

The Klau Mich Show, an instituting practice

In 2009 in the Centro José Guerrero we presented the exhibition *David Lamelas: In place of cinema*. This examined the relationship between the artist and cinema as a way of understanding his work in its entirety. As a continuation of that line of argument we are now considering a specific project undertaken by Dora García, which is starting to take shape with this publication.

In my opinion, David Lamelas and Dora García's work coincides in more than one area. But what concerns us when we have to present a coherent programme is their shared interest in anti-institutional movements, and more concretely, in anti-psychiatry. If David Lamelas took several fragments from Ronald D. Laing's book *Knots* to make one of his films for reading (*Reading film from Knots by R. D. Laing*, 1970, in which the spectator is confronted literally and not without difficulty with the reading of various filmed and read fragments of the text), in several of her works Dora García has turned to another of the fathers of anti-psychiatry, Franco Basaglia, especially in *The Deviant Majority: From Basaglia to Brazil*, and in *Juqueri, the asylum-state*.

Anti-psychiatry, a revolutionary movement which started in the early 1960s in Europe and openly and radically challenged the mechanisms of social control over the individual, to a large extent helped schizophrenics to be seen as socially excluded individuals, as well as potential revolutionaries. Ronald D. Laing wrote that 'a schizophrenic person is an exile from the scene of being as we know it, he's a foreigner, a stranger (...) but madness is not simply crisis. It is also a step forward. Potentially it is a liberation and a renovation'.

I should like to think that Dora García's interest in anti-psychiatry lies precisely in that revolutionary potential, that liberating capacity which comes out of the experience of madness and in the strategies it develops for calling the psychiatric institution into question. As Foucault has explained, the characteristic inversion performed by anti-psychiatry places power relations at the heart of the problem and challenges them, thus initiating a systematic destruction of the disciplinary mechanism from within.

The prism of anti-psychiatry allows Dora García to reflect on various challenges that have been part of her artistic research from the outset: the calling into question of the *art institution*, the role of the public and of the artist herself and her work.

If psychosis leads to a confusion between the I and the other, before and after, inside and outside; if in the theories of Laing or Basaglia there is no distinction between doctor and patient (artist and public?) but merely a constant differentiation between their roles; if anti-psychiatry criticized the repressive methods of the asylum (the art institution?) and proposed a systematic destruction of the disciplinary mechanism thanks to an internal effort, putting in its place an alternative form of non-hierarchical collective therapy; if the madman (the artist?) re-organizes reality in order to create his or her own world, then in her performances (and the *Klau Mich Show* is a performance) Dora García involves us in a liberating and renovating experience, both on the individual and social level, in this case transforming history/the institution from within. The *Klau Mich Show* that the artist is presenting at Documenta 13 will allow the construction of a *kind of historical novel*, as she herself says, that ‘tells the story of the incredible adventure of the anti-institutional or anti-authoritarian movements in Germany since the Second World War, with special emphasis on radical forms (those which favor an extreme change in the *statu quo*) of psychiatry, art, and politics.’ In other words, Dora García will offer us a kind of dynamic representation of the history of post-war Germany, so that it performs a process of self-transformation produced by the instituted, the administrated, and the instituting. Seen in this light, the *Klau Mich Show* will become an instituting practice, I would go so far as to say an *instituting* performance, set in motion in this instance by the chorus of actors who are dissatisfied with the institution of history, who seek to innovate and transform their condition, employing from within it a power of criticism, transformation and metamorphosis to create a kind of collective therapy. The prison, the asylum, and even history are presented as total institutions challenged by the mechanisms of anti-psychiatry.

If, as Félix Guattari pointed out, the schizophrenic has become the equivalent of an inventor of alternative societies, of possible other worlds, so too has the artist. Madness, as a creative force unrestrained by any disciplinary regime or institutionalized in any way, is here conceived of as something we should grasp and make our own as a revolutionary, transformatory force capable of building a different rationality.

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