



Perfo-Puerto: Performance Art in Chile

Rodrigo Tisi explores a growing tradition

Perfo-puerto, an independent organization of performance art in Chile led by Alexander del Re and Alejandra Herrera, presented the first congress of performance art in the country this past November. The event was divided into three phases: "Intro," at the Animal Gallery in Santiago, "the Congress," at various universities in the city of Valparaíso (including UPLA, UCV and UTFSM), and "Post," at the Muelle Baron of Valparaíso.

Since its beginnings, performance art has been understood as one of the most dynamic and sophisticated branches of the art world. Performance art is based on the use of many mediums to produce or, rather, "present" the art piece while the body constitutes its main vehicle. The field of performance art has become one of the most intriguing practices of contemporary art at the end of 20th century.

The art of performance can be understood as a tool of interaction and of live communication between the artist and the audience. Performance art questions traditional artistic practices and, consequently, highlights combined artistic practices in a variety of forms—from the glory of the stage to the regular activities of quotidian life. In this postmodern world, many of the situations we encounter are somehow "performative," hence the importance of performance. Performance crosses the line of many traditional artforms; it intersects photography and video art with installation and public art on the streets. But in any of these mediums, perhaps the most relevant thing distinction of performance is the importance and presence of the body.

South America does not have a long history of performance

art but many recent exhibitions have begun to change that. Perfo-puerto 2002, Coalition, the Latin American Festival of Performance Art in the old prison of Valparaíso, the Limes project in Argentina and Uruguay in 2003, the international In Transit Festival in Santiago and Buenos Aires, and the Excentra Festival in Uruguay in 2004 have all contributed to the growing awareness of performance art in the southern hemisphere.

Perfo-puerto was a truly ambitious project this year as its organizers aimed to gather some of the most relevant names in the field as well as theorists and organizers of similar events in the region. The hope was to provide a forum for discussing and debating issues about the future of the discipline, encouraging the practice's growth. All in all, it is very important for Chile to hold such an event considering the geographical distance between it and the main hotbeds for this type of art.

Some of the artists that participated in the event were Paul Couillard and Richard Martel from Canada, Jamie McMurry and Marilyn Arsem from the US, Sylvie Ferre from France, Boris Nieslony from Germany, Ahlien from Taiwan, Fernando Martinez from Uruguay, Daniel Acosta from Argentina, Paula Darriba from Brazil, Pancho Lopez and Janice Alva from Mexico, and Valetin Torrens from Spain. Organizations such as Franklin Furnace and Chashama from USA, ArkaMax from Italy and Fado from Canada also collaborated on the project. □

Left-right: (Alejandra Herrera y Alexander Del Re), *Andra i den Andra*. Virtual performance. International Performance Festival "Chocopop sonoro," Dominican Republic. / Jonathan Vivanco, *The Globe in Two Parts*, 2002.