



PORTRAIT D'ARTISTE /
Gabriela Golder

Je suis née à Buenos Aires en 1971. Mon père et ma mère sont nés en Argentine mais ils sont d'origine RUSSE... ukrainienne et moldave (ça dépend des époques, des guerres, des annexions des territoires). Ils ont quitté l'Europe dans les années trente du côté de mon père, et du côté de ma mère cela date de la fin du XIXe siècle.

Interview de Gabriela Golder

par Gabriel Sucheyre

La famille de ma mère était des gens très simples, des voyageurs de commerce. Du côté de mon père c'était plus intellectuel, très prétentieux, cultivés, ils parlaient français. Mon père était psychologue et ma mère avocate. Tous deux étaient militants et ils se sont rencontrés à dix-huit ans. Avec mes parents il y avait donc du dialogue, des discussions ; ils étaient communistes (ma mère l'est encore), respectueux des droits de tout le monde, etc.

J'ai une sœur de deux ans de moins que moi, qui est artiste aussi au sein du « Grupo de arte Callejero » (GAC), un groupe artistique très engagé politiquement.

J'ai toujours vécu dans le centre ville de Buenos Aires, je suis très citadine. J'allais à l'école publique. Il paraît que jusqu'à 7 ou 8 ans j'étais très timide, après cela je me suis devenue extravertie grâce, entre autres choses, au théâtre. Je suis vite devenue une sorte de leader, très tôt engagée politiquement. Il faut savoir que c'était encore la dictature à l'époque. Il y a une chose que j'aimerais retrouver, un article apparu dans un magazine, dans l'année 83, avant les élections... Juste avant le passage à **la démocratie, un journaliste a fait un reportage** à l'école, j'avais 11 ou 12 ans et je disais que je voulais être présidente, j'expliquais pourquoi,

etc... Je parlais beaucoup et assez facilement en fin de compte.

J'allais dans une école de l'état. Plusieurs **des enseignantes étaient des épouses de militaires**. On ne pouvait pas parler de tout, c'était dangereux. On ne pouvait pas écouter certaines choses... Autre exemple, je mangeais à la cantine à midi, et à table, une chef était désignée, le plus souvent la plus âgée, qui faisait respecter les règles. Quand je parle de cette interview, il faut situer le contexte, c'était au début des années 80, on allait vers la démocratie, etc... Toutefois, on ne savait jamais vraiment à qui on avait affaire. Dans ma famille on le savait plutôt mais j'avais des copains à l'école dont les parents étaient de la police ou d'autres représentants de l'ordre en rigueur. On faisait donc quand même très attention.

Après l'école primaire, je suis allée dans une école secondaire publique, mais un peu élitiste, on dit de « l'élite intellectuelle », une école qui dépendait directement de l'université, avec concours d'entrée, etc... La démocratie **commençait (mon parcours est tellement** marqué par ces ruptures, par la dictature, la démocratie, les crises sociales...) C'est un **établissement où il se passait beaucoup de**

choses, où il y a eu beaucoup d'étudiants disparus. Le centre d'étudiants était très fort, **il y avait beaucoup de militantisme, on était** très actifs. À cette époque là, je voulais être sociologue. J'ai commencé très tôt à travailler dans un institut de sociologie, j'étais dans **une commission pour la défense des droits** de l'homme. J'écrivais beaucoup aussi. J'avais beaucoup d'activités, le théâtre, la sculpture, la poésie.

Après le lycée, j'ai commencé des études de sociologie à l'université de Buenos Aires et en même temps quelque chose venait de naître : les sciences de la communication. Je m'y suis donc fortement intéressée. D'autre part, le soir, j'allais dans une école de cinéma, le théâtre m'intéressait toujours autant. Puis j'ai abandonné la sociologie car je m'intéresse plus à la philosophie sociologique qu'aux études même, purement économiques de cette discipline comme le marketing pour exemple. Cet aspect là me déplaisait fortement, la certitude que cela dégageait m'ennuyait terriblement. Il y a le « doute », la possibilité de la doute, qui commençait à s'installer en moi. La possibilité de douter, travailler avec ce doute, faire avec.

En 1991 s'est ouvert l'Université du Cinéma. C'est le directeur du Cinéclub où allaient mes parents qui m'en a parlé, il me disait que c'était une usine à rêves ! Salvador Sammaritano devait y être professeur de l'histoire du cinéma et il m'a obtenu une bourse. Ce projet un peu idéaliste au début était dirigé par un ex-directeur de l'institut cinématographique, aussi ancien directeur de cinéma : Manuel Antin. L'école se trouvait dans un ancien théâtre à San Telmo, le plus ancien quartier de la ville.

J'arrête donc la sociologie, je poursuis en **sciences de la communication et je commence** le cinéma. Avec le cinéma, j'ai trouvé un moyen de réunir tout ce que j'avais envie de faire dans une seule et même chose ! Je suis très critique, et au début, je trouvais que beaucoup

de choses n'allaient pas pour moi dans cette Université. Malgré tout, cette année, la première année à l'Université, a été très importante car c'est à ce moment que j'ai rencontré Jorge La Ferla. Il était mon professeur de technique audio-visuelle et avec lui j'ai pu découvrir l'art vidéo. Beaucoup de choses d'aujourd'hui se décidaient déjà à l'époque sans que je le sache vraiment. Tout le monde à l'école voulait être réalisateur de cinéma et quand il est arrivé en cette année 1991 avec son cours sur l'art vidéo (**où il montrait beaucoup de vidéos françaises** et brésiliennes), j'ai tout de suite su ce que je voulais faire ! Je n'avais jamais eu l'opportunité de voir ce genre de choses. À partir de là tout s'est déclenché, je suis devenue son étudiante assistante grâce à quoi j'ai fait des rencontres très riches, très importantes. Un grand workshop a été organisé en 1995 avec des artistes chiliens et brésiliens, comme Claudia Aravena, Lucas Bambozzi, Carlos Nader, etc... J'étais la plus jeune et la moins expérimentée mais c'était le début ...

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Turbulences Vidéo #68, le 5 mai 2010

Gabriela Golder was born in Buenos Aires in 1971. She was five years old when Videla launched the coup that gave rise to one of the cruelest periods in Argentine history.

Introduction from the catalogue *Habitada*

by David Arlandisy Javier Marroquí

In one of her earlier videos¹ **Golder used a split screen to show the simultaneous development of her early childhood and the beginning of the dictatorship.** The question that the artist asked herself was: "How, in spite of the deaths, the people gone missing and the exiles, was it still possible to keep living a normal life"².

After the disappointment of her early studies in communication and sociology, Gabriela joined the Buenos Aires Film University ; it was here that she first became acquainted with video. She obtained her Film Director degree in 1995 and continued her studies in Spain, where she took a graduate course at the Santiago de Compostela University. Later she relocated to France, where in 2000 she completed her studies in Hypermedia at the University of Paris 8. Ever since she has lived in **different countries, becoming a resident artist** at: Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln (2003) and Schloss Balmoral (2004) in Germany, the Wexner Centre for the Arts (2005) in USA, the UQAM in Montreal (2007/2008 in Canada), and

Le 104 in Paris, France.

At present, Golder combines videographic production with teaching, holding a chair at the Tres de Febrero National University and the Maimónides University, in Argentina, and has held regular workshops at several universities and art centers abroad. She also co-directs Continente, the Electronic Art Research Center, with Andrés Denegri. Her work in video has earned her distinguished awards such as: the Tokyo Video Award in Japan, a prize from the 14th Videobrasil in 2003, the Media Art Award from the ZKM of the same year, the first prize from the National Hall of Visual Arts (Argentina) in 2004 and the Sigwart Blum award, from the Association of Argentine Art Critics in 2007, to name but a few.

II

The present exhibition, called **Habitada** (Inhabited), is actually part of a curatorial project which we started one year ago and are now presenting to the public for the first time. Our work is usually based on research projects contemplating different issues which later develop into expositions, conferences, workshops or publications. This method of working has already been applied on three separate occasions. We have now started a

1 - The film in question is entitled **En memoria de los pájaros** (In Memory of the Birds), produced in 2000

2 - Extract from Graciela Taquini's text in the exhibition catalogue: "Sobre una realidad ineludible arte y compromiso en Argentina" (About an Inescapable Reality, Art and Commitment in Argentina), 2003. Published by MEIAC and CAB de Burgos.

new research project which, as a whole, can be called **Care Crisis**; yet it is not of a unitary nature but rather functions as a common research topic which will materialize, or rather be shown to the public, under different appearances. The first one is **Habitada**.

In these times of economic crisis and swimming against the tide, this project is intended to attract our attention to a different kind of crisis which we are experiencing. It does not grab the attention of the media in the same way, but it is indeed, like the former, a global crisis. However, unlike the economic woes, this affects life as a whole. It is the **care crisis**.

