

Mapa Teatro *Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity*

31 October 2018 – 29 April 2019

Sabatini Building. Espacio 1, Sala de Bóvedas, Stairs

Fisuras Program





Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity

Heidi and Rolf Abderhalden Cortés are siblings, multidisciplinary artists, and cofounders of Mapa Teatro. With roots in the Colombian Andes and the Swiss Alps, their working lives have forever branched across the Atlantic. Dividing their time between Latin America and Europe, they initially founded Mapa Teatro in Paris in 1984, before making Bogotá home for what they call their “laboratory” of artistic experimentation.

For over three decades, Mapa Teatro has been constructing its own unique “cartography.” Everything revolves around the desire to produce “live arts,” a term of Anglo-Saxon origin that these two “cartographer-anthropophagists” have devoured, regurgitated, and reinvented in Latin America over the years in collaboration with artists and thinkers from a variety of latitudes. Theirs is a process of “devouring transcreation” in which human bodies are present within the work—the “live” element from which the English term derives—and become the invisible presence of life itself, a precondition of the work’s very existence.

Conceiving and elaborating artistic practices of whatever kind in order to create live arts has long been Mapa Teatro’s method for producing a form of “thought-creation”: an act that is at once ethical, aesthetic, and political and that implies bodily immersion and exposure, as well as the crossing of geographical, linguistic, and disciplinary boundaries and the friction these “gestures” cause when coming into contact with local and global problems via “assembly operations.”

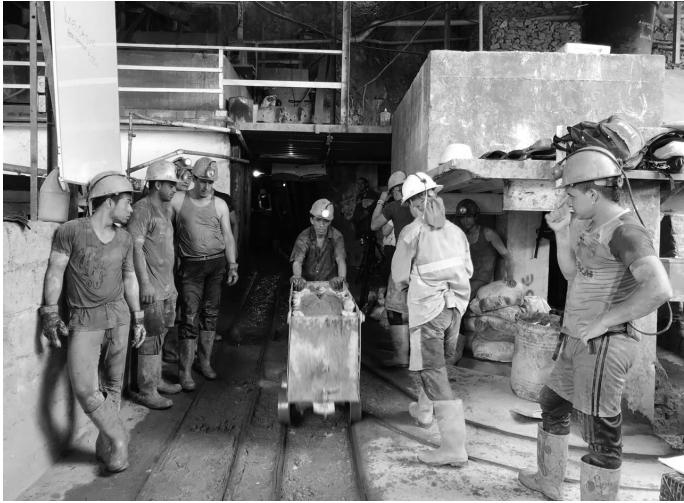
Mapa Teatro has thus become a home for artistic migration, a place where myth, history, and current affairs constantly interact; a place of speech and of multimedia (theater, video, installation, opera, radio; urban interventions, performance actions, and conferences); of geographies, languages, and genders; of reality and fiction.

As part of the Museo Reina Sofía’s Fissures program, Mapa Teatro’s artists—with Heidi and Rolf as cartographers, working alongside Ximena

Vargas, Timothy Noble, José Ignacio Rincón, Forrest Gray, and a temporary and experimental community of collaborators from the Marmato mining town in Caldas, Colombia—have conceived of a series of happenings for three spaces within the museum. They term these happenings “ethno-fictions” and call the project *Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity*.

This work of ethno-fiction takes the history of the museum’s Sabatini Building as its point of departure. The Sabatini Building served, until 1968, as the main building of the Hospital General y de la Pasión of Madrid. Founded in the sixteenth century by King Philip II as a “hospitality” refuge (providing assistance to the city’s poor and marginalized), it would become a modern health center two centuries later when, in order to save it from ruin, King Ferdinand VI decreed that all alms granted by the royal family or coming from the Indies were to be donated to the hospital. The Hospital General y de la Pasión thus became an infirmary for the convalescent and the insane. The hospital welcomed people with all manner of illnesses, while the building’s basements became a home for those excluded from society, “lunatics and the unsound of mind” as they were called at the time. From 1749, vast quantities of gold coins and objects destined for the hospital began to arrive from the Americas.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, King Charles III supported the establishment of a Royal Mining Company and sent two mineralogists to the New Kingdom of Granada (present-day Colombia) to boost gold production and make it more profitable. Don Juan José D’Elhuyar and Don Ángel Díaz Castellanos spent several years in different mines across the region, but in Marmato in particular, trying to implement new technologies that were, for various reasons, doomed to failure. While working in Marmato—an area that in pre-Colombian times had been settled by the Quimbaya, a culture known for its sophisticated gold metalwork techniques, the best examples of which are today housed in the Museum of the Americas in Madrid—Don Ángel Díaz Castellanos began to show signs of suffering from what was diagnosed at the time



as *auriferus delirium*. Compelled to return home, he was interned in the vaults of the Hospital General y de la Pasión.

