

Code Translation in the Performing Arts: Interactions between the Body and the Cinematographic Image in the Company Los Detectives

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: María García Vera is an actress, creator and stage researcher. Doctor *Cum Laude* in Audiovisual Communication from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra with the first applied-research thesis approved in Catalonia. Degree in Acting from the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona and in Cinema from the Université Pathéon-Sorbonne. She is co-director of the company Los Detectives, with which she has presented the pieces *Kopfkinó* (2016), *Pienso casa digo silla* (2019), *Concrete Matter* (2021) and *Les Chevaliers Capítulo 1* (2024). Her research focuses on code translation between cinema and the stage from the actress' perspective.

English translation, Neil CHARLTON.

Abstract

This article analyses the translation of artistic codes between cinema and theatre through three case studies: the films *Kopfkinó* (2021) and *Pienso casa digo silla* (2021), and the video essay *Bellas artrópodos* (2022). Framed within arts-based applied research, the paper explores how interdisciplinary dialogue redefines the relationships between body, stage and cinematic language, expanding the boundaries of artistic representation. The methodology combines performative tools and editing as a central line, fostering collaborative and non-hierarchical processes from a feminist perspective. The results highlight the impact of translation between media, revealing how intermediality gives rise to a "third language" that redefines both practices. In *Kopfkinó* and *Pienso casa digo silla*, this hybridisation translates into a narrative where theatrical resources, such as frontality and bodily gestures, are reshaped, emphasising intimacy and emotional depth. For its part, *Bellas artrópodos* functions as a conceptual synthesis that uses editing to question dominant narratives, proposing a converging visual language that reflects on gender, desire and body. The video essay is characterised by its humour and light-heartedness, approaching images from a critical perspective that creates alternative narratives. This study concludes that artistic research not only generates knowledge but also transforms the company's creative methodologies, promoting new avenues of exploration and collaboration in the performing and cinematic arts.

Keywords: code translation, intermediality, performativity, editing, applied research, performing arts, cinema and theatre, feminism, visual narrative, artistic collaboration

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Introduction

The convergence of cinema and theatre opens up a space for exploration in contemporary performing arts. This article analyses how code translation between these two media enriches narrative and theatrical reflection. The starting point is the work of the company Los Detectives, a group of female creators of which I am a member, that integrates cinematic elements to transform its stage pieces. This study addresses intermediality and code translation between cinema and theatre in Los Detectives, focusing its analysis on two films made from the company's early pieces and the video essay *Bellas artrópodos*, the main case study.

Since it was founded in 2016, Los Detectives has developed an interdisciplinary practice in which the actor's body becomes the central line of a piece of research that dialogues between stage presence and cinematic imagery. Pieces such as *Kopf kino* (2017), *Pienso casa digo silla* (2019), and *Concrete Matter* (2021) exemplify this approach, exploring issues such as fragility, humour and performativity from a gender perspective.

In a cultural context marked by digitalisation and virtualisation, code translation between film and theatre not only transforms artistic methodologies but also challenges traditional forms of representation. This article examines how intermediality redefines the relationship between the actor's present body and the virtual body on screen, generating a "third language" that feeds and amplifies theatrical languages.

The "third language" can be understood as a space of confluence and transformation between artistic languages that generates polysemic and fluid meanings. Rather than a literal translation from one medium to another, this notion encompasses a process of reinterpretation in which elements of cinema and theatre blend to give rise to an emerging language. This language is neither fixed nor uniform; instead, it is shaped as a dynamic platform where fragments, resonances and tensions coexist, inviting the spectator to engage in multiple interpretations. Thus, the "third language" not

only expands expressive possibilities but also creates an ongoing dialogue between disciplines, enriching creative and methodological practices.

The main objective is to show how the development of a video essay that explores the interaction between cinema and theatre through applied research not only enriches artistic creation but also offers new methodological tools for analysing and transforming contemporary performance practice.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research is nourished by an interdisciplinary dialogue that embraces concepts such as intermediality, code translation and performativity, while incorporating a gender perspective as a central line.

Intermediality is understood as a field that explores the interaction between different artistic media to create new forms of narrative and expression. As Erika Fischer-Lichte argues in *The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics* (2008), this concept emphasises how the borders between disciplines are diluted, enabling tools characteristic of cinema, such as editing and atmosphere, to be recontextualised in the performance space (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). By eliminating barriers between disciplines, intermediality fosters a constant exchange that stimulates new artistic and discursive perspectives. In this way, the stage not only incorporates the visual language of cinema, but also transforms it, creating hybrid experiences, similar to what happens when stage elements are transferred to audiovisual images.

