

## **Manifesto II (The day after)**

The day we did the intervention, the newspapers headline the day with the story of a baby dead by malnutrition. I feel stupid playing with dolls. I see myself in the media and I'm ashamed being an art-talking parasite. They ask me whether this experience is art. I don't know, I don't care. I try to question myself, and therefore question ourselves, what is our limit in this state of things. What moves us towards such indifference towards each other, or such violence.

We, the idiotic children of the 'menemist' (1) feast and the 'delarruist' (2) hangover, grandchildren of the house of horror that the military process built (at least uncle Alfonsín (3) had good intentions, or we even had some hope then); we now wander like orphans, trembling for what might happen to us (only as individuals; as a society we don't care). How we laid so low. Why did we walked merrily in the shopping malls stepping on bodies, those shredded body-built malls, shreds of the social body, the corpses we saw with rejoice, being left at the side of the road. We rode planes to make that little trip of ours (as we have done some time before when we invaded the worm-infected peninsula, asking: two of those, please!); didn't we realize that the runway was paved with bodies, when we landed? yes, we knew, but it was party-time then. Today the midnight bell tolled, and the chariot turned into pumpkin again. But our vicious habits were not shaken off. We keep on showing the same sharp indifference. Or the violent indignation for being disturbed in our intimacy, ignoring ourselves as social beings, country of thirty six million individuals, and no society. We learned our lesson well, one thing we are good at. Goad, our national pride.

I try to calm down and write clearly. What for? to defend myself? to reply to the media that question this intervention they consider bad tasted, 'pavlovian', dangerous? we were better with Tinelli (4) ! at least he made us laugh. True. Enough! Need of calming down. I'm being asked whether this is art, and I wonder what is art. Art is metaphor in order to question ourselves, to seek desperately, reveal the secret of our specie here on earth, of our finiteness and condemnation. With any tool we, as artists, might have at hand. In this case, they are dolls, implacable metaphor of the 'dis-classed' sub specie, that resemble (that resemble, but are not, and therefore the metaphor is hyper realistic, therefore metaphor, and therefore art...) mysteriously knocked down human beings, like the ones we avoid daily in the streets of different cities of our country and across the whole world, with no exception. Even in Vienna, where this event took place, home of illustrious musicians, and other monsters that made history in magnificent blood symphonies, home of the civic hygenisation and other racial cleansing.

Art disguised as reality, one of the principal features of a urban intervention. Its subversive power is corrosive precisely for blending in with the object in question. Here lies the origin of the whether-is-art-or-not interrogation. I question that myself. What I'm certain of is that is not a sociological experience, that I'm not interested in judging social behavior, and that is not even about surveying the social tissue, pointing out its stinginess or sense of solidarity. What is it about then? I don't know, maybe it would have been better to stay home watching the fuzz in my bellybutton grow. No. I keep some of the images of last Friday: that old lady that gave the puppet a coffee and called it 'sir' (how many of us call 'sir' to an indigent laid on the street?). I keep the image of that frightened man that believed that the body lying in the street was 'Francisco', the janitor from next building, and later his relief (not rage) when he found out it was about an aesthetic experience. I keep

the image of one of the intervention team taking an indigent woman (that wanted to take the puppet's clothes just a second before) to a church to have some breakfast.

I try to erase the memory of those that passed by without even looking to their sides, of those that insulted and even started beating to avoid staining with bodies their aristocratic sidewalks, those that sent us to hell for making this intervention (ignoring that we are already all in hell), of the policeman that kicked the doll furiously mistaking it for a living person, of the proprietors of that mall that believed their propriety included the sidewalk, bully occupants of public spaces that forced the team there located to leave, assisted by security guards and police patrols, of those who threatened companions to death... all those I try to erase, but they return to my head like ghosts, they make me dizzy, I become nauseous, and I wish with all my strength that the old lady with the coffee defeats them, persuades them, lulls them and turns them good, turns us good, by power of caresses, and then, once for all we start making our rights work and our command to build a fairer society...

end of this foolish statement. Stupid gesture of a stupid artist, according to the sign of the time.

Emilio García Wehbi  
November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002

(1) Argentinean president between 1989-1999

(2) Argentinean president between 1999-2001

(3) Argentinean president between 1983-1989

(4) TV Entertainer. The introducer of hidden camera in Argentinean television.