Society used to develop through productive and reproductive (or care) work. This division was made possible thanks to the division of labor by gender. Productive work was carried out by men and care work was conducted by

women. The backdrop for the consolidation of such a system was that of the fordist family, that is to say, the nuclear family existing within capitalism and defined by such division.

However, the fordist family has now come to its demise. Women's struggles, especially since the 70's, against all injustices and oppressions of the sex/gender system have swept away that family system. One of the factors having the most direct impact on the so-called care crisis is the inclusion of women into the postindustrial labor market. There lies one of the roots, if not the cause, of the current state of affairs. As women leave their homes in search of paid work — designed by and for men — no-one is left to perform family care tasks, that is, life sustainability tasks. The result is either a deficit in the caring necessary for the development of life, or a transformation of the system that provides



that caring. This transformation impacts on infinite social realities, and on two with special **relevance: a necessary change in the male role** within the family and most importantly the transfer of care work into the market sphere and its assignment to immigrant women. This research project is intended to study that **social phenomenon and to bring together** different fields of knowledge to that end.

III

This exhibition is made up of two pieces. The first, **Dolor** (Pain, 2010), began to take shape the previous year in Canada and is now being presented for the first time. This work stems from a quest into personal memory, an attempt to exteriorize the artist's own pain through the pain of others. When she talks about her work, **Gabriela constantly insists on the need to listen**; she ensures that it is possible to find our own feelings, our own fears and experiences, in the stories of others. As she did before in **earlier pieces like Preocupación, Arroró, or even Concierto diurno, Gabriela utilizes a concrete** working method : listening to the voices of others to tell personal experiences, stories of others which also belong to her and could in turn belong to us ... to all. Unemployed workers, immigrant housewives or women who for different reasons leave their own **countries and families to take on, as often** happens, the care of others in the host country.

The concept of pain is quite broad; most of us fear physical pain but this is not the worst of pains; there are others far less visible with the ability to enter our lives and stay with us for a long time. We are talking about inner pain, that which arises when someone close cannot be with us, when we are forcefully separated from those whom we love.

During her stay in Canada, Gabriela lived through a personal situation in which she

suffered this kind of pain. One way to extirpate it was to invite other women to fill the spaces in her home with their own stories of pain. "I asked them to define "Pain" by choosing a text, a text that to them was Pain."

The video installation features six screens, each of them displaying a woman who shares her story with us through her chosen text. Pain materializes in the touching letter written by Camila to her sister; or in the one read by Sayeh, the Iranian girl, who tells us **about the suffering of a grandfather for having** his granddaughter far away and for being unable to pay for her studies; in an extract **from a Laurent Gaudé book about clandestine** immigration; in the fear that a son may die; in **the search for identity in a hostile environment** filled with oppression, repression and religious fanaticism; in the family drama lived by Nancy ... These women look at the camera as if they were staring pain in the face and remain in silence for a few seconds before they begin to read. First one, then another, little by little **their voices join in and their stories of pain** blend and entwine, filling the room.

Díaspora (Diaspora) is the second piece in the show: a performance recorded in a sequence shot in real time. We observe the artist herself crawling in an empty room. Barefooted, on her knees, and with great effort, she drags her body and licks the floor. The action is harsh and provokes several questions in the viewer's mind: Is this a reference to torture ? Perhaps to the oppression of women ? Or to the working **conditions and jobs assigned to immigrant** women ? As occurs in other works by the **artist, there is a conscious desire for the piece** to remain open. The role of interpretation rests with the viewer, who must make their own connections and build on the piece. But the title gives us a hint: «Diaspora» reminds us once again of exile, the forceful abandonment



Diaspora, 2005, Gabriel Golder ©

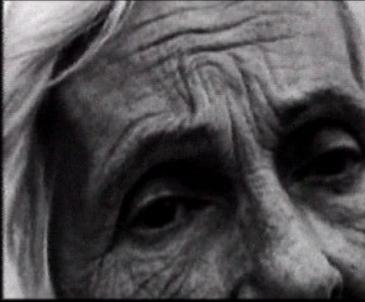
of one's motherland, the pain which comes from all that is left behind, the effort required in adapting to new surroundings and indeed, the matter of identity itself. This video was first **presented at the Desarmadero Naval de Buenos Aires** (Buenos Aires Marine "Chop Shop"), a space located next to the Immigrant Hotel: **the place of arrival for immigrants coming from Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.** Now, as Gabriela says, a different **kind of immigrant arrives at this point of entry** : Peruvian, Bolivian... all of them leaving **everything behind to become the labor force of the host country, so often related to household care**, just as the video suggests.

In addition to those installations, the space includes an area for à la carte viewing of the artist's videography. It also features other material such as interviews and literature

about her work.

IV

Gabriela Golder's artistry can be viewed from different perspectives. Undoubtedly the ideal viewpoint from which to study would be one that allows us to take an oblique look. The reason for this is that her work interconnects multiple ideas which, while not closely linked at first, do bond and empower one another in an enriching way precisely through her work. In this brief catalogue which functions as an introductory essay to Gabriela Golder's visual production, we consulted two female writers about the Argentine artist's videography. They have worked on two of the most recurring themes, or rather two of the most effective perspectives to approach her work: the concepts of memory and woman. Virginia



En memoria de los pájaros (À la mémoire des oiseaux), 1999, Gabriel Golder ©

Villaplana takes on the former; the latter is covered by Victoria Simón. Now, in the little space we have left, we intend to at least take **a glimpse at a third indispensable approach** to watching Golder's videos: her work on sociopolitical reality.

The first time we worked with Gabriela Golder was at the show **Sobre una realidad ineludible; Arte y compromiso en Argentina** (About an Inescapable Reality; Art and Commitment in Argentina), co-produced by MEIAC and CAB de Burgos. Qualifying a reality as inescapable draws our attention to **the moral need of Argentine art not to turn its back on the historic events taking place** early in the first decade of the 21st century. The piece began to take shape in 2001; the political **situation lived through by Argentines** in the previous thirty years was marked by three events of the utmost significance: a

devastating military dictatorship, a no less harmful economic debacle and the resulting generalized, radicalized people's protests of late 2001. The vicissitudes endured by the country throughout those years drew an uninterrupted line joining the past with the present: an indelible mark which appeared on **everyday life and leaked into current artistic** production.

On that occasion we included in the show two Gabriela Golder videos : **En memoria de los pájaros** (In Memory of the Birds) and **Vacas** (Cows). The former was produced in 2000. As we mentioned, this video splits the screen in two and shows us images of Videla's **dictatorship and home movies shot in Super 8**. An intimate archeological piece which in turn denounces what became one of the most repressive dictatorships in Latin America. The latter video, from 2002, using a filter which

transforms Argentine news footage into almost pictorial work, shows a group of people from the impoverished town of Las Flores who after a livestock truck accident begin to butcher, right by the side of the road, the calves that died in the accident. When that meat runs out, they chase after the calves which are still alive to sacrifice them right then and there and take a hunk of meat home to feed their families. To transfer that kind of footage — obtained from mass media — to the sphere of art is a risky operation. But it can also be quite useful. It was necessary to extract those images from the fleeting nature of television, where facts are consumed and promptly forgotten. The very structure of these shows prevents reflection. What Golder achieves by moving it into the realm of art is she allows us to think about it.

Also, she does not simply record the footage and display it, but adds a series of new formal elements intended to erase any trace of the supposed objectivity of journalistic work, and thus creates a subjective, poetic piece and particularly a piece which unmistakably has a political point of view.

Soon after that, in 2004, she made a video installation called *Bestias* (Beasts). Again, she used effects to transform the images captured by a technological medium into a sequence of overlapping shapes and colors which brought it closer to painting. The footage came from the significant demonstrations that took place on December 20th and 21st 2001, better known abroad under the name of *cacerolazo* (pot banging protests). On those days the enraged



population came out against the ruling class after the corralito (banking curbs). It was the last straw; a multitude took to the streets under the motto "out with all" and their force drove President De la Rúa out of the Government House in a helicopter. In **Bestias**, Golder recalls the commotion of those days; the violence lived in the streets in those moments. The installation consists of three large screens arranged in a "U" shape and enclosing a room which takes the viewer deep into that world of violence represented by the images in red.

After those years of vindicating **erescence in Argentina, and once certain democratic "normalcy" and minimum economic recovery had been achieved, the vindication issue** took a break from the spotlight of Argentina's general artistic output. Gabriela Golder's work shows how she seizes those days of necessary reflection upon what is occurring in her country to work on the subjects that are ever present in her art: woman, memory, identity ... We find pieces such as **Trizas, Crashing dishes and Concierto diurno**, which will not be dealt with here, as they are the object of careful study in the following texts.