Code translation, for its part, goes beyond mere adaptation. This process involves a creative reinterpretation in which elements of cinema, such as the two-dimensionality of the screen or the fragmentation of time in editing, are translated into the stage language. For example, film editing, when translated into theatre, can transform linear narrative into a fragmented structure that allows for the exploration of simultaneity and ellipses on stage (as is the case with the piece *Kopfokino*, premiered in 2016). Similarly, cinematic atmosphere, with its use of lighting and textures, inspires the creation of environments that transcend the physicality of the theatrical space, opening up new possibilities for the spectator's experience (as in *Pienso casa digo silla*, 2019). And, similarly, as a two-way process, these stage pieces transformed into films bring to the screen the energy of the performing bodies, the freshness of rehearsal, and the theme of movement, among other aspects, thereby creating playful, physical and highly rhythmic cinematic sequences. This process can be understood as an artistic reinterpretation that invites reflection on the adaptation of languages and techniques across media, highlighting how some tools from one medium can inspire new approaches in another. In her book *La performatividad de las imágenes* (2020), Andrea Soto-Calderón suggests that images, rather than being immobile representations, act as creators of passages that allow for the articulation of new relationships between sensitive elements (Soto-Calderón, 2020: 126). Code translation between cinema and theatre facilitates the creation of intersections where the

boundaries between disciplines blur, promoting a fluid integration between artistic languages. This process is directly intertwined with the notions of performativity by activating experiences that transcend their source medium, establishing new sensitive and discursive connections between images and bodies.

In this context, the performativity of the image gains relevance as an active element that promotes “the porosity between the arts, the exchanges between theatre, cinema, and the visual arts” (Soto-Calderón, 2020: 71). This connection is also manifested in how images and performative actions challenge and reconstruct gender imaginaries, creating new narratives at the intersection of disciplines. This idea resonates with Erika Fischer-Lichte’s concept of performance, who defines it as “any action that develops temporally with a bodily engagement associated with the real-time presence of the performance” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). Both perspectives highlight the capacity of images and actions to create new meanings and experiences through their interaction. Performance, in this sense, not only acts as a medium, but becomes a tool that allows disciplines to intertwine and mutually transform.

Finally, the gender perspective is a fundamental pillar of this research. Judith Butler (1990) introduces the idea that gender is not a fixed fact, but a performative construct, stating that “gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts” (Butler, 1990: 179). In *Los Detectives*, this notion translates into a work with genders on stage through humour and its questioning during the creative processes. The feminist approach is based, in turn, on the theory that philosopher Suely Rolnik develops in her book *Spheres of Insurrection* (2019), where she argues that just as it is necessary to change the social and political structures that continue to fuel a heteropatriarchal, colonial, capitalist, and phallocentric system of domination from a macropolitical framework, it is also essential to change certain mental structures of thought in the micropolitical sphere in order to decolonise what she calls “the colonial-capitalistic unconscious regime” (Rolnik, 2019: 123). The author argues that feminist anticolonial change must also operate by transforming the imaginaries, beliefs, and automatisms that we unwittingly perpetuate against ourselves (Rolnik, 2019: 123).

The case studies presented here explore the transformation of the heteropatriarchal imaginary through the interplay of gender performativity, thus questioning the traditional hierarchical structures dominant in theatre and cinema, embedded in our collective imaginary. In this respect, intermediality also operates as a tool to subvert gender narratives by opening up liminal spaces where bodies and images intersect to challenge visual and discursive stereotypes. Working with the translation of stage codes into cinema also allows us to question the gaze and desire from a feminist perspective that enables us to reappropriate the gaze of desiring power over our bodies. Both in the making of the films (co-created with editors Maria Castan de Manuel, Mònica Cambra, and Júlia Gaitano Mendizabal) and in the work of the company (co-directed by Mariona Naudin, Marina Colomina, and myself),

the authorship and direction are shared by a group of women, so there is an absence of a “heterosexual-male gaze” toward the materials and bodies on stage and on screen. This approach allows for the exploration of narratives distanced from traditional representations, generating creative processes that prioritise authenticity and collective experience. For example, aesthetic decisions are made horizontally, which fosters a diversity of perspectives and prevents the imposition of a single dominant voice. Similarly, this absence of a male gaze influences the way characters are constructed and bodies are presented, approaching them from a perspective that underscores their complexity and humanity, far removed from objectifying stereotypes. This process profoundly transforms the stage results, as well as the point of view in the creation of materials. The feminist approach not only reshapes power dynamics but also creates spaces for dissident and plural narratives. The theoretical framework enables us to approach these passages from a feminist perspective, where cinema and the stage feed off each other, expanding the creative and methodological possibilities of artistic practice.