For this work of ethno-fiction, Mapa Teatro has uncovered imperceptible traces of the mineralogist's stay in three parts of the building (the vaults, the staircase that leads down to them, and the first floor), as well as in the hospital archives. Guided by miners from Marmato—that continue to be exploited today and defended by the miners from the monopoly of the multinational companies—Mapa Teatro's artists followed in Don Ángel Díaz Castellanos's footsteps and went in search of his phantasmagorias.

All the materials accumulated in Madrid and Marmato—including a gold statue of a Quimbaya chief—have been installed in these three spaces and turned into image, sound, and machinery in order to bring this *delirio aurífero* to life. The same delirium drove European colonialism and the forming of nations in the Americas and invented the racialization, today drives the insanity that is globalized capitalist exploitation.



Mapa Teatro Artists

Laboratory, Bogota

Heidi Abderhalden Cortés

Rolf Abderhalden Cortés*

Ximena Vargas

José Ignacio Rincón

Alirio García

Programming architect:

Timothy Noble

Video editor: John de los Ríos

Sound editor: Forrest Gray

Architectural modeling:

Arq^a Daniela Bright

Blacksmith: Héctor Guerrero

Carpenter: Edwing Pinzón

Craftsman: José Alirio Melo

Dealer: Carlos López

Research consultant:

Arq^a M^a Dolores Muñoz Alonso

* Arts Department Professor at the
Universidad Nacional de Colombia

The Marmato mines

Marmato Association of Traditional Miners

Rubén Darío Rotavista

Yamil Amat

Eulises Lemus

Fernando Álvarez (Tornillo)

La Esperanza Mining Company

Omaira Morales Ramírez

José Guillermo Ortíz Olarte

Manuel Alberto Valencia

Carlos Holmes Cañaveral

Luvin Alfonso Gaviria (Bolsillo)

Santiago Correa

Sebastián Arredondo

Camilo Hernández

Libardo Ospina

Luis Emilio Calvo

Carlos Adrián García

Víctor Bañol

Raúl Izquierdo

Álvaro Gañán

Angie Zapata

Vanessa Cuervo

El Respaldo - Echandia Gold Mine

Wilson Flores

Omar González

Marmato Cultural Center

Bernardo Álvarez

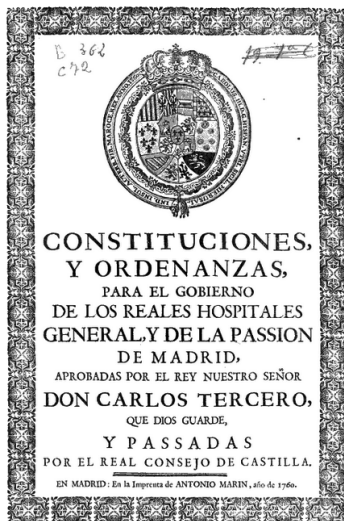
Marisela León

Josep Velásquez

Manuel Restrepo

Hospital San Antonio de Marmato

Cristian Alejandro Parra



CAPITULO XVII.

De los dementes, ò faltos de juicio.

1

ENseñando la experiencia, que muchos de los pobres enfermos, que vienen à curarse à los Hospitales, por resulta de una grave enfermedad, suelen declinar en demencia, ò locura, ha provisto la caridad de los que los han gobernado, fabricar algunos quartos, ò jaulas para encerrarlos durante el tiempo que subsistan, y que permitan sus indisposiciones removerlos à Toledo, ò à Zaragoza, por la impolsibilidad de curarlos radicalmente en Madrid; y con el mismo motivo la Real Hermandad del Refugio ha recogido los que desvalidos, y desamparados ha encontrado por las calles, y los ha retirado por la quietud del público à estas jaulas, manteniendolos de su cuenta, por no haver en los Hospitales fondos, ni dotacion para estos enfermos: Y deseando la Junta, y Hermandad del Refugio, atender à estas urgencias, se ha convenido en que los Hospitales cuiden de los dementes, que se puedan recibir, y permita su cabimiento; y la Hermandad conducirá à Zaragoza, ò à Toledo, todos los que existan de ambas clases, procurando aprovechar los tiempos oportunos, y que no se dilate su remission.

The Gold Crevice

José A. Sánchez

Mapa Teatro's latest fissure speaks of a faraway crevice that is still open today, a place of desire and exploitation, ingenuity and brutality, resistance and oblivion. Fiction is to the fissure what gunpowder is to the crevice: it cuts through the surface to make the hidden visible. The act itself produces a narrative that might almost be read as a fairy tale; yet the act's very nature, in that it emphasizes the poetic, is a taking of sides: it is a response to the cleft left by extraction, to rationalist arrogance, and to erased memories.

