



ANATOMY
OF AN UNKNOWN
PROFESSION

Art installation
1 — 30.07.2023

cia. miquelbarcelona

EL BORN
CCM

Ajuntament de
Barcelona



«Vulnerability is a legitimate stance
from which one can act and
generate beauty and thought.»

Paul B. Preciado

Is dance counterculture?

This question deserves an answer that generates movement. Dance encompasses many dances, and counterculture includes many margins. And to talk about dance or counterculture, it is important to know what we are placing at the core.

Dance was origin and is a human condition. When dance was at the core, we were a tribe. When dance was sacred, we were ritual. When dance was popular, we were a gathering. When dance was real, we were a class. When dance was classical, we were an elite. When dance was modern, we were adolescents. Now that dance is contemporary, we can put whatever it aims to be at the core.

Ever since dance has been contemporary, it has aimed to be many dances. It seems to aim to be intellectual, but more importantly it wants to be a profession. It also aims to be a meeting point with an injured public. It has been the witness of too many gazes that have sought to understand it with theatre eyes and knows that doing certain dances questions the ailing, unfair and violent system in which we are living.

If we talk about dance in Catalonia, the dance I know is inevitably counterculture because it has no institutional support befitting the scope of the social and professional practice that exists and is not known/recognised. The cultural policy on dance neither educates nor offers tools to defend, understand or value it. Therefore, this artistic installation is an educational act that I hope enables visitors to understand it and that prompts (re)actions.

There are also hierarchies among disciplines, cultural sectors and performing arts; just as urban dances do not have the same resources as classical dance—although I'm guessing that urban dance is much more common today than classical dance—a theatre director is not the same as a choreographer (and we end up becoming 'movement consultants' due to the lack of referents, knowledge or agreements). Perhaps this is also because, due to the nature of its practices, the dance sector is an understanding, inclusive, transversal and especially female sector.

'Counterculture' is a concept which I would like to revisit from today's perspective. This project aims to be a confrontation and to arouse an uncomfortable, contradictory attitude. It seeks to contribute to pulling back the veil of an obsolete, aggressive system (the cultural system, too). It aims to share the reality of a profession that is subjugated to dynamics and policies whose particularities are not known, to a worrisome professional invisibility and to harsh physical, psychological and emotional consequences. And it is essentially an attempt to repair which harnesses all the creative tools afforded by movement and dance to help heal the memory of performing bodies and their effort to achieve excellence—both invented and learned—in their human and poetically imperfect corporeality..

«Trauma is not what happens to you;
it's what happens inside you as a
consequence of what happened to you.»

Gabor Maté

All these bodies you will see comprise a common body that we are calling *Anatomy of an unknown profession*. We would like you to learn about this body in order to tell you about some injuries. To do so, all we ask is that you listen and reflect with us.

Artistic proposal

The installation's artistic look was co-designed by Àurea Estellé Alsina, Carlos Martorell and Jou Serra and directed by Miquel Barcelona Palau.

The **testimonials** were taken from a survey that the company sent out on bad practices in the cultural sector, which was available from May to July 2022, along with two meetings to discuss the topic held at the La Turbo creation space in the Sants neighbourhood. Artistically, from listening and the voices we saw an intimate, ephemeral and familiar approach to the experiences of 12 people.

The person behind each testimonial associated their experience connected to bad practices—their injury—with a visible **body part**, a temporary sculpture of which was made. We wanted to shed light on and dignify this vulnerable injury seeking repair and allow it to be touched. Part of this process involved plastering the injured bodies to create an artwork from them using alginate moulding powder, turning the processes backwards. Moulds, which are usually functional objects but are never displayed, come to the fore and turn into sculptures themselves. Thus, the artistic piece is elevated to become part of the process, dignifying what is usually hidden. This type of topographic anatomy-as-sculpture is temporary, because the injury should not be eternal but instead we want to help it scar over in the repair process.

The **light sculpture** explores the vulnerability of bodies which open up to be shared; exposed, sensitive, worn-out bodies which leave a footprint. The piece is expressed via the vibration between matter and light, that point of convergence where the frequencies are diffracted and communicate with each other. A material that is quite common in dance, mirrors, plays with the laser light to express that invisible part of bodies, as well as this vulnerable strength which makes this profession so special.

The **3D scan** entails a reflection on how we see dance: a working body which seeks (an absurd) perfection in the arrangement and expression of movements, an initial surface layer which often leads us to forget the entire process behind it.

The **sound space**, in contrast, is a complementary quest in the visual imaginary. It inquires into injury and memory, that is, what is not visible: the very physicality of what changes and leaves its mark. For example, we have sampled a motif (cliché) from a piece, *Spiegel im Spiegel* by Arvo Pärt, that is danced often, and we ran it through the filter of PaulStretch, an open-source tool that enables a sound to be stretched infinitely until it becomes unrecognisable.

The entire space is wrapped in a **vocabulary of healing**, which is often needed to address these issues and to keep learning, understanding and resignifying.

Fact sheet

Direction and artistic coordination:

Miquel Barcelona Palau

Installation space, sculptures
and graphic design:

Àurea Estellé Alsina

Sound space and cartographies:

Carlos Martorell

Space and light sculpture:

Jou Serra

Technical coordination:

Jou Serra

Company manager:

Biel Martínez Lorca

Administration and production:

Francisca Araújo

Recording:

Ignasi Castañé

Group accompaniment:

Bea Vergés

Testimonials:

Laura Alcalà, Nora Baylach,
Fàtima Campos, Toni Gutiérrez,
Natalia Fernandes, Helena Gispert,
Martí Güell, Núria Hontecillas,
Merce Matus, Sandra Pujol, Junyi Sun
i Clémentine Télesfort.

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Culture and Memory and the Miquel
Barcelona Company with the aPdC and
La Turbo complicity.
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Life installations

— Performances calendar

Tuesdays, thursdays and saturdays
from 18.00 to 19.30 h

- 4.07 — **Merce Matus**, *Karisma*
- 6.07 — **Junyi Sun**, *L'abraçada*
- 8.07 — **Clémentine Télesfort**,
Maneres de tocar un cos
- 11.07 — **Natalia Fernandes**,
Anatomía y Estrategia
- 13.07 — **Laura Alcalà**, *La Tullida*
- 15.07 — **Helena Gispert**, *Apagar el foc*
- 18.07 — **Toni Gutiérrez**, *PRE*
- 20.07 — **Sandra Pujol**, *Commirar*
- 22.07 — **Martí Güell**, *L'últim ballarí*
- 25.07 — **Nora Baylach**, *El dubte*
- 27.07 — **Núria Hontecillas**, *Desarrelada*
- 29.07 — **Fàtima Campos**, *Petricor*

This installation is the first piece in the
Counterculture Project.

Forthcoming pieces: *Utopia* (the Scenes
series premieres at the Auditori on 11
and 12 February 2024) and *Ecosystem*
(opening at the Museu de la Vida Rural in
L'Espluga de Francolí in March 2024).

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