Methodology

This study is part of art-based research, which aims to legitimise contexts and parameters adapted to the particularity of the artistic field, respecting its non-linear and unlimited nature. This perspective allows for the acceptance of the artistic work itself and its processes as research results. Since the 20th century, art seems to be closely linked to research (Sánchez; Pérez Royo, 2010: 45); thus, artistic practice can be understood as research when its objective is to expand our knowledge and understanding through original processes that pose key questions in the academic and artistic context (Borgdorff, 2012: 43), disseminating both the processes and the results. Patricia Leavy defines this type of research as a transdisciplinary tool, at the “intersection between art and science” (Leavy, 2018: 3), and Fernando Hernández defines it as a puzzle that will fit pieces together, thereby progressively building a discourse while leaving gaps for that part of the process that cannot be verbalised to manifest itself, creating a possibility of polyhedral reading (Hernández, 2011: 112). Thus, other ways of looking at and analysing experience are sought, which try to reveal, in dialogue with scientific methodologies, “everything that is not talked about” (Hernández, 2011: 94), from a relational point of view of art, as defined by Bourriaud (2015), reaching a knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible, forging micro and macro connections from a multidisciplinary perspective that contributes to fighting against prevailing stereotypes and ideologies and to creating critical awareness and multiple meanings, while promoting relational and collective practices with utility and social impact (Leavy, 2018: 11-12).

This type of research, in constant transformation and perpetual becoming (García, 2011: 62) is based on body practices that produce thought, and not the other way around. The methodological framework crossing all areas of applied research is based on performative methods that produce embodied mind. The concept of performativity serves not only as a theoretical

framework but also as a methodological tool that allows the transition from one artistic medium to another. Embodied mind is a concept coined by Fisher-Lichte that derives from the concept of the performative. In the first chapter of her book, she illustrates this with an example that helps to understand it, which we will briefly describe here: after attending a performance by Marina Abramovic, the spectators experience a shock; their nervous system is affected by the experience, which prevents them from initially creating a discourse. The artist acts through her body; the spectators receive the impact in their body and only after a while can they construct a discourse (in addition, what they see is not governed by Aristotelian dramaturgy). For the author, this is what is performative: there is no narrative or intellectual language prior to the wisdom of the body. Embodied mind has to do with that “embodied” wisdom (Fisher-Lichte, 2017: 23). Knowledge, therefore, first passes through the experience of the body, and, after a while, the brain creates a discourse of what has been experienced. As Merleau-Ponty argues, vision is born from what happens to the body and therefore is “excited” by thinking from the body (Merleau-Ponty, 2017: 42). Thus, Fisher-Lichte and Soto Calderón propose that performativity be a tool within applied methodology through a living, moving practice that allows for the opening of new connections and knowledge and the creation of gaps between those already established. The “foundational” tool of this methodology is the body. Experience and artistic practice from the body come first, followed by the conceptualisation and analysis of discoveries.

Editing has been addressed in all three applied research processes as the primary reflection tool: film editing not only organises the narrative, but also allows for the identification of nuances and qualities of the performance that are often lost in live theatre. In *Kopf kino* (2017), for example, editing was used to highlight simultaneities and emotional transitions, which are more difficult to capture in a stage performance given the distance between the audience and the performers. The intention was not to create filmed stage pieces but, from an experimental perspective, to create films with their own cinematic identity. This is a transfer of tools from one universe to another, in relation to the editing practice. The methods used to create the films followed all the stages of a fiction film: script, shooting, editing, and post-production. The methodology employed also includes performative analysis: we see how the actors’ bodies on stage are reshaped when transferred into the audiovisual medium. This analysis considers the stage energy, physical transformations, and intimacy created by the camera.