Mapa Teatro is not a theater collective but a "laboratory" of artists who experiment with creative, investigative, and interventionist procedures in multiple formats (staged, audiovisual, discursive) and fields (artistic, academic, urban). Mapa Teatro's artists define themselves as practitioners of "live arts" and term the results of their artistic procedures "gestures." The "live" element does not refer to life itself but to temporary experiments that use human bodies to explore specific issues and contexts without predefined disciplinary limitations. The "gesture" is a form of poetic thinking that breaks free from a purely discursive medium and resists being pinned down, categorized, or conserved out of context and neutralized of its political power.

One of the first things this fissure does, in tandem with other interventions (by Mapa Teatro elsewhere and by other artists in this museum), is to challenge the space itself by introducing a "live" element into a place that is institutionally committed to conservation (no matter how incompatible conservation is to its other commitments, such as facilitating an aesthetic experience or generating discussion). Mapa Teatro's use of the term *gesture* initially suggests some kind of bodily movement

or an act performed in support of a larger action. However, almost from its inception Mapa Teatro has combined or alternated activities that imply presence (staged, performative, participative) with others based on absence, whereby actors take a step back and compel other bodies into action. These other bodies may be those of the museum's visitors, who nominally retain their role as spectators but act within the installation through their very presence, a presence that is subsidiary but no less significant and opaque, in a space that now seeks to be inhabited rather than passed through. This is what happened with *Testigo de las ruinas* (Witness to the Ruins), enacted at the Museo Reina Sofía in 2016, when visitors became vessels of absent life and thus took on the responsibility of giving meaning to multiple aspects of the installation that would have otherwise been muted.¹ But visitors are not the only bodies entrusted with "activating" these installations. This duty sometimes falls to "special guests," as happened with the same piece when Antanas Mockus (mayor of Bogotá in the early 2000s, when the marginalized, downtown neighborhood of El Cartucho was demolished) and Juana María Ramírez (one of the last residents to leave the neighborhood) took part; or with the producers of the piece itself, "witnesses" to a process they themselves began.²

The sense of ambivalence that pervades all of Mapa Teatro's work was especially visible in *Los incontados: Un tríptico* (The unaccounted: A triptych, 2014), an installation with actors, witnesses, and special guests that provided an overview of the

1 *Ficciones y territorios: Arte para pensar la nueva razón del mundo* (October 2016–March 2017).

2 *Witness to the Ruins: Living Archive* was presented at *Arts and Politics*, Graz, 2011, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, 2012. In its cinematic format, *Witness to the Ruins* was presented for the first time at the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna in 2005. It was later presented in Madrid at the Casa de América in 2008 and at the Fringe festival at the Matadero in 2016.

first part of the group's research into fifty years of violence in Colombia. The same piece (now part of the Museo Reina Sofía's permanent collection) was presented at the São Paulo Biennial, with live action exchanged for a sequence of sounds, images, and mechanical movements, the preestablished and temporary nature of which allowed visitors to enter the installation and explore the device.³

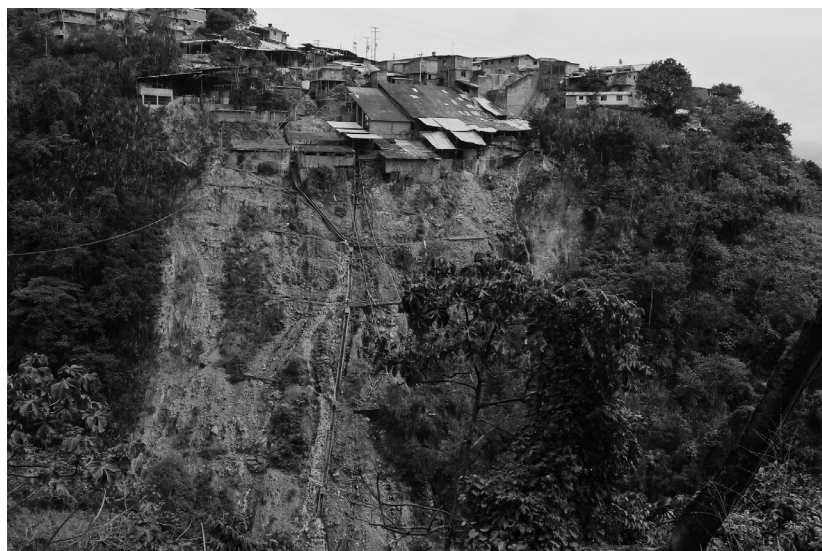
If *La despedida* (The farewell, 2017), Mapa Teatro's last staged production, may also be thought of as an installation with actors, *Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity* (2018) can be considered a performance in which the bodies that might have inhabited it have been extracted to make its exhibition possible, but without using the asepsis that would have made all traces of them disappear.⁴ The traces are still there, and their latent presence produces a sort of paradoxical theatricality that defies coexistence but not the apparatus that enables it. The aim of the installation could be described as reconfiguring the space as a place of memory; however, not only does the work recall the past, but it also takes what the witness has seen and what it essentially is and develops it in order to anticipate what it might become (within the installation or within history).