But as mentioned, Golder never abandons **the observation of the sociopolitical reality**, especially that of her own country. In Argentina, there is the birth of a new feeling **of failure or at least of frustration of the hopes** that were carried by the demonstrations of 2001 and 2002. It is then that some of the best pieces by the Argentine artist emerge, such as **Diáspora** (2005), which has already been discussed, or **Reocupación (Reoccupation, 2008)**, a touching conceptual project which is visually massive. It is an audiovisual piece in which the artist establishes a connection with people who have been stripped of their jobs. She asks them to search their physical **memories for the actions, the movements**, the knowledge acquired by them in their respective employment. This is, as she explains

it, an essay on non-work and a piece of work on identity. Five vertical screens in a room display five ex-workers flawlessly reproducing **the body movements they used to perform in their workplace**.

The final piece we would like to review in this space, with the intention of pointing out one of the favorite viewpoints from which to approach Gabriela Golder's audiovisual production, is **La lógica de la supervivencia** (The Logic of Survival, 2008). In this piece, the artist is forced to resort to her own production as a reflection of the condition of her country. In Vacas we observed an entire neighborhood **immersed in a horrifying situation, running after calves to sacrifice them in the middle of the road and so have something to eat**. In **La lógica de la supervivencia** we observe, again as she would say, a project of failure. We see a multitude plunging into food. We see a young man being brutally repressed because of it. We see how the illusion of reconstruction vanishes in just three scenes.

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Turbulences Vidéo #68

On the Threshold

Notes on the female element and women in the work of Gabriela Golder

by Victoria Simón

*It's a privilege to see
So much confusion*
Marianne Moore

She then resorted to differing tools and installation, 2000), making a super-human support according to the project and ultimately

looked at, Gabriela confronts the others as a

themselves in their spaces as if the body, beyond language and through the intensity

Irreversible, video

the very silence (*Silencio*
Intemperie)

return, like in *Resistencia*



Arroró, 2009, Gabriel Golder ©

the scene), the artist would simultaneously chase them away. There is within them an element at stake which belongs to the order of absence, of secret, of a threat to sense. A “lack of knowledge” insistently inhabits the work of Gabriela Golder and its enunciation, the quest **and the doubt as central stylistic features, emerge in her pieces through persistent** questions, repetitions, enumerations and silences. In them, image is not a given element which we assimilate to interpret or consider in a literal way, but rather it brings question **marks, revives suspicions and imposes losses,** loneliness and anguish.

Between men and women, between social classes, between the individual and the **system, tension seems to have no possible** solution outside of poetic answers. Two clear, **albeit not unpolluted spaces emerge in her pieces: the intimate, luminous and in turn dull** space of her personal story and the collective space. To obtain a classification, which will

surely lack absolute fairness, we can group her **pieces according to those criteria and relate** them back to the artist’s figure, which crosses all of them transversely.

Metaphor and Action

With the exception of a few pieces¹, where the artist resorts to conceptual, plastic work with real images from television **to make us think about social oppression,** resistance, survival and the way we look at **certain unfortunate, socially violent events,** in every Gabriela Golder piece, the female figure somehow emerges to take hold of our attention. Even in pieces where she seems to **be absent or blended into a collective set,** as is the case with **Reocupación** (“Reoccupation”,

1- I am referring to **Vacas** (“Cows”, single-channel video, 2002), **Bestias** (“Beasts”, single-channel video, 2004), **La lógica de la supervivencia** (“The Logic of Survival”, single-channel video, 2008) and **Multitud** (“Multitude”, video installation, 2008).



ella quería que él se muriera de amor por ella

Pasajes, 2010, Gabriel Golder ©

video installation, 2008), **Pescate** ("Rescue", net.art and video installation, 2009) or **Arorró** — Argentine lullaby — (video installation and net.art, 2009), the female element surfaces through the artist's own insinuation in the piece or the process of the piece.

Both **Recupación** and **Arorró** stem from the desire to and the practice of listening to the other, of committing physically and intellectually to what they have to say or sing. They are part of an effort which has involved many meetings and interviews, inviting those attending to look at themselves and listen to themselves. The original idea, as in a documentary process, is transformed based on what the other proposes. "All we have to do is tighten our skin like a drum for great politics to begin", wrote Gilles Deleuze. In this act which precedes the piece, the act of facing the other, of rescuing with the other a forgotten gesture or a song which is part of childhood, lies her entire political dimension and one of the key points to consider about her work : to always place her view in relation to that of others, to confront, converse, learn, find that which is

hers in the others and build her own identity not only out of her own traits and obsessions but also through a deep sense of belonging to a particular group, or even through the proof of difference.

In **Pescate** (net.art and video installation, 2009), the idea is to recover the memory of certain words from books censored by the Argentine military dictatorship. The words are not only saved in their typographic form, but spoken one by one by the artist. It is not superfluous to mention that she reads them without a pause.

There is no montage.

Gabriela reads the hundreds of words comprising the piece, chooses them, rescues them, and in the modulation of her voice we reunite with her figure and perceive her physical exhaustion.

From the individual sphere to the collective, Gabriela Golder has said on many occasions that her journey is circular. In **Heroica** ("Heroic", single-channel video, 1999), **Doméstico** and **Concierto diurno** ("Domestic" and "Daytime Concert", 2007 and 2006, two versions of the same work in single-channel and video



Pasajes, 2010, Gabriel Golder ©

installation formats), for example, the concept proposed is radical and even literal. A group of women perform a sort of dance while hanging the laundry; other women smash plates against the floor without exchanging a single word, appealing to the memory of the gesture and all of its symbolical potential. If in those two pieces Gabriela Golder focuses on gender and violence issues, inquiring and questioning certain social models, it will be in **Diáspora** ("Diaspora", video installation, 2005) that the **artist crosses the individual and the collective once again, placing herself at the center of the performance.** The artist licks the floor across a **room in an endless path, and in that symbolic gesture not devoid of sexual connotations, the woman marks out her territory like an animal and exhibits free from shame the idea of female submission and the miseries of immigration** (the piece was first exhibited in the building which housed the Immigrant Hotel in the early 20th century at the Buenos Aires harbor).

Her presence in the pieces, however, is far from vindicating or programmatic. Even **though her background makes her familiar**

with the close relationship between the raising of gender issues and power hierarchies, **and the origins of video creation and the performing practices of the 60's and 70's, we dare to think that her stance is rather closer to the assertion of individual identity, the uncertain construction of the self identity and its connection to the world, pain and the experience of others.** As if the sorrow in oneself and one's own experiences could not be complete without being in turn confronted **by those of others, taking their place and establishing an open bond to produce a new way of thinking and a new sense.**

The Space of Desire

In **Pasajes** ("Passages", single-channel video, 2010) **static, disturbing shots of an abandoned hotel in ruins follow one another while a literary, silent dialogue of a couple shown in the form of subtitles tell us unfinished stories, or rather notes of what perhaps once was.**

It is possibly in this latest piece that Gabriela Golder takes to an extreme her need to exhibit desire tied to abandonment. Desire and



Despojos, 2009, Performance, Hotel Central, Sao Paul, Gabriel Golder ©

desolation joined by the emptiness within both of them, since there is no experience, to the artist, which does not originate from the force of desire.

In inhospitable spaces, words are more important than what is said. The story dissolves under the weight of the sounds of the text which sustain the absent bodies. The ghostly **dialogue envelops a void, remaining at the edge of what is not there, which undoubtedly constitutes the very core of desire, a black hole filled with words which direct us to the imagery.**

Pasajes is a piece loaded with absence. In **addition to the visible distance of the bodies,** the words expose the absence and lead to an abyss. Something lies beneath, something which is overflowing and impossible to control. The cadence of the deserted, repetitive image makes us forget the text as a story. At other times, the situation can be reversed. We no longer look, we only try, weakly, to keep

our balance between the lines of a hesitant dialogue, as we remain sustained by a certain tension, an original discomfort. Georges Didi-Huberman says that the bond between images and words is ever dialectic, restless, open, unresolved. That is how this piece presents itself, and we can positively relate it to the environments of Marguerite Duras, the **dialogues, the hotels, the silence rocked by the chaotic beat of desire.** We do not ask ourselves who is engaged in dialogue, but rather we join in the dialogue with them, with the spaces, the light and the dark. **“The word is not a weapon, it is a place”,** wrote Duras, and Gabriela Golder **seeks to build that place through the combination of multiple voices, leaving doors closed, doors half-open, windows that filter the light.** Here it is not the female body that **is present but rather the female element as an underlying force which escapes the text, mines the sense and endows the images with sensuality and sexuality.**

Returning to the idea of producing an encounter with the other, which is a strong element in Gabriela Golder's latest work, three recent pieces apart from *Pasajes* find in the **literary language a nation, a memory and a bridge towards that which is unspeakable in love and pain.**

In *Despojos* ("Remains", video installation and performance, 2009) a group of people were **invited by the artist to occupy different rooms** in an empty hotel (in Sao Paulo, Brazil, during an international art residence), and read texts of their own choice about love, separation, and passions. The voices overlap and build a new text in multiple languages loaded with nuances, confronting these presences with the ghostly absences suggested by the space.