The analysis of interactions leads us to the creation of a language that does not belong exclusively to either medium, but is constructed from their constant dialogue. Through this translation, a hybrid code is created that combines theatrical and cinematic elements, such as atmosphere and fragmented time. This process is particularly visible in *Pienso casa digo silla* (2019), where the filmed natural spaces interact with the theatrical narrative, creating a constant dialogue between the two media. In the film essay *Bellas artrópodos*, the use of editing is more associative and dialectical. The video essay itself functions as a methodological tool, enabling us to analyse

the relationship between cinema and theatre in the company's artistic practice as it is being done. The production consciously moves away from certain conventional narrative logics and aims for a narrative that operates within its own frameworks, while also advocating a non-linear narrative. The iconological research stems from sparks, images within images, and short stories that weave the central thread of the show, leaving room for spectators to make their own associations. The methodological intention was to create a new aesthetic and compositional dimension in which the editing process plays a fundamental role in the narrative. The starting point was different motifs or gestures (which we grouped into three acts corresponding to the themes of body, theatre, and gender) and visual associations, which has allowed us to connect one cinematography with another. Thus, basing the editing practice on the methodology that filmmaker Harun Farocki develops in the chapter "Towards an Archive for Visual Concepts" of his book, edited by Thomas Elsässer, *Working on the Sight-lines* (Farocki, 2004: 261), which advocates making a selection of sequences that express much more than their basic narrative structure, and that are in themselves constructed to maximise ambiguity. The director invites the creator to give these sequences and these films space in their mind before and during the editing process. The result is a visual edit that connects images around certain figurative ideas such as dance and the body in the image, the filming of the essay, the stage and the performance, the cinematographic device, the question of gender, and the self-agency of the desiring gaze. In this sense, the main methodology of the video essay *Bellas artrópodos* has been the editing through constellation of images: this technique allows us to explore how images relate to each other, generating multiple and polysemic meanings through the editing and juxtaposition of some with others, through the fragmentation and proliferation of meaning (based on the theories of Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin). Through the connections between the images, we have worked one motif with another in thematic blocks, simultaneously freeing the visual and material components of the images (colour, light, movement, rhythm, cut, framing, etc.) from their figurative and narrative context. Double, anamorphic and rhythmic images often sit on the perceptual threshold and pave the way for a different way of receiving.

This methodological approach not only allows for a critical analysis of the interactions between cinema and theatre, but also questions traditional hierarchies in artistic creation, paving the way for practices promoted by other organisations. Furthermore, it establishes a solid analytical framework for exploring, in the results, how the dynamics of translation and editing enrich artistic languages, integrating theatrical and cinematic elements in an ongoing dialogue..

Results

Code translation in *Kopf kino* and *Pienso casa digo silla*

Kopf kino is a stage piece turned into a film that addresses the consequences of consuming fictions on bodies and identities from a gender perspective.

Through cinematic imagery, the film uses the body as a vehicle to explore how audiovisual narratives influence the construction of subjectivities. Meanwhile, *Pienso casa digo silla* delves into the world of medieval female mystics, focusing especially on Hildegard von Bingen. It reflects on the potential of belief and vindicates the empirical knowledge these visionary women possessed, highlighting their contribution to history from a feminist perspective. Both films emerge as exercises in translation, reshaping stage dynamics in a cinematic language that explores new narrative and visual dimensions.

During the editing process for both films, new dynamics emerged in the dialogue between theatre and cinema that had not previously been considered. One of these dynamics is the tension between frontality and three-dimensionality. The theatrical pieces, originally conceived for an audience positioned directly opposite the action, were cinematically reframed toward a four-dimensionality that explores a more intimate and circular spatial dimension. Both films retain the theatrical component of addressing the audience through the camera's eye, but the proximity of the framing allows for a deeper emotional connection. This is evident in the various versions of the "Opening Night" scene in *Kopfokino*, where the camera is positioned even closer than in the original film, capturing the characters' most subtle reactions. The same occurs in the remake of Marisa Paredes's monologue in Pedro Almodóvar's *The Flower of my Secret* (1995), where the three performers are leaning against a wall. In the theatre, this arrangement can distance the audience, especially in large spaces, leading to lapses in attention. In contrast, the film's close-ups highlight the nuances of abandonment and the range of emotions that emerge in the performances. Similarly, the science fiction monologues in this same piece benefit from the closeness of the camera, which reveals details such as the slight movement of an eyebrow or a small expression of joy before introducing a mystery. These nuances are difficult to capture in theatre, where emotion must be projected through the entire body to reach the most distant spectators.