Echoes of Samuel Beckett can be heard in Mapa Teatro's approach to re-presentation: characters who are dead in life, or alive only inasmuch as they subject themselves to the endless repetition of their agony. In Mapa Teatro's works, the actors have the same one-dimensionality that Beckett requires of his protagonists.⁵ They are not quite people; rather, they serve as

3 *Los incontados: Un tríptico* was presented at the 31st São Paulo Biennial in 2014.

4 *La despedida* premiered at the Théâtre de la Ville in Lausanne in 2017.

5 See, for example, Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* (1957; New York: Grove Press, 1958).



supports, mediums, screens, or assistants, enabling the action to advance and to be repeated night after night, even after the end has already occurred. To replace a body that is present with one that is latent thus becomes a seemingly simple task.

Casa tomada (House taken over), Mapa Teatro's first production after relocating from Paris to Colombia in 1987, was in some ways a Beckettian interpretation of Julio Cortázar's short story of the same name, while *De Mortibus: Requiem for Samuel Beckett* (1990) was a means of confronting Beckett's plays and narratives.⁶ In preparing the piece, Rolf Abderhalden met Beckett in the nursing home where the Irish playwright spent the last years of his life (after briefly being interned at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne in Paris). Beckett gave him a signed copy of a page from *The Guardian* newspaper featuring *Stirrings Still*, Beckett's final piece of prose.⁷ Beckettian traits are evident in the installations *Camino* (Path, 1997), *Lo demás es silencio* (The rest is silence, 1999), and *Pieza de corazón* (Piece of heart, 1997), German playwright and regular Mapa Teatro collaborator Heiner Müller's most Beckettian work). But Beckett's influence on Mapa Teatro is more a matter of intellectual and artistic affinity, evident in the recurrence of certain poetic motifs and methods. In terms of motifs, it is worth highlighting the theme of failure and, closely connected to it, that of ruin, which Mapa Teatro considers from a collective perspective, whereby disappointment, sickness, and decadence are always shown in conjunction with unsuccessful social or political projects: urban sanitation in *C'úndua, un pacto por la vida* (C'úndua, a pact for life, 2001); guerilla revolutionaries,

6 Beckett's work is as literary as it is gestural. Roger Blin, a disciple of Antonin Artaud, was responsible for the first set designs for Beckett's works. Rolf and Heidi Abderhalden trained in Paris at the École Jacques Lecoq. Lecoq began teaching in 1947 at the school founded by Jean-Louis Barrault and Blin, Éducation par le jeu dramatique.

7 Rolf Abderhalden, "Una cita con Mr. Beckett," *Revista Arcadia* (Bogotá), no. 4 (April 2006).

paramilitaries, and narco-power in *Anatomía de la violencia en Colombia* (Anatomy of violence in Colombia, 2010–2014)]. As for methods, there is the role of the eyewitness, expressed by Beckett through the seemingly impassive stare of his characters, their silent screams, which Mapa Teatro translates into a physical and emotional displacement of bodies, fiercely involved during the artistic process, but of muted expression and engagement in the presentation.

While in Beckett's work these motifs are underscored with a sobriety that forewarns of tragedy, in Mapa Teatro's productions they are afforded a sensuality infused with irony, celebrating a sense of the theatrical that does not seek to curb its own excesses. This theatricality is a consequence of the clash between the mechanics of repetition and the bodies that resist or act upon those mechanics and, in doing so, unleash a dynamism that can at times be frenetic, expressed as intellectual curiosity, sensitive mobilization, or carnivalesque exuberance. Irony manifests itself in the simultaneous interaction of opposites, implicit in the titles of the works themselves, which enables violence and partying, rationality and delirium to coexist.⁸ Fiction makes such encounters possible.

The Ecuadorian philosopher Bolívar Echeverría considered *tertium datur* a principle of what he termed a "baroque ethos," a way of living in modern times without making the binary choices that the "law of the excluded middle" demands.⁹

8 *C'úndua*, which means "the place we will all go to after death," is completed by the title "a pact for life," while violence, which leads to destruction and death, is approached anatomically, like an organism. As for "delirium," see Adriana Urrea, "Mapa Teatro: Poética de las ruinas y del delirio," in *Mapa Teatro: El escenario expandido*, ed. Marta Rodríguez (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2018), 30–40.

9 One of the classic laws of logic, whereby in a dichotomy the sum of a proposition is equal to its refutation. See Bolívar Echeverría, *La modernidad del barroco* (Mexico City: Era, 1998), 175–78.