Loucos de amor ("Mad with Love", single-channel video, 2009) shows two little Brazilian **girls reading out loud fragments from a Sam Sheppard text: an adaptation of the theater play Locos de amor.** With a kind of understanding different from that which an **adult might be capable of, the girls comment on the text spontaneously, interrupt one another, get tired, contaminate the literary work with their own voices, transform it and give it a new identity.**

Finally in *Dolor* ("Pain", video installation, 2010) Gabriela invited a group of women, many of which were immigrants, to define pain by choosing a text and reading it in a part of her own house, during the artist's prolonged stay in Montreal, Canada. So each woman chose a **part of the house and the artist recorded them reading and listened to their stories of pain,** which little by little began to inhabit her house and blend into her own hurt, becoming simply one massive pain.

This idea of the splitting of the self mediated **by the literary language is already present in Es todo** ("That's all", experimental full-length film in video, 1997). But in her recent work, the idea

has been refined. There are no actors ; it is the other that chooses the text ; and it is the artist's own home that is inhabited and becomes almost a place of exile, of externalization. **Gabriela Golder takes a step back in order to listen and recreates her pain with images that belong to others, words in foreign languages, and new kinds of music. Thanks to the words, as dull as they may seem, something rises, stands upright on the threshold of enunciation. This, the pain which in appearance is as atrocious as it is inaccessible and non-transferable,** finds a poetic form that enables its visibility (as it occurs with the display of the gesture in *Reocupación*, or by naming silenced words in *Pescate*).+

Behind these mechanisms lies a very precise **notion of art, a belief in the transforming power of a piece, which is capable of acting swiftly on oneself and the others.** And there is also an extraordinary force of desire. **Loving desire, desire of the image, desire to make desire "speak" so as to revolutionize every form of expression and demonstration. It is from this destabilizing, voluntarily imprecise and threatening area where questions surface and certainties escape, that the female element takes hold of Gabriela Golder's work.**

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Turbulences Vidéo #68

By means of a series of questions, compilations and a selection of extracts around memory and cultural practices, we started an open dialogue that would allow us to get closer to those who now read these words. The following text may be understood as a free essay, an incidental music score, a conveying of shared experiences, of forms, ways of doing and viewpoints on writing and the artistic practice for two voices and different handwriting for a probable infinite grammar.

Forms of Memory and Cultural Action

A dialogue between Gabriela Golder (Argentina) and Virginia Villaplana (Spain).

by Virginia Villaplana

Can memory be postulated as a personal gesture, an intimate trait that is transformed into a public event? Ana Longoni. Ejercicios de (otra) memoria, Buenos Aires, Muntref, 2006.

Virginia Villaplana: What models do you defend in your artistic practice? (participative research with social groups, interview methodology, documentary studies) What were your beginnings like? How do you collaborate when you create the representations of the people who appear in your pieces?

The story of my life does not exist. That does not exist, there is never a center. Nor is there a path, nor a line. There are vast landscapes that insinuate that there was someone, it is not true, there was no one. Marguerite Duras

Gabriela Golder: My training was in film, at the Film University. I had just taken different Communication Science and Sociology classes and was quite disenchanted. I was **not interested in market research, nor certain**

strategies, nor the dogmas, nor...

I had a special interest in Philosophy, Theology, the subjects that triggered questioning.

At that time the Film University had just been created and that is where I went. And all my energies were set on that path. Back then I wrote, did plays, sculpture and thought that film enveloped that entire world. Immediately after I started University, I came across a class where students would watch, discuss and make video art (now that term has dissolved). And that is the path I took, to date. I finished college, obtained a "Director" degree (the inverted comas denote how peculiar I have always thought that term is), yet I have always worked with video, and by video I am including Super 8 and even other film formats. That is, I



Arzorro, 2009, Installation video + Web + On line Performance, Linz, Ars Electronica © Gabriel Golder

am referring to language.

From that moment, increasingly, it has all been about opening, generating doubts in me and others, starting discourses.

It becomes increasingly difficult for me to say THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO SAY, it is more about saying, raising, starting the game, taking the floor... I want to travel down that path, I want to listen to others, I want to understand certain things by means of others, I want to find the definitions of worlds among others' worlds, and in turn, I want to interpolate, to ask, to question.

I'm writing you all this from another world, a world of appearances. In a way the two worlds communicate with each other. Memory is to one what history is to the other. An impossibility. Legends are born out of the need to decipher the indecipherable. Memories must make do with their delirium, with their drift. A moment stopped would burn like a frame of film blocked before the furnace of the projector. Chris Marker, *Sans Soleil*, science fiction and documentary essay-film, 1982.

(And obviously...we compile)

I, like you, have tried with all my might to fight forgetfulness. Like you, I have forgotten. Like you, I

have wanted to have an inconsolable memory, a memory of shadows and stone. I have struggled every day, with all my might, against the horror of not completely understanding the reason behind remembering. Like you, I have forgotten. Why deny the evident need for memory? Marguerite

Duras, script and dialogues from the film *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, by Alain Resnais, 1959.

Gabriela Golder: So, as I usually say, I believe that my journey, my path is circular, permanently fluctuating between THE SELF and THE OTHERS and between one and thing and another thing, many paths crossing one another.

Sometimes I cannot hear the others, I need to come back to myself, shut down, look inside and make other videos and writings, and then I come back out, different. I think, I do, and every time what begins changes, my thoughts are transformed by my creations and vice versa.

And thus the movement becomes permanent, looking inside, going out, looking outside, coming back to me...

My world fluctuates and I play with that, with the oscillation. I allow myself to be interpolated, questioned, penetrated.

Recently, after making projects that included many others narrating for me, telling for me, sharing with me their view of the world — I am referring to **Reocupación** (“Reoccupation” 2006-2010), **Arroró** [Argentine lullaby] (2009), and **Dolor** (“Pain”, 2010)— I needed to return to me, to that that which is intimate, small and more silent. I needed to look inside to then come out again. And that is still the case.

My approaching others happens more or less spontaneously at first, I intend it to be human, or rather, like a beaver’s work, construction work. I approach someone or an organization, I ask them, I ask rather basic questions at first, I listen, I listen a great deal and I plan a next encounter, and that way I get close to other people, I tell them of my project and I do so even with some doubts.

Other times it is different.

For example, when I did **Arroró** (2009), the contacts were different. In general, I recorded at the first meeting, because what emerged did so because of the meeting. But people **called me on the phone, told me stories and** then I proposed to them, why don’t we record, why don’t you sing a song to me. (I remember thousands of anecdotes like that).

Even though I have read a lot about documentary making, I took a graduate course, I watch a great deal of them, etc... I **still try to make a different kind of approach**, more like an offer to do something together. Naturally everything that I have read, watched, etc., stays with me.

Once I was working on a project with some unemployed people who did group work with a psychologist. They were very **depressed, unarticulated, not unionized or** socialized. Then everything was worse, with no prospects... The question came up : what will you do for us?

And that question seemed essential to me, because it was about how they could use

what I did. My answer back then was the idea of exchange, sharing ideas and thoughts. I said, I do video and I would like to show you one afternoon what it is that I do, and I’m open for questions, doubts, anything.

And that is what happened, they watched my videos for about three hours, we talked, **had mate [Argentine hot drink] and did a** physical group activity. They made a physical representation, by movement, of their work desire, what they would like to do.

I did not make a piece from that, that was the whole experience, to share that with them.

So the aim is not always to do something **from an activity, a gesture, a movement, but** rather to see what happens.

I am increasingly trying to open to that.

Retaining images, words, gestures, metaphors: is it a form of resistance? Rodrigo Alonso. La necesidad de la memoria. Ejercicios de (otra) memoria, Buenos Aires, Muntref, 2006.

Gabriela Golder: When I did **Reocupación** (2006-2010) the process was different. I approached a group of unemployed workers that was organized and politically solid; they were activists who struggled. So things were different from the start.

Right away they felt that we were equals. They thought that it would be useful for them to talk, to be heard and seen.

At one point, one of the workers even stared at me, stared into the camera (I was behind the **camera) and talked to the president, o** ering (with tears in his eyes) to keep working. He showed his hands and said: my hands can still work. That was a very intense turning point.

If we show you pictures of napalm burns, you'll close your eyes. First you'll close your eyes



Dolor, 2010, Gabriel Golder ©

to the pictures. Then you'll close your eyes to the memory. Then you'll close your eyes to the facts.

Harum Farocki

The experience with **Dolor** (Pain) was different. I was living in Canada at the time and going through a very painful personal situation. Like never before in my life, the concept of Pain surfaced. I would say to myself: I have **Pain**. I felt Pain, I lived Pain.

Shortly after that I had the need to listen, to find the self between words and images, between narrations and other experiences... I invited several women, most of whom were immigrants, to tell me what is Pain. But I asked them, in order to define Pain, to choose a text, a text that to them was Pain. And I proposed their inhabiting my home with narrations of Pain. Each of them chose a space and read. I listened and observed and then the stories of Pain populated my house. Then my Pain became part of all those pains.