On the other hand, some aspects were not easy to translate, such as the real-time interaction provided by the stage, which the company uses so much (intending to make the audience doubt about what is prepared and what emerges in the moment). This allows for play with comedy and adaptation to the audience's response, while maintaining unpredictability as a vital component of the stage experience. These errors or unforeseen aspects that breathe life into the stage were not easy to capture in *Kopfokino*, as there were no spectators during filming and the film took place in a closed space, which robbed the footage of a certain freshness. In this respect, another relevant issue was the spectator's place in the fiction, who in this piece was translated into a kind of ghostly and imaginary voyeur who is present but not physically.

It was not the same in *Pienso casa digo silla*, since filming in a natural setting meant that the trees, stones, and wind took on the role of the spectator and also fostered the unexpected. Inspired by filmmakers like Mariano Llinás, who emphasises that natural elements can become characters, this



Figure 1. Stills from *Pienso casa digo silla* (2022).

film uses the environment to enrich the narrative atmosphere. The wind, light and forest interact with the bodies on stage, adding mystery and depth to the story.

Another significant lesson in the theatre-cinema translation was the management of physical intensity. In both pieces, we decided to reduce the emotional intensity, aware that the cinematic code demands a more intimate and sensitive relationship with the spectator, while theatre requires energy to be projected toward the audience. However, this emotional adjustment also resulted in an unintentional decrease in physical intensity. Upon reviewing the filmed footage, it became clear that the physical intensity had to remain as great as on stage. Contrary to expectations, this intensity is not excessive on screen, but rather enhances the experience, as exemplified by the fight between Berto and Stevenin in *Out 1: Noli me tangere* (Jacques Rivette, 1971). Moreover, we understood that for this intensity to penetrate the screen, not only was physical commitment necessary, but also careful planning of the shots. An example of this planning is the “shots in the dark” scene in *Pienso casa digo silla*. In this sequence, I find myself with a rubbish bin on my head and a billiard cue hitting the air. This moment originates from a fight with separator posts alongside Mariona Naudin in *La Caldera* (a work in progress for the eponymous performance piece at the Festival Sàlmon 2019), which evolved into a solitary battle against invisible enemies. In the stage context, this “*capirote*” moment stands out for its danger and violence, as it takes place in a confined, blind space, guided only by Mariona’s audio cues. The proximity to the audience adds real risk, as evidenced by the fact that several sticks were broken and she fell from an elevated stage on one occasion. In the film adaptation, this physical risk lost some of its tension due to the vast natural space and the absence of spectators. More appropriate planning, with close-up shots capturing the force of the movements and others showing the impact of the blows on natural elements, would have better conveyed the sense of danger. By way of compensation, the strangeness and unease of the stage was emphasised through a sound progression with overlapping layers of ambient sound, highlighting its ritualistic and anticipatory nature.

Another example is the “Modern Love” sequence (David Bowie, original song, 1983) in *Kopf kino*, a circular remake of the scene with Denis Lavant in *Mauvais sang* (Leos Carax, 1986). This moment, the climax of the stage piece, conveys vitality and a resistance to abandoning a state of innocence in



Figure 2. Frames from *Kopfkino*, María García Vera (2022).

the face of an oppressive reality. During editing, the theatrical climax could not be replicated. Neither the long shots nor the close-ups managed to sustain the energy. In this case, it was not a matter of planning or physical inadequacy, but rather that the dance sustained in time lost its power on screen due to the lack of live energy. The solution came after multiple experiments: Mònica Cambra, the film editor, integrated the moments of maximum physical intensity from the entire piece into a fragment of the song, synchronising them with the music. This decision created a cinematic climax, underscoring how editing can transform stage tools into cinematic ones, achieving similar effects in dramaturgy and narrative. This example illustrates how cinema translates stage time through flashbacks and flashforwards, reaffirming its ability to adapt and reinterpret artistic languages.

The editing process for the films *Pienso casa digo silla* and *Kopfkino* revealed multiple significant discoveries, largely facilitated by the dialogue with editor Mònica Cambra. Through this collaboration and the multiple versions developed through trial and error, issues such as the relationship between stage and cinematic rhythm were addressed. In some cases, the slow pace of the stage piece was maintained in the film, as in *Pienso casa digo silla*, where the initial cadence serves to contrast with the subsequent jerks. In other cases, certain physical progressions were not sustained on screen, necessitating the use of ellipses, as in *Kopfkino*'s diagonal walks.

