

I Am a Stranger, and I Am Moving
Cabello/Carceller

Text by Pablo Martínez

Every revolution, however great it may be, begins in the body itself (that of oneself), which is flesh but also, as the philosopher Baruch Spinoza pointed out, power and affection. It is true that liberation movements are collective and it is the force of its multitude that changes the course of events by means of revolution. However, it also remains true that throughout history a legion has fought for their freedom and for this they have been (and are) the subject of permanent violence that attacks their very existence. It is the substratum of *jotería*¹ (fags, tomboys, trans*, the queer, in short) that Gloria Anzaldúa claims to find at the base of every social liberation movement. Perhaps because the queer are always in rebellion, disregarding the norm through every gesture. Through their research, the collective Cabello/Carceller challenges any conception of identity as something monolithic and makes visible the violent impositions of prefabricated gender roles to the body.

One of the central pieces of this exhibition *I am a Stranger, and I am Moving* is *Movimientos para una manifestación en solitario [Movements for a demonstration on one's own]* (2020), that starts from the fact that sex-dissident and gender-discordant subjects carry their bodies as a flag. In their public exhibition they make their existence visible, all whilst risking their own disappearance. In the video, Perla Zúñiga moves, dances and shakes a banner in which you can read the quote by Spinoza "LO QUE PUEDE UN CUERPO" [WHAT A BODY CAN DO]. Her body becomes the basis of visual lexicon that makes her gestures loud and clear. With her movements, she composes a significant semiotic that is in itself queer since the matter of which it is composed consists of the same gestures that were erased from history. With this proposal, Cabello/Carceller not only cease the revolt from being abstract, showing its incarnate nature, corporalized, but they also restore in history accompanying the body, the gestures. Gestures are "atomized and particular movements [that] tell stories that constitute the occurrence of history. They convey an ephemeral knowledge of queer possibilities that are lost in a phobical majority public culture," said José Esteban Muñoz. Perla moves alone in a white scenery that allows her to travel back and forth through the story from which queers have been left out, the text of the political avant-garde. Perla's revolt is pure affirmation of life and has no other adversary than the norm. Not having an antagonistic character does not turn the manifestation into a narcissistic exaltation of the self. In her solo movements, she defends all the

movements of those who dance and danced for the freedom to be a body. One of the widespread criticisms in certain spheres of classical militancy is the opposition of diversity against the power of unified struggle, branded as narcissists who embrace movements based on affections. It is as if the vibration of the bodies in the square, or on the dance floor, were not able to alter the experience. It is precisely in that being with others that the power and joy of the spinozian antidualist bet resides. In the affirmation of the dance there is the paradox pointed out by Judith Butler that when bodies appear in the square they do so at the same time in their vulnerability and endurance. There lies their potency.

Lo que puede un cuerpo (After Baruch Spinoza), 2020, the white linen banner with Spinoza's quote is placed in the showroom next to the video as a remnant of the action and as the only material witness to the bodies' movement. During her dance the fabric is Perla's banner, flag, veil, dress and receiving blanket. Its significance changes during the video's six-minute duration, ceasing to be waved to be in-corporated. In 1964 Hélio Oiticica began creating his Parangolés, pieces of fabric to be worn but not exhibited within a multisensory experience of incorporation. Oiticica was always interested in drawing a world that came close to those considered marginal in society. Although, it was without aspiration of giving voice to the disinherited, nor correcting social fracture. In the exhibition, Cabello/Carceller have incorporated Oiticica together with other "outsiders" in the series *Notas al pie [Footnotes]*. *Notas al pie* are a set of collaged drawings with quotations and references to Pedro Lemebel, Tórtola Valencia, Agustina González López "La zapatera", David Wojnarowicz and the aforementioned Oiticica. This set of drawings, collages and photographs make up a kind of portrait for an alternative art history, in which the characters are rescued by Cabello/Carceller. These characters are not examples of good behavior, but are there to remind us of "the failure", "the mad", "the sidosxs²", "the insolent" and "embarrassing", that have historically been labelled queer people. They are footnotes because the body of the text historically cannot withstand these dislocated characters, those who lived outside of their time. Queer subjects have never been granted a past (they have been erased from history), nor do they have a future, since it is shaped only for heterosexual reproduction. The queer must fight for their survival, misunderstood in the midst of the social madness of each age. In the silver whistle *Locura social [Social Madness]* and the photomontage *La persecución (con Agustina González López, la Zapatera) #1 [Persecution (with Agustina González López, the shoemaker)#1]* it is stated that the world suffers from a social madness "that the one marked as crazy is sane and that the

society in which they live does not understand them and therefore misjudges them". As if queer people were foreigners in their own time.

In the portrait- footnote, a tribute collage, *La extrañeza (con David Wojnarowicz) #1* [*Strangeness (with David Wojnarowicz) #1*] is written in red ink, the phrase that gives the title to the exhibition: I am a Stranger and I am Moving. This is a quote from David Wojnarowicz's lecture at the Drawing Center in New York a few months before his death from aids complications in July 1992. During the conference Wojnarowicz enunciates from a self that can no longer be extracted from his own death, a self that is disappearing and hates people because he recognises that disappearance. "I am vibrating isolated among you all" he says, in a variation of the conference published in Artforum in March of that year. We could affirm that the same experience dominates this exhibition composed of a set of vibrant beings whose dissent and struggle makes them isolated, harassed, agitated and attack for their radical imagination and vital strength. For their movements and their gestures. In today's time, Wojnarowicz's words are laden with new and multiple senses and Cabello/Carceller invoke that unfamiliarity. They bet on a world that is not limited to the reproduction of the norm and its violence. To do this, in this show, our dead move between us and their gestures embody them in our bodies. Vibrating. Isolated among others, among you.

Pablo Martínez (Valladolid, 1979. Head of Programs at MACBA, Barcelona)

¹ Jotería - action, gesture, sentence, voice or people perceived to be gay or gender non-conforming.

² Sidoso/a – pejorative term for someone who is AIDS sufferer