate everyone's contribution.



1975 | abril, 2015
(C) foto alejandro persichetti

Fragment form 1975 by Sandra Massera

The woman suddenly stops.

WOMAN: March 13th, that same year: 1975. I wrote this page, I think I did it to make fear go away. I wrote about something I saw, I wrote it with my own words at that time.

As she speaks, she picks up letters from the floor and slowly tears them as she shuffles them in her hands.

Ten years have passed since you took that ferry. There were no mobile phones then. Back in those days there was nothing to be alarmed by, but I do remember feeling awkward, though. Besides, Daniel and I were going away together for the first time. We had put up our tent in the woods in La Floresta, near the beach. We went for a walk very early that morning. It was freezing cold, we were clasped to each other. Suddenly, behind the dunes, we saw a dead body on the shore. We saw it from the distance, washed in by the waves. We got petrified, some 20 meters away from... that. It was the dead body of a man in dark pants. He was swollen and, worst of all, seemed to have no face. Like an inflatable faceless dummy. Long strips of seaweed came out of his hands and feet, as if a perverted puppeteer had tied him up with his strings and leave him to die. Strings

that got loose from the stage of death, the stage of his very last day. The crash of the waves pushed him towards us, and now those strings were winding like snakes on the wet sand, nothing more than salt filth.

Two cops got there in no time. They didn't see us, though, or didn't mind two kids watching in panic. One of them left right away. The other one, poor thing, stayed in custody of the corpse, using a stick to keep it from being washed back by the waves. We ran away.

Next day there was the news in the press: another unidentified, violently ravished body had appeared on the coast of the Province of Canelones. The entry on the notebook ends abruptly: "...dead bodies are being found on the beach all the time, and no-one knows who they are. Alberto, mum hasn't slept a wink in two days. Do write soon."

Leticia Feippe (Montevideo, 1977)



Holds a Journalistic Communications Degree. Her works have been awarded many prizes. She published in *A palabra limpia*, *Esto no es una antología*, *Muestra de cuentos lesbianos*, *22 mujeres* and *El papel y el placer* (Uruguay and Brazil). She has also been published in the British webzine *Errant Words*.

In 2014, her book *Asuntos Triviales* (Trivial Affairs) was published. In the same year her play *Tukano y el libro de todas las historias* (Tukano and the book of all stories) was awarded three Florencio prizes for children's theatre, including Best show.

In 2013, the CCE produced and published in the book *Dramaturgia joven uruguaya* (Uruguayan young playwriting) her play *Hasta Amarillo* (Yellow).

In 2011 her children's novel *Viaje en sobretodo* (Trip in an overcoat) was showcased by the company Teatro EL Galpón. She has worked as a cultural journalist for the magazines *El Estante* and for *El País Cultural*. In 2007 she was guest actor at the company *Teatro Circular*.

Web: www.leticiafeippe.com.

A few characters looking for an outsider

by Leticia Feippe

Fifteen years ago an author told me something that every now and then comes back to me.

I was very young and wanted to be a writer. I would dress, I thought, properly and go to bars where writers were usually seen. I would order a whisky -at that time it seemed adequate- and sit there, a couple of tables away from renowned writers in order to hear what they would talk about. Much to my surprise, at that time -now it seems perfectly normal- they would talk about things they had bought in the market, about their families or about malfunctioning washing machines and also, but only a little, they would discuss literature.

For quite a while, my friend and I would go to that bar every Friday. One time, we could see one of the renowned authors leave his chair and head for the toilet. I knew the man because I had interviewed him. In a rapture of teenage snobbism, my friend crossed our fingers and wished for him to come and say hello. It was not so strange because we were strategically sitting in the way to the toilets. The man, a playwright himself, came by and said hello to me. We chatted a little and he asked me if I was writing something. It was then when he told me something that I still remember: "Uruguay is in need of playwrights but most of all, it is in need of women playwrights"

Today we can do the exercise of asking random people in the street, students, professionals, whoever: "Which woman playwright do you like the most?" And the most repeated answer will be. "I don't know any". And, however hard it is to say; in some cases the person is going to ask: "What is a woman playwright?"

My relationship with playwriting started during childhood without me even thinking about it.

In that time, during the 80s, my brother, a friend and I used to put on magic shows and short plays, that I wrote or adapted and where we all acted, for birthdays parties. It is a pity no to have any record of it in order to verify what I think, that they were naïve but genuine. I would be very interested in checking if my memory is betraying me or if what I remember is what actually happened. However, I think what counts is my memory of it.

Childhood came and went away and more formal education came. Art was not a priority in that educational context. Creation became something intimate and reserved. It's not that I felt it was bad to say I wanted to be a writer, it's that I never even thought about the possibility. I continued to write but had repressed the urge to do it professionally. During my teenage years I couldn't imagine that writing was going to be the most permanent thing in my life. I have always worked -started very young-. I started a scientific degree and didn't last a year, then I changed degrees and moved on to a creative one. Since then, writing became a daily activity, my "other" job.



VIAJE EN SOBRETUDO / Teatro El Galpón , Mayo 2011 / (C) foto Alejandro Persichetti

Actress: Sofía Hernández. Directed by Graciela Escuder and Bernardo Trías.

I consider myself an outsider regarding theatre. Though I had a short but very enriching experience as an actor, my relationship with theatre was established exclusively through playwriting and that is my chosen area of work. This is why I consider myself an outsider and because of that it seems to me a little rude to reflect from an academic point of view about women in the Uruguayan playwriting landscape. I have my opinions about it, of course, and they are no different from what I think about women in literature in general.



Tukano and the book all stories. Actors: Karen Halty, Victoria Novick and Marcelo Conde. Directed by Marianella Morena. MAPI Museum.

Three years ago, the book *22 women* (*22 mujeres*) was published, it was a collection of short stories by Uruguayan writers. During the presentation of the book the editor said that to understand what took him to publish that book we should only look at the tributes paid to the '45 generation. These homages are always given to men. To me that was more than accurate and, if we talk about playwriting – a less published genre than narrative-, the situation is the same.

In order to talk about my work as a playwright, I must start saying that my characters came to life in this context where women have had to ask for permission to talk altogether. This wasn't a *leit motive* at the beginning but it is a part of the world where I grew up as a person and as a writer it is also the world where my characters were born.

My female characters, many times, have to make an extensive effort to be heard, or what is worst, they want to say something but they can't. This is why She (*Ella*), the main character of *Yellow* (*Hasta Amarillo*), lives inside a playpen, the same one she was put in where she was a baby, a playpen with a roof. That is why Ana, a current character in my children's plays, is a girl who wants to talk, to have an opinion, to risk her opinions, make mistakes, get angry and feels how hard it is for her sometimes.

Fragment from *Yellow*, by Leticia Feippe.

SHE: There are two screens on the ceiling. On one of them there's Me, and on the other one there's Her. The thing is, I don't know if I'm Myself or I'm Her. On one screen, for example, I'm having sex. I see myself moving, surrounded by other men and women. I see myself giving a faceless stranger a blowjob, and feeling the cold touch of a pair of scissors that a blonde stranger puts on my stomach, which someone else then takes to cut her panties open.

Now I turn to the other screen. He's licking my ear. It feels sticky. He smells like cigarettes. And heavy. Heavy. He's heavy.

I haven't waxed. I haven't waxed for a month.

That's Her. No... that's Me. She's the one blindfolded and being groped by two guys. And He's the one touching the blonde with the scissors, who's now fatter than in the first scene, and speaks English. And she's a brunette now. I like watching them.

Every now and then, He asks me if I'm ok and I say I'm fine but I cry to myself. My muscles cry and I feel hot tears that want to come out through my skin, but just can't. Then He moves frantically. Ridiculous.

He goes to the edge of the bed and gives the mattress a blowjob.

He goes to the end of the bed.

He's kind. He loves me. He's decent.

On the first screen I see myself making out with some boyfriend of mine on my rooftop, where I used to live over 20 years ago.

From the roof I can see every other roof. I'm 13 and I've wetted my panties.

He's moving but I feel nothing, so I guess I can't fall in love. Or otherwise, I don't know.

I do feel something when he starts touching me. I feel his smell. I can feel it, huh?

The room gets filled with smells of food and fabric softener.

He touches me. The fat girl who used to be blonde touches me and gets thin and black-haired now. Two strangers are touching me.