A story does not have to be real or not real; it can be true without responding to such a dichotomy. Behavior does not have to be modern or not modern; it can quite satisfactorily defy such division. By extension, a gesture does not have to be artistic or nonartistic, scientific or nonscientific, coherent or incoherent. Accepting the “excluded middle” implies putting the everyday in brackets and trusting in the conviction that it is possible to live in at least two spheres of reality at the same time and be free in one of them. This is the duality of the theatrical experience. What makes baroque thought unique, then, is its questioning of the ontological preeminence of what is represented.¹⁰ That a figure covered in gold might be more valuable than a figure of solid gold makes no sense to a realistic ethos, which tends to disregard play as well as magic. This is why the baroque ethos is potentially so subversive, for in its excesses it expresses resistance to profitability and order, the hallmarks of capitalist modernity.

Such resistance is represented here by the gold statue of the Quimbaya chief in particular. Whether the item is genuine is of no concern in the context of theatrical performance. But in the context of a museum, an institution committed to guarding against counterfeits, a place where replicas ought only to be found in the gift shop, the question of authenticity is highly significant. Not only the logics of theater and museums collide here, but so do the logics of creation (live) and conservation. Issues relating to ownership rights in communal heritage are also raised and given added emphasis by the fact that the communal was, in this case, denied at origin, for it is a product of colonial appropriation. But according to the baroque ethos, authenticity is meaningless and issues of genuineness can be answered via the excluded middle; that is, by moving into the realm of fiction, which is simply the staging of the problem itself.

10 Theodor W. Adorno defined the baroque as “the art of absolute decoration” in *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 236, cited in Echeverría, *La modernidad del barroco*, 210.

Mapa Teatro's fiction is baroque inasmuch as it values the power of fantasy and does not seek to curb excess. And it is not baroque inasmuch as it values—greatly—the reality that surrounds it, in multiple senses. Mapa Teatro's "laboratory" is located in a part of Bogotá that was, until recently, a working-class neighborhood in the city's downtown historical center. The building is a "found space," an observatory onto the city's popular imagination, and a meeting place open to new experiences and problems that are not necessarily art-related. This willingness to work where the bulk of the city's bodies are physically located has been a feature of several projects relating to historical-architectural and social-urban matters and has led to a fictional reconfiguration of two research methods: the archaeological and the ethnographic.

Project 24: Variations on "House Taken Over" (2017) was the result of what might be called an archaeological-fictional procedure: several items salvaged from the Bing Theater, set to be demolished as part of a remodeling of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, were moved to the nearby fossil laboratory at the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum and examined as prehistoric artifacts. The relics (though fictitious) became the material, the laboratory (a real place) became the performance space, the scientists became the guest actors, and an old film projector became the apparatus that enabled this impossible convergence of disparate times and realities to occur. Archaeological fiction is not only a matter of displacing time; it effects research methodology too: Mapa Teatro's laboratory analysis relied more on intuition and chance findings than it did on traditional scientific procedure. A unique object or a revealing document can thus serve as a punctum to the research, which is no less rigorous as a consequence and is carried out using archives, history, and the space itself.

Mapa Teatro employed the same archaeological method for *Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity*, which is presented as part

of the *Fisuras* program. As the archive was “excavated,” the Museo Reina Sofía disappeared and the Hospital General y de la Pasión reappeared, the original incarnation of a building that is emblematic of the reigns of Ferdinand VI and of Carlos III and therefore of Spanish enlightened absolutism. Documents were recovered from the archive, one of which gave the project its title, and the work revealed that the Sabatini Building had primarily been financed using revenues from natural resources extracted from the Indies, especially gold from the New Kingdom of Granada, as established by Philip V in 1717. His successors promoted a reformist agenda that sought to improve the conditions in which the sick and the insane were cared for, an initiative that coincided with an ambitious plan to reorganize the way Spain’s overseas provinces were governed, redefining them as colonies in an attempt to make them as profitable as France’s overseas territories and to fend off the British and the Dutch.

