

Psycho Drag: Disruptive “Annoying Stone in the shoe”

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Interview with the spokesperson of the collective, who, like much of what is expressed in the No Places, manifests itself in a strong anonymity. I often affirm that, in order to write about art in its various formats, languages, creativity and genres, the self-referential experience is fundamental, as Pablo Neruda said: “I confess that I have lived”, which as a confession pivots the positions that define us when trying to understand the meaning of the work of others. I am referring to the performance and bio-installation at El Tanque, MADC's Ideas Laboratory, curated by José Picado in 2023.



First of all, I would like to say that the body is the highest bidder in this cove of critical manifestation, and impels us not to overlook the Alexandrian poet Constantine Kavafis when he refers to it thus: “Come back again and take me, Beloved sensation come back and take me-” Without inner drive, there is no performance, there is no overflow or character of rebellion. The body is the battlefield, the existential skirmish and the fray in the sphere of desire: “When the body's memory is awakened, and an old desire pierces the blood;” (Cavafis 56 Poems. 1998. p37)

Faced with this scenario, I would like to ask the collective some questions:
How do you define the poetics of disruptives?

Disruptive, Psycho Drag answers, refers to those artists who do things differently, those who are not afraid to go against the tide, the rebels, the

scandalous, those who raise their voices and question what is “normal”. Hence, we decided to call this project Disruptives, which was born as an artistic proposal in the format of performance and installation, integrating languages of testimonial theater, bio-installations and Drag art.

What characterizes you?

It is a participatory, open and experimental creative process. The central event is conceived as a series of micro-performances that conceptualize the life of memories in Drag, each attached to an emotion or sensation. In this MADC proposal it was accompanied by an installation of symbolic objects of Drag, which refers to the memories of this art.

What boundaries do you intend to break?

There are multiple edges that Drag art questions in society and we as a collective seek to reproduce. Social structure, patriarchy, heteronormativity, gender inequality, gender identity, racism, religion, politics... These are themes that, depending on how art is conceptualized, restructure the way of thinking or constructing concepts.

What are the roots of your critique?

It dates back to the 19th century in Europe when aristocratic society and the political sphere of the time was satirized on stage, it was used to mock gender roles. By the 20th century, drag was established as an artistic trend in New York, where it was very common in gay entertainment establishments. It was practiced by both men and women.



Photos courtesy of MADC

It was at that time that the Stonewall riots in NY took place, due to the persecutions and police harassment that raided these nightclubs and arrested all attendees. Until one day a large group of Trans, Queer, Drag and other members of the community resist without letting up and raise their voices to stop these persecutions.

This is how Drag figures took on great relevance in the diverse culture and their art and aesthetics became popular in the ballrooms or ballroom dances characteristic of queer culture, even as we know them today.

Regarding the symbolic imaginary, what signs are used to present themselves to society?

He is inspired by women who represent positive things, whether they are family, artists or idols, they seek to inflame the female figure.

To build characters, they study their personal characteristics, gestures, personalities, way of dressing, walking, dancing, singing, putting on makeup... In short, it is a profound characterization, which aims to imitate and sometimes exaggerate, but without falling into stereotypes about femininity. Of course, there are many styles of drag and colors for different tastes, but what matters is its critical and detailed content. We can recognize them by their big wigs or headdresses, high heels, silhouettes, their dances, their lip syncs, exceptional costumes, their stage setups, personality that fill them with brightness and light wherever they are.

What perceptions are uncomfortable with them?

I think we make ourselves uncomfortable more than they

make us uncomfortable. These negative reactions on the part of certain sectors of society only show ignorance, intolerance and value judgments that they have regarding this art. It's very easy to play from appearances if you don't inform yourself about what's behind it. This is why we believe it is important to show these expressions in alternative spaces where people can appreciate what is being done.

What kind of myths could they refer to around the actors?

Some of these are:

-That Drags are men who want to be women. This is not the case, despite the fact that many Trans women discover their gender identity while developing as Drag artists, there are gay men, women, non-binary people and even heterosexuals who do so.

-That drags are sex workers. This is not true either, it is important to clarify that they represent a segregated sector of the community in many aspects, there are those who have resorted to these ways of generating resources. That's not to say that all men who do drag prostitute themselves. It's a lifestyle, everyone deserves respect.

-That drags are people rejected by their families. Although it is a disruptive art and they are rarely rejected by their family, there are a large number of colleagues who are supported by their family environment. In addition, in the diverse culture, there are families made up of people from the community and they live together as a blood family.

-That Drags only do shows, there are many types of collectives, we usually see them doing a show, but there are some who do it for pleasure without going on stage, there are those who like to be more in contests where their



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catwalk, costumes and intelligence when speaking matter more, there are those who do it as it is conceptual art for visual content.

-That Drag is exclusive to men. There are women who do it too. There is also a category called Drag King, which is developed by women with very masculine references.

-The Drag show is for adults only. There are many scenic styles where Drag art is involved, such as circus, musicals, theater, dance, even storytelling.

-Doing Drag is cheap. Well, it's not like that, it's an art that involves many resources such as wigs, makeup, costumes, accessories, all of good quality and personalized. It really is a very expensive art and there are those who make a living from it. They also invest a lot of time and rehearsals to put on their shows. That is why it is important to fight for good remuneration for these artists. This is also why it is customary to tip the Drags. These are some of the myths surrounding this art, but it is undoubtedly full of prejudices.

How far do they intend to break? Well, Drag art was born to break all these barriers. Drag have become leaders in the LGBTIQ+ communities, as they are artists who have a lot of visibility and projection. They make it feel when something happens that violates the rights of sexually diverse people. Drag art itself implies breaking with many social structures, in addition to its political, cultural and belief discourses.

How do you define your political positions?

We are occasionally apolitical

(at convenience), we love to be rebellious and uncomfortable. But when it comes to rights, we do raise our voices, for gender equality and identity. Whenever the diverse community is threatened by homolesbotransphobic ideas, they are the first to raise awareness of such acts. There are those who are activists and must always be fighting for equality.

To conclude with this intense review of what was exposed in *El Tanque del MADC*, it is important to affirm that this is a contemporary manifestation which intersects with theater and the visual arts crossed in turn by gender games and roles, the driven, mediating clothes, makeup, hairstyles to exaggerate the features of the opposite sex. One of the aspects, the Drag queer performance, as said, is of a non-binary aesthetic, it seeks naturalness, theatrical and histrionic insight, criticism, scenographic talents, choreography, to fill a space that is not always a theater but a square, a bar, the street itself or as in this case the museum trying to fill it with non-verbal languages: gestures (kinesic) with hands, face and body; prosemic when distances speak; paralinguistics or accentuations when speaking; the semiotic dimension; The elusive gaze, all with eccentric dramas capable of breaking fierce gender patterns, without forgetting that the body is central to all discourse of performative art, a corporeality that more than a physical and aesthetic entity, its reading is like bringing a Annoying Stone in one's shoe.

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