I hate the feel of my sticky ear, stinking like smoke. I want to wash it. And the sheets. They stink. They smell like the clothes which are still wet but I put away anyway. And it's so hot. I find it impossible to focus in here. If only this playpen didn't have a roof...

I've learnt so much from cats, they can smell everything. I think all of us have a smell, which sometimes can't feel.

MOTHER: You smell like cigarettes.

SHE: ... she would tell me. Cause I've been studying with my friends that smoke, maybe.

MOTHER: It comes from your stomach.

SHE No way.

MOTHER: You smell like cigarettes.

SHE: I don't. I smell like candy.

MOTHER: Yes, you do.

SHE: No, mum, I don't.

MOTHER: You do. Yes, you do. You do.

SHE: I don't, mum. I don't, mum.

I don't, mum. I don't, mum... I don't, mum.

MOTHER: You do. Go get the laundry down.

SHE: Then I go up the rooftop and get a smoke out. On one of the screens, He asks me "do you like this?" I get distracted by some noise. Honks or music from another house, through the roofs. My ears are sticky and smell like cigarettes. He doesn't deserve it, by I want to wash them as soon as this is over. He comes, falls exhausted and hugs me. Next day we'll split up. And roofs don't have a roof...

MARÍA: I was there when she got her first period. I was there when she got elected Beauty Queen in high school, too. And coming up the stage she tripped and I got her some cloth to wipe her blood. Everybody would laugh at her and call me names, I got called Bloody Mary because I got stained with her blood. I was there when she was pregnant, too. Only I knew about it, which went on for about 10 or 12 weeks.

SHE: What sort of a dyke doesn't dare suck a cunt? A bad dyke, of course. I could put the blame on her, because she told me about this infection of hers, but in fact, if she hadn't told me anything I wouldn't have dared, and she wouldn't be thinking I'm a bad dyke. Guys are simpler. They don't ask, they do it. They just do it. That's why they've done so well throughout History. That's why God is a guy and those who believe He doesn't exist are guys too. Girls are only good at school. Not before, not after that.

I'm a little girl, good for nothing, I head to the kitchen... Back in the days of Henry VIII, if a page got a damsel pregnant, he got charged with no beer for a month. However, during centuries, pregnant girls who were still single got thrown out of their parents' and made to give their illegitimate children away. Only those who could afford to got nurses to look after them. There was once this Amelia Dyer who ended up on the gallows for

delivering and getting rid of the babies who were born on the farm she ran. And there was this Australian who got rid of her own six kids. The first two because she wasn't married, and all the rest because people would notice she wasn't a first-time mother. She was called Barbara Wilkinson. The name of a razor blade, isn't it? María once taught me how to shave myself, here (points her pubic area), at the school's restrooms. I wouldn't, but she insisted so badly that I did it, but if she did it too. We hurt ourselves.

And María got called Bloody Mary because she got her trousers stained. She was wearing white. And now I'm ashamed to tell her that I'm a bad dyke. But I have to. She's the only one who listens to me.

HE: I did like that story. The razor blade one.

Florencia Caballero (1985, Montevideo)



Playwright and director, she studied acting in EMAD. After graduation she specialized in playwright and direction with national and international masters like: Sergi Belbel, Simon Stephens, Sean Holmes, Sergio Blanco, Matías Umiperrez, José Sanchis Sinisterra, Mauricio Kartun, and Gabriel Calderón.

Influenced by her context and story, her mother is a left winged politician, ideology, authority and political speech made her develop a deep interest in the mechanisms of power and how they affect women. In 2016 she staged her first play as playwright and director *Inés. Love will eventually conquer it all*. At the moment she is in the process of rehearsing her second play *POSH GIRL*.

You should be able to play Ophelia

by Florencia Caballero

...This sentence marked the first ten year of my artistic career. It was the only feedback I received from a Uruguayan theater eminence after I failed an acting exam.

I won't speak about my playwriting without speaking about acting or directing. I speak from those three places. As a female artist dedicated to theatre I studied acting and can't avoid the acting from entering my writing, I write since I was a child and it is one of the most sensitive areas of my acting.

We live in a society in which a lot has been written confirming the patriarchy and the violence that are base to its survival oppress women from every front. However if we look closely it can be found that this oppression is not only affecting women but men as well. Without question men, sustained by the society that brought them up reproducing mechanisms of violence, oppress women in invisible ways without realizing those are misogynistic actions.

To be a female artist in Uruguay is to be an activist, not only within organized social or politic organizations but in everyday life, while we are working. In theatre at the moment there are more women than in the past working as playwrights and as directors but men continue to be more. Actually in 2013 when I started studying playwright in the CN, we were ten playwrights, three women and seven men. In order to put this numbers in context let me explain that in 2009 Uruguay to be used only in one election, a Quota Law, this was an affirmative action law aimed to reduce gender inequality in parliament. This law mandates that every

three candidates in a list of candidates from the same party, there must be one woman. Therefore in a list of nine candidates, three should be women. In the present, in 2017, the Associate Degree in Playwright from the Republic University has eight women and nine men in its first class. Today, after this one-time application of this law, is again being discussed how to apply a gender affirmative action laws that is not avoided by putting women on lists but making them resign afterwards.

But it is not the raw data what tells this story. The context has still many nuances, not only because in the first two months of this year there are already seven women who were murdered by their male partners or former partner, but because invisible violence, naturalized violence are deeply rooted in all of us, men and women. Last year a Uruguayan film producer and director invited separately several young actresses to an audition in a hotel room. Some of them went and this man filmed private and compromising videos of them under the claim of the artistic value of the images and assuring each one of them that the role was theirs. He was publicly accused, but not prosecuted; only one institution condemned his actions and offered legal counseling to the victims. Now, after less than a year this man is producing and directing a series for a streaming service in which Uruguayan actresses accepted to work with him. He still has the power and influence to offer jobs in a context of lack of employment possibilities for actresses. He continues to abuse power and our society enables him.

“You have a very pretty face. You should lose weight. You should be able to play Ophelia.” “There are too many young women like you in Uruguayan theatre, it is very competitive.” “You are probably doing very well as a director because you are pretty and actors like that.”

These remarks were made about me at different stages of my artistic career. They were not made by monsters, they come from well-meaning colleagues. Violence and repression against women, against the way our bodies look, against us being too many where there is no space for all, sometimes they come from both male and female friends, sometimes, they come from myself. This violence appears in unexpected ways without me thinking it through, it is reflection of the social structure I was born and raised in.

When I was reading the first public accusations against the film producer previously mentioned made by the actresses he harassed, my first reaction was doubt. I doubted those women. I had to go through the process of rethink my first response in order to believe the accusations. Why women should make an effort to believe other women? And I don't mean believe without reason or disregarding credibility, I mean something deeper. I am talking about the social mechanisms that make us doubt women when they make an accusation because there are women.

I don't want to be Ophelia, or Nina, or Julia, or Nora. I don't even know if I want to be Virginia Woolf or Sarah Kane. I do not want to be the woman with her head in the oven. I want to more than to be a well-known woman that had to die to be freed from this world that doesn't understand her and in which there is no place for her. I want to be big and not feminine at all or very feminine at the same time. I want to speak loudly and debate topics passionately without adding a nice tone before I correct a man. However many times I am not, I am a bombshell and men look at me with watering mouths like a cartoon watching a piece of meat. Nonetheless my vulnerability makes me sensitive; it is the root of my poetry. My fighting wishes feed my writing and all of the answers that I didn't give, because I was a nice girl, to those hidden insults I received because I am a woman. All of this give strength to what I say, they make my speech deep by dint of repression.

A few years ago in México there was a campaign of awareness about verbal abuse and invisible harassment against women in theatre. This organization of actresses coordinated a protest inside a theatre in the middle of a play to its director. During the demonstration they accused this director of rape, there was no proof of the accusation and a formal complaint was not made yet. Afterwards the man was investigated, prosecuted and justice took its course.