Acting also emerged as a central focus of the analysis. Watching each other perform allowed for a deeper understanding of the interplay between interpretive registers, as well as the registers most commonly used by each of us, identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. Our work is characterised by an interpretive game that combines freshness and



Figure 3. Frames from *Kopfkino* (2022).

verisimilitude, elements more characteristic of cinematic language, with more theatrical ones such as irony and detachment. Examples of these contrasts include the zombies of *From Here to Eternity* and women in *Kopf kino* or the “voice of the other” in *Pienso casa digo silla*. This interchange between audiovisual and theatrical performance styles generates a unique interpretive texture, balancing emotional closeness with critical detachment.

The process of translation between media in both films paves the way for a broader analysis in the video essay *Bellas artrópodos*, where these concepts and methodologies are integrated and expanded into a reflective approach that articulates new forms of interrelation between film, theatre and body.

Bellas artrópodos

A group of creators from the invertebrate family seeks to play on a velvety black mat with a new arrangement of images that generate new realities in which they can be vertebrated. The title refers to the most numerous and diverse phylum of the animal kingdom: arthropods, endowed with an external skeleton and an articulated appendage but lacking a backbone. Something invertebrate dwells in this video essay, which mixes arachnids with crustaceans and myriapods. A monstrous piece in which the entire relationship between the visible and the invisible is articulated around the return of the gaze toward one and the same. “The eye at the limit of the image. The gaze, too, is a production. (...) And a question of power. Who looks at what. Who teaches what” (Comolli, 2004: 234). To answer this question, we have taken the liberty of occupying the dominant narrative space, subverting pre-established powers or at least becoming more aware of them, through the friction unleashed in the construction of identities that are not subjugated to foreign desire. These identities, in this case the members of the company and the editors, construct themselves from a gaze that seeks an interiority that becomes an image, thus bringing forth their own desire. To look, Lebovici affirms, is also to be seen (Lebovici, 2019: 181). To produce a gaze is to become simultaneously the subject of perception and an object made visible in the perception of others (“How am I seen”). The visual process is therefore constructed as an integral part of a fantasy of which the creators and actresses are both subject and object: “she who looks, without ceasing to be visible, is therefore looked at while she looks” (Lebovici, 2019: 181). The video essay illustrates this process and this relationship through the phenomenological condition



Figure 4. Frames from *Bellas artrópodos*, María García Vera (2022).

of the actress and director, as well as that of their colleagues. There is no doubt that the central point of this study is the female body and the actress' body, which proposes a research project to create "other" imaginaries, as well as to connect in the field of practice with other women's bodies (the editors) and find ways to self-organise from a non-hierarchical space of co-creation, which has allowed us to make a critical reflection on the construction of femininity and desire.

In this respect, a clear reference was *Les Insoumuses*, which shows how the collective production of videos allows us to rethink the image and the gaze in the context of a struggle for autonomy, as a gesture of disobedience and emancipation (Petresin-Bachelez; Zapperi, 2019: 17). The film *Sois belle et tais toi* by Delphine Seyrig, of which excerpts appear in the video essay, has also been a reference on a conceptual level, because it blows apart the status of women, represented as objects of the male gaze, and, instead, opens up a different future in a new form of media appropriation (Petresin-Bachelez; Zapperi, 2019: 21).

Similarly, in our pieces, *Los Detectives* works with devices that challenge the alienation in which the self is often trapped in multiple restrictive spaces that work both in artistic practices and outside of them, and we do so through imagination, play and humour, aspects that can be clearly detected in the film, such as in the remake based on a sequence from *La Flor*, by Mariano Llinás (2018), an idea by the editor and director Maria Castan de Manuel.

In this respect, the creation of the film is an exercise in constant experimentation, where the editing of heterogeneous materials and trial and error method play a crucial role. This approach allows the work to be constructed organically, layered and continually evolving throughout the process. Thus, the final result is not the fruit of a rigid script, but rather a live, physical experience that gives rise to an audiovisual essay that functions as a collage, one possible constellation among many.