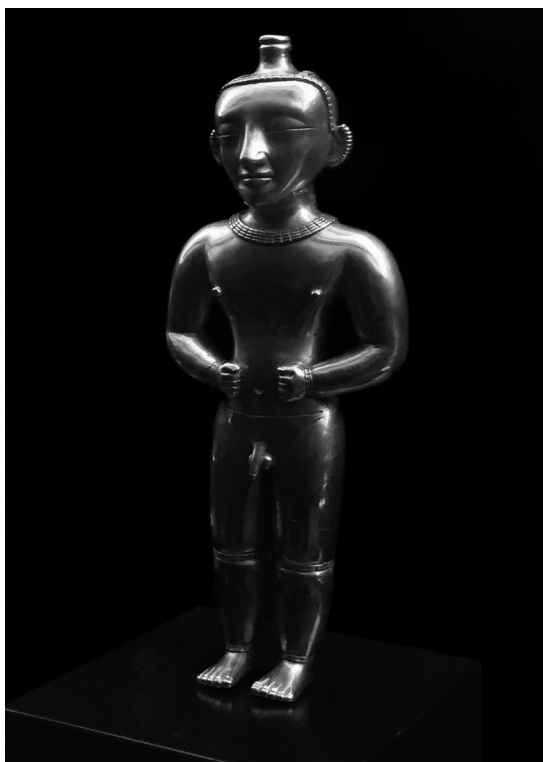
Archaeological research is then complemented by historical fiction. Mapa Teatro’s methods are, in this sense, similar to those of artists such as Walid Raad and Rabih Mroué, who, lacking the original documents that prove historical truths, have no choice but to *reconstruct* them. Raad denominates them “hysterical documents,” symptomatic of a silenced collective memory, the remnants of events and people erased from history.¹¹ *Discurso de un hombre decente* (The discourse of a decent man, 2012) was built around such a reconstructed document: the letter found in Pablo Escobar’s pocket after he was shot dead and in which he lays out his plans for Colombia were he to become president, including the legalization of drug trafficking. *La despedida* (The farewell, 2017) concludes with a

11 Walid Raad cited by Kaelen Wilson-Goldie in “Walid Raad: The Atlas Group Opens Its Archives,” in “We Are Old,” special issue, *Bidoun*, no. 2 (2004), <http://www.bidoun.org/magazine/02-we-are-old/> (accessed September 11, 2018).

reconstructed situation, the silent conversation between Karl Marx and an Amazonian shaman.

Reconstructed documents, situations, or characters infiltrate the artistic process as relational objects and fulfill the same function as stage props in other pieces. In *Horacio* (1994), Heiner Müller's work was the prompt for an intense "social imagination" process undertaken with inmates at the Colombia Central Penitentiary, known as La Picota (The pillory). In *Prometheus* (2002–2003), another text by Müller was the catalyst for a similar procedure, this time with inhabitants evicted from the El Cartucho neighborhood in Bogotá. Both works, but especially *Prometheus*, were initiated using ethno-fiction techniques, a method Mapa Teatro repeated on subsequent projects. For *Of Lunatics, or Those Lacking Sanity*, the field of social experimentation was not Madrid but Caldas, the gold-mining region of Colombia where Carlos III sent the engineers Don Juan José D'Elhúyar and Don Ángel Díaz Castellanos to modernize the mines and make them more profitable. The Mapa Teatro team followed in the engineers' footsteps, reconstructing the itinerary that led them to the Marmato mine, which had begun to be exploited before La Conquista (Spain's colonizing of the Americas) and has forever been productive, resisting control by various factions during Colombia's armed conflict—unlike other mines in the second half of the twentieth century—and the invasion of mining multinationals (which promote open-pit mining). Such resistance can be explained only by the strength of the local people, a self-regulating community that has preserved the Marmato mountain, which is burrowed full of tunnels, some of them hundreds of years old, and, like a baroque island, is surrounded by the perils of industrial-scale extraction and illegal gold mining, a business that is less visible but just as, if not more, profitable than cocaine cultivation and trafficking. By becoming implicated witnesses, exposing their bodies to the sensory experiences of the place and reacting to the stories of its inhabitants, Mapa Teatro's fictitious ethnographers were

able to build a symbolic bridge that connected the mine to the hospital and the Enlightenment engineers to today's miners. These miners were invited to take part in the work of fiction in the same way that special guests have joined in Mapa Teatro's previous projects, partaking in the journey and bringing their own memories, plans, abilities, and desires to the performance. This is what Juana Ramírez did in *Witness to the Ruins*, the inmates of La Picota in *Horacio*, the patients at the Tunja Psychiatric Hospital in *Sanatorio* (Sanatorium, 2006), Linda Lucía Callejas, Charlotte Sheider, Cristal Malabert, and Amada Rosa in *Exxxtrañas amazonas* (Stttrange Amazons, 2007), Genaro Torres in *Los santos inocentes* (The innocent saints, 2010), Danilo Jiménez and Jeihhco Wayfarer in *Discourse of a Decent Man* (2011), and the children of the Instituto Carmenza de Sánchez marching band in *Los incontados: Un tríptico*. Over the years, these people have shared the stage with Andrés Castañeda, Santiago Sepúlveda, Julián Díaz, Agnes Brekke, and the composer and DJ Juan Ernesto Díaz. If Don Ángel Díaz Castellanos (who ended his "insane" days confined within the very walls that now house the exhibition) is the relational character driving the narrative, the miners are the mediums that bring the delirium of the gold rush back to the present day, with all its symbolic and political implications. But the bodies of the miners, like those of the producers of this "gesture," are present only in a latent sense, and it falls to the museum's visitors to make them present; to make sure the fiction is not watered down and that the space is inhabited as a place of action and conflict; to ensure the objects and images are rearticulated as poetic thought and that the gesture is, ultimately, renewed as a manifestation of life.