Nevertheless in the middle of those agitated days, another director, a colleague that identifies himself as a feminist, writes a public reflection in social media on the events, in which he questions the method or the protest, being it the abrupt interruption of a play. He asks: Didn't we agree that there was still something sacred? The reaction to his words was very harsh and it made him deeply question himself until this days. I could see the depth of his self-questioning in the way he told the story even in his own uncomfortable demeanor while we were listening to it in another country a long time afterwards. At that time a didn't answer, I couldn't take the chance to explain what it feels and looks like from this other place that I occupy with many other women and artists. The answer I didn't give: A friend of mine and I have a saying that we repeat every time we think something is unfair, it is an unappropriated joke a statement that some say was said by Jorge Luis Borges, or Teodoro Adorno, or Roland Barthes. Probably it doesn't belong to any of them, but it goes like this: *The world belongs to white thirty-year old men*. Finally the answer that I couldn't give at that time: The sacred things are also for white thirty-year old men, the rest of us battle in a close combat with the profane."

Fragment from *Inés. Love will eventually conquer it all* by Florencia Caballero.

Episode 3: Inés and her body.²

Before our eyes, Inés gets dressed/undressed as Inés.

Foreword:

"...all the white pigeons and birds of the kingdom chirp happily as their carriage slowly zooms out. The end."

They're happy.

She's happy.

She's the one everyone's after.

An old-fashioned Cinderella.

An oldish, 50s version.

A yellowish book with ugly illustrations.

²Although Inés is a woman, in this Episode she's played by a man.



Actors: Elisa Fernández, Martina García and Matilde Nogueira

An unpretentious, poetically poor book. Something irrelevant, which one saves just because it used to be her mother's, and her mother's mother's before that. An insignificance you couldn't compare to those heaps of books got abroad: Bernhard, Koltés, Durás, Barthes, Kristeva, Arednt. Estatus.

No status at all.

Yet.

Right before the end: a detail.

A detail.

A scene.

A stepsister tries the glass slipper on.

Her foot's too big.

She gets her scissors and cuts off her big toe, to make the slipper fit.

To be her.

Chosen. Happy.

She gets on the carriage. And away.

But her feet bleed and the slippers get stained, and the white pigeons chirp around and give her away, warning the deceived prince, the kingdom, everybody, that she's a fraud.

The slippers don't fit, they're not hers, her feet bleed, she can't walk, and gets given back. Sorry.

No. There's more: another woman, another stepsister, another strategy, for another hoax.

No.

This second girl also cuts off her big toe, also gets on the carriage, also bleeds down, also gets given back: a cripple for life, because the slippers wouldn't fit.

An unpretentious, poetically poor book. Something irrelevant, which one saves just because it used to be her mother's, and her mother's mother's before that. An insignificance you couldn't compare to those heaps of books got abroad: Bernhard, Koltés, Durás, Barthes, Kristeva, Arednt. Estatus.

No status at all.

Yet.

What am I capable of doing to get into something that won't fit?

I'm Inés. I'm 29. I'm not ashamed of admitting that I find deformity repulsive. What matter is you don't tell: It's not only being, but also seeming.

Inés softly dances and sings "The season of the witch" by Donovan Leitch.

I am a Literature teacher, writer and director. I write drama, poetry, scripts and texts for the national carnival, most of all for the Murga category. I define myself as a playwright and started in this path, as many did in Uruguay, taking part of the Encuentro de Teatro Joven in 2000. In 2006 I started the independent company "Japonesa Teatro". In 2011 I started a path of my own with the play "Te pasa algo", so far the only one staged abroad: in Madrid, Málaga and Buenos Aires.

In the world of awards, a world separated from the world of theatre, I was awarded in 2009 the Florencio Revelation Award for direction and playwright of "Cajas Chinas". In 2015 I was awarded the Children's Florencio for the direction and the lyrics of "Los músicos de Bremen". I have also been nominated many times but I don't think that speaks much about my constant work, because I also have a suspicious look for those awarding prizes and recognitions in this country. I have published two little books, "Pájaro Blanco" and "Dentro", that could be considered "poetic prose". Everything but those two books, from which I don't have any copies; can be read here:
<http://www.jimenamarquez.blogspot.com/>

Jimena Márquez (Montevideo, 1978)



Colourful tunics

by Jimena Márquez

I live in a country; I live in a world that divides people and things by gender from the moment of their birth, beginning with the colours of our first booties. Even before, the mother and father to be are anxious to know if their baby will be a boy or a girl. When I was in kinder garden girls would wear pink tunics and boys sky-blue ones, during primary school boys and girls would line up next to each other but in deferent lines, the same in PE. I knew my mother would make me go home if she found me playing with marbles, with dirt on my knees. There was no place for women in Baby Football teams³. Today, when I see girls and boys playing together in soccer fields, I smile to myself with nostalgia, wishing my childhood had been a little bit different. I feel something is slowly changing. It is not enough, but is indeed positive.

I celebrate the difference. I don't want to do everything men do. I don't think it's necessary to explain the delight of diversity. I am aware of the importance of this topic in society, but I've never affiliated my art to it. It is not a topic that moves me to write. It is not an inner drive of mine. I don't agree with those who see being a woman in the arts as a moral duty, an obligation. If there is one, I apologize but I am not going to stick to it. To write about this would be to reduce my art to a socially accepted or expected issue and I wouldn't be addressing my real drives. This is the way of creation that I know and practice. Anyway, I think that just the fact of being a woman producing and working all the time, slowly accomplishing visibility in the artistic world, deals with gender equality, and I hope it motivates colleagues and people.

³Soccer for children

I insist in the constant work because I believe the centre of the fight lies in never stopping, in looking for opportunities, in being alert, in knocking down doors if they're not opened. I don't want to be given anything because I am a woman. I reject the praise, usually given to me in carnival: "It's very good, especially coming from a woman". I am the first woman to write a complete script for a Murga and the first one to be nominated as "Figura de Murga", and this award has never been won by a woman. Murga is a historically male category in carnival. I don't waste any opportunities to put journalists on the spot when they ask "How does it feel being a woman in a murga composed entirely by men?" or "Isn't it strange that a choir of men sings lyrics written by a woman?" and my answer is invariably "The day you stop asking me this is the day things would have really changed."

Because I don't agree with gender separation, I am not much convinced of exclusively female ventures as groups, publications, concerts, etc. And even when I join them because I understand their aims and positive spirit they have, like this one, it's still contradictory for me because at a certain point it's another way to underline a separation. Integration is for me the better, happier and more coherent way of going forward.

I belong to a generation of changes, I reached adulthood visualizing opportunities to choose that I would've liked to have before. I celebrate the new opportunities girls and boys have. However, it is also true that the traces of a universal paternalistic culture are still there, latent, particularly in this part of the world. Like fascism, that is still alive even when I can't understand why. I think that acceptance and tolerance of the others, exchange and mixture are the only fights which will make it possible to achieve equality of any kind.

I have taken part of many groups in the world of culture, poetry, theatre and carnival. In the fields of poetry and theatre, from my experience, being a man or a woman doesn't make any difference of opportunities, of looks, judgements, or expectations. My path in playwriting or direction was not difficult because I was a woman. I recognize that we had have very strong women in theatre and they have left the doors open to ones coming after them.

The world of Carnival and Murga⁴ is different, there I have felt the weight of judgement and I had to convince, at first, the groups that welcomed me and were suspicious of being directed by or playing the scripts written by a young woman. I have been questioned there, ideologically and in other ways.

In the field of theatre I have never been asked "What's it like to be a woman and write drama?" or "How can an actor act a text written by a woman?" These questions in the field of theatre are, fortunately ridiculous. I think that many women before me had paved the path I walked along when I got in theatre as a playwright and a director. As I write this, I smile and get convinced that in the theatre we are more mixed and judgement-free.

This is why I propose to let children choose the colour of their tunics.

⁴ Murga: a traditional and popular mix of choir singing and musical theatre

Fragment from *She, the comedy playwright*, by Jimena Márquez.