In *Pain* we plunge into time, not by means of a psychological memory, which would result in nothing but an indirect representation, nor through an image-memory, which would take us once again to an ancient present, but rather through a deeper kind of memory, a memory of the world that explores time directly and reaches in the past what is subtracted from the recollection. How ridiculous does a flashback seem next to such powerful explorations of time, like in *Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961), with the silent march on the thick hotel carpets opposing each time the image of the past. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I* and *II: The Movement-Image* (1983) and *The Time-Image* (1985)

(I think of **DESPOJOS**)

Then, as usually happens even with the most insignificant dead people, they collected the memories that he could have left them, helping

each other and making a sort of agreement. But we know this little flame, the shivering in the disturbed shadow. And the agreement arrives only later, with oblivion... Alternative translation of Samuel Beckett's *Malone dies*, Ed Alianza, Madrid, 1973, p.57.

Virginia Villaplana: What is memory for you?

Gabriela Golder: Memory helps to create an identity for man, for peoples. Memory is conscience, exercise. My work is about recovering memory, activating memory, inquiring. And observing, showing, making others see, insisting, repeating, insisting again, on the need to create identity from memory.

It is to assume the dialectic between the past, the present and the future.

And the dialectic aspect is also present between memory and oblivion. And then I ask myself about the strategies of memory and the strategies of oblivion.

I believe in the duty of memory and I believe in resistance from that place.

What happens when we travel and try to capture what we experience in the streets and we observe by their side? Is it possible to obtain an overall image? [...]

With hope in their faces, the street vendors approach the few cars passing by [...]

Old women, a man with a kiln, gipsy families with or without cars, peasants with carts, young girls by themselves or sitting in a group by the side of the road [...] Where are their villages? Don't they have a job? Does the long road compensate them after possible buyers for a few marks?

Places and worlds that don't appeal to the media fall into oblivion. The lights go off and in the dark remains that which needs the urgent attention of the public: Poverty, abandonment and fear of the State terror. The image in the film follows the path of the journey, the geographic

line that runs through southeast Europe, from Berlin through Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Rumania and Bulgaria down to the Black Sea. The trip continues in a cargo ship towards Odessa (Ukraine) and from there covers the coast all the way to the southeast corner, Istanbul. We see streets, markets, towns, cities and varying architectures. The encounter with peoples and places generates filmic miniatures. Almost imperceptively, they compare the old with the new, insinuate and clarify.

Some of the still photographs alternated in the film have been taken behind the windshield of the moving car. The car becomes an extension of the camera, which is visible in the unclear image [...] There is a need to photograph [...] situations parading at full speed —precise observations of everyday life that becomes blurry in its fleeting march. After Perestroika and the fall of the wall, the borders of the Eastern states seem to have opened, although they are in reality more insurmountable. Enormous territories have become blank areas in the political map, abandoned regions, cast into the economic crisis unleashed by the industrial and agricultural reform. New power structures have emerged, which are ambiguous, ignored or denied by the international community and which now make the search for vital resources even more difficult. [...] We see the new nomads (teachers, lawyers, peasants, craftsmen) doing business by the numerous border crossings, on the side of the big and small streets, in the ghost towns of rural areas, at markets and bus stops and in the noisy cities of Odessa and Istanbul. Ulrike Ottinger, *Southeast Passage*. A trip to new blank zones of the European map. 2000. Documentary film-installation structured in three parts: the first one travels from Berlin to Eastern Europe; the second and third ones are two urban excursions: Odessa and Istanbul.

Gabriela Golder: ... this passage is quite surprising to me. It is like describing the images of a piece that I would like to create



Vacia, 2005, Gabriel Golder ©

—my family, on both sides, comes from that area (from Bessarabia, from Odessa; my father studied in Moscow a few years before I was born). All the stories, the images, the sounds (**Russian in arguments, in stories, in lullabies**) and later the other stories, communism, the fall of the wall (I think of the fall and the intimate dimension that it had in my own family...). A journey that I once thought of embarking on with my father, who spoke perfect Russian. Returning, inquiring, circulating around vestiges...)

Virginia Villaplana: What kind of poetic dimension do you find in the collective and the personal memory? What is the social dimension, in your opinion, that can be carried out from the art sphere?

Gabriela Golder: In my work I can find two more or less clear categories.

Collective memory/personal memory and the others/the self, or listening to the others and looking inside (as I said before, everything is increasingly mixed together)

As regards the collective memory, we can talk of **Vacas** ("Cows", 2002), **Bestias** ("Beasts", 2004), **Multitud** ("Multitude", 2008), **La lógica de la supervivencia** ("The Logic of Survival", 2009), **Arrorró** (2009): the memories of others but also my own and so many crossovers. **Diáspora** ("Diaspora", 2006): the collective aspect, immigration, women's work, but all of this in my body, so again, the crossover.

Each picture shows a past but deciphers a future. Chris Marker. La Jetée, 1962.

With regard to personal memory, we can think of **Vacío** ("Void", 2005): my memory, my reflection, my discovery; **En memoria de los pájaros** ("In Memory of the Birds", 2000): mine, that of others, collective memory; **Reocupación** (2006-2010): the memory of workers, the memory of work, but also that of construction/ destruction of a nation's project; **Concierto Diurno** ("Daytime Concert", 2006) and its single-channel version **Doméstico** ("Domestic", 2007): women's memory (what did it mean to them to smash dishes), gender and violence. I also think of the book I wrote with teenage girls in Bad Ems, Germany: **Private Motions-Public Space** (2004), including their stories, their drawings, their pictures, their problems as teenagers, as women...

Also **Postales** ("Postcards", 2000) and **Rescate** ("Rescue", 2009), two Net Art pieces. **Postales** raises the issue of movement, translation, a personal diary and love stories.

Rescate (2009) is also a very personal piece, completely blended in turn with collective memory. **Rescate** (2009) talks of words gone missing, of words in books gone missing, of words written by writers who were assassinated, missing or exiled. Of words recovered.

And I played with these words, gave them visibility, opened a dialogue (it is also an interactive piece, a video installation).

I have just finished a piece I made in San Paolo, in an abandoned hotel from the early 20th century, where something happened that was quite interesting, something like engaging in a dialogue with the thousands of possible stories lived in this hotel. Recover the memories. What would it be like to make a video about this place? It is all fiction, but

everything could have occurred. I allow myself to create stories from possibilities or from the possible stories embedded in the walls, the furniture, the beds... And that movement always emerges, swinging between what is visible and what is imaginable.

So it becomes memory, so it becomes the construction of memory and from there, ludic swinging —sometimes.

I believe that the social dimension can be massive, since it is about raising thoughts, doubts, thoughts again, conscience, visibility, reflection, space. Because it interpolates the other, because it interpolates the situation.

In general I never tell myself, today I will make a piece on collective memory, or today I will make a more intimate piece. I place myself within the space, life runs through me, I let it pierce through me, I think, I think a lot, I get closer, I look around, I think again and I do, I do and I keep thinking. My process involves doing and thinking permanently and simultaneously.

There is a belief that where information is abundant, there is a superabundance of memory. However, the present shows us that is not the case at all. Information is not memory. It does not contribute to memory, but rather works only in its own interest. And its interest is for everything to be immediately forgotten to then assert the unique, abstract truth of the present and then assert itself as the only one adapted to that truth. The more the facts abound, the more the feeling of its undifferentiated equality imposes itself. And the capacity also expands to transform its endless juxtaposition into the impossibility to conclude, to read in the facts the meaning of a story. Jacques Rancière, *Film Fables. Reflections about fiction in film*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2005, p. 182.

Virginia Villaplana: What should we do to prevent memories configured by new technologies in poetic-resistance dimensions

from being reduced to mere technological effects?

Gabriela Golder: In my path, memory, the search for memory, inquiring, they all have to do with an encounter. I meet with the others, listen to them. They ask me questions and new elements are born, many of which were unimaginable.

So technology is used as a tool (in the past I used to pay more attention to the specific “language” created with these tools). In the **case of Arroró** (2009), created with an almost entirely digital platform, emotion is the first thing to emerge, the most powerful part of the project. Even I was surprised, as the project grew, by the emotion emanating, by what happened with the participants, with the recipients.

In the same way, if we look at any other piece, we could consider each of them in detail.

I think of **Pescate** (2009), both in its web format and the installation version, where the words appear “on stage”, on the screen. My **voice names them and rather because it names** them, they appear. I think of the reception **instance and the human voice, in this case** my voice, which is much more powerful than any other media or technological device. And without the voice, this piece ceases to exist. The voice and the register of this voice, the exhaustion, the repetition, the effort, a state, that is the most powerful part of the project.