Mapa Teatro: Creating from an Affect

Suely Rolnik

What emerges first in the works of Mapa Teatro to its directors, sister and brother Heidi and Rolf Abderhalden, is purely and simply an affect. An affect pulsing in their bodies, which, at that very moment, causes a tension in them. Seen from the outside, it looks like nothing.

This is because, although affects do not possess words, images, or gestures, they are, nevertheless, real—or, rather, they are the very emotions of the real, vital emotions. They are the effects of the forces that agitate a certain context upon the bodies that constitute it. They produce in those bodies a state that the subject is unable to translate with his or her repertoire, causing destabilization. Such a state signals that life must have been blocked at some choke point along the forms of the present and their respective languages, and this imposes upon subjectivity the imperative to release it so that it can resume its movement. It also signals that the affect contains within itself seeds of the future, whose germination will bring forth its release. Answering to this life imperative is not straightforward: it implies creating *something* in which the choke point acquires a sensible body that we might recognize; it implies as well that this *something* brings with it traces of those embryonic futures.

This is the task that drives the creating imagination of Mapa Teatro. To account for this task, the second movement of its directors is to look for an element that carries with it a pulsating frequency that resonates with the affect that triggers the work: an image, a sound, a gesture, a texture, a poem, a passage in a book, a fragment of archive, a photograph, a certain sequence in a film, a certain detail within a memory, a dream.

Once the element that carries within it a trace of the triggering affect is found, this element is what will be presented to the “temporary experimental community” gathered by Heidi and Rolf for that specific project. Its presentation to the group is accompanied by a question: how to provide a body to this affect? This draws the outlines of an immaterial space in which the collectively shared work of creation will occur. The chosen element will work as the catalyst for others, which, also through resonances, will be brought forward by each group member according to their singular sensibility. And this will progressively shape the work, which will only become visible at the end of its creation process.

Seen from the outside, it all looks senseless. However, an ethical compass guides the group’s desire in their search. Life, in its will to persevere, is what draws the needle in this compass, and the needle’s position points in which directions can be found elements with this resonance frequency and shows as well which other directions should be avoided. And thus, little by little, the work is created: a sort of dream-world, with an incantatory power, which opens up the way for us to recognize in our own bodies the affect that triggered it and the seeds of futures it carries.

What would an example look like? The affect of violence of armed conflict in its countless facets is one of the most recent triggers. So intensely present in the bodies that live the Colombian experience, it has originated not one but four works—or four unfoldings of the same work, referred to as *Anatomy of Violence in Colombia*. In the third one, *Los incontados: Un tríptico* (The unaccounted: A triptych), the catalyst is a dream that insistently recurred during the last months of Vladimir Mayakovsky’s life, imagined by Antonio Tabucchi in *Sogni di sogni* (Dreams of dreams). It stages the affect of an existential malaise, through the effect of the totalitarian violence of Stalinism in the body of the poet.



Presented to the group, the dream will be the catalyst for other elements. The first of them is a performative gesture of the dream by one of its members: Julian Díaz, a black actor from the Colombian Pacific coast. On his first attempt, Díaz narrates the dream through the feelings provoked on his body by the racialization of individuals and their relations. But this does not work. The voice must be cleansed from the gooey layer of psychological emotions and ideological pathos mobilized with this phenomenon, so as to reach its vital emotions: the affects of racialization, the essence of its effects upon the vital states of bodies. The actor then performs them in many other modes until a blues cadence emerges in his exhausted voice, carrying the vibration of the malaise of existing, which effectively impregnates a black body that lives in a South American country. Through resonances, the power of the racialization-affect's real presence will draw in other elements, which will bring to us other nuances of the violence-affect as experienced in bodies in that country—for instance, the presence of the feast as intense and pervading as the presence of violence, and the ease with which one becomes the other when we least expect it, causing perplexity and terror.

But where do the seeds of futures that inhabit the violence-affect reside in this work? Not by chance, they emerge with particular intensity in the final scene of *La despedida* (The farewell), the fourth and last materialization of the collective work triggered by this affect. It is the image of the encounter between Karl Marx and a shaman. Both are seen standing over a gold mine deep in the Amazon; in fact, we barely see them amidst the shaman's smoke. But we can hear in the scene the beginning of a conversation between the European man and the indigenous man. A conversation in which pulses the virtual affects that this meeting would carry since the beginning of the colonization process, affects that were, nevertheless, repressed by this same process since then.

In this repression, the embryos of futures they announced remained buried, waiting to be eventually rescued to be able to germinate. And we get the clear feeling that the conversation we are witnessing between the European Marx and the indigenous shaman is a sign of the rescue of those embryos. A sign of their germinations' start, virtual carriers of irreversible dislocations of the human landscapes created by the colonial-capitalistic enterprise, whose horizon covers today the whole of the planet. However, we still know nothing or hardly anything about how the new landscapes will be.