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Escritora de Comedias

Teatro Alianza (2015)

Actress: *Lucía Bonnefon*

Inside 1

THE CHARACTER: Twelve centuries ago... sorry, something like... a minute ago, I don't really know how... I got in here. It's been at least... two hours. And I'm bored. I have this certain feeling the door's closed (hesitantly approaches the door and tries to open it, in vain). A good feeling, cause it's certain. I also have this certain feeling someone asked me to come here... some days ago. But that's not one of the best feelings either, because I don't know if this one's certain, either. I can't deny it, I feel so tempted by this beautiful pun: "certain feeling, might not be certain". I just love puns! I'd also love to know them all! (approaches the door again, as if she's just discovered it, and tries to open it, in vain) It's just that I didn't remember if it was open (tries to open it again, in vain). Good thing is, in here I have no physical needs. I mean being locked up and having physical needs must be one of those... terrible feelings. But on the other hand, being trapped with no physical needs at all is... (tries to open the door, as quietly trying to escape, in vain) It's amazing how one could survive being trapped for... four years, only having their mind. That's why I say it. Thinking it to yourself is not the same as saying it out loud. One feels more... accompanied. Weird, yes, but accompanied. And I've just come in! I mean, as time goes by, I think things will get tougher, won't they? Maybe all this talking and talking gets me to the word I'm missing. Since I was little... very little ago... I've been in search of the only words in English ending in "i"... And I know what you're thinking! Don't give me Latin plurals, please, I've already ruled

them out. Don't give me "fungi", "alumni", "syllabi"... Singular, I mean. Singular words ending in "i". And let's rule out "I", too, it's just too obvious. Well, they're only four, you know? And I've already got "alibi", "safari" and "ski". And the fourth word ending "-i"? (tries to open the door again, to find it out, in vain) I won't stay locked up in here without finding it! (tries to open it again, quite desperately, in vain).



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Escritora de Comedias

Teatro Alianza (2015)

Actresses: Jimena Vázquez and Lucía Bonnefon.

Inside 2

THE CHARACTER: I suffer from a terrible disease. I've just got it, many years ago. It's an inborn desire to own incomplete things. A collection of stamps, for instance. I can't stand the incomplete album. Or that marbles jar, and its empty void below the lid. Mum would say she'd buy more marbles so I would stop complaining about that transparent space. Anyway. I'd already got a bigger one, in case the old one got full. Or the Jules Verne collection. I thought I had all the issues, from one to ten, till Dad came one day with number fourteen, I placed it in line with the rest, next to number ten, watch them from the distance, and just couldn't stand that leap from ten to fourteen! I took them off the shelf and threw them all away. One of the saddest days in my life. (tries to open the door again, in vain) I'll tell you a recurrent dream of mine! It's raining things over the town, who knows why, unimportant random things, at least for me, like... scraps of fabric. I pick them up until I can't get hold of any more. The picture of a whole town covered with scraps that I can't get to pick makes me scream in horror... At least waking up makes me sigh in relief. Well, that rain of scraps never happened for real, so nothing to feel frustrated about. Those scraps never existed. But, what if they had? How

would one live with such a disease? It's only been forever since I've had it, and it would seem much longer if it wasn't much less than it looks. Everything becomes not enough for me. And it's not only about material things. It could be idioms, movies yet to watch, words ending in "i", which we already know there's "alibi", "safari", "ski", but the problem is the fourth word one... or whatever specimen of whatever kind in this world, if there was more than one specimen of that kind...

Mariana Percovich (Montevideo, 1963)



Literature teacher. Artistic Director of EMAD from 2004 to 2007 and 2012 to 2017. Dramatic Arts Consultant for MEC and Director of INAE between 2008 and 2011. Professor at the Uruguayan Catholic University, EMAD and CLAEH. Drama teacher with independent theatre schools. Acting Training, Direction and Playwriting teacher at the company COMLOT where she belongs since 2007.

She was awarded the Florencio Prize in 1997 and 2013. Her shows are well-known for the study of the relationship between theatrical space and spectators. Her playwriting has put on stage women and has been defined as feminist, the author agrees.

Among her plays are: *Extraviada*, *Yocasta*, *Medea del Olimar*, *Clitemnestra: falso monólogo griego*, *Pentesilea*, *Mucho de Ofelia*. Her versions and adaptations have been showcased in Uruguay, Canada, Argentina, Brazil and France. She has directed public and independent companies in Uruguay and abroad. She has received national and international prizes such as Premio de ITI, Morosoli, Iris, Moliere, Florencio, Gralha Azul and her shows have been on tours around Latin America and Spain.

Feminist Writing

by Mariana Percovich

For two decades I have been writing about women in Uruguay. When I started working in theatre the first two stories I wanted to write involved tales with female leading characters. It wasn't meditated or staged, it was natural and visceral. In my theatre, the leading characters are always women and I try to make versions of the classics working from the point of view of my gender.

My work revolves around real cases involving women and Greek myths but told from a female point of view. Maybe the first person who made me think about a woman's responsibility to tell stories from a female point of view was a male playwriting teacher, José Sanchis Sinisterra, who in a seminar of fifteen people where only five were women told us/me, "A woman should, some time, give a voice to Yocasta". Simple and clear. It was the Hellenistic scholar Nicole Loraux who taught me how to look at tragedy from new optics.

Women should give voice to other women. Because western theatre has built the great female characters, therefore they have also created an idea of women, of their archetypes, from a male point of view. These notions have been built from androcentrism and heteronormativity. Furthermore, most directors on the national billboard and teachers in drama schools are also males. Therefore the females who these men have shaped on stage embody once and again, one generation after another, the idea of what a woman is.

Two Uruguayan theatre experiences in the XXI century portray my work in this twenty-years long path: The anger of a male spectator who got outraged by my play *Clytemnestra, false Greek monologue*, in which spectators were separated by gender. My way of portraying Agamemnon and his state reasons for the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia (This was the only monologue he could witness given that Clytemnestra and her reasons were only heard by the female spectators) offended him to the point of shouting at me “*You write this way because you are a woman*”. The second experience was the reaction to my adaptation of *Penthesilea*, staged in a basketball field, in Mexico. The audience once again separated by gender, started shouting and cheering their “teams” on stage, the “Achilles” and the “Penthesileas”, but from the seats reserved for the male spectators we could hear them saying while the actors played a ball game as a prologue: *Punch her! Go to the legs! Break her!* It was rough violence.

To write and work from my gender identity is not an innocent decision, it is necessary so our voice, our body and our stories echo back to us, denounce, outrage and shake the floor below us. As it should be.

Fragment from *Much about Ophelia: A show by Mariana Percovich.*



Actress: Gabriela Pérez

OPHELIA: The bed. Now she is in bed. A silver bed, connected to mechanic arms. If you turn the lever the bed goes up and down. The metal is cold, the linen is hard. The night is enormous and silent and endless. Once upon a time...

The classical fables have archetypal figures, heroes, victims, martyrs, warriors. Patients are all those things... and in the strange tales told in here they are also something else.

We can say they are travellers going through unthinkable lands... lands unknown otherwise.

Am I sick? Do I suffer from melancholy? Talking about sickness is a kind of enchantment, like the one made by the sultan in The Arabian Nights.

Go to bed, now!

No, no, no, go to bed correctly, now!

Sit up, now!

Head high, back straight ...

Walk straight lines.

Walk and walk now!

March before breakfast, now!

The genitals, no! The genitals, no, no, no.

Correct utterance of words and syllables, now! Words-and-sy-lla-bles... the-ge-ni-tals-no

No, no, no, give me your hand in punishment, now!

I love him

I don't love him, I hate him.

He hates me

I don't love him

I hate him

Because he harasses me

I don't love him, I love her.

She is the one who loves me

It's not me who loves the man, it's she who loves him

I don't love him, I only love myself

It's God who speaks

(Screams)

Life's not that bad

And it gets worse.

Have you got enough!⁵

Angels

Beautiful corpses

Young and beautiful suicidal girls

Pieces of ourselves⁶ buried in the sand,

murdered

Ophelia sells Vuitton purses

A police superintendent writes a blog about a police procedure and talks about us

Fast enough, a man answers and says it's all a lie.

He says that women don't die more than men do

But, dead women seduce everyone

And we are a global trending topic

It is death on stage, live pain, wounds, current affairs, a show before your eyes

To make the virgin die offstage

To tell her death

Narrate it

Sing it

It is good to kill the young girl in our minds

In the story

But

I cannot kill myself sometime

I can

I also can die of love and desperation

Like in Hamlet



⁵ In English in the original.

⁶Feminine pronoun in the original.

Playwright, actor, teacher and stage director, Estela has been a member of the company *Teatro sin Fogón* from Fray Bentos, a lead of the provincial theatrical movement in Uruguay. In 2004 she graduated as a Scenic Arts Teacher at MEC. She currently runs Acting workshops at *Teatro sin Fogón* and teaches Acting in Senior Highschool.