The beginning of the video essay is already a full-blown declaration of intent: from the body and on the body we propose a space of direct image action, an experiment without a defined orientation "where images make their movements and do not submit to our binary logic of connection, but can be touched, rubbed, hit or spread, creating an interstitial residue where the unforeseen is organised" (Soto Calderón, 2020: 78). In the figurative, we



Figure 5. Frames from *La Flor*, Mariano Llinás (2018), and *Bellas artrópodos*, María García Vera (2022).

offer presences that intermingle in search of a haptic input that connects with the spectators' skin while surrounding them with spectres. But again, the doubt about the intangible arises: how to discern whether the presence is especially material and pregnant or if it is spectral? The very nature of the images, inevitably phantasmatic, cooperates in the paradox of the simultaneous presence and absence of bodies, offering the audience a discontinuous physical connection, yet probable as a carnality prior to any interpretation. A reality of a lower degree, ambiguous and formless, that multiplies and expands in a proliferation of possibilities, creating exchanges, splitting, suppressing limits, and even making way for, or giving way, to the abject: white slugs with breasts. (Lispector, 2021: 36).

From that beginning, the images are placed on a canvas that becomes visible so that the black margins of the images make visible the presence of the person creating the game. This was the great formal approach that shaped the game board in the edit and that Maria Castan de Manuel and Júlia Gaitano Mendizabal consider a symptom of the contemporary image. Everything is played from a black background like a poker table or a tarot card game. Velvety black like Aby Warburg's panels, where the ghost dwells. Black abyss, cosmic black, black thought where the figures hide to avoid being encapsulated by a closed meaning.

The work of creating dissident images or images that flout normative mandates would not, then, be so much about denunciation as about "imagining spaces, constructing a stage for those non-existent realities that have no image" (Soto Calderón, 2020: 135). In this respect, the question that has repeatedly resonated is how to materially inscribe that which has no space in reality. How can we ensure that our images are not absorbed by official media that produce narratives of experiences that seem empty? How can we present these images so that they are more than a mere material and temporal showcase? "How can we open up other grammars of our own culture?" (Soto Calderón, 2020: 135).

Scale folds, strata folds, fractal folds. A performance piece in the sense that it appeals to its fragility and precariousness, which triggers many threads that could lead to many other future performance pieces. The editing is the passageway to the other world because it is "seeing through the eyes of another. This produces a shift in the gaze that makes the film exist in an exchange, in a transmission. A passage through the eyes of the other" (Comolli, 2004: 147). The editors Júlia Gaitano Mendizabal and Maria Castan de Manuel are that great other that confronts me with myself as another.

The transfer between collaborators, as well as the translation from one medium to another, produced a transformation of the materials into something unknown and discovered in the process. Cinema, seen in this way, is above all the tool of a possible, real relationship between us. They knew how to read the universe I proposed and made it their own, and the result is a three-way work, like the works by Los Detectives, as are the two films edited by Mònica Cambra.

Working with a light touch and humour is the main common thread running through all these collaborations. In the video essay, the intention was to

develop a reflective and profound, yet playful and irreverent, thought process through images. Much of the cinematography studied is based on humour and light-heartedness, so these two elements have been the fundamental vectors in the composition process. What is humour through editing like? How can we create intelligent and feminine humour through images and the relationships between them? This humour has also emerged by dismantling the spatial and temporal order of the shots. A play with rhythms and tempos that produces, as an effect, shocks, jolts, jumps, and abrupt changes: discontinuities (Didi-Huberman, 2013: 88). Moreover, there has also been work with gesture, treating it first as a documentary, secondly reframing it, and thirdly displacing it. An example of this is the slaps in the first episode where the scene from John Cassavetes' *Opening Night* (1977) coexists on the mat with the remake of *Kopfkinos*' sequence, the rehearsed slaps in *Kinetta* by Yorgos Lanthimos (2005), and those received by Juliet Berto in *Out 1, Noli me tangere*. These are dislocated from one film to another and create new meanings or a stronger meaning together. This work recognises the power of the image as that which destines it to never be "the one-image" but rather to be multiplicity, to be constellation and metamorphosis.

Through editing, images reveal how the world is displayed and altered, and by reordering them out of their chronological sequence, they offer new interpretations of our own history (Didi-Huberman, 2013: 245). Dislocation, re-arrangement, and fragmentation of bodies that become pieces of bodies, pieces of presences, and "pieces of beings in more or less, excess and lack at the same time" (Comolli, 2004: 128). This practical investigation is a treasure map, a mirror that is a multitude of mirrors and mirrored reflections. The mirror of this film is reflected in the mirror of the stage practice and vice versa. Editing proves to be a versatile and powerful tool, allowing the film to be transformed into a constant game.