I can't help but express the existing tensions between the need to take from the past images, teachings, going back to reread, to re-say, to change, and the possibility of a different future. A different “to come” (l' à venir used by Jacques Derrida), a different future, a different thing to be accepted that is not foreseen or foreseeable. How to get out from that past that, unresolved,

repeats itself traumatically. Will we never learn? This afternoon, a far-sighted character in a film (*The Air I Breathe*, Jeho Lee, 2007), talked about his capability to accept that a foreseen future, a future that has already been seen, was then an inalterable future. Only the unknown gives us the possibility, or not, to change something that is to come. **Laurence Passel.**

Virginia Villaplana: What relationship do you propose between memory and story in your artistic practice?

Gabriela Golder: My work contains, in particular, a reflection about memory. And indeed it contains stories, but always through memory. I am interested in the narration, the re-signification, the collective creation, the meanders, the uncertainties.

Story and narration, that's it. Story and narration and thousands of layers, filters, sounds in the far. That is what I collect and compile.

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Turbulences Vidéo #68

To be and not to be

by Rodrigo Alonso

to open closed spaces, or to emphasize silence



by means of deafening sounds. What is private turns public very quickly, what is unimportant gains the solidity of a monument. Although **it might look as an aesthetics of opposition, on the contrary, it is a strong decision to pullout the gist of the situation from what is apparently absent in it.**

Golder's tactic is described by a word whose **sole mention gives the shivers in Argentina:** subversion. Killing subversion was the aim that provoked people's torture, death and **disappearance during the dictatorial government in the 1970's** - the years when the artist lived her childhood. It is not fortuitous that the **echoes of the military process often erupt in her works.**

Nevertheless, the political character of those artworks is much more conclusive **at the level of their narrative and formal construction**, in the power with which the social ruptures, the political fluctuations and **the footprints of history have a repercussion** in the individual existence and in the daily space; in the full understanding of the feminist maxim, according to which, what is personal is political.

According to Michel de Certeau, a tactic is **an action determined by the absence of an own space**, by the need to operate in a foreign ground, organised by a strange law. It is the art of the weak, of the one who makes use of the breaches which allow him to talk in a discursive field dominated by another voice. In **times of censorship, the possibility of naming what was not allowed to be voiced was above all a question of tactics.** Today, Golder makes **these procedures hers, and refers to situations which can be named though might still be not so nice to hear.**

This shift from censorship to the potential of the unsaid marks the artist's work in a particular way. It labels her work historically, aesthetically and politically. It emerges once and again as the result of an elaborate reflection about the

ways to approach conflicting circumstances, **environments and characters in critical dilemmas, or else it appears as the singular** feminine conception of the world. She acts as a sharp look, many times intimate and with sensibility, evoking facts whose vision is not forbidden but which we still find hard to face.

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Turbulences Vidéo #68

Pourquoi tu racontes cette histoire ? D'avantage qu'une question, ce pourrait être un reproche.

Gabriela, chercheuse d'or

by Jean-Paul Fargier

La formule surgit parmi les mots qui frappent, en toutes lettres, du sceau d'une **narrativité déconstruite, les images de Passages** (2009), la plus longues des vidéos de **Gabriela Golder**, entièrement composées de vues prises **dans un appartement abandonné, dévasté, en ruine**. Ces plans fixes sont sous-titrés par des fragments d'un récit, qui ne commence ni ne finit. Effet de récit plutôt, mettant en selle deux personnages (elle, lui) dont on n'ignore tout,

sauf qu'ils (se) parlent, tandis qu'un troisième commente leur dialogue, leurs gestes. Si les images n'étaient si belles dans leur désolation, on décrocherait vite. La lecture de ce faux récit lasse sans tarder. Mais on comprend, vite aussi, que les mots ici n'ont d'autres fonctions que de servir de support aux images, comme on pose une sculpture sur un socle pour l'exposer. Gabriela Golder ne raconte pas : elle montre. C'est même une montreuse remarquable.



Multitud, 2008, Gabriel Golder ©



Domestique, 2007, Gabriel Golder ©

Elle cherche l'or du temps. Les temps sont durs et l'or trouvé confine à l'ordure. Littéralement parfois, même. **Multitude** (2009) se fonde sur une scène de lutte mettant aux prises des pauvres auxquels ont été jetés en pâture des produits gratuits. La scène en son entier relève d'une séquence de journal télévisé ou de documentaire social. Golder la traite par le ralenti, sans commentaire. Un ralenti extrême, n'offrant en pâture aux spectateurs que le remplacement au centre de ce corps à corps tumultueux d'une tache verte par une tache blanche. C'est tout et c'est d'une violence insoutenable. Cette substitution d'une chemise à un polo plongeant vers le même paquet d'on ne sait quoi montre mieux qu'un film discursif l'état du monde, économique et politique.

Même démonstration dans **Cows** (2002), en partant cette fois d'un document,

sans doute diffusé à la télévision, sur un **incident de parcours dans le circuit de la marchandise**, comme on l'apprend à la fin en lisant un carton. Un camion transportant des vaches vers un abattoir s'étant renversé sur la route, les animaux s'étaient dispersés et la population s'était jetée sur les bestiaux, s'appropriant leur viande sauvagement après les avoir tués et dépecés. Gabriela Golder, là, veut surtout donner à voir l'irruption d'une force irréprouvable, mue par le besoin. Et cela **surgit encore du ralentissement des gestes**, décomposés au sein du chaos jusqu'à ne mettre en mouvement que des couleurs **muées en signes, en symboles coupants** : ah ! le rouge de ces quartiers sanguinolents de chair fraîchement arrachée à leurs producteurs. Rouge étendard d'une éruption collective à venir.

On ne pourra, non plus, aller plus loin, faire

plus bref et plus violent dans l'expression du mal-être féminin retourné en révolte (on dit **féminisme, dans les gazettes, pour faire court**) que les quelques plans de **Domestic** (2007). Gros plan de visages de cinq ou six femmes, d'un certain âge, qui brise tour à tour une assiette, hors champ. Le bruit éclate et dans le silence qui suit elles fixent un **instant la caméra, comme on signe un acte grave**. Regard caméra + son off = flèche de la rébellion. La signature la plus percutante est bien sûr placée en queue de peloton (peloton d'exécution dont, spectateur mâle, je me semble la cible). Un seul œil y suffit, mais quel regard ! Une tignasse tombante masquant un œil, l'autre flambe pour deux. C'est à ce genre de détails, recherchés, contrôlés, affichés, que se mesure le talent d'une chercheuse d'or.

L'or d'une chanson d'enfance, récitée par un parent, Gabriela le fait attendre jusqu'à la fin de **Emptiness** (2007), et là aussi c'est un coup formidablement bien joué. Tant d'autres vidéastes l'auraient placé en incipit. Pour **initier ce voyage dans un territoire enfoui de la mémoire, la pampa d'Argentine, terre d'accueil probable des émigrés russes dont descend l'artiste, Gabriela préfère lancer une rafale d'images floues, blanches, presque abstraites, créées par le passage rapide dans le cadre d'un cavalier filmé de trop près (image du père sans doute, auquel le film est dédié)**. Puis c'est le ciel, les champs, les troupeaux, les vaches, les chevaux, la lune, les oiseaux, habitants **immuables de ces espaces où le hasard de la vie a amené celle qui y pose une fois encore ses yeux à la recherche d'un trésor oublié, inoubliable**. Opposition de l'intemporel et du fugitif, de la ténacité et de la chance. Une perle (sonore) vient la couronner.

Performeuse léchant le parquet, Gabriela, **dans Diaspora** (2005) déconcerte et ennuie. Comment faire autrement quand on s'expose prisonnière du cadre, de la durée, de la métaphore. Mais enfin, c'est une installation et

l'on peut n'y jeter qu'un coup d'œil, s'en aller, y revenir, un peu culpabilisé de la laisser seule à son ingrate tâche. Pas d'or à trouver ici ? Peut-être quand même celui d'une humiliation que livre le titre : l'exil n'est jamais heureux, la dispersion toujours triste. Pour dépasser ce **poids du destin, il faut parfois en passer par une exagération de la douleur**. À quatre pattes, la fille d'exilés, ne lèche pas, elle efface. Chaque **coup de langue restaure une possibilité de bonheur**. Avec sa robe qui lui arrive au ras des fesses, l'artiste progresse vers le plaisir. Ouf ! sauvée.