She has been awarded with the Florencio Prize [Uruguayan highest distinction in Theatre] on several occasions for her performance as an actor, playwright and stage director, and the ATI Prize for her work as an actor. In 2007 she was awarded with the Morosoli Prize from the Lolita Rubial Foundation and in 2013 she and Roberto Buschiazzi shared the FITUU Award for their contributions to the National Scenic Arts.

Awarded plays: *Vacas gordas*⁷ (2002), *El disparo*⁸ (2005) y *La canción de las palabras esdrújulas*⁹ (2014). Her plays have been staged in Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Peru and Argentina, and translated into Italian, Portuguese and Czech.

Estela Golovchenko (Río Negro, 1963)



Four reasons not to forget

by Estela Golovchenko

Memory

Memory is water:

rainfall rolling downhill

washing moss off the motionless stone,

rainfall penetrating the soil

making it mud.

It can make the shine dull

and the dark fertile.

Memory is water.

Let silence get soaked with voices.

⁷ In English: "Fat Cows".

⁸ In English: "The shot".

⁹ In English: "The song of the proparoxytones".

Let them splash not cries,
only voices.

I was only ten when the Coup in our country burst in. Some throes did get to me, but nothing I wasn't able to cope with, being a teenager in the Russian immigrants' village of mine. Later, back in democracy, I heard the story like everybody else who wanted to know, and it hit me at the heart of that spot where impotence before justice turns into a need for expression.

Violence just petrifies me. I can write violent episodes but I cannot see them happening on stage. I am the kind of audience who cannot put up with violence in fiction, as I am the kind of person who cannot put up with violence in real life.

Yet, I cannot do other than write about it, about human monstrosity when committing a violent act –art provides emotion with its wonderful support. Injustice is also an act of violence: injustice, in the form of impunity.

Easing the pain of injustice pushed me to make up characters who, from various angles of fiction, dare say those things yet unsaid, and rebuild bonds which our latest dictatorship, destructive as it was, shattered.

In *Punto y coma*¹⁰(2004), a girl comes to object to her father's political position, being back in democracy. That daughter, having undergone her mother's enforced disappearance, cannot stomach the fact that her father, now a member of Congress, hasn't done a thing to get to the truth. She needs to make peace with him, though, at least for her own sake.

DAUGHTER: Why have you changed this much?

FATHER: I found no other way to survive (...)

Each of them, their own way, has to find a way to deal with the past. Either denial or memory. The father chooses to erase it all, while the daughter finds herself bogged down in a world filled with memories.

DAUGHTER: I have everything that used to be hers. Her clothes, her scent, her photos are all over the place. I have boxes, drawers full of memories. I kept everything that could be kept: newspaper scraps, letters, censored books, postcards, stones, beads, lipsticks, broaches, records, everything. The house where I live is Mum's Memorial.

*Alcanza con que estás*¹¹ deals with a grandmother's reunion with her granddaughter, kidnapped in captivity. The characters go along this tortuous conflict where not only their maternity, but also their childhood, were deprived. When Ana, the main character, learns that she's been adopted, she thinks:

ANA: (...) Everything I once had, has disappeared. No, everything I didn't have has now appeared. I couldn't get it, even less take it. I didn't know who I was, what I did. I felt as I'd got on the wrong train, only realizing at the last station that this is not where I wanted to get.

¹⁰ In English: "Semicolon".

¹¹In English: "You're being here is enough".

And her thoughts unroll as she gets deeper into the truth:

ANA: (...) What I cared the most about was, finally, learning that my real mother hadn't given me away.

Ana becomes a mother herself and makes amends with her own history in a healthier, more pleasant way.

In *El disparo*¹² (2005), a woman finds a way to ease the nightmarish pain of having being tortured: she moves into the house opposite her torturer's place and there, in her imagination, she kills him everyday. This is never more serious than a healing fantasy of hers, until one night she gets the chance of making it real, in the hands of a young offender. He will, apparently, get the whole situation sorted. Won't he?

BOY: And what's justice, for you? (in silence, gets a gun, and shows it to her)

At the possibility of getting her revenge, she hesitates:

WOMAN: I've never killed anybody.

BOY: We all have, we all do. Once in a lifetime, we all kill someone.

Judging the guilty is a matter of justice.

*La canción de las palabras esdrújulas*¹³ (2014) is about love. A couple reunites in a dreamlike place, where those who still love each other after death meet. Andrés has disappeared and comes to tell Magdalena, his wife, where his remains are hidden. He comes exactly the day before the finding. Though belonging to different dimensions, the characters are able to restore a conversation after 30 years of silence:

ANDRÉS: (...) You might not remember this dream when you wake up, either.

MAGDALENA: I want to remember it. I want to remember you. Dreams are about memory, aren't they? I've never forgotten you, Andrés.

On this new contact, fear, guilt and love come up:

MAGDALENA: You never said goodbye.

Bidding our dead farewell is a matter of justice. Giving them the chance of seeing the sun:

¹² In English: "The shot"

¹³ In English: "The song of the proparoxytones".



Ensayo, La canción de las palabras esdrújulas)(julio, 2014
[C] foto alejandro persichetti

Actors: Estela Golovchenko and Sergio Mautone. Directed by Roberto Buschiazzo.

Sin Fogón Theatre, Fraybentos.

ANDRÉS: The sun is shining. The sun sheds its light all over the place. The land is dry, but soft. It's the color of my body, that has waited for so long. (...) they're removing the soil, inch by inch, and searching (...), they first find my shoes.

I guess other stories like these will come up, or perhaps not another one, I don't know. When I first started, I didn't do it deliberately, they just came up, as a command greater than myself, with the only intention not to forget. *Punto y coma*, which is my first play's name, makes a longer pause than the comma, but a shorter one than the full stop does. And it is not my job to write such a stop.



Ensayo, La canción de las palabras esdrújulas] [julio, 2014
[C] foto alejandro persichetti

Pilar de León (Montevideo)



Actor, director, researcher and teacher, she works as an Assistant to the Literature Theory and Methodology Department of the Humanities and Educational Sciences School of UDELAR. She holds a MA in Theory and History of Theatre from FHUCE UDELAR. She has been published many times and at the moment she is having her thesis for her MA in Theatre Theory and History evaluated.

She is one of the gender investigators for GETEA for the Universidad de Buenos Aires. She is also founder of the Centro de Investigación Teatral Prometeus with whom she has directed, acted and written plays, such as: *El ultimo beso*.

Fairy Tales: Analysis and context

by Pilar de León

Fairy Tales was first staged in October 1998, directed by Juan Carlos Moretti. The play was a audience success and had excellent reviews.

According to Myriam Caprile, in an interview to the author published in October, 18th by Últimas Noticias, soon after the premier:

As an artist Raquel Diana is a sensitive woman (...) She pointed out she doesn't have many fundamental assumptions when it comes to theatre but it is capital for her that "theatre hugs the audience, I don't like it to punch them. People are already shocked by other things, the aesthetics of violence and aggression comes into our homes every day through the television. On the other hand, I think there are not many things to transgress these days. Everything is transgressed, life itself is transgressed. That's why I don't like transgression or even finding novelty forms. I think the structure of *Fairy Tales* is original, but it is not originality what I care

about, because in this postmodern life new things get instantly old. This is a race that can't be corrected." (Caprile, 1998: s/d)

What is interesting here is Diana's perception of the need for homages in the present to ordinary women during Dictatorship times as the true heroines that they were. The fact that they are recognized on stage brings hope to their figures in a moment of ideological crisis.

In the need for healing wounds that belong to a historical context a temporality that is common to all temporalities throughout the world is established: love. The tale is constructed from that perspective.

The characters are Blanca, a pregnant woman who talks to the girl she is expecting, remembering throughout the tale moments lived with her father, her step-mother Maruja and a neighbour: Carmen. Other characters emerge from these memories, dormant ones that we wait to see appear on stage at some point.



Actresses: Sara Larocca, Mariela Fierro and Graciela Escuder. El Galpón Theatre.



From the second scene until the penultimate one, the play builds a connection between Blanca's love for the fairy tales told by her father, a construction worker and the story of her life, filled with delights, disappointments, magic, suffering and love. The story involving the death of her mother is connected to Snow White's tale, whose mother dies giving birth to her. Blanca (in Spanish, "white") says: "My mother is a photograph."