The work of Mapa Teatro mobilizes in our own bodies resonances of the affects that it stages, if we so allow it. In any case, to inhabit such resonances is the necessary condition to apprehend them. However, what Mapa Teatro offers us is not only the possibility of accessing those affects: that is what we (eventually) perceive on a first approach. More than this or that affect, their work allows us to experience an act of deciphering what happens to us through the evaluation power of the affects: this is entirely different from our habitual mode of sentimental or rational deciphering. In other words, Mapa Teatro offers us the possibility of reconnecting with our experience as living beings and to develop the knowing-body that is proper to it; and, moreover, of authorizing ourselves to activate thought as creating imagination to deal with that which this experience points to. And this is no small thing.

Under the domain of the colonial-capitalistic regime, we have lost access to this experience, which makes us vulnerable to our vital drive being turned away from its ethical destiny: a "potency that creates new worlds," which sets itself in motion every time it is needed for the perseverance of life. Along this detour, such potency tends to be reduced to a "creative capacity to produce novelties," as it is ceaselessly stimulated to generate investment



opportunities and capital accumulation and to spur on the voracity of consumption. This is the micropolitical basis of the current regime: an abuse of life's drive, drained at the very source of its creating impulse.

To recover our access to the experience of affects, as well as of the use of the ethical compass that might guide us in deciphering the present, is the crucial task if we are to succeed in an effective transfiguration of the points in which life finds itself violated and demands creating actions. As stated in the beginning, to rise to life's challenge by answering its call so that it may continue to flow is far from obvious. Is this not, precisely, the role of the human practice that the West chose to separate from the other activities of social life under the name of art? Is this not where the very political potency of the so-called artistic practice resides? The power to create transmutations at the micropolitical basis of the dominant regime, without which it cannot stand up. And, nevertheless, even in this practice the creating drive tends to be pimped out today. In our days, in any artistic field, we seldom come across works that are able to sustain such a potency. The work of Mapa Teatro is undoubtedly among such rarities (in all meanings of the word).

P. S.—I almost forgot to mention that everything described here shows how Heidi and Rolf take on the function of the so-called director. The group is implicated in the responsibility facing the work's triggering affect, which demands not only listening to it but also taking it as the guide for what will be collectively created. In other words, what they propose for this temporary community is the experience of an alteration in the dominant micropolitics of the very subjectivity of its members and their relations, the condition for the work to truly carry the pulsing of this metamorphosis. Its pollinating power will, in turn, depend on it.



Acknowledgements in Colombia:

Elizabeth Abderhalden Cortés,
Alejandro Valencia, Carlos Jáuregui,
Agnes Brekke, Andrés Castañeda,
Julián Díaz, Santiago Sepúlveda,
Leidy Galindo, Mauricio Corredor,
José María Rubio, Mauricio Arango,
Carmenza Rincón, Pablo Felipe Araque,
Facultad de Artes, Universidad Nacional
de Colombia

Acknowledgements in Madrid:

Suely Rolnik, José Antonio Sánchez,
Irene Fernández de Tejada de Garay, Real
Jardín Botánico
Javier Blas, Real Academia de Bellas Artes
de San Fernando
Joel Butler, Toni Rueda,
Jean-François Dubois

EXHIBITION

HEAD OF EXHIBITIONS

Teresa Velázquez

EXHIBITION COORDINATOR

Rafael García

EXHIBITIONS MANAGER

Natalia Guaza

REGISTRARS

Iliana Naranjo

BROCHURE

TEXTS

Rafael García

José A. Sánchez

Suely Rolnik

HEAD OF PUBLICATIONS

Alicia Pinteño

COORDINATOR

Mercedes Pineda

TRANSLATORS PORTUGUESE-ENGLISH

Pablo Lafuente

Rui Parada

TRANSLATOR SPANISH-ENGLISH

Jethro Soutar

COPYEDITING AND PROOFREADING

Christopher Davey

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Julio López

PRINTING

ErasOnze

ALL IMAGES

Archivo Mapa Teatro

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Main venue

Sabatini Building
Santa Isabel, 52

Nouvel Building
Ronda de Atocha s/n
28012 Madrid

Tel: (+34) 91 774 10 00

Opening hours

Monday to Saturday
and public holidays
from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Sundays

from 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
the entire Museum is open
from 2.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
are open Collection 1
and one temporary exhibition
(check website)

Closed on Tuesdays

Exhibition rooms in all venues
will be cleared 15 minutes
before closing time.

www.museoreinasofia.es

NIF: 036-18-010-4 D.L. M-34984-2018

**MUSEO NACIONAL
CENTRO DE ARTE
REINA SOFÍA**



Programa educativo
desarrollado con el mecenazgo
de Fundación Banco Santander