The analysis of the three case studies allows us to identify and systematise a series of fundamental methodological lines in the company's creative processes that emerged throughout the filmmaking process. The first discovery is the relationship between performativity and theatricality, body and representation. Coming from different artistic fields, a friction arises between perspectives on representation and performativity, which is very fruitful in creation. The second discovery is the importance of humour, which is a critical and transgressive tool in our practice. Regarding direction

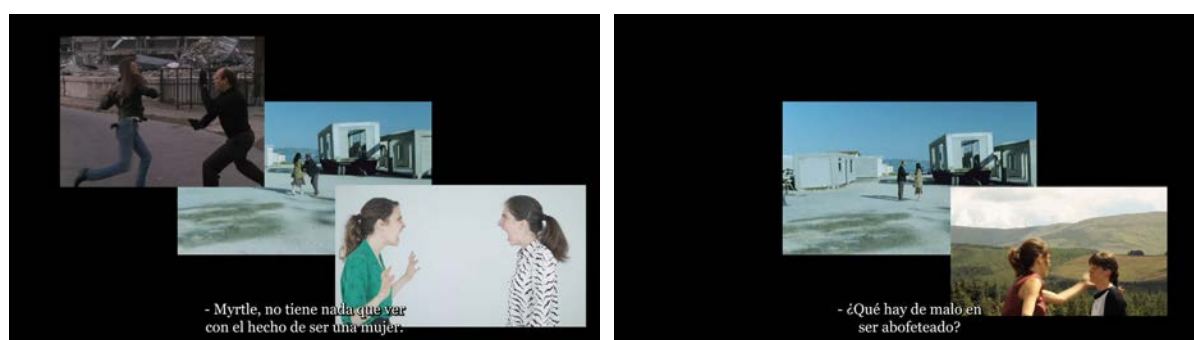


Figure 6. Frame from *Bellas artrópodos*, María García Vera (2022).

and decision-making, we conclude that we apply a horizontal decision-making model (no one has more power than anyone else), where the strongest idea prevails, those that endure and are maintained, regardless of their origin. Thus, the dramaturgical work developed through collaborative writing by six partners focuses on the search for a personal language at the intersection of disciplines. During this writing, the encounter between the device and the stage frame is essential for creating materials and ideas within it. These lines not only summarise the most relevant findings of the way we work but also outline directions that will inspire future practices, as well as new reflections on intermedial spaces for creation.

Conclusions

The combination of my collective work in *Los Detectives* as an actress and participant in the artistic practice, together with the key ideas extracted from the films analysed, lead me to the following conclusions.

First, how creation inspires reflection, elevating it to another level while nourishing and enriching the understanding of the works. The endless loop of the relationship between cinema-theatre-cinema, practice-theory-practice, feeds back into infinity. Artistic research, as we have pointed out, is not only a system of representation, communication, and analysis of ideas or affects, but also calls us to question our ways of creating knowledge, of assuming unstable ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions (Calderón; Hernández, 2019: 51), no less rigorous for that. Thus, we open paths that lead us to construct other possible modes of subjectivity, those that are yet to come and for which we are preparing the ground. This happens, in part, because we face the challenge of going beyond established ways of knowing (Calderón; Hernández, 2019: 67). The transition has been made possible thanks to the performative methodology used, which allows for the journey of concepts between different fields of knowledge and diverse disciplines (Bal, 2002: 225). Performativity in research sets in motion the dynamics of movement as a becoming; that is, as a transformation. Thus, knowledge is transformed, but so are the identities that participate in the crossing. It is from this same position that the group emphasises the importance of collaboration and knowledge feedback in artistic research. The processes, both creative and productive, are relational and transformative, generating new connections and strengthening established ones. The shared experience among filmmakers, actresses, editors, and other creators reinforces the value of collaborative methodologies, showing how they can create more open, critical, and transformative artistic processes. Secondly, and finally, what does the transfer and translation from one medium to another mean for the company and for me within it? This research has led to the development of a solid foundation, both conceptual and practical, for the language that characterises the company, which straddles the borders between various artistic fields. Analysing the transfer between them has allowed us to truly move into an intermediate space that transforms the tools and strategies of each, creating a third language that playfully unfolds between the

shores and seas of the disciplines, also incorporating dance, choreography, performance, and visual arts.

This intermedial space multiplies meanings, redefines the tools and strategies of both media, and underscores the importance of rethinking the imaginaries and narratives in the performing and audiovisual arts. As a company, this research has strengthened our understandings and methodologies and opened up new possibilities for experimentation and speculation, which we will explore in future projects.



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