After her father's death there is only silence and sadness. She tells their first Christmas is very difficult until the appearance of their neighbour Carmen, a fairy godmother to Blanca. ("Carmen is an old aunt, an aunt to everyone but related to no one.")

The strategies to engage the audience played by Diana are the Asides and Blackouts that occur in twelve opportunities before the ending of the play. During scene number 17 (the last one) we can see a pregnant Blanca, just like in the first scene, who talks to her belly. During that final dialog the concept of a play as a patchwork quilt of memories occurred from 1972 until sometime in the 90s is closed.

The Blackout as a strategy has many meanings: the passage of time, forward as well as backwards; the dispersed threads of memory; the changes of topic or space and the different climates achieved by the play.



During the blackout previous to scene 10 we are prepared for the most intense conflict of the play: the moment when El Negro, Blanca's most beloved partner is disappeared by the Dictatorship. The last scenes of the play are like "the soul's wrinkles", heartrending. The pain can be travelled through, the Dictatorship leaves a trauma but also the bravery of these three women who keep celebrating birthdays and loving.

We find this play is a statement to the political times between the years 1972 and 1990, but it also refers to the moment of its premier: 1998, when the fear and sufferings lived started to be explained and showed in a larger scale. This play also provides readers/audiences with the universal concept of love transcending history resorting to the notion of doing what is humanly possible: the compulsive need for the other in life, the urge of life and survival symbolized in the baby to come.

Fairy Tales plays at the same time with the meaning of its title, a reference to widely known European legends and traditional tales and on the other hand with the ideological sarcasm of knowing about all the death and suffering caused by a new society that couldn't be possible. As if the real political universe was a tale of fiction. This play talks about the helplessness felt by fictional characters and the abandonment lived by real characters.

CARMEN: I have to go to the hills. Wandering souls go to Sierra de las Ánimas. I'm going to walk around a lot because, who knows, maybe one day I can find, no El Negro, but his soul hanging from a tree.

In Moretti's version, while Carmen says this, Maruja is sitting, sewing. This character knits and sews in order to weave dreams that are no more than the masks we need to protect us from what is ineluctable. It is necessary to protect the body after it is dead as well as when it is alive. The play is a song to

emotion, to the feeling of knowing oneself as fragile, of knowing that children sometimes turn into men that don't protect other men but into bewitched beings, in ogres.

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Interview

Interview to Raquel Diana, 13-05- 2014.

Luciana has directed twelve theatre plays in Uruguay since 2006, such as *Primer Módulo. Una Obra de Acción* (Montevideo, 2014) Supported by Fortalecimiento de las Artes escénicas. *Amigo Latino* by Gael Policano, for the Bienal de Buenos Aires 2013 through the project *Long Distance Affair*, created and coordinated by New York artists. (Buenos Aires, 2013) and *Adiós niño bonito* by Ana Solari, sponsored by Prince Claus foundation (Montevideo, 2011). She is a founder member of the Theatre company P.L.U.T.O and Teapot; plays in English. P.L.U.T.O (<http://www.plutodirectors.com/>) is an international company created after the Lincoln Center Lab 2015, it has been selected to participate in The Watermill Center, February 2017.

Luciana Lagisquet (Montevideo, 1986)



Some of Luciana's scripts: *La chica estándar abre un libro de Marosa, se moja y pierde la virginidad del cerebro*. This script has also been published in the book *Rioplatensas Vol. 1*, (Buenos Aires, 2013), in the Uruguayan cultural magazine *Revista El Boulevard*, N° 5, and in the Parisian Theatre Magazine *Le Bruit du Monde*, N°5. In this magazine were also published fragments of Luciana's latest play *Primer Módulo. El banquete*, written for the dance show *Virtuosos*, from the choreographer and dancer Martín Inthamoussu. *Virtuosos* was composed by seven texts from seven playwrights (Teatro Solís, 2011).

Let's talk about this, because the girls are interested

by Luciana Lagisquet

If I make a quick review in my mind of plays showcased and written by Uruguayan women I recall quite a few but not many women playwrights. There are, in my memory, only seven writers with more than one play, that I saw or knew about.

To begin with, the role of the playwright (female or male) in Uruguay is at least peculiar. I do not know any "pure" playwrights, most of us are playwright/actors, playwright/directors or actor/director/playwrights. This phenomenon has complex historic structural reasons, to mention a few: There is not a degree or any long term courses of playwriting or direction. On the other hand; plays are not available, it is unusual for them to be published, and we don't have access to contemporary texts from abroad. It is a context of many actors with few plays and few directors, as a result, actors are compelled by circumstances to assume those roles. Thanks to the Internet and to an increase of international exchanges, at the moment it is not impossible to get contemporary texts from other countries. However, these ideas of actors in charge of the multiple roles are key to our context, our identity. In order to see their play made a playwright has to direct it, has to have an entire cast to venture after them and vice versa; actors need texts and directors, directors need texts and actors. These multiple roles, this codependency, the myriad of independent groups and companies are the

fundamental basis of our theatrical context but they are born outside of it, they come from the need and, as they are repeated and established as an identity, they conform a Uruguayan-way-of-thinking theatre.

It is clear that the social and political structures of a country influence theatre. It is not that clear if theatre has an influence on these structures. I could analyze Uruguayan theatre from a historic period point of view: dictatorship, post-dictatorship, right-winged governments, left-winged governments. But, what about gender, which structures of gender shape our theatre?

Uruguay is one of the Latin-American countries with highest levels in gender violence. While I write this, there is a demonstration on the streets with the slogan *Ni una menos* (Not one less), against persistent femicides. For reasons of time I had to decide between writing this article or going to the demonstration. I'm writing with remorse feeling that I would be more helpful on the streets, standing for our rights. What is theatre useful for? Is it useful against femicides, sexual violence, against the gender pay gap? What does theatre have to do with this?

I always say to my high school students: Theatre always raises an argument about the world; it reproduces or questions human relations of power, makes them either stand out or get silenced. Theatre transforms relations of power or keeps them as they are.

A few months ago I was interviewed for a French magazine. I was asked about gender, about how it is to be a female playwright in Uruguay. That is a common conversation between female artists, together with the inequalities that we face. Nonetheless, during that interview I could not make a clear statement. I felt that I was exposing my fellow male colleagues by saying their achievements were owed to their male gender, also I felt I was victimizing my failures to the fact that I am a woman. Faced with this opportunity I gave poor and coward answers.

If we look at the facts, women are the majority in theatre, there are entire generations of acting students and theatrical design where only women finished their education. At this moment the Director of the CN is a woman, the Director of Teatro Solís is a woman, the Director of the EMAD is a woman, the IAM has three directors, all of them women. It is the first time that so many women have positions of power that historically were occupied by men. Is this a contribution to the shaping of a more equal context? It is too soon to know. Should it be quotas? Should we compete separately as in the Olympics?

Last year I went to an international seminar for playwrights in Barcelona. We were seven men and three women. Lola from Madrid, Pauline from France and I. We would have coffee when we came back from class and wine at nights, we created a refuge of talks in the apartment we shared. It was not that someone attacked us yet we had experience enough not to expose ourselves too much during the seminar. What was really interesting is that every time I go to this kind of events –always coordinated by a man- the experience involves not only technical learning but also spaces to share collectively, an opportunity to identify oneself in the problems and doubts of the others, something that given the nature of writing, playwrights don't usually have. Even so female playwrights –may not everyone of us- come to learn that we need to be guarded, gender as a topic, or female emotional exposure are not always welcomed and we can get easily marginalized. Our encounters with Lola and Pauline were a parallel seminar. We had one for sharing playwright arguments and this one for female playwrighting. Again, it seems that we women need extra help in order to be able to participate.

One of the exercises of the seminar was to ask a question for the rest of the group. Pauline asked: Does female playwriting exist? That way the female playwriting *things* entered the playwright argument. The male reaction was divided in two, the brutal position *you are attacking me, I am no sexist* and the condescending one, *Let's talk about this because the girls are interested*. Probably I am being unfair, maybe there is a defensive reflex in this perception of mine. Finally, there was a rich and intense exchange. We questioned the existence of a neutral playwriting, without gender, beyond who writes it. Women are the new thing, the rare thing. Does our presence change theatre? Do we write differently because we are women?