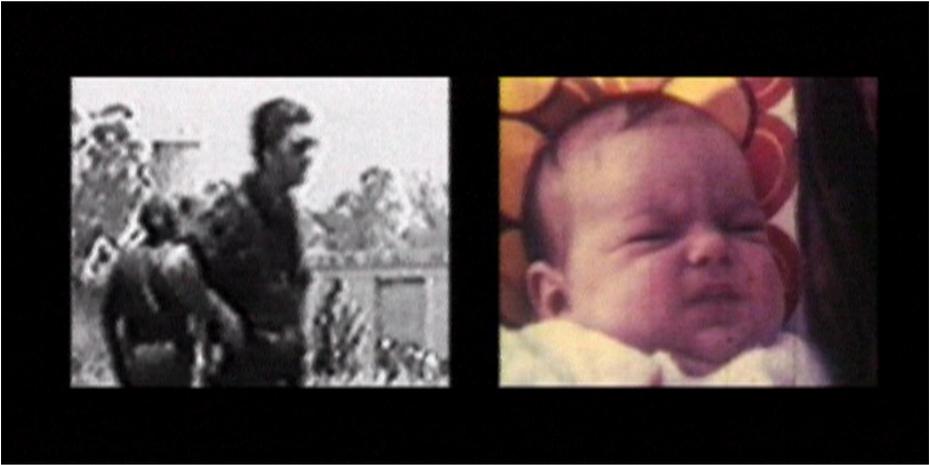
Mais le plaisir est difficile. L'amour rend fou. **Locos de amor** (2009) le proclame en toute innocence. Deux petites filles lisent, en plan fixe et en plan séquence, un récit de folie amoureuse. Scène banale, décrite à coup de poncifs, on dirait du Marguerite Duras appliqué, montrant deux êtres (Elle, Lui) qui s'attirent **et se repoussent sans pouvoir se séparer : pars, reste, je pars, je ne pars pas, je suis venu pour t'emmener, etc.** Elles n'y comprennent rien, **les pauvrettes, elles débitent les mots avec application**. Mais l'or est là justement, dans cette purification par l'indifférence de la verroterie sentimentale. Le sens doit être dégagé de sa gangue. Le texte n'est pas à saisir au premier degré. Il est « exposé » (et explosé) par la diction des lectrices.

Pas de premier degré, jamais. Il en va ainsi de toutes les vidéos de Gabriela Golder, orfèvre subtile. Dans l'art comme dans la nature, l'or se présente rarement pur. Il appartient au spectateur de l'extraire, de le raffiner. De le chercher où il brille. L'or des formes. Partout à l'œuvre chez Gabriela Golder, prolifique trouveuse de formes.

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Turbulences Vidéo #68

En memoria de los Parajos (video - 2000)

Catalog of the World Wide Festival 2000 - Amsterdam



While Claudia Aravena Abu-Ghosh was growing up in Chile during the military regime Gabriela Golder was spending her youth in the Argentine of Videla. Abu-Ghosh made the very successful video **Berlin: been there-to be there** which is a stylistically sensitive description of the recovery of her memories of Chile. Yet for all the similarities between the Chilean terror and its outcome and the terror in the neighbouring country of Argentina, Golder's video bears little resemblance to Abu-Ghosh's work. Both artists were brought up under military dictatorships by adults who were compelled to adopt the survival strategy of selective memory and «simply behaving as though there was nothing the matter». Both seek to shake off the burden of collective memory loss and **to confront the traumas and the painful pasts of their respective countries both have created very** personal, autobiographical works. The result is two totally different videos. Where Abu-Ghosh sits on our heels with her associative approach Golder maintains a distance, simply by calling things by their names. The harsh reality of oppression and her carefree childhood as part of happy family are placed literally side by side. On the left of the image we see black and white pictures of soldiers in armoured cars, while running simultaneously on the right are super-8 colour movies of a typically happy family-playing, eating ice cream, running across the beach. At the bottom of the screen flow the subtitles of a Spanish voice over which portrays the terror in graphic terms before concluding with the words: «I have seen everything. I have seen nothing». This summarizes the paradox with which Golder is wrestling: how was such a happy youth possible while thousands of people were being tortured and murdered just round the corner?

Autour de *Ceremony of innocence // Postales*

by Luc Dall'Armellina

Introduction

Ce texte est le produit d'un remaniement (extrait/modification/sélection) d'un autre texte : **Support fluide-espace virtuel, l'écran agi écrit pour les rencontres de Lure en août 2000** et dont le thème était «typographier l'espace».

Il s'agissait ici de retenir les aspects descriptifs de deux dispositifs afin d'en faire ressortir les dimensions communes et les particularités.

La question de la narration orale, linéaire, couplée à un dispositif hypermédiateur **de manipulation y est interrogée avec en introduction, trois schémas qui permettent de resituer les dispositifs décrits comme systèmes dynamiques** incluant la machine **avec ses capacités computationnelles et de connectivité**, l'auteur, avec sa production littéraire et algorithmique intentionnée, le lecteur et ses intentions actées. Cet ensemble complexe faisant oeuvre non pas en soi mais à travers une expérience de l'oeuvre sans cesse actualisée.

Les uns pensent, dit-on, les autres agissent mais la vraie condition de l'homme c'est de penser avec ses mains. Jean-Luc Godard

Deux dispositifs, l'un en ligne (**Postales de Gabriela Golder - web - juin 2000**), l'autre, hors-ligne (**Ceremony of Innocence - cd-rom - 1997**). Tous deux se présentent à bien des égards comme oeuvres intermédiaires, hybrides, empruntant aux codes du cinéma, de la littérature, et du multimédia. Non pas tant dans leur mise en scène que dans la resémiotisation [Lellouche] que chacun de

ces dispositifs fait des médias auxquels ils empruntent.

Narration séquentielle et dispositif interactif

Les auteurs de Ceremony comme de Postales défendent un propos, ils proposent un récit à dévoiler et à construire par les intentions d'un lecteur [Jean-Louis Weissberg], dans les deux cas, une narration sonore se trouve comme libérée («Postales») et révélée («Ceremony») par une intervention sur le dispositif. Les deux dispositifs partagent en commun de proposer simultanément une narration sonore (voix enregistrée) et un environnement actable : texte ou images de textes, images indicelles ou symboliques, vidéos, animations.

Récit et oralité - Les voix off portent l'histoire de manière linéaire par le mode du récit à la première personne (**Postales**) ou par celui de la parole à l'autre absent (**Ceremony**) propres à l'échange épistolaire. La présence par la voix semble ici donner le corps nécessaire - souvent minoré dans un dispositif numérique - à l'incarnation. Le canal audio du lecteur peut être occupé à écouter l'histoire (**Postales**), **sans se perdre en endroits de lecture - réputée difficile à l'écran - pendant qu'il fouille l'oeuvre de son curseur découvreur.**

Image et activité - Les textes-images eux **prennent en charge ce non-temps du récit** (supporté par le canal audio) mais qui va **le libérer (Ceremony)** ou l'orienter dans ses dimensions plastiques et comportementales (**Postales**). À cet égard, le terme de lecture



Postales, web site, Gabriel Golder ©

paraît trouver ici une grande légitimité. L'action **sur le dispositif ne sert plus comme avec le livre une lecture de décodage du langage** (fonction assurée ici par l'audio) mais plutôt une quête **des intentions cachées sous les images** par une fouille active.

Les questions du récit et de l'activité se **jouent ici dans une relative autonomie** de temps et sont en même temps prises dans un rapport conditionnel au niveau opératoire. Ces deux dispositifs présentent plusieurs niveaux d'accès ou de lecture, le mode d'apparition des signes (images, textes, animations) se constitue comme code d'écriture au même titre que l'agencement spatial et temporel des signes eux-mêmes (images, textes, vidéos) ou que leurs comportements. Chacun de ces codes s'ajoutant aux autres par strates pour former, sur le même plan de réception, l'expérience de l'œuvre.

Modalités de présence des signes - ou point de vue sémioactif (apparition de type présence-absence - luminosité de type transparence-opacité, couleurs de type froid-chaud, éclatements de type signe-matrice-pixel, mouvement de type libre ou contraint, cinétique de type pesanteur-apesanteur, limites de type champ-hors champ, espace de type agrandissement-réduction, rotation)

Postures du lecteur - ou point de vue du lecteur : alternance de positions **spectatorielles** et manipulatoires ou «ergodiques» [Espen Arseth] pour **Ceremony** et co-existence de ces deux positions pour **Postales**

Dispositif sensible et algorithmique - ou point de vue de l'auteur, compris au sens de sa production : l'œuvre numérique et ses possibles, faite des réseaux complexes de **relations entre contenu sensible et programme intelligent**.

Dispositif computationnel - ou point de vue de la machine et de ses extensions : l'ordinateur avec ses capacités variables, ses temps d'accès relatifs, son écran de taille et **de résolution variable, son dispositif sonore** intégré ou externe, son clavier et sa souris.

Ces rapports posés comme hypothèse devraient servir l'idée encore peu thématifiée que l'œuvre numérique fait non seulement «œuvre ouverte», «œuvre en mouvement» [Eco] mais opère comme présentification des intentions d'un auteur révélées par les intentions d'un lecteur. Ceci, à travers deux écritures distinctes structurellement (les textures du récit d'une part et l'ensemble des programmes d'autre part) mais identifiées comme une seule (le cédérom comme œuvre) pour le lecteur qui utilise l'ordinateur comme instrument de médiation.