The only time a critic analyzed a play of mine as feminine, it came out as a very intelligent reading of it. Female playwrights, we do not have the possibility of escaping our gender, our plays are read from there and I'm growing more and more comfortable with it, assuming it is a responsibility, not a chain, it is a decision, a road of creation and freedom.

Extract from *First Block, an action play*, by Luciana Lagisquet.

Scene 2.1 Women RR

Two teenage girls, Lilly and Milly, rush in.

LILLY: Bastard Little Marcel's like he doesn't have the fucking poster now!

MILLY: The liar!

LILLY: Of course! Or got rid of it just now, like, not to give us anything! I saw it, I swear! 'Bout a week ago, right there, like, on his door. All the Eva foam cells and shit... Fuck, we would've got an A.

MILLY: Was it that good, you think? Maybe he was right then, like, maybe the teacher would've noticed it wasn't ours, like, it was his...

LILLY: The fucker... Look, you think the Biology teacher will know all last year's project shit by heart? He-ll! Like, she's always like stoned or high on some pill or something, like... They said anything?

MILLY: Nothing. Felipelli just called me in, like to bring all my shit. I had all the Wikipedia thing. Everybody had the same, like, nobody got down to this, seriously.

LILLY: There's only shit going on in this place and no-one gives a fuck. All they care about is this stupid Biology poster! They want us to do all this shit and what? Well, at least they could try and do their job right, like, everyone knows about this kid and they just, what? Nothing? Like, nothing?

MILLY: The Brigade bitches are coming any time... Are we doing this?

LILLY: There's some time before the bell goes... like, yes, we're definitely doing this. Just this and it's done. You'll see. Like, over. They'll stop fucking around with us all.

MILLY: What if they don't speak?

LILLY: We'll put them up on the Internet. Their cunts, like, real close up, pissing. Yuk! Like, we'll definitely get them.

MILLY: But... We're **not** really doing this, right? Like, the videos, huh?

LILLY: No, silly! We're just twisting their arm! They'll give everything away, like, what happened, and all.



MILLY: You haven't answered the question.

LILLY: Yes! We're doing it, I said! All the shit's in my bag. I'm not afraid, like, we're stopping those motherfuckers. If the girls fall, they all fall too.

MILLY: Not that question! Did you study for Math?

LILLY: You stupid! This is way more important!

Lilly opens her bag and drops all of her things, including a pregnancy test. Milly grabs it. Pause. Milly gets it back and puts it away. Then she takes out a webcam and its gear.

LILLY: Here. Piece of cake. We'll tuck it behind here, no-one will notice.

MILLY: Are you...?

LILLY: What? *(Pause)* Is it any of your business? What, you think it's yours?

MILLY: Asshole.

LILLY: So... we'll put this here... *(opens one of the boxes's door)* Yuk! Why don't they close it up?! *(opens another)* This one's good. Well, we'll hide this here... *(does it)* and switch it on at break time, right? Like, we need to get the right angle. Come here, squat down so I can focus.

MILLY: Here? What, like I'm taking a piss? Like this?

LILLY: Yeah, panties down. Do it. *(pause)* Stupid! Not for real! Act it out, pretend!

Milly gets in the box, pretends to pull down her panties and take a piss. Lilly frames and focuses the camera and directs the action.

LILLY: Someone has to do something, like, say what happened, tell the truth. It has to come out. They just can't get away with it. Something has to be done, like, something...

MILLY: Then... are you...?

LILLY: No fucking idea! Haven't done it yet...

MILLY: Need help?

LILLY: Yeah... like, you mind pissing on my fucking test, so we'll know if I'm pregnant, please?!

MILLY: Stupid. You know what I mean.

LILLY: No, I fucking don't. How are you helping me, then? Are you holding my hands so my ass won't touch the toilet? (pause) Mom would do it when I was a kid, like in public places, you know. She would get in with me, hold my hands...

MILLY: Yeah, mine too. So I wouldn't pick up some bug and shit.

LILLY: I could use that! I mean, with my mom, like... and you could help me! We'll both show up at home and I'll go "mother, you see, I wanted to take a piss at school, you know, and didn't do as you taught me. I sat on the toilet, got this bug, I guess, and now I'm pregnant. You see, you're always saying one could pick up all sorts of shit in public toilets. Well, mommy, you were right, you're always right. I picked up a kid. Forgive me, please. I know I'm such a disappointment, momma, and that I was raised to be careful on these things. But squatting is such a slog! And you may get splattered if you don't get an even gush out, and that's just disgusting. Like, sitting is so comfy, mom. You even enjoy it. It's so nice to enjoy yourself sitting on the toilet, isn't it? I'm so sorry, mommy, I just couldn't resist it. It's so hard doing it by myself. If you're not there for me, I have nothing to lean on... Always, no matter how hard you try, a tiny area of your buttocks touches the toilet surface and, boom, that's enough for some virus to make its way up and that's it, you got it in. I did wash my hands though, of course. That I did remember. Imagine if I hadn't! Another kid in the elbow, maybe." And here's where I point at you, like, you're also here, remember, like, to help me, right? Give my mom an innocent, poor-thing look, and go "same happened to her, you see, my friend, who's here to help me. Must be an epidemic of some kind, like. They're calling the Ministry, we might even go on a strike, like, take the school, those things. She was lucky enough she didn't sit completely on the toilet and had an instant miscarriage, you know, like immediately, naturally. Like, one day she wakes up and there's blood all over her bed. But, like, not normal blood, like, with clogs and things, tell her, tell her..." This is your cue. You explain to her, like "yes, absolutely", and tell her you also had an egg fertilized, because of sitting on the toilet!

MILLY: See anything? Check the camera. See anything?

LILLY: Yeah, good.

MILLY: Now you, and I'll look. (*they swap places*) Great. Well, depends on how they do it, though.

LILLY: Where would you go...? Like, where in the whole world, if you could choose anywhere you wanted.

MILLY: To holy fucking hell.

LILLY: Nope. Too close, too mainstream. I'd rather somewhere more exotic, like really away. Somewhere I could really give a fuck. Some place with a longer history, maybe. Like, if you're somewhere thousands of years old, you go to school every morning and you go past places thousands of years old too, ancient, historical. Then it makes some sense you don't remember every fucking single thing that happened there, it's just too much history. Won't feel guilty walking down a street where thousands suffered, got killed, who knows what, over centuries. No way. Won't take it upon yourself, like so many years of stupidity and human shit. Like, you'll just walk by, enjoy the view, because at this point it's all just impossible. I mean, so many failed attempts at change. Shit becomes picturesque, you see? Touristy, almost. Like Auschwitz killing fields, or that Marie Antoinette's quote "if peasants have no bread, let them eat cake".



Primer Módulo [mayo, 2014
[C] foto alejandro persichetti

MILLY: Bullshit, that was a courtesan of hers, not herself.

LILLY: You see? Who gives a fuck? It's been so long it's become a historic milestone. If you lived in Paris you'd joke about it. You'd care, sure you would. Who wouldn't? I mean, it's terrible. But it's history and you can go over and over it with no pain or guilt at all. Think about it, like, what the fuck can you actually do about what happened in the 1700s? Uruguay's so young, such a baby. Little history, little to remember... so if you don't, then you're a mother fucker. And you can't live your entire life as an indifferent mother fucker, like, you'll have to get up and do something at some point. Something, like, anything.

Vika Fleitas (Montevideo, 1983)



Playwright, graphic and scenic Designer. Trained in Communication, Advertising, Cinema, Singing, Cultural management and Graphic design. In 2011, she starts studying Scenic Design at the *Escuela Multidisciplinaria de Arte Dramático Margarita Xirgú (EMAD)* in Montevideo. As a playwright, she participates in workshops and talks about Playwriting, given both by uruguayan and international playwrights. In 2014, she directs a scene of her authorship, performed by actors of the uruguayan National Comedy, at the *Teatro Solís* in Montevideo. That same year, she stages and directs her short play *Zona de avistamiento* (Sighting zone) Since 2013, she gets scholarships and awards from Uruguay, Spain and Mexico. The languages she speaks (spanish, french, english, portuguese and catalan) and the travels to numerous cities around the globe, constantly expands her creative horizon. She lived in Bordeaux and Barcelona, and currently lives in Montevideo.

Sons of freedom

by Vika Fleitas

I was born in august 1983, in Montevideo, two years before the ending of the uruguayan dictatorship.

Thinking about what means to be born in democracy, I found by chance this words of the uruguayan playwright, actor and director Gabriel Calderón: *"It seems to be a contentious issue the matter of youth engagement. They usually attack us for not having political commitments, or future goals, etc."*¹⁴

Even if the country I remember was already free, some traces of the previous period come to my mind: a grey country -or at least a grey city-, a shy silence, a thick air full of secrets, taboo matters, fears... A tired society, willing to end the nightmare once for all. Who if not in children will be deposited the hope of a better future?

I feel that my generation was marked by that optimistic sensation; the one of our parents, our grand parents, the one of the whole society. We, sons of democracy, became the holders of all illusions, dreams and hopes broken through twelve years of militar dictatorship.

¹⁴CALDERÓN, Gabriel. *Nota sobre nosotros "Los nuevos" en Lo nuevo*. Programa Laboratorio, MEC. 2008.

We were born free. And that, compared to what those before us had to live, is a luck. However, if we make ours some Sartre's words referring to freedom and its consequent responsibility, a son of democracy "carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders"¹⁵, or at least, the weight of the whole society.



Sighting zone. Space design & written by: V. Fleitas

By this I don't mean a victimised claim or an unfair complaint. Not at all. I put it simply as a way to analyze what is expected of us -post-dictatorship youth- and how do we avoid -by summation, the young + post-dictatorship + creators- the weight of such responsibility.

The struggles have been dissolved, the Manichean and politicized country has become blurry. What is our fight? What do we fight for? It's true that some young people in this country still hold high old standards, others, recycle old struggles, some others none of the above, etc.

As that common struggle gets blurry, the one that was united after an ideal, whatever it may be, the personal struggle come to life. To look inside becomes a must. Maybe that's why we are demanded of political commitment (as the initial quote explained) and we are even branded as individualists; we were born in a free context, walls have been demolished, options increased, limits to creativity and censorship have dissolved. But still, that doesn't make it any easier. We fight against our own psyche.

In this context, when I create, it becomes normal to wonder: What do I want to talk about as a playwright? The vast number of options happens to be paralyzing. Of course, I don't mean I'm interested in the 100% of the universal topics, options reduce right away when I think what really attracts my attention. But there is a moment that overwhelms, and that's when we realise the freedom we have. We can talk about absolutely ANYTHING. Pros and cons at the same time.

When I analyze the texts I write, I realise that the variety of subjects is quite large. Maybe the common denominator is just myself, I mean, the point of view with which I see and I recreate the world.

However, I'm not aware of that. I don't start to write from my supposed world view (even if sometimes they tell me "this is so Vika"). I simply write about what comes to me, as someone satisfies a whim.

¹⁵ SARTRE, Jean Paul. *Being and nothingness*, 1943.

I once asked a young mexican playwright, actor and director -perhaps the most celebrated today- what people used to say about his work. He answered something with which I identified myself: "*that no text is like the previous*". That kind of thematic multiplicity, of genres, styles, languages, etc. is something that I'm particularly interested on.

If I'm forced to define it, even if it sounds contradictory, I would say that my style is the multiplicity of styles. I 'm not in vain graphical and theatrical designer, writer, producer, singer, etc. Some people think I should choose one thing, but I prefer those who tell me -with a bit of humour, of course- that I am sort of a Renaissance artist. I like multidisciplinary, it's what I am, it's not something I can choose.

Same thing happens when I have to think about my creative processes. Throughout my training, I have taken all the paths I was able to and learned all I could. Each artistic discipline has its logic, its way of thinking. Even if I like to be methodical, I don't have a method when I write (at least not yet). Sometimes, the idea comes from a space, like in the short piece *Zona de avistamiento*; sometimes from a family conflict, *Temporada de cetrería*; sometimes from a situation that attracts my attention and I start to investigate, 391¹⁶, etc. Some other times, it simply starts from a forgotten dialogue in my computer's desk (*Ficción para cuatro actores y una habitación de hotel*).

Our *X Generation*, -in this kind of *era of emptiness*, in terms of Lipovetsky-, would then be marked by the attitude we take against the old paradigms that have fallen, the gaps that have been generated, the new languages related to technology, and our place as individuals in the gigantic mass that is the world.

I think that the current struggle, as creators and human beings is, ultimately, with ourselves. And from there we create. The crude material and the inner voices are endless, the difficulty of filtering and editing becomes greater.

Therefore, the only way is to trust ourselves, to be true and responsible about what we write.

If our struggle is through honesty, nothing can go wrong.

Extract from 391 by Vika Fleitas

On a back screen, the following subtitles will be projected. The language will be the one of the audience. The character is arab and speaks in arab.

I

Mefloquine! Exactly!

I couldn't remember the name...

¹⁶ Short piece inspired by the situation of the former prisoners of Guantánamo in Montevideo. For the International Playwriting Seminar *L'Obrador d'Estiu*. Selected to participate by the Instituto Nacional de Artes Escénicas (INAE) Uruguay. July 2015, Sala Beckett, Barcelona.

ME-FLO-QUI-NE.

Do you think I'm dead? No. I'm not. It's true, maybe I can be the closest thing to a dead person that you'll see today... but no. I would be stinking. You say it because of the radical angles of my face? Because of my arms, thin as branches? No. I'm not dead. Am I? I don't think so, I'm not dead.

Why are you staring at me?

Mefloquine.

391 mg daily.

I know what you're thinking. Why would you understand me? No, I don't speak your language. I don't share your mores. Anyway, the guilty ones -the tortured- we don't speak any language anymore. We live in no world. We don't belong anywhere. We're empty. We are Nobody.

Mefloquine.

391 mg daily.

Taste: bitter.

I know what you're thinking. But I'm not...

I'm not... How to make you understand...

I'm not... I don't...

اننا لسنا ارهابي¹⁷

I told you a thousand times! I'm innocent!

I owe my life to the Holy. But that doesn't make me guilty. Does it? It doesn't, right? Right? Answer me!

He shouts.

ANSWER ME!

More calmed.

Ok, sorry. I'm sorry... is just the side effects of...

Is it the overall that bothers you? Is it? Should I take it off? Alright then, no problem.

He takes off the orange overall and remains naked.

Better this way? This is how you wanted to see me? Helpless? Vulnerable? Humiliated? Here I am.

¹⁷ I'm not a terrorist.

391 mg daily.

Taste: bitter.

Side effects: anxiety, feelings of mistrust toward others, hallucinations, depression, suicidal thoughts, nervousness, confusion, sleeping troubles, seeing things or hearing voices that doesn't exist.

-Seeing things or hearing voices that doesn't exist.-

I did not sleep for days. Lights are on day and night, night and day. It's cold. Very cold. I hear sounds of babies crying mixed with cat meows constantly.

Or is that just cries? The guilty ones doesn't cry. They can take it longer. The ones that can bear the beating, the cold, the eternal interrogations. If they were cleverer -but they're animals- they could tell right away who's guilty and who's innocent. The innocents, we were not trained to suffer like them.

And so have been the last 388 nights. When the 389th night came -I used to count them, then I lost count- a voice told me:

شهيدي¹⁸

Despite the cold, I woke up sweating.

He put the orange overall back on.

391 mg daily.

Maximum recommended dose: 200 mg weekly.

Then came the 390th night -same cold, same light- I could not sleep either. I was still covered of blood. Mine and someone else's. *Menstruation blood*, they told me, *fucking whore* they told me.

391 mg daily.

Maximum recommended dose: 200 mg weekly.

Treatment for diseases like malaria.

¹⁸ Martyr.

GLOSSARY

Acronyms

ATI: Provincial Associated Theatre Companies

CCE: Spanish Cultural Centre

COFONTE: National Fund Committee for the Theatre

CN: National Comedy (National Stable Cast)

ECU: Uruguayan Filmmaking School

EMAD: Multidisciplinary Scenic Arts School

FHUCE: Humanities and Education Sciences School

GETEA: Argentinian Theatrical Studies Group

IAM: Acting Institute of Montevideo

IM: Government of the city of Montevideo

INAE: Scenic Arts Institute, MEC

IPA: Artigas Institute of Teachers of Higher Education

MAPI: Museum of Aboriginal Arts

MEC: Ministry of Education and Culture

UDELAR: University of the Uruguayan Republic