Art technologique ou design numérique

Les liens étroits, tissés entre ces notions pourraient donner quelques perspectives à l'idée que l'œuvre multimédia est une œuvre mutante, hors des formes repérées, parce que pensée structurellement à travers un médium dont le propre est de posséder lui-même la capacité de gérer et de générer des systèmes **en mouvement , faisant naître de nouvelles**

modalités lectorielles et forçant la définition de nouvelles grilles de décryptage. Cette idée déjà développée [Philippe Bootz] dans le contexte spécifique des textes génératifs sous l'angle de la «profondeur de dispositif» pose la question des frontières entre l'œuvre et le produit, avec en toile de fond le débat sur «art ou design interactif».

Il ne s'agit pas tant d'engager ici le débat que de pointer, en marge, qu'on ne peut éluder trop longtemps le sujet. La question vivante de l'art - qui se déplace en même temps que son objet se transforme - fait l'objet du champ de l'esthétique et prend appui sur des positions philosophiques. Elle se pose, pressante, avec l'œuvre numérique. Elle a été au centre de nombreux débats lors de ISEA00 et de NUMER00. Maurice Benayoun y a proposé [table ronde d'ouverture de NUMER00] que «l'art restait une question» alors que le design, plus ancré dans le partage **des codes culturels constituait un ensemble** de «réponses provisoires». Si cette proposition ne clôt pas la question, c'est du moins un point de vue pragmatique et pertinent dans notre contexte et qui me semble rejoindre celui de Sophie Lavaud (texte «A propos de Myth II» du 24 janvier 01).

J'utiliserai donc à propos de ces deux dispositifs le plus souvent le terme d'œuvre puisqu'il ne s'agit ni d'applicatifs logiciels (répondant à des fonctions), ni de jeux (avec règles, entraînement, apprentissage) **ni non plus de produits culturels éducatifs** (avec ses modes et processus d'accès aux connaissances). Dans les deux cas décrits ici, le non-dit de l'intention repose sur le pari d'un engagement du lecteur par identification, par sympathie, par capillarité pourrait-on dire. Les personnages (dans les deux dispositifs) ne **parlent pas tant de leur amour, de leur désir,** de leur solitude, que de solitude, de désir

et d'amour. Leurs questions deviennent les nôtres parce qu'une magie se produit, celle peut-être d'une écriture (multi-médiée), qui parvient à atteindre l'universel en nous. Cette **part irréductible de fragilité, de constante inconstance, hors temps et hors espace,** archaïque et sublimée, partageable à travers une œuvre.

(...Autour de «Ceremony of innocence...)

Postales - Gabriela Golder - dispositif web
- juin 2000

Postales est un site web écrit en 1999-2000 par Gabriela Golder. Présenté par son auteur comme un «journal intime... avec ses fautes de français». Il utilise les ressources médias du texte, de l'image photographique et symbolique ainsi que du son (audio) et se lit à travers un navigateur web de génération 4 interprétant le DHTML et gérant le son en streaming (en flux continu) de RealAudio.

Le principe de *Postales*

Postales est un hypertexte de près de 220 pages-fragments inter-reliés dans une logique propre à l'auteur, chaque page possède de un à trois liens possibles. Chaque consultation **peut donc révéler la lecture active de di érents** chemins d'expérience. Les liens textes ou images sont masqués, donc à chercher, souvent en dehors des zones attendues. La particularité de ce dispositif est que le lancement de la première page déclenche la **lecture linéaire, inaltérable : une narration de** 35 minutes. Ce récit est celui d'un texte de l'auteur, dans un français coloré d'un accent Argentin et interprété sans hâte, avec un ton nostalgique, parfois sussuré.

Le contrat du lecteur

Le dispositif web est a priori non documenté (pas de jaquette, de livret) au contraire de la **plupart des supports cédérom, et suppose** une entrée directe dans la pratique de l'œuvre. Peut-être faudrait-il évoquer ici le «billet de recommandation» ou tout au moins le moyen par lequel le lecteur a eu connaissance de ce dispositif. Il n'est pas indifférent de savoir s'il vient d'un moteur de recherche (selon quels mots-clés ?), par un article sur un magazine (lequel ?), sur les recommandations d'un ami... Et également de savoir en quels termes, dans quel contexte, ce dispositif a été présenté. Le contrat implicite du web est peut-être justement du côté d'un usage sans médiation, ou tout au moins qui ne se fait pas par un canal unique, voire identifiable.

Le générique

De la notion de générique, on pourrait dire qu'il ne se traduit pas dans les mêmes formes que pour **Ceremony** mais qu'il n'est peut-être pas inexistant. Le son par exemple, met un «certain temps» à arriver (trafic, vitesse de connexion, occupation du serveur...) et l'auteur en tient compte. La phrase «sans s'arrêter» est ainsi répétée en plusieurs cycles. On peut voir là une façon de gérer ce que l'on **connaît sous le nom de loading, ce temps de** chargement des médias avant qu'un dispositif web soit en mesure de réagir comme convenu par l'auteur. Cette réitération fonctionne en fait comme un générique, elle installe l'ambiance, met en condition par le ton, la voix, la fréquence, on peut «perdre» le texte puisqu'il n'est pas encore important dans son énoncé.

Champ - hors champ

Terme emprunté au cinéma, le champ - hors champ désigne ici les nombreux cas où l'image est plus grande que l'écran. Cet espace que l'on s'accorde à concevoir comme

une continuité, comme espace homogène. Ce décor accessible depuis ma fenêtre - la chaîne de montagne des Aravis - je peux l'imaginer «continuer d'exister» hors de mon champ de vision, «hors du cadre» puisque je connais ces lieux et que ma mémoire sait s'y référer. C'est le cas par exemple de la vision à travers une longue vue sur pied. Après un long panoramique, notre image mentale s'est construite à partir d'une succession d'images que l'œil ne voit plus mais que notre esprit a mentalisé. Je peux imaginer un «avant» et un «après» spatiaux - temporels pour une suite ou un «avant» de l'image dans le champ.

Beaucoup de dispositifs font usage de ce **procédé, Postales** à la particularité de l'utiliser, que l'image soit un texte ou une image. Ce qui ne manque pas de causer d'étonnants effets. La lecture même est perturbée puisque le texte se donne à voir dans une temporalité : celle de la vitesse à laquelle il va traverser l'écran.

Trace et mémoire

L'usage du champ - hors champ se trouve intimement lié à l'écran numérique et y implique temporalité et spatialité. Si l'image déborde l'écran c'est qu'elle est «très grande». Cette notion imprécise a toutefois une valeur et une réalité : le début de l'image passant comme «hors de l'écran» initialise les phénomènes de traces, jeux d'oublis, résidus de mémoire. Qu'ai-je retenu de cette image qui est passée ? Y avait-il un ou plusieurs liens cachés que je n'ai pas vu ? Nous en cherchons les signes et indices dans l'espace de notre mémoire à court terme. «Postales» joue de ces registres et certains scroll verticaux et horizontaux possèdent plusieurs liens. Si nous les manquons, il nous faut «recharger» la page, refaire une tentative pour accrocher la suite. Le nombre des liens et la possibilité que l'on a de



les manquer contribue à donner «du prix» à notre lecture.

Nous finissons par savoir que nous faisons des choix, contre d'autres, que nous prenons des chemins et passons à côté d'autres. L'apparition n'a qu'un temps, il faut être de celui-là ou re-passer. «Il tempo fugge e non s'arresta un'ora». Mais c'est là le propre de l'hypertexte, de torturer le lecteur à chaque instant de décision, à chaque lien. De l'installer dans la perte. Brouiller les pistes, musarder, se promener dans les marges d'un texte qui se tisse là (à l'écran) en même temps qu'ici (sur le fil narratif qui nous est lu). Nous pouvons avoir l'impression de lire le journal intime, ou plutôt de le consulter (l'effeuiller) en même temps que l'auteur nous parle. La navigation hypertextuelle accompagne ici l'écoute, lui **fait écho comme une volonté de lecture par le geste**. Et nous l'avons vu plus haut, les liens ne sont pas «documentés» comme ils peuvent l'être en html (lien actif, lien suivi, lien cliqué codé en couleurs), la notion d'historique n'est plus efficiente ici (même si elle le reste au niveau inférieur du navigateur par l'accès à l'historique ou aux signets).

L'attachement

Les pages où le curseur se fait le départ d'une phrase qui le suit dans ses déplacements, crée inmanquablement une tension visuelle entre l'objet désigné et ce message «flottant» comme un drapeau. Cette tension est le produit d'une friction linguistique et visuelle, le texte (la lettre) prend par la programmation (comportement), des attributs d'objet vivant (soumis aux lois physiques de notre monde) sans pour autant perdre son message textuel. Cet effet appelé aussi cursor trails ou «effet élastique» est intéressant au-delà de l'effet cinétique (vitesse, masse, accélération) qu'il opère visuellement. L'accompagnement du curseur par les textes-images dans leurs traversées de l'écran génère également une lecture plus contextuelle, plaçant les textes au plus près de notre avatar d'intentions actées (la petite flèche noire pointant à 10